

SERBIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND ARTS
INSTITUTE FOR BALKAN STUDIES

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2019

BALCANICA

J. KALIĆ, Information about Belgrade in Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus • D. POPOVIĆ, On Two Lost Medieval Serbian Reliquaries • D. KOVAČEVIĆ KOJIĆ, Serbian Silver at the Venetian Mint • A. FOTIĆ, Coping with Extortion on a Local Level • L. HÖBELT, Balkan or Border Warfare? Glimpses from the Early Modern Period • P. M. KITROMILIDES, Spinozist Ideas in the Greek Enlightenment • M. KOVIĆ, Great Britain and the Consular Initiative of the Great Powers in Bosnia and Herzegovina • M. BJELAJAC, Humanitarian Catastrophe as a Pretext for the Austro-Hungarian Invasion of Serbia 1912–1913 • F. GUELTON, Avec le général Piarron de Mondésir: Un aller-retour de Brindisi à Valona • D. BAKIĆ, The Serbian Minister in London, Mateja Bošković, the Yugoslav Committee, and Serbia's Yugoslav Policy in the Great War • G-H. SOUTOU, The Paris Conference of 1919 • B. MILOSAVLJEVIĆ, Drafting the Constitution of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (1920) • M. VASILJEVIĆ, Carrying Their Native Land and Their New Home in Their Hearts • S. G. MARKOVICH, The Grand Lodge of Yugoslavia between France and Britain (1919–1940) • V. G. PAVLOVIĆ, La longue marche de Tito vers le sommet du parti communiste • K. NIKOLIĆ, Great Britain, the Soviet Union and the Resistance Movements in Yugoslavia, 1941 • Y. MOURÉLOS, Les origines de la guerre civile en Grèce • A. EDEMSKIY, Additional Evidence on the Final Break between Moscow and Tirana in 1960–1961 • Lj. DIMIĆ, Yugoslav Diplomacy and the 1967 Coup d'Etat in Greece • K. V. NIKIFOROV, The Distinctive Characteristics of Transformation in Eastern Europe • B. ŠIJAKOVIĆ, Riddle and Secret: Laza Kostić and Branko Miljković ❧

ANNUAL OF THE INSTITUTE FOR BALKAN STUDIES

UDC 930.85(4-12)

BELGRADE 2019

ISSN 0350-7653

eISSN 2406-0801



BALCANICA L



UDC 930.85(4-12)

ISSN 0350-7653
eISSN 2406-0801

ACADÉMIE SERBE DES SCIENCES ET DES ARTS
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eISSN 2406-0801

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ANNUAL OF THE INSTITUTE FOR BALKAN STUDIES

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BELGRADE
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Publisher

INSTITUTE FOR BALKAN STUDIES
Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts
Serbia, Belgrade, Knez Mihailova 35/IV
www.balkaninstitut.com
e-mail: balkinst@bi.sanu.ac.rs
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The origin of the Institute goes back to the Institut des Études balkaniques founded in Belgrade in 1934 as the only of the kind in the Balkans. The initiative came from King Alexander I Karadjordjević, while the Institute's scholarly profile was created by Ratko Parežanin and Svetozar Spanačević. The Institute published *Revue internationale des Études balkaniques*, which assembled most prominent European experts on the Balkans in various disciplines. Its work was banned by the Nazi occupation authorities in 1941.

The Institute was not re-established until 1969, under its present-day name and under the auspices of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts. It assembled a team of scholars to cover the Balkans from prehistory to the modern age and in a range of different fields of study, such as archaeology, ethnography, anthropology, history, culture, art, literature, law. This multidisciplinary approach remains its long-term orientation.



Accepted for publication at the 10th regular session of
the SASA Department of Historical Sciences of 26 December 2018

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A TRIBUTE TO DUŠAN T. BATAKOVIĆ
(1957–2017)

*This volume is dedicated to the memory of Dušan T. Bataković,
Director of the Institute for Balkan Studies SASA*



DUŠAN T. BATAKOVIĆ

(1957–2017)

Historian and Diplomat

It is often said that one's true and long-lasting friends are those made at university. I did not meet Dušan T. Bataković at the Faculty of Philosophy while I was a history student, but I was hearing a lot about him. He was considered to be one of the brightest students, and one with a personality of his own. I first met him in a stressful situation, during my first job interview. The fact that he was present at the job interview of a colleague only slightly younger than him, along with the Director of the Institute of History who was twice his age, led me to believe that he already was an accomplished historian. It was his personality, his unshakeable confidence and his professional authority that brought him to the forefront, be it in history or, much later, in politics. But the first time that we spoke, during that interview, it was he who asked questions, who tried to put me at ease and, eventually, who put in a good word for me. Little did I know that, from that day on, Dušan would be the kind of friend you make at university, one that walks by your side along the path of life.

Dušan, I learned during the thirty odd years that I had the privilege of knowing him, was an unusual man. He was a Serbian patriot, proud of his Montenegrin origins and his Serbian family, a royalist, and a religious man who in the early 1990s wore a Rastafarian bonnet while looking for Led Zeppelin CDs and old books about the Balkans in the streets and shops of Paris. He liked neither Tito nor the country he had created, but in a way he and his generation perhaps represented the best that came out of that political experiment in the distinctive atmosphere of Belgrade of the late 1970s and '80s. In the relative political liberty of the end of Tito's reign, Dušan spoke his mind without fear or favour, first as a rock musician, then as a rock critic and, finally, from the mid-1980s, as a historian. However the period is called, the New-Wave age or a prelude to the breakup of Yugoslavia, it was a time for people with strong principles, creative minds and assertive personalities. Dušan surely was one. Looking back from the distance of all these years, he was first and foremost a leader, one that shows the way to others.

Perhaps because he had the misfortune to lose his father very early, Dušan had to open doors for himself, the doors that were supposed to give answers to

his insatiable curiosity. His lifelong journey through literature, art and music, created a man who was also endowed with what he thought to be inexhaustible energy. In the noblest of ways, Dušan was his own creation, built on the deep-rooted values he inherited from his family, both maternal and paternal. He took in the values of his maternal grandfather, a royalist and a Serbian patriot, and he was no less proud of his father's Montenegrin origins, and his faith was his companion and beacon throughout his life. To these foundations, Dušan, with his immense intellectual curiosity and open-mindedness, added a European perspective, as a way of life and, most importantly, as an intellectual horizon.

History and, later, politics were an ideal scene for a man who had a message or, as he put it later in life, a mission. He turned to history after a brief excursion into the field of science, and, as he said himself, knew almost immediately that he found his calling. His fellow students remember him as the one who not only asked pertinent questions, but was set apart as the privileged interlocutor by the professors who sensed that, to Dušan, history was a passion, not a trade. Looking for answers, he inadvertently crossed the boundaries of official communist historiography more than once, and was so very proud of the freedom thus won, and in some cases, gained respect of his professors.

His career as a historian began in the Institute of History, but historical research with its slow pace and measured expressions soon became too rigid a setting for a man of Dušan's interests and energy. While working on his first thesis Dušan became one of the editors of a youth weekly, *Književna reč*. Interestingly enough, he was responsible both for the pages devoted to history and for those devoted to rock music. He wrote about the friends he met when he had a band of his own and, at the same time, interviewed his professors, now asking in a professional capacity the inconvenient questions he had once asked as a student. His energy enabled him to pursue two careers, under the watchful and benevolent eye of his professors, Radovan Samardžić and Andrej Mitrović.

His first major work, on the late-nineteenth-century history of the monastery of Dečani, combined his values and his research, creating what he called a mission. The situation of the Serbian minority in Kosovo, even though it officially was part of a Serbian communist republic, to Dušan, was the very image of the collapse of Serbia under communist rule. To him, being first and foremost a man of firm principles sure of his life path, Kosovo became the essence of his mission. Throughout our many discussions, he maintained that people should choose their profession in accordance with their profound inner beliefs as that is the only way in which their work can have its full meaning. His most profound inner belief was his patriotism, a term and a concept that nowadays, in the era of globalisation, tends to have a negative connotation. Dušan sincerely and profoundly loved his country and its nation. Serbia that he loved and for which he worked all his life both as a historian and as a diplomat, in his opinion should be

a democracy based on the legacy of the golden age of the Serbian parliamentary system (1903–1914) and a part of the Europe of sovereign nations.

But the decay of Yugoslavia, especially after Tito's death, stuck in the quagmire of artificial national balance, imposed on Dušan the duty to state his opinions on politics and history clearly and publicly, putting aside all consideration for the established views both in politics and in historiography. He believed it to be his duty to speak up against wrong political decisions and to point out the unpleasant truths and inconsistencies in the national narrative. His assessments and opinions were always based on scrupulous respect for the methodology of historical research. His mission as he understood it was to oppose the tendency to project the artificial national balance of Tito's Yugoslavia onto the historical narrative. The tendency to intentionally ignore facts in order to enable the nation-building process in all Yugoslav republics and even autonomous regions, such as Kosovo, was unacceptable to Dušan since it was an affront to historical research, first of all the one concerned with the history of Serbia.

Following the path traced by his professors Radovan Samardžić and Dimitrije Djordjević, Dušan thus chose as the first great theme of his research the history of Kosovo in the late nineteenth and twentieth century, one of the most challenging topics in Serbian history. While working on the history of Kosovo the concern for the Serbian population living there and the medieval Serbian cultural heritage became for Dušan a genuine calling. His books, *The Dečani Question; Kosovo and Metohija in the Relations between Albanians and Serbs; The Kosovo Chronicles; Kosovo: la spirale de la haine: les faits, les acteurs, l'histoire; Kosovo and Metohija: History and Ideology*, published in Belgrade and Paris between 1989 and 1998, remain as testimonies to his effort to provide a new and well-documented history of the Serbian southern province.

The second important subject of Dušan's work was the history of Serbia from the First Serbian Uprising to the end of the Great War. The authentic Balkan revolution that began in 1804 made Serbs and the state they were building a part of the European process of national awakening in which they singled out themselves as a society that knew no nobility, where land belonged to those that worked it and where political parties mobilized the majority of the male working population, not only the elites. That was the Serbia that Dušan wrote about in his books and articles, always underlining the importance of its European models, which, he concluded, were mostly French. In his doctoral thesis, written under the guidance of Professor George-Henri Soutou at the Sorbonne: *Les sources françaises de la démocratie serbe: (1804–1914)*, in his numerous articles on the Serbian intellectuals who followed the French intellectual lead and became opinion-makers in Serbia as ministers and university professors known as "Parisians" at the time, in his book on the nineteenth-century programme of Serbian national policy, the famous Nachertanie, Dušan created a structured narrative about an autonomous and original democratic path of Serbia that had

its culmination in the epic victory in the Great War. The Yugoslav state created in the aftermath of the great victory was, in Dušan's opinion, a great delusion for the Serbs. He made a clear distinction between the Kingdom of Yugoslavia as an honest broker of relations between the nations that composed it and the communist one that imposed a foreign ideology on the Yugoslav nations, as he pointed out in his book *L'histoire de la Yougoslavie*.

While working on his doctoral thesis in Paris in the 1990s, he courageously sought to challenge the predominant narrative that portrayed Serbia and Serbs as the only culprits for the bloody breakup of Yugoslavia. I remember a conversation we had in Paris after he took his PhD. He told me he had no doubts about what he should do next. The prospect of teaching at French universities he was offered had no real appeal to him. His decision was made: he will return to Serbia because it is there that his work can really make a difference. Once back in Serbia in the late 1990s, he immediately joined the opposition to the Milošević regime, putting in practice his beliefs that Serbia should be a true democracy based on the European model. He took up a post at the Faculty of Philosophy and, after only a few months, spearheaded resistance to a governmental decree that required an oath of allegiance to the Milošević regime.

During these last years of Milošević's "reign", Kosovo became the focal point of the Yugoslav crisis that had been going on for years. In his capacity as a historian who had long been concerned with the history of the Serbian southern province and as a consultant to the Serbian Orthodox bishopric for the region of Kosovo and Metohija, Dušan proposed a project of dividing the province into cantons, each with a clear ethnic majority, thus trying to ensure viable governance while maintaining the overall constitutional framework. The Kosovo issue brought Dušan into the political arena not only on a national but also on an international level during a series of initiatives that looked for a compromise acceptable to both the Albanian and Serbian communities in Kosovo.

Dušan wrote his scholarly papers and pursued his political engagement with the same passion. He would write for long hours, mostly at night, convinced that he should do his best to rectify the unjustified but dominant narrative which made Milošević the personification of Serbian contemporary history. His relentless efforts took a toll on his health, but after the fall of Milošević and the democratic turn in Serbia, he accepted to serve as ambassador, first in Athens, and then in Ottawa and Paris. He spent much of his career of a historian reading diplomatic correspondence and now he found himself in a position to write one himself, only to conclude that it necessarily represents only an incomplete picture of the reality. He wrote his correspondence with the utmost attention of a historian who was fully aware that it would be read not only by his superiors but also by the generations of historians to come, knowing that the most important information cannot and must not be put in writing. His encounter with the diplomatic world was a cause of disillusionment for Dušan,

since he found that bureaucratic complaisance was more common than personal initiative. A man of Dušan's temperament and convictions could not feel at ease in such a setting, but his stay in Athens, Ottawa and Paris was considered a success both by his hosts and the Ministry in Belgrade.

As ambassador in Paris (2009–12) Dušan was able to continue and wrap up his research on bilateral relations and on French influences in Serbia while working hard to foster closer cooperation between two societies. This work made it possible for Serbia to figure prominently in the museum devoted to the memory of the Great War in France. He organised what his predecessors could not or would not do: a commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the assassination of King Alexander of Yugoslavia in Marseilles. As ambassador in Paris, with the authority of an expert on Kosovo, Dušan defended the territorial integrity of Serbia.

In a way, the time Dušan spent in Paris as ambassador was the high point of his career and an undeniable satisfaction for him personally. A man of many interests as he was, he transformed the ambassador's residence in a gallery of modern Serbian art, owing to his personal ties with the generation of Serbian artists who had chosen to leave communist Yugoslavia in the 1950s and '60s. While fulfilling his duties as ambassador, Dušan was able to continue his search for old and rare books, which was his passion and something of a legacy to his children and his students, and to write, as always, in the small hours after a long day of diplomatic work. In Paris, he was truly happy and, as one of his superiors said, he was the right man in the right place.

At the end of his diplomatic career Dušan rejoined the Institute for the Balkan Studies, where he spent the major part of his working days and which he led as director from 2005 to 2007 and again from 2012. Dušan's firm conviction that Serbia is an integral part of Europe and that therefore its history and culture are an integral part of European heritage inspired him to do his best to demonstrate it by putting in place in the Institute, from 2005 onwards, a programme of publications in French and English. Its journal *Balkanica* has been published in English and French since 2006. Until 2017, during the period that he was the editor-in-chief, even while serving as ambassador, the Institute for Balkan Studies published fifteen collections of papers from different conferences in English and French. He considered it necessary to acquaint the international public with the work done in the humanities in Serbia, largely unknown abroad because publication is almost exclusively in Serbian. In the same period the Institute under his guidance published thirty-four books in Serbian. At his initiative the Institute began the process of developing international cooperation on a regional and a European level. He was also vice-president of the International Association of South-East European Studies.

Even if he seemed to be strict, sometimes severe, unafraid to state harsh truths and undisturbed by the effect it might have on his interlocutors, Dušan

was a warm person, deeply empathetic to his colleagues and friends. He generously helped whoever he could and encouraged and supported younger colleagues in their scholarly efforts.

Dušan believed that life can only have meaning if lived fully. He devoted his life to Serbia as he believed it should be: Serbia that cherishes its Orthodox roots and respects its history, Serbia that upholds its democratic traditions and takes care of the wellbeing of its citizens in the homeland and in diaspora. As a historian, he sought in his lectures and writings to contribute to the present generations not losing national consciousness, and as a diplomat, he fought to prevent Serbia from losing parts of its territory and, above all, its self-esteem.

The immense and generous effort Dušan put into achieving his various academic and patriotic objectives, the battles he fought to defend the integrity of the historian and historiography and those he fought as a historian in politics, took a serious and irreparable toll on his health. His departure left an immense and irreplaceable void for his family, friends, colleagues, and for those who respect his life's work, but he left us richer for the moments we had the privilege to share with him.

Vojislav G. Pavlović

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Compiled by Marina Ninić

Jovanka Kalić

*Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts
Belgrade*

Information about Belgrade in Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus

Abstract: The paper looks at two sets of data provided by Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus' *De administrando imperio*, one concerning information about Belgrade in the context of Serbian settlement in the Byzantine Empire under Heraclius, the other Belgrade itself.

Keywords: Belgrade, Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, Serbian settlement in Byzantium,

The exceptionally valuable writings of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus have long been known to Serbian scholarship. Evidence suggesting the emperor's earliest Serbian readers, even if only through excerpts or in other languages, takes us, according to one hypothesis, as far back as the late seventeenth century.¹ Since then Constantine Porphyrogenitus has not ceased attracting scholarly attention, in accordance, of course, with times and the development of historical methods. His capital work *De administrando imperio* (The Book on Peoples) has become the basis of our knowledge of the early history of the Serbs in the Balkans. Among the abundance of data it contains new discoveries are constantly made, especially if one looks at the wider picture of Byzantine politics, neighbouring regions and nearby lands. On this occasion, we shall draw attention to only two sets of data, one well-known in scholarship, the other neglected. Both have a broader significance.

The first set of data has come to occupy a privileged place in historiography: Porphyrogenitus' account of Serbian settlement in the territory of the Byzantine Empire under emperor Heraclius in the early seventh century. With the emperor's consent, the Serbs – Constantine Porphyrogenitus claims – first settled in the theme of Thessalonica, in Servia. At some later point they chose to return to their native land but, having crossed the Danube, regretted their decision and, through the *strategos* (military governor) of Belgrade, appealed to

¹ N. Radojčić, "Proučavanje spisa Konstantina VII Porfirogenita u srpskoj istoriografiji", *ZRVI* 6 (1960), 1–2.

emperor Heraclius to allot them some other lands for settlement.² Every single aspect of this account has been carefully examined over and over again (its essential meaning, the settlers' movements, the issue of a *strategos* in Belgrade, the name of the city, etc.).³ It basically concerns the earliest history of Belgrade, the presence of Serbs in the area of ancient Singidunum, which raises the questions surrounding Slav settlement in the Balkans and the role of the confluence of the Sava and Danube rivers in the process. This is a topic that leads us to a critical period, one that transformed the Balkan landscape, with late Roman settlements, cities in particular, disappearing, and settlements of a new society rising. Viewed in this way, the fate of Belgrade ceases being merely the history of a city.⁴ An important contribution to the efforts to sketch the outlines of this process has lately been made by archaeology, exploring the formative period of the oldest Slav settlement on the site of Belgrade. In that way the accuracy of Constantine Porphyrogenitus' information can be proved or disproved, its chronology in particular. The excavations conducted so far have revealed the remains of a Slav settlement in the so-called Lower Town of Belgrade. Most researchers have dated it to the ninth century.⁵ Of course, further investigations are necessary.

The other set of data survives in Chapter 40 of *The Book on Peoples*. It did not go unnoticed by K. Jireček, but has not since received due attention in Serbian historiography.⁶

Chapter 40 of the emperor's writing is devoted to the settlement of Hungarians (Turks) in the Pannonian Plain or, as he put it in his text, "in the land

² Constantine Porphyrogenitus *De administrando imperio*, ed. G. Moravcsik, transl. R. J. H. Jenkins [hereafter DAI], 2nd rev. ed. (Washington DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library & Collection, 1967), 152.

³ For main interpretations and overviews of the earlier literature see F. Barišić, "Vizantijski Singidunum", *ZRVI* 3 (1955), 1–14; B. Ferjančić, ed., *Vizantijski izvori za istoriju naroda Jugoslavije*, vol. II (Belgrade: Vizantološki institut SANU, 1959), 49; J. Kalić Mijušković, *Beograd u srednjem veku* (Belgrade: SKZ, 1967), 26–27; Lj. Maksimović, "Severni Ilirik u VI veku", *ZRVI* 19 (1980), 17–57, and others.

⁴ J. Kalić, "Neueste Ergebnisse der historischen Forschung zur Landnahme der Slaven auf dem Balkan", *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 33 (1985), 375–377.

⁵ J. Kovačević, "Arheološki prilog preciziranju hronologije slovenskog naseljavanja Balkana", in *Predslavenski etnički elementi na Balkanu u etnogenezi Južnih Slavena*, ed. A. Benac (Sarajevo: Centar za balkanološka ispitivanja ANUBiH, 1969), 65; G. Marjanović Vujović, "Slavic Belgrade", *Balcanoslavica* 2 (1973), 9–15; G. Marjanović Vujović, "Slavenski Beograd", in *Istorija Beograda I* (Belgrade: Prosveta, 1974), 292–295; G. Marjanović Vujović, "Najstarije slovensko naselje u Beogradu", *Godišnjak grada Beograda* 25 (1978), 7–16; M. Popović, *Beogradska tvrđava* (Belgrade: Arheološki institut, 1982), 38–40.

⁶ K. Jireček, "Hrišćanski elemenat u topografskoj nomenklaturi balkanskih zemalja", *Zbornik Konstantina Jirečeka*, vol. I (Belgrade: SANU, 1959), 521. This set of data was not included in vol. II of *Vizantijski izvori za istoriju naroda Jugoslavije*.

where they *now* live”.⁷ In describing the area of their settlement, the author uses known concepts or clear geographical reference points. There are – the writers says – ancient monuments (landmarks), above all the bridge of emperor Trajan, at which point “Turkey” begins, i.e. the land of the newly-settled Hungarian tribes; then, at a distance of three days (walk) from there is Belgrade and, in it, “the *pyrgos* of the holy and great emperor Constantine”. Then, at a distance of two days’ river journey upstream from Belgrade is Sirmium and beyond it lies Great Moravia.⁸ The areas of “Turkey”, he says, are *now* called after the rivers that flow through them: the Tamiš/Timiș, the Tutis, the Maros/Mureș, the Karaš/Caraș and the Tisa/Tisza. There follows a list of neighbours – in the east, Bulgarians are separated from Turks by the river Istros, also called Danube, to the north are Pechenegs, to the west Franks, and to the south Croats.⁹ Chapter 40 ends with an account of the internal situation of the Hungarian tribes and the genealogy of the ruling family.¹⁰

It is obvious that smaller textual units were merged into a single chapter here, as was done elsewhere in the emperor’s text. The multiple chronological and thematic layers of this source require that the structure of the section containing information about Belgrade be analysed first. This leads us to the question of the genesis of the text.

It is well known by now that emperor Constantine VII had several assistants preparing material for him to use in individual chapters. *The Book on Peoples* is in fact a compilation from various written sources (reports by provincial and other officials, reports by imperial envoys, observations about people, events and, especially, neighbours, all of these having been accumulated in Constantinople). These different units can usually be recognized by the use of typical introductory formulas (*ὅτι ἰστέον ὅτι*) announcing a new set of data.¹¹ Sometimes it is only an intratextual analysis that makes it possible to distinguish between these different units. The analysis of the text of Chapter 40 requires the use of both methods along with a comparative examination of other parts of the book.

Chapter 40 was put together in the same way as most of the other chapters. Various sources were used, earlier and later, the latter including Hungar-

⁷ DAI c. 40.25–27.

⁸ DAI c. 40.27–33.

⁹ DAI c. 40.35–40. G. Moravcsik, *Áz Arpád-köri Magyar történet bizánci forrásai* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1984), 48.

¹⁰ DAI, c. 40. 41–68.

¹¹ J. B. Bury, “The Treatise *De administrando imperio*”, BZ 15 (1906), 524 ff.; *Constantine Porphyrogenitus De administrando imperio: Commentary*, vol. II, ed. R. J. H. Jenkins (London: Athlone Press, 1962), passim; *Vizantijski izvori*, vol. II, 3; B. Ferjančić, “Struktura 30. glave spisa *De administrando imperio*”, ZRVI 18 (1978), 69–79; Lj. Maksimović, “Struktura spisa *De administrando imperio*”, ZRVI 21 (1982), 25–26.

ian ones. In the second part of Chapter 40 this is quite clear even at first sight, given that the abovementioned opening formulas occur as many as five times.¹² The segment containing references to Belgrade is fitted into a text that lacks such formulas, but its being a separate unit is suggested by some other details. It describes the geographical situation at the time of writing. Firstly, the text expressly states that it is the land where Hungarians “*now live*”. Secondly, the areas where they live are “*now*” called after the rivers that flow through them. This points clearly enough to the tenth century. Furthermore, the use of the present tense makes this geographical description conspicuously different from the previous part of the text.

The writer cites three major points by which the empire marked its border to the north and the settlers: Trajan’s bridge, Belgrade and Sirmium. Leaving aside all other meanings of this particular choice, we call attention to the accuracy of the topographical data in that section. It is in fact a feature of this work in general. Its geographical data as a rule are reliable, of course, depending on the quality of the information used and the period it refers to, as observed long ago by both foreign and Serbian researches. In this case, the sources of this accuracy may be identified more closely.

To do that, we should compare the text on Belgrade in Chapter 40 with the text of Chapter 42. Chapter 42 provides a geographical description that leads the reader from Thessalonica to the Danube, and then towards areas around the Black Sea, to the city of Sarkel and the Caucasus.¹³ In this brilliant description we come across Belgrade again. From Thessalonica to the Danube, where Belgrade sits, it takes eight days, travelling at one’s leisure. Turks (Hungarians), the writer says, live on the other side of the Danube, in Moravia, but also on this side, between the Danube and Sava rivers.¹⁴ There follows a description of the lands and cities in the area between the lower Danube valley and Sarkel, including the distances between some places and distinctive features of the landscapes. The compilers had in front of them an itinerary which included the routes from Thessalonica to the Danube.¹⁵ One led to Belgrade, the other towards Dorostol and the border with the Pechenegs.

In both sections the writer used the contemporary name for Belgrade. It is known to be accurate because it occurs in other ninth- and tenth-century

¹² DAI c. 40.51–66.

¹³ DAI c. 42.1–110.

¹⁴ DAI c. 42.15–20.

¹⁵ Bury, “The Treatise *De administrando imperii*”, 568; C. A. Macartney, *The Magyars in the Ninth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 1930; 1968), 143; DAI, II, 153–154; Konstantin Bagrianorodnyi, *Ob upravlenii Imperiei*, eds. G. G. Litavrin and A. P. Novoseltseva (Moscow: Nauka, 1989), 400.

sources as well.¹⁶ All this leads to the conclusion that Constantine Porphyrogenitus and his assistants had at their disposal the data from an anonymous tenth-century itinerary.

Let us return to the basic content of the text. In the tenth century there obviously was in Belgrade a *pyrgos* (*stup* in medieval Serbian sources) of the “*holy and great emperor Constantine*”. The manner in which individual emperors are described in Porphyrogenitus’ text leaves no room for doubts about their identity. Constantine I the Great (r. 306–337) is mentioned several times, and always as “great” or “holy” or both.¹⁷ There was no mistake here. Consequently, in Porphyrogenitus’ times there was in Belgrade a *pyrgos* named after Constantine I the Great, most likely because he himself had set it up. Judging by the medieval concept of a *pyrgos*, this was an important tall structure which could be either a free standing one or a complex of structures within the city walls.¹⁸ It cannot be established at present what earlier sources might have been used by the authors of the tenth-century itinerary.

Given that the *pyrgos* is the only structure in Belgrade mentioned in Porphyrogenitus’ text and that the city itself is on a commanding location, it is likely that in the tenth century the *pyrgos* was still very prominent by its size and importance. The text gives us no reason to make assumptions about the structure’s possible renovations, but such an undertaking should not be ruled out. If we look at this piece of information in the context of the historical area of fourth-century Roman Singidunum, i.e. Belgrade, taking into account its geographical position and the inherited situation, it seems likely that the *pyrgos* sat in the dominant, north-western area of the so-called Upper Town. It is believed that this area had also been the focus of the building activity of emperor Justinian I (r. 527–565).¹⁹ Later on the Serbs built a major element of city defences – Nebojša *Stup* (tower) – on the site.²⁰ Whether the focus on this particular site rested on the structure of emperor Constantine I the Great or the *pyrgos* named after him should be looked for elsewhere will probably be established by archaeology unless all earlier traces have been effaced by subsequent human activity in this case too. Either way, it is important that the builder of the capital on the Bosphorus was also building in Singidunum. Settling Slavs found his structure still standing. It came to symbolize a fading age.

¹⁶ Kalić Mijušković, *Beograd u srednjem veku*, 27, 344.

¹⁷ DAI c. 13.49; 13.78; 13.141 ff.

¹⁸ J. Kalić “Byzanz und die mittelalterlichen Städte in Serbien”, *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 32 (1982), 599–603.

¹⁹ Popović, *Beogradska tvrđava*, 34.

²⁰ J. Kalić, “Kula Nebojša u Beogradu”, *ZFF XV-1* (1985), 115–123.

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Danica Popović

*Institute for Balkan Studies
Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts
Belgrade*

On Two Lost Medieval Serbian Reliquaries The *Staurothekai* of King Stefan Uroš I and Queen Helen

Abstract: This essay discusses two lost medieval Serbian *staurothekai* known only from written sources. One, belonging to the Serbian King Stefan Uroš I, was described as a sumptuous item in the Hungarian spoils of war following their victory over the Serbian army in Mačva in 1268. The other *staurotheke*, with an extensive inscription, was Queen Helen's gift to the monastery of Sopoćani, a foundation of her husband Uroš I. Based on the available facts, it has been assumed that this reliquary came into the possession of a Serbian ruler of the House of Branković in the fifteenth century, eventually ending up in the Habsburg *geistliche Schatzkammer* and playing an important role in the *Pietas austriaca* programme. It is known from the surviving descriptions that the *staurothekai* had the shape of a two-armed cross, and were made of gold and lavishly adorned with precious stones. Apart from their substantial material worth, documented with precision, both *staurothekai* had a distinct sacral meaning and ideological function.

Keywords: the cult of the True Cross; *staurothekai*; Serbian King Stefan Uroš I; Queen Helen, consort of King Uroš I; Hungarian King Bela IV; the Habsburgs; *pietas austriaca*

In medieval Serbia, as elsewhere in the Christian world, the cult of the True Cross was widely popular and had multiple functions.¹ Its manifestations became particularly evocative under the rulers of the House of Nemanjić. Embracing the fundamental Byzantine understanding of the significance and role of the True Cross, the Nemanjić rulers saw it not only as a relic of the highest order possessing miraculous powers but also as a symbol of royal authority. From the state-building reign of Grand *Župan* Stefan Nemanja (1166–1196), whose

* dama.popovic@yahoo.com

¹ From the ample literature on the True Cross let me refer on this occasion to the still unavoidable study of A. Frolow, *La relique de la Vraie Croix. Recherches sur le développement d'un culte* (Paris: Institut français d'études byzantines, 1961) and, of more recent works, to *Byzance et les reliques du Christ*, eds. J. Durand and B. Flusin (Paris: Association des amis du Centre d'histoire et civilisation de Byzance, 2004) and H. A. Klein, *Byzanz, der Westen und das "wahre" Kreuz: Die Geschichte einer Reliquie und ihrer künstlerischen Fassung in Byzanz und im Abendland* (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2004).

pectoral cross had the status of a holy weapon and a guardian of the realm, those ideas grew in strength and importance. Through the programmatic effort of Sava of Serbia, profoundly knowledgeable about Eastern Christian cults and their theological and political significance, the most distinguished Serbian monasteries and religious mainstays of the Nemanjić state – Hilandar, Studenica and Žiča – came into the possession of fragments of the True Cross. A particularly important fact is that the True Cross was the focus of the relic programme designed for Žiča, the cathedral and coronation church of the first Nemanjić kings. Its treasury, supplied with relics of the highest order originating from the Holy Land, was a factor which greatly contributed to the sacral legitimation of the young Serbian state.²

Inaugurated in the time of Stefan Nemanja and his son, Sava of Serbia, the cult of the True Cross continued to be fostered, with a new energy, by the next generation of Nemanjić dynasts. It appears from the documentary sources that the Serbian monarchs from King Stefan the First Crowned on as a rule possessed a relic of the True Cross and donated sumptuous *staurothekai* to distinguished monasteries. This close connection between the cult of the True Cross and the royal ideology of the Nemanjić has often been pointed to in scholarship. Reliquaries containing a piece of the holy wood were symbols of God's patronage and of the divine origin of royal authority, guarantees of victories as well as metaphors for royal prestige. An important aspect of these notions was the recognition of the Nemanjić rulers as New Constantines. Research has shown that the "Constantinian" programme was pursued consistently in Serbia through different messages and emphases, depending on the epoch and its needs.³ In the early period of statehood, Stefan Nemanja's pectoral cross was to be "a guardian and a fortress and a helper in battle", "a refuge and a rock ... as once to David and the ancient emperor Constantine".⁴ This idea was further developed, assuming various forms. It is known that the pattern of likening the ruler to the "holy and

² D. Popović, "Relikvije Časnog krsta u srednjovekovnoj Srbiji", in *Konstantin Veliki u vizantijskoj i srpskoj tradiciji*, ed. Lj. Maksimović (Belgrade: Zavod za udžbenike, 2014), 99–101 (with sources and ample bibliography).

³ V. J. Djurić, *Le nouveau Constantin dans l'art serbe médiéval*, in *Lithoströton: Studien zur byzantinische Kunst und Geschichte. Festschrift für Marcell Restle*, eds. B. Borgkopp and T. Stephan (Stuttgart: A. Hiersemann, 2000), 55–65; S. Marjanović-Dušanić, *Vladarska ideologija Nemanjića: diplomatička studija* (Belgrade: SKZ & Clio, 1997, 287–302; S. Marjanović-Dušanić, "Novi Konstantin u srpskoj pisanoj tradiciji srednjeg veka", in *Konstantin Veliki u vizantijskoj i srpskoj tradiciji*, 81–98.

⁴ Stefan Prvoenčani, *Sabrani spisi*, ed. Lj. Juhas-Georgievaska (Belgrade: Prosveta & SKZ, 1988), 82–83; Domentijan, *Život Svetoga Save i Život Svetoga Simeona*, ed. R. Marinković (Belgrade: Prosveta & SKZ, 1988), 286–287.

great kings, the meek David and the famous Constantine”⁵ – the epitome of a war victor triumphant with God’s help – was given supreme expression in the reign of King Stefan Uroš II Milutin (1282–1321), that is, in a time marked by Serbian victorious military campaigns and territorial expansion. The idea had been there a generation earlier though. Thus, in the reign of Stefan Uroš I, it was promoted by means of a Constantinian epithet describing the ruler as *equal to the apostles*, an ideologically charged imperial attribute associated with Constantine the Great, a champion of Christianity and defender of the true faith, and readily appropriated by the rulers of the lands within the Byzantine cultural orbit.⁶ The appeal that this idea had to the third generation of Nemanjić kings is evidenced not only by the documentary sources and literary patterns, i.e. the attributes attached to the reigning king, but also by the fact that King Uroš I, just like his dynastic ancestors, possessed a sumptuous *staurotheke* containing fragments of the True Cross.

All trace of King Uroš I’s *staurotheke* is long lost, and it is now known only from the sources. Information about it survives in the charter that King Bela IV of Hungary issued to Mihaly, son of his magnate Peter Chako, in 1269. It offers, among other things, details about the Serbo-Hungarian war fought in Mačva in 1268. The Serbian army suffered a sound defeat, and the Hungarians captured King Uroš I and his son-in-law, returning home with rich spoils, including a Serbian war flag which was put on display in front of the Hungarian royal palace as a war trophy.⁷ According to the charter, Mihaly handed over to Bela, Ban of Mačva and grandson of King Bela IV, the sumptuous *staurotheke* with fragments of the True Cross seized from King Uroš I’s son-in-law. It ended up in the possession of the Hungarian king, who granted considerable land to Mihaly in exchange for it. The charter contains a description of the *staurotheke* attested by the king’s daughter Anne and grandson Bela. Namely, upon receiving the cross, they found out that “it contains the Lord’s wood that is a palm and a half long and a palm wide, encased in ten marks of gold, and extraordinarily beautifully adorned with valuable gems and precious stones, its value being estimated at five thousand marks of gold, gems and precious stones” (*ipsam crucem videssent continere de ligno Domini longitudinem unius palme et dimide, latitudinem valere pal-*

⁵ Danilo Drugi, *Životi kraljeva i arhiepiskopa srpskih. Službe*, eds. G. Mak Danijel and D. Petrović (Belgrade: Prosveta & SKZ, 1988), 140.

⁶ S. Marjanović-Dušanić, “Povelje za limski manastir Sv. Apostola i srpski vladar kao retnik apostolima”, in ΠΕΡΙΒΟΛΟΣ, *Zbornik u čast Mirjane Živojinović*, vol. I, eds. B. Miljković and D. Dželebdžić (Belgrade: Vizantološki institut SANU & Zadužbina manastira Hilandara, 2015), 167–176.

⁷ M. Dinić, “O ugarskom ropstvu kralja Uroša I”, *Istorijski časopis* 1 (1948), 30–36; Dj. Bubalo, *Srpska zemlja i Pomorska u doba vladavine Nemanjića* (Belgrade: Filip Višnjić, 2016), 196–198 (with relevant literature).

mam, formatam in auro decem marcarum, preciosis gemmis et lapidibus mirabiliter ordinatam, estimantes in valore quingentes marcas auri, lapidum et gemmarum).⁸

For all its succinctness, this description provides several noteworthy pieces of information. For a start, we can learn that the *staurotheke* of Uroš I had the shape of a cross. Although its exact type is not specified, it is reasonable to assume that it had the usual shape of a two-armed cross, of which more will be said below. From the information about its length (one and a half palms) and width (one palm), it follows that it was 34–35 cm long and about 23 cm wide.⁹ It seems pertinent to note that it was very similar in dimensions to the *staurotheke* with the name of Sava of Serbia now kept in Pienza (36 cm × 18.5 cm), a very rare example of an original medieval Serbian *staurotheke* and hence tremendously useful for comparative purposes.¹⁰ Very interesting is also the information about the estimated value of the reliquary expressed in marks. This unit of weight for gold and silver, sometimes also for platinum and pearls, was in use in most medieval European states, including Hungary.¹¹ In our case, the mark in question most likely was the so-called Hungarian mark, also known as the mark of King Bela IV, which was equal to 233.35 g of silver and was in use between 1146 and 1280. Expressed in the gold currency of the time, the value of the *staurotheke* of 500 marks would have been about 3,000 Florentine florins.¹²

The units of measurement and numerical values referred to in Bela IV's charter permit some, if cautious, assumptions to be made about the original appearance of the *staurotheke* of Uroš I. The considerable discrepancy between the value of the gold (10 marks) and the estimated total value of the reliquary

⁸ *Codex diplomaticus Hungariae ecclesiasticus ac civilis*, Studio et opera Georgii Fejér, t. V, vol. 1 (Budae 1829), 25; this text was also published by St. Stanojević "Da li je kralj Uroš 1268. god. bio zarobljen od Madjara?", *Glas SKA* CLXIV, dr. raz. 84 (1935), 203, and Dinić, "O ugarskom ropstvu", 34.

⁹ *Palma* or *palmus*, meaning "palm" or "hand", was one of the basic units of length in the middle ages. For medieval Serbia see M. Vlajinac, *Rečnik naših starih mera u toku vekova*, vol. IV (Belgrade: SANU, 1974), 696–697; S. Ćirković, "Merenje i merenje u srednjovekovnoj Srbiji", *Rabotnici, vojnici, duhovnici. Društva srednjovekovnog Balkana* (Belgrade: Equilibrium, 1997), 143. In our case, it is the unit known as *palmus maior* or "greater span", which was equal to 12 digits or about 23 cm.

¹⁰ D. Popović, "A *staurotheke* of Serbian provenance in Pienza", *Zograf* 36 (2012), 157.

¹¹ Vlajinac, *Rečnik naših starih mera*, vol. II, 563–565.

¹² B. Hóman, *Magyar pénztörténet 1000–1325* (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1916), 102–104. The product of multiplying 500 Hungarian marks by 233.3533 g is equal to 116,676 kg of silver, which would have been worth about 53,521 Venetian grossi. The value of the *staurotheke* in gold currency can only be expressed in Florentine florins – the Venetian ducat was introduced only in 1284 – and it would have been about 2,937 florins. I express my gratitude to Vujadin Ivanišević, senior fellow of the Archaeological Institute in Belgrade, for information and wider clarifications on this topic.

(500 marks) suggests that most of its value lay in the holy wood and the sumptuous jewelled decoration. The statement about the cross being “extraordinarily beautifully adorned with valuable gems and precious stones” indeed suggests an unusually luxurious object. That it was both a highly revered relic and a worthy work of religious art may also be seen from the Hungarian king’s determination to do whatever it takes to make it his own. Since his attempt to buy the reliquary from Mihaly failed, he decided to grant him landed estates in exchange for it (*pro tali igitur preciosa re quamdam terram conditionalium suorum Erdewchukuna vocatum*).¹³ Finally, it may be assumed that the religious significance of the holy wood and the great material value of the *staurotheke* were not Bela IV’s only, though obviously very strong, motive. Just like the captured Serbian war flag (*signum triumphi vexillum*), the True Cross – the most convincing, Constantinian, sign of victory, which the Serbian king must have also hoped for when he had set out to war – symbolized the Hungarian victory over the defeated enemy.

* * *

That the cult of the True Cross had already taken root in Serbia by the time of King Uroš I can be seen from the fact that his consort, Queen Helen of Anjou, also owned a *staurotheke*. The appearance of this reliquary, believed to be either irretrievably lost or collecting dust someplace, is partially known from the documentary sources dating from the late eighteenth century. Since these documents are a vital source of information about the history of the *staurotheke* – about a later phase of its history, to be exact – and about the type and decoration of the reliquary, we shall first offer these known facts.

Contemporary sources are silent about the earliest, medieval, history of Queen Helen’s reliquary. Something is known about its later fate owing to Franjo Ksaver Pejačević, a prominent eighteenth-century Jesuit theologian and author of a voluminous *Historia Serviae*. The tendentious intent of Pejačević’s book – to prove the alleged centuries-long adherence of the Serbs to the Roman Catholic Church – set aside on this occasion, it is his merit that he used various sources to compile important information about the appearance of Queen Helen’s reliquary, about how it made its way to the Habsburg court and what use it had there. Thus, we can learn that the *staurotheke* contained fragments of the holy wood, had the form of a gold cross set with four precious stones and incised with a Cyrillic inscription in Serbian (...*Reginae istius Helenae monumentum, partem videlicet crucis Dominicae notabilem, auro gemmis quator ornato inclusam ... denique auro incisum esse aliquid caractere nostrate Cyrillico dudum inaudii* ...). He also makes a very interesting claim that the reliquary, wrapped up in silk, is laid by the newly-born Austrian princes after their baptism (*ex hac pro pio more do-*

¹³ *Codex Diplomaticus Hungariae*, 25; Stanojević “Da li je kralj Uroš”, 202–203.

mus augustae augustae particulam decerpi, obvolutamque serico, principibus recens natis post baptismi solemnia appendi). Worthy of particular note is his account of how the *staurotheke* arrived in the Austrian capital. He claims – without specifying his sources – that the reliquary, which Queen Helen had donated to the Monastery of Sopoćani, a foundation of her husband, King Uroš I, came into the possession of Despot Djuradj Branković. After the first fall of the Serbian Despotate to the Ottomans in 1439, the despot took his valuable possessions to Hungary, and left them there when he set out to look for allies against the invaders (*Ad Austriacos pervenisse ex Hungaria reor: Hungariae vero sacris clenodiis a Georgio Despota illatam anno 1439; quo regno ejectus, apud Hungaros exul, auxilia adversus Amuratis tyrannidem conquirebat*).¹⁴ If Pejačević's story is founded on reality – which is a possibility that should not be ruled out given the political and military situation in the region at the time – it seems logical to assume that Queen Helen's *staurotheke* first came into the possession of the Branković family, and then ended up in the Hungarian royal treasury. In that case, it must have come to the Habsburg court in the first half of the sixteenth century or, more precisely, before the conquest of Buda in 1541, when Ferdinand I of Habsburg had the treasury transferred to Vienna.

Be that as it may, another Pejačević's merit is that he published the inscription engraved on Queen Helen's *staurotheke*. Remaining our main source for the subsequently lost Serbian reliquary, his 1797 account is also chronologically the last first-hand testimony that the reliquary was in use at the Habsburg court. Pejačević's account was referred to by later collectors and students of Serbian antiquities, who also published the inscription and thus saved it from oblivion. The inscription reads:

*This holy cross was made by Queen Helen for the Holy Trinity [church] at Sopoćani. [There are] in it five pieces of the holy wood, all intact, and four stones [on it]. Two thousand perpers were given for the wood, and a third thousand for the stones and gold. May he who alienates or takes the cross forcibly from the Holy Trinity be killed by God and the True Cross. May he who chips off a piece from the holy wood be damned by God and killed by the True Cross.*¹⁵

The information about the type and decoration of Queen Helen's reliquary is supplemented from another and chronologically the earliest eighteenth-

¹⁴ F. X. Pejacsevich, *Historia Serviae seu Colloquia XIII. de statu regni et religionis Serviae ab exordio ad finem, sive a saeculo VII. ad XV.* (Colocae 1797), 327.

¹⁵ The inscription has been published by several scholars: P. J. Šafarik, *Serbische Lesekörner oder historische-kritische Beleuchtung der serbischen Mundart* (Pest: C. A. Hartleben, 1833), 70, LXVII; Fr. Miklosich, *Monumenta serbica spectantia historiam Serviae, Bosnae, Ragusii* (Vienna: G. Braumüller, 1858), 70, LXVII; Lj. Stojanović, *Stari srpski zapisi i natpisi*, vol. I (Belgrade: Srpska kraljevska akademija, 1902), 19–20, no. 45; Frolow, *La relique de la Vraie Croix*, 443.

century source: the inventory list of the items in the ecclesiastical collection of the Habsburg Imperial treasury (*Inventar der geistliche Schatzkammer*) of 23 February 1758. The object under no. 5 (Reg. no. 12624) is described as an “ancient” double-armed cross which contains a very large piece of the holy wood; the cross is entirely of gold, set on a flat silver-gilt foot, adorned with four uncut sapphires, and bears an “ancient” inscription in Greek (*Ein detto doppeltes ganz goldenes uralter creuz, in welchem sich etwelche sehr grosse particul von heiligen creuz befunden; stehet auf einem glat silbervergolden fues und ist zugleich mit 4 ungeschnittenen saphir gezieret, die inscription, welche uralt und in griechischer sprache*). A *Nota Bene* added at the end of the description states that the holy wood had been chipped away several times before 13 June 1758, when Her Majesty the Empress (Maria Theresa) set the holy wood and its casing aside for her own use (*Von diesen particul seind zu verschiedenen mahlen einige stücke herausgenommen worden. Den 13. junii 1758 aber haben ihro maj. de kaiserin diesen particul gänzlich samt der fassung zu allerhöchst deroselben disposition zu sich genohmen*).¹⁶

When the information from the *geistliche Schatzkammer* inventory records is compared with the information provided by the inscription on the *staurotheke*, the likelihood of this being our reliquary becomes quite high. Such identification is corroborated by the claim of Franjo Ksaver Pejačević that Queen Helen’s reliquary was among the items kept in the Imperial treasury. The only discrepant detail is that the inscription was in Greek. It can, however, be explained by the widespread practice of classifying inscriptions on “ancient” objects of Eastern-Christian origin as Greek as a result of ignorance of Slavic languages. The Croat Pejačević could not possibly have made such a mistake – he is explicit that it is a Cyrillic inscription in Serbian – but it was quite conceivable for a mid-eighteenth-century Austrian official responsible for making the inventory of the Imperial treasury.¹⁷

So, with all known information collated, the appearance of Queen Helen’s *staurotheke* may be reconstructed in the following way: it had the shape of a two-armed cross and it was made of gold and decorated with four sapphires, uncut at that, as was common in medieval goldsmithing. The reliquary bore a relatively extensive inscription, but its exact place was not specified. Judging by the known Serbian analogies – the *staurotheke* with the name of Sava of Serbia from

¹⁶ H. Zimmermann, ed., “Inventare Akten und Regesten aus der Schatzkammer des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses”, *Jahrbuch der kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhaus* 16/II (1895), VII and XXVIII; v. <http://jbsak.uni-hd.de>

¹⁷ This identification has also been accepted by Dr Franz Kirchweyer, curator of the Kaiserliche Schatzkammer and Kunstakammer Vienna. I express my great gratitude to my Austrian colleague for exploring information about Queen Helen’s *staurotheke*, i.e. for confirming that all reference to it ceased after Empress Maria Theresa took it for her private use in 1758. To the best of his knowledge, the *staurotheke* at present is not in any of the collections of the Schatzkammer or the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna.

Pienza and the *staurotheke* of the church of Sts Peter and Paul at Ras – it might have been inscribed on the handle.¹⁸ Other unknowns include the technique, morphology and possible calligraphic solutions of the inscription, all of which taken together constitute an important component of the visual “rhetoric of enshrinement”.¹⁹ The statement from the inventory records that the *staurotheke* had a silver-gilt foot should be interpreted with much caution. Namely, the foot most likely was a later addition which enabled the new Habsburg owners to put the cross on display in a vertical position. Judging by the known examples, medieval Serbian *staurothekai* were not fixed onto a stand in order to be kept or put on display, but rather they had handles at the lower end of the cross shaft by which they were held when lifted up during various rites.

The inscription contains some other interesting details. It should first be noted that it belongs to the usual category of donor inscriptions, in this case informing about a gift of Queen Helen to the *katholikon* of the monastery of Sopoćani, her husband’s foundation and funerary church. By making this expensive gift, Queen Helen followed the Nemanjić royalty’s established practice of donating fragments of the True Cross to distinguished monasteries. Strikingly, however, the inscription does not contain the donor’s usual plea for good health, salvation or forgiveness of sins which, in the context of donor inscriptions and epigrams, expressed their expectation of a spiritual reward from the heavenly powers for the material gift made.²⁰ On the other hand, another commonplace of donor inscriptions was not omitted: the concluding sanction, i.e. a curse to whoever dares alienate the relic or take it forcibly from the monastery. A similar sanction concludes the inscription on a somewhat later *staurotheke* of King Stefan Uroš II Milutin and the Bishop of Raška, Gregory II.²¹

Yet another interesting fact about Queen Helen’s inscription is that it states the exact cost of the *staurotheke*. It is quite telling that of the total amount of 3,000 *perpers*, 2,000 were paid for the holy wood and twice as less, or 1,000, for the gold and precious stones, i.e. for the reliquary. The high amount paid for the relic itself can undoubtedly be accounted for by its size, i.e. by the fact that

¹⁸ Popović, “Relikvije Časnog krsta”, figs. 3, 4 and 5; D. Popović, “The *staurotheke* of the church of Sts Peter and Paul in Ras. A contribution to research”, *Zograf* 42 (2018), 73–87.

¹⁹ On the subject see H. Klein, “Materiality and the Sacred. Byzantine Reliquaries and the Rhetoric of Enshrinement”, in *Saints and Sacred Matter: the Cult of Relics in Byzantium and Beyond*, eds. C. Hahn and H. A. Klein (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collections, 2016), 231–252; I. Drpić, *Epigram, Art and Devotion in Later Byzantium* (Cambridge University Press, 2016), 186–243 and *passim*.

²⁰ On gift giving and returning see T. Kambourova, “Ktitor: le sens du don des panneaux votifs dans le monde byzantine”, *Byzantion* 78 (2008) 261–287; Drpić, *Epigram*, 276–295 (with sources and bibliography).

²¹ Popović, “The *staurotheke* of the church of Sts Peter and Paul in Ras, 74, fig. 5.

it consisted of as many as five pieces of the holy wood. Making an estimation of the real value of the *staurotheke*, including the relic, would require a separate study based on both Byzantine and Serbian contemporary sources, but even a rough estimate suggests it was an exceptionally expensive object.²² For the sake of comparison, in roughly the same period, the price of a sheep in Byzantium was one *hyperpyron*, of a battle horse 79–90, of a male slave 22, and of a female slave 28–30 *hyperpyra*. As for the objects made from precious metals, let us mention a pair of earrings adorned with pearls and precious stones which cost 48 *hyperpyra*.²³

The fact that Queen Helen's *staurotheke* held five fragments of the holy wood is worthy of special emphasis. Research based on the written sources and surviving reliquaries has shown that the *staurothekai* containing several holy wood fragments were a rarity in Byzantium and, therefore, particularly highly valued. Perhaps the best-known example is a reliquary originally from the Constantinopolitan Church of the Virgin of the Pharos and since the thirteenth century housed in the French royal treasury.²⁴ There is also good reason to assume that the so-called *staurotheke* of the Empress Maria from St Mark's in Venice, a replica of another highly-valued Byzantine reliquary, also contained more than one holy wood fragment.²⁵ The state of preservation of the holy wood fragments after the arrival of Queen Helen's *staurotheke* in the Habsburg treasury cannot be known with certainty. The claim made in the inventory records – that pieces had been chipped off several times until the Empress Maria Theresa took the relic for her private use – may imply that the holy wood had been spared from substantial fragmentation.

The practice of relic fragmentation – a long-standing practice of the Christian church – had a particular meaning in this case because the cult of the True Cross was an essential ingredient of the religiosity of Habsburg dynasts. In addition to Eucharistic piety, the veneration of the Virgin and particular saints, the *fiducia in Crucem Christi* lay at the core of *pietas austriaca*. This concept of

²² According to what is known, one *perper*, which was the unit of account, was equal to 12 silver dinars in the Serbian lands in the late 13th century. Therefore, the amount of 3,000 *perpers* would have been equal to about 36,000 silver dinars. For this subject see V. Ivanišević, *Novčarstvo srednjovekovne Srbije* (Belgrade: Stubovi kulture, 2001), 36–42.

²³ C. Morrisson and J.-C. Cheynet, "Prices and Wages in the Byzantine World", in *The Economic History of Byzantium: From Seventh through the Fifteenth Century*, ed. A. E. Laiou (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2002), 854–857, T. 15.

²⁴ J. D[urand], "Le reliquaire byzantin de la Vraie Croix", in *Le trésor de la Sainte-Chapelle* (Paris: Reunion des Musées Nationaux, 2001), no. 17, 63–64.

²⁵ K. Krause, "The *Staurotheke* of the Empress Maria in Venice: a Renaissance replica of a lost Byzantine Cross reliquary in the Treasury of St. Mark's", in *Die kulturhistorische Bedeutung byzantinischer Epigramme*, eds. W. Hörander and A. Rhoby (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2008), 41–42.

piety, considered to be one of the most important virtues of a ruler, was at the heart of the distinctive Habsburg ideology of a chosen people and its salvific mission in the Christian world. The Habsburgs drew its main principles from the medieval heritage, including chronicles and popular legends. The starting point and symbolic focus of these beliefs was the coronation of their forefather, Rudolf I (1273), at which the cross had been assigned the role of a sign of victory as well as of a symbol of royal authority. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Habsburgs embraced and further developed the idea of *imitatio Christi*, notably in the reign of Ferdinand II (1578–1637), when the cult of the True Cross, infused with complex symbolism, became an important instrument of dynastic propaganda. At its centre was the idea of the Habsburgs – *domus austriaca* – as being chosen and preordained by God to pursue their universal mission for both state and church. The cult was given a tremendous impetus by a miracle that took place in Vienna in 1668, when a piece of the True Cross emerged intact from the great fire that broke out in the imperial palace. As a result of this miraculous event, which inspired the institution of the Order of the Starry Cross, the veneration of the relic gained popularity beyond the imperial family, taking root among the high aristocracy.²⁶

The cult of the True Cross continued to be devotedly fostered within the *Pietas austriaca* programme by the eighteenth-century Habsburg rulers, experiencing a particular surge in the reign of Maria Theresa (1717–1780). Apart from the inherited belief in God's help and protection ensured for the dynasty by the True Cross, this illustrious empress, also known for her radical Roman-Catholic religiosity, considered the relic to be an efficacious weapon against all manner of infidels and heretics. Invoking the legacy of Ferdinand II, she took an illustrious dynastic relic – the cross from which, legend has it, the emperor had heard the message: *non te deseram* – to Bratislava (1741), ordering that it be put on display in the Reichstag. Upon its return to Vienna, the cross was enshrined in a luxurious case in the renovated imperial chapel at the Hofburg, and from 1748 was presented for kissing on Sundays and religious festivals. Maria Theresa encouraged the veneration of the True Cross by means other than just such ritual practices. Making use of the traditional likening of Christian rulers to Sts Constantine and Helena, she commissioned paintings and statues portraying

²⁶ A. Coreth, *Pietas Austriaca. Österreichische Frömmigkeit im Barock* (Vienna: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik 1982); M. E. Elisabeth, "Emperors, Kingdoms, Territories: Multiple Version of Pietas Austriaca", *Catholic Historical Review* 97/2 (2001), 276–304; W. Telesco, "The Pietas Austriaca. A Political Myth? On the Instrumentalisation of Piety towards the Cross at the Viennese Court in the Seventeenth Century", in *The Habsburgs and Their Courts in Europe, 1400–1700. Between Cosmopolitanism and Regionalism*, eds. H. Karner, I. Ciulisová and B. J. García García (Palatium, e-Publication 1, 2014), 159–180 (with relevant literature). I express my gratitude to Professor Vladimir Simić for introducing me to the relevant literature on the topic.

her as St Helena, and the portraits showing her together with her husband, Francis Stephen, evoked the Early Christian imperial pair.²⁷

This context provides clues to the prominent role of Queen Helen's "ancient" and incontestably authentic *staurotheke* in the Habsburg family rituals such as its having being laid at the side of the newly-born princes after their baptism. We do not know how Maria Theresa used the *staurotheke* once she took it from the Imperial treasury in 1758, thereby preventing its further fragmentation, nor do we have any information about its later fate. It may be pertinent to note at this point that yet another True Cross fragment of Serbian provenance came to the Habsburg court in the late seventeenth century. It was the relic enshrined in the already mentioned *staurotheke* of King Stefan Milutin and the Bishop of Raška, Gregory II. This reliquary, which had arrived in Dubrovnik (Ragusa) after the Ottoman conquest of Serbia in 1459, was obviously highly respected. According to a Ragusan chronicler, the Dominican Serafin Crijević (1686–1759), a friar stole the holy wood fragment in 1697 and presented it as a gift to the Holy Roman Emperor Leopold I's envoy to Ragusa, Baron Saponaro. The latter, in turn, presented it as a gift to Empress Wilhelmina Amalia, consort of Emperor Joseph I (1678–1711), who "encased it in gold", i.e. had a sumptuous reliquary made for it. She also requested and obtained from the Ragusan Dominican monastery the "certificate" of the relic's authenticity.²⁸ In hindsight, then, the distinctive Habsburg piety and the strong, programmatically fostered cult of the True Cross seem to be the main reason that two medieval Serbian relics of manifold importance have been rescued from oblivion.

* * *

Even though the *staurothekai* discussed in this essay cannot be classified together, they do share a few common features. Instead of a conclusion, we shall take a brief look at them. It should first be noted that both reliquaries were royal donations, which confirms the conclusion about the popularity of the cult of the True Cross with the Nemanjić royalty and their practice of possessing and donating sumptuous *staurothekai*. In our case, this fact is particularly telling because the

²⁷ Coreth, *Pietas Austriaca*, 41–42; K. Schmal, *Die Pietas Maria Theresias im Spannungsfeld von Barock und Aufklärung. Religiöse Praxis und Sendungsbewußtsein gegenüber Familie, Untertanen und Dynastie* (Frankfurt am Mein etc.: Peter Lang, 2001).

²⁸ This information was shortly outlined also by I. K. Sakcinski, "Izvjestje o putovanju kroz Dalmaciju u Napulj i Rim s osobitim obzirom na slavensku književnost, umjetnost i starine", *Arhiv za povjesnicu jugoslavensku* VI (1857), 335–336; V. B. Lupis, "O kasnobizantskim zlatarskim likovnim utjecajima u Dubrovniku", *Starohrvatska prosvjeta* III/34 (2007), 359–340 (with sources, literature and a drawing of the reliquary done by Serafin Crijević as an illustration for the text – fig. 21); see also Popović, "The *staurotheke* of the church of Sts Peter and Paul in Ras, 78.

donors were a powerful royal couple. Because of the scarcity of available sources, however, we hardly know anything about the motives and details of their acts of donation. Given that some information about King Uroš I's *staurotheke* has only survived due to the fact that it was captured in a war, we do not know where it was kept and what uses it might have had. As for the *staurotheke* of Uroš I's wife, it is known to have been donated to the Sopoćani monastery church, but Helen's motivation for donating it to her husband's foundation rather than to her own, the monastery of Gradac, remains an open question. The question is all the more difficult to answer because of the very complex and insufficiently elucidated relationship between the two foundations with respect both to the chronology of construction and to their intended use.²⁹

The available sources are much more generous with information about the shape and decoration of the two *staurothekai*. As has been shown, they had the usual shape of a double-armed cross, as expressly stated in the case of Queen Helen's one. Important in itself, the information that we have is even more important for broader considerations of the typology and decoration of the medieval Serbian Cross reliquaries. Even though the surviving reliquaries are small in number, especially in comparison to their original number, we can draw some fairly reliable conclusions about their appearance and form. It is certain that the Serbs adopted two basic Byzantine types of *staurotheke* – in the forms of a double-armed cross and of a panel-icon.³⁰ To the latter belonged the thirteenth-century *staurothekai* of King Stefan Vladislav, now known only from the sources,³¹ as well as some later reliquaries, such as the one from the monastery of Vatopedi

²⁹ B. Todić, "Sopoćani i Gradac. Uzajamnost funerarnih programa dve crkve", *Zograf* 31 (2006–2007), 59–77.

³⁰ A. Frolow, *Les reliquaires de la Vraie Croix* (Paris: Institut français d'études byzantines, 1965), 93–115; Klein, *Byzanz, der Westen und das "wahre" Kreuz*, 100–101 and passim.

³¹ It is known, e.g., that the safety deposit box of Župan Desa and his mother Beloslava – King Stefan Vladislav's son and wife – inventoried in 1282, included two icon reliquaries with fragments of the True Cross. One was described as *Ycona una cum cruce et cum ligno Domini*, the other, which held several relics, as *Ycona una coperta in qua erat lignum Domini, et cum reliquiis et cum perlis*, G. Čremošnik, "Kancelarijski i notarski spisi 1278–1301", *Zbornik za istoriju, jezik i književnost srpskog naroda SKA*, ser. III, vol. 1 (1932), 53–55. We also know of the *staurotheke* in the form of a panel that King Vladislav donated to the monastery of St Paul on Mt Athos. It had a lid decorated with scenes of the Crucifixion and the Christ Enthroned surrounded with images of saints, as well as with a portrait of the royal donor shown in proskynesis accompanied by an inscription, Arhimandrit Leonid, "Sloveno-srpska knjižnica na sv. Gori Atonskoj", *Glasnik SUD* 44 (1877), 279–280, n. 1; D. Vojvodić, "Obavijen zemaljskom slikom. O predstavama vizantijskih i srpskih srednjovekovnih vladara u proskinezi", *Crkvene studije* 4 (2007), 383.

which tradition attributes to Prince Lazar (Hrebeljanović).³² In some cases, reliquaries could be a combination of the two types, as illustrated particularly well by the reliquary of the Musić brothers, today also at Vatopedi.³³ Among the prestigious examples of *staurothekai* in the shape of a double-armed cross are certainly the reliquary with the name of Sava of Serbia kept in Pienza, Italy – refurbished in the last third of the fourteenth century – and the *staurotheke* of King Milutin and Bishop Gregory II of Raška, which underwent a thorough renovation in Ragusa in the first half of the sixteenth century.³⁴ Although now lost and only known from written sources, the *staurothekai* of King Uroš I and Queen Helen are a precious testimony to the popularity of this reliquary type in medieval Serbia.

Owing to the economical but informative enough descriptions, our *staurothekai* are also a precious document for the ways in which such religious objects of the highest order were decorated. As we have seen, both reliquaries were made of gold and lavishly bejewelled, which classifies them among the most luxurious works of *ars sacra*. In this respect, the Serbian rulers followed common practice in the Christian world, especially as regards the decoration of *staurothekai*.³⁵ In addition to the layered spiritual meaning of the luxurious materials used – a metaphor for the uncreated light and the walls of the Heavenly City – the Cross reliquaries fashioned in this way had yet another meaning. The sumptuous cross-shaped reliquaries, whose origin can be traced as far back as the Early Christian *crux gemmata*, were also symbols of royal authority and triumph, evoking the hallowed model – the victorious sign that had appeared to the first Christian emperor and champion of the “true faith”, Constantine the Great.³⁶

³² B. Todić, “Τρείς σερβικές λειψανοθήκες στη Μονή του Βατοπεδίου”. In *The Monastery of Vatopedi: History and Art / Ιερά Μονή του Βατοπεδίου. Ιστορία και τέχνη*, 249–252 (Athens: Ethniko idryma ereynon, 1999).

³³ Frolow, *La relique da la Vrai Croix*, 571–572; Todić, “Τρείς σερβικές λειψανοθήκες”, 246–249.

³⁴ “Relikvije Časnog krsta”, passim; Popović, “A *staurotheke* of Serbian provenance in Pienza”, 157–170; Popović, “The *staurotheke* of the church of Sts Peter and Paul in Ras”, 74–78.

³⁵ Frolow, *Les reliquaires de la Vraie Croix*, passim; Klein, *Byzanz, der Westen und das “wahre” Kreuz*, passim; for general references on the decoration and “rhetoric” of the reliquaries see n. 18; for Serbian examples see n. 33.

³⁶ H. A. Klein, “Constantine, Helena and the Cult of the True Cross in Constantinople”, in *Byzance et les reliques du Christ*, eds. J. Durand and B. Flusin (Paris: Association des amis du Centre d’histoire et civilisation de Byzance, 2004), 31–59; H. A. Klein, “Sacred Relics and Imperial Ceremonies at the Great Palace of Constantinople”, *BYZAS* 5, *Visualisierungen von Herrschaft. Frühmittelalterliche Residenzen, Gestalt und Zeremoniell* (2004), 79–99; C. Hahn, *Strange Beauty. Issues in the Making and Meaning of Reliquaries, 400 – circa 1204* (University Park, Pennsylvania, 2015), 73–102.

Apart from possessing these general characteristics, the *staurothekai* of King Uroš I and Queen Helen illustrate some distinctive practices associated with the cult of relics in the late medieval period. It above all involves the idea, increasingly current, especially after 1204 when the relic trade became common, of relics as having not only sacral value but also quantifiable material worth.³⁷ Although documented in a small number of sources, this idea was current in medieval Serbia, too.³⁸ It is frequently reflected in donor inscriptions on reliquaries in their emphasis on the “reciprocal” nature of the act of donation: in exchange for their expensive gift, donors expected an appropriate spiritual reward – forgiveness of sins and salvation of the soul.³⁹ Our *staurothekai* offer some interesting information in this respect. As we have seen, the worth of the materials used for crafting the reliquary of King Uroš I – gold, precious stones and gems – was estimated at 500 marks and, as an attempt to purchase it failed, the *staurotheke* was exchanged for valuable landed estates. The “commercial” value of Queen Helen’s reliquary – amounting to the large sum of 3,000 *perpers* – was emphasized even more explicitly given that it was stated in the donor inscription itself.

And yet, it seems that it would be quite wrong to think that this “commercial” aspect of relics challenged the belief in their sacredness and miraculous powers – both among the contemporaries and among subsequent generations. The full significance of King Uroš I’s *staurotheke* and the reason why the Hungarian king was determined to get it was certainly not just its expensiveness and craftsmanship but also the fact that, as a valuable war trophy, it was a compelling symbol of Hungarian victory over the Serbian adversary. On the other hand, the fate of Queen Helen’s *staurotheke* – one of the oldest and most valued items in the Habsburg treasury – compellingly shows that the belief in the power of the True Cross among European nations survived unweakened deep into the modern period.

³⁷ H. A. Klein, “Eastern Objects and Western Desires: Relics and Reliquaries between Byzantium and the West”, *DOP* 58 (2004), 283–314 (with sources and literature).

³⁸ A rare and interesting piece of information about the price of a relic concerns the relics of St Luke; according to the sources, the buyer, Despot Djurađ Branković, negotiated the price down from 30,000 to 15,000 ducats, see D. Popović, “Mošti svetog Luke – srpska epizoda”, *Pod okriljem svetosti. Kult svetih vladara i relikvija u srednjovekovnoj Srbiji* (Belgrade: Balkanološki institut SANU, 2006), 301–302 (with sources and literature).

³⁹ See n. 19 above.

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Desanka Kovačević Kojić

Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts
Belgrade

Serbian Silver at the Venetian Mint in the First Half of the Fifteenth Century

Abstract: This paper is an attempt to learn more about the inflow of Serbian silver into the Venetian mint based on three account statements sent from Venice to the Kabužić (Caboga) brothers in Ragusa (Dubrovnik) and on the sets of contemporary data published and discussed by Alan M. Stahl. A reference to the Venetian mint occurs in 1431 in a letter of Christophore Alberto, a citizen of Ragusa, but it is only the fourth page of an extensive account statement drawn by the Venetian Nicolo Grioni in 1435 that refers almost entirely to the mint's mode of operation. It contains the name of *ser Aluvisse*, whose responsibility was to add an alloy to silver bullion, and of *ser Rafael Barisson maser ala zecha*, a mint master. An account statement presented by Marco di Stai to the Kabužić brothers in 1435 mentions the name of the same mint master and refers to some steps in the operation of the mint but without specifying their sequence. Relying on the data contained in the accounting books of Guglielmo Condulmer, a Venetian merchant, Alan M. Stahl has singled out some fifteen or so names of the persons whose supplies of silver to the mint exceeded 70 kg each, notably *Marin di Gradi* (165 kg), a member of a well-known noble family of Ragusa. Apart from him, eight more Ragusans may be identified, four from the ranks of nobility and four from the citizen class, who supplied a total of 891 kg of silver to the mint. Serbian silver made its way to the Venetian mint through Ragusan middlemen, which may explain why the silver that largely came from Serbian mines tends to be classified as *Ragusan silver* in European historiography.

Keywords: mint, Serbian silver, Venice, Ragusa (Dubrovnik), Kabužić (Caboga) brothers, account statements from Venice, Christophore Alberto, Nicolo Grioni, Marco di Stai, Guglielmo Condulmer's accounting books, Alan M. Stahl

The exploitation of mines in medieval Serbia begins with the arrival of Saxon miners in the mid-thirteenth century, under King Stefan Uroš I (1243–76). Soon afterwards there appear the first references to the minting of coins from fine silver at Brskovo, the oldest silver and gold mine.¹ From the very beginning of minting the coinage issued by the Serbian kings matched the Venetian

¹ The first information about the trade in and export of silver from Brskovo to Ragusa and thence to Venice also date from the 1270s. See R. Čuk, *Srbija i Venecija u XIII i XIV veku* (Belgrade: Istorijски institut, 1986), 23, 24, 100, and V. Ivanišević, *Novčarstvo srednjovekovne Srbije* (Belgrade: Stubovi kulture, 2001), 27.

grosso in appearance, weight, fineness and intrinsic value. The striking similarity between the two did not go unnoticed even by Dante Alighieri, a contemporary of these developments, in his famous *Divina Commedia*. Thus coinage was one of the ways in which Serbian silver found its way into the Venetian market even before the fourteenth century. The Venetians at first allowed the circulation of Serbian coinage, but it did not take long before they began introducing a number of measures to protect their market, until eventually, more than a decade later, they managed to ban it altogether.²

The export of silver from Serbia to Venice can be followed from the early 1320s, intensifying in the 1330s. From the mid-fourteenth century a severe shortage of precious metals began to be felt in Europe because of the greatly depleted European silver mines and the outflow of silver to the East. These circumstances greatly contributed to an abrupt rise in mining output in Serbia. Several silver mines were opened, including Trepča, Rudnik and Novo Brdo (*Nuovo Monte*), the latter having been known for its gold-rich silver,³ the famous *argentum de glama* (presumably from the Greek word *μαλαγμα*, meaning “gold”; in Latin and Italian sources also referred to as *argento indorato*, *argento in oro*). Silver mines in the area of Mt Kopaonik also began operating soon afterwards.

Silver mines began operation in the mid-fourteenth century in Bosnia, too. The silver exported from Bosnia (Fojnica, Dušina, Deževica), being unrefined (*argento plichó*), was sold at a lower market price. The silver mine of Srebrenica near the river Drina in eastern Bosnia was reopened, and in the early fifteenth century incorporated into the medieval Serbian state. The Serbian mines were also silver refining sites. Latin sources refer to this final stage in the production of silver as *affinatio*. It is known that mints only accepted fine silver, *argento fino*, for coinage.⁴

It is therefore understandable why Serbian silver and gold entered the European trade in precious metals as early as the mid-fourteenth century. They mostly went to Venice via Ragusa, and then from Venice to Levantine markets in the eastern and as far as Catalonia in the western Mediterranean.

The Serbian production of precious metals kept growing and reached its peak in the first half of the fifteenth century. This is evidenced, inter alia, by ever stronger Ragusan colonies established not only at the mines themselves but also in the surrounding market towns. The stronger Ragusan presence suggests

² The efforts of the Venetian government to ban Serbian currency have been an object of attention of both Serbian and foreign historians and numismatists. See Čuk, *Srbija i Venecija*, 25–31.

³ I. Voje, “Argentum de glama”, *Istorijski časopis* 16–17 (1970), 16.

⁴ D. Kovačević Kojić, “On the Composition and Processing of Precious Metals from the Serbian Medieval Mines”, *Balcanica* 45 (2014), 97–106.

that as the mining output grew so did the amount of precious metals exported to European markets.

Apart from being traded commodities, precious metals were used for servicing debts, for purchasing goods, for making jewellery. Naturally, considerable amounts of silver ended up in mints. As far as Serbian silver is concerned, this has been documented for the mints in Serbia, Bosnia, Ragusa and the royal mint in Southern Italy, but has only been assumed for the mint in Venice.⁵ The Venetian mint is only mentioned indirectly in the available documents, in connection with the negotiations between the Ragusan government and Venice (1319) about customs duties which were to be paid at the delivery of silver to the mint.⁶ The otherwise ample source material concerning the export of Serbian silver to Venice kept in the State Archives in Dubrovnik, however, contains no information about any portion of that silver being supplied to the mint. It should nonetheless be assumed that it was, given the fact that the Venetian government, always careful to maintain the stability of its monetary system, implemented various measures to make sure its mint was adequately supplied with silver.⁷ This lends all the more importance to the account statements and letters that the Ragusa-based Kabužić brothers, engaged in the trade in precious metals between Serbia, Bosnia, Ragusa, Italy and beyond, received from their Venice-based business partners.

The surviving portion of the accounting books of the Kabužić brothers is kept in the Dubrovnik Archives. It consists of the *Main Ledger* (*Quaderno*) (142 folios), the *Journal* (*Giornale*) (101 folios) – both spanning the period from 15 December 1426 to 25 May 1433 – and the *Reminder* (*Squarço*), which covers a somewhat shorter period of time.⁸ These are not only the oldest but also the only surviving accounting books using the double-entry bookkeeping system in the South-Slavic lands. The *Main Ledger* and the *Journal* have been published, whereas the *Reminder* has not been taken into account because of the manner in which it was kept.⁹

⁵ M. Spremić, *Dubrovnik i Aragonci 1442–1495* (Belgrade: Zavod za udžbenike, 1971), 162–165.

⁶ Ćuk, *Srbija i Venecija*, 100.

⁷ Reinhold C. Mueller, “La crisi economica-monetaria veneziana di metà quattrocento nel contesto generale”, in *Aspetti della vita economica medievale. Atti del Convegno di Studi nel X anniversario della morte di Federigo Melis* (Florence: Università degli Studi di Firenze/Istituto di Storia Economica, 1985), 546, 556.

⁸ Državni arhiv u Dubrovniku [State Archives in Dubrovnik; hereafter DAD], *Privata, Libro di negozio Nicolo Luca Caboga*, 28/1; 28/2; 28/3.

⁹ D. Kovačević Kojić, *Trgovačke knjige braće Kabužić (Caboga) 1426–1433* (Belgrade: Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti, 1999), 367.

At the end of the *Main Ledger* is an appendix containing (twelve) letters of the Kabužić brothers' business associates, mostly from Venice (ten letters or account statements). The account statements from Venice include two that contain information about the Venetian mint (1430–1431). A third one, also sent from Venice (1435), is kept in the *Massa* series of the Dubrovnik Archives.¹⁰ Their content, especially because of the information about the mint in Venice, invites us to try to learn more about the merchants who drew them up, about their environment and about the ways in which they organized their businesses.

* * *

The first reference to the Venetian mint in the documentary material from the Dubrovnik Archives dates from 1431. It occurs in a letter of Christophore Alberto sent from Venice to his business partners, the two Kabužić brothers, Nikola and Luka. The way in which Christophore and his brother Ivan ran their business is worthy of particular attention.

Christophore and Ivan Alberto were sons of Alberto Bono who had come from Venice to Ragusa at the invitation of the Ragusan government to assume the office of notary and chancellor. They did not follow in their father's footsteps but rather chose to act as middlemen in the trade between the lands in the hinterland of Ragusa – Serbia and Bosnia – and the Mediterranean. Ivan began his career in the Serbian lands, at Novo Brdo, while Christophore moved to Venice, where his role in their business was to sell the shipments of silver and hides sent by his brother and to purchase other commodities in return.¹¹

In the following years the brothers ran their business either independently or in partnership with one or, more often, a few associates. Their business collaboration with the Kabužić brothers was a long and successful one, with the latter's abovementioned accounting books providing a fairly good insight.¹²

The most extensive testimony to the scale and nature of this business, however, is an account statement from Venice, itself contained in the appendix at the end of the *Main Ledger*. It was drawn up on 15 July 1430 in Venice and received on 20 December the same year in Dubrovnik. Christophore informs the Kabužić brothers about the completed business transactions in great detail.

¹⁰ DAD, Miscellanea XV seculi, box 6, 1. I am grateful to my colleagues Neven Isailović and Nebojša Porčić for this piece of information.

¹¹ R. Ćuk, "Porodica Alberto (Bono) u Dubrovniku u poznom srednjem veku", *Zbornik Vizantološkog instituta SANU* XLI (2004), 377–386; M. Spremić, *Srbija i Venecija VI–XVI vek* (Belgrade 2014), 219, 229, 236, 260–261.

¹² Kovačević Kojić, *Trgovačke knjige*, 268–269, 271, 273–276, 291–293. Ivan also traded in unrefined silver from Bosnia (*Argento plicho di Bosnia*), which he shipped to his brother in Venice, see Ćuk, "Porodica Alberto (Bono)", 381.

Apart from mentioning textiles and some other commodities, he pays the greatest attention to the accomplished sale of large shipments of fine silver, and of *argento dorado* and *argento tien oro*. The separation of gold from silver (*partidura*) was carried out in Venice. He even mentions two gold ingots (*de verige*). The content of this account statement convincingly shows that Christophore traded in the precious metals from Serbia on a quite large scale.

It is only in a letter of 30 June 1431 he sent from Venice to Nikola and Luka Kabužić in Ragusa that the Venetian mint is mentioned. Namely, Christophore stresses that he took *li argenti bianchi* to the mint because it would be sold quickly (*piu presto*) in that way. He also informs them about their joint business operations not only in Venice and Italian cities but also in the Levant, notifying them that he shipped certain quantities of fine silver, wax and tin by ships sailing for Tana (on the Black Sea) and Syria. Christophore then returns to the question of silver (*la chaxon dei argenti*), saying that twelve ingots have not yet been sold from the mint, providing information about the varying value of the *solidi* against the ducat, and suggesting several possibilities for the Serbian fine silver (*argenti fini*) to be sold at last.

The letter is signed with: *Christofol* (Xpfal) d'Alberti/salute.

The names of the addressees at the back of the letter are: *domino Nicolo e Luca di Caboga in Raguxi*. They received the letter on 12 July 1431, which means that it travelled twelve days, which was how long it usually took a ship to get from Venice to Dubrovnik.

The letter does not say much about the mint itself, but it nonetheless suggests that big silver merchants, like Christophore Alberto himself, invested silver in the Venetian mint, too.

As far as the mint's operation is concerned, especially relevant is an account statement that Nicolo (*Nicholo*) Grioni, a Venetian citizen, sent to the Kabužić brothers from Venice. Grioni had been engaged in the trade in the precious metals from Serbia ever since the 1420s. In November 1421 Nikola Živolinović, a business associate of the Kabužić brothers residing in Priština, engaged *ser Nicola quondam Johannes Grioni*, a Venetian citizen and merchant in Venice, as his agent. He sent him considerable quantities of silver and money to purchase woollen textiles of the type, colour and price of his own choosing, and to pack them, declare them to the customs and send them back by ship.¹³

Soon after that the names of Nicolo Grioni and his partner *Goan-Ganin Riço* began to figure quite frequently in the Kabužić brothers' accounting books. The brothers sent them silver shipments several times. Thus, on 27 July 1427, through their agent Antonio, they sent two substantial shipments of silver to

¹³ D. Kovačević Kojić, "Nikola Tvrтка Glavić i Nikola Živolinović u Trgovačkim knjigama braće Kabužić", *Istorijski časopis* 40–41 (1995), 8–9.

Nicholo Grioni and *Goan Riço* in Venice.¹⁴ The Kabužić brothers conducted all their transactions with Venice through an agent, *Antonio di Bon*, also named in documents as *Antonio di Dobrosau* (Antonije, son of Dobroslav), who lived and traded in Venice.

Based on the data contained in the Kabužić brothers' accounting books, we can reconstruct in detail the process of sale of these silver shipments. First, Antonio di Dobrosau confirms receipt and cites the names of the ship-owners, and then delivers the silver to Nicolo Grioni. The selling price of the silver is established according to the local system of weights and the currencies in use in Venice. *Bernardo Gaschigli*, a Catalanian who purchased the silver from Nicolo Grioni (12 September), drew up a bill of exchange (*una litera di cambio*) for the Kabužić brothers. Finally, on 15 October, according to the contract, the Kabužić Company received 600 ducats from Venice through the bill of exchange.¹⁵

This is only one of the examples of business transactions conducted between Nicolo Grioni of Venice and the Kabužić brothers. The latter's accounting books contain plentiful relevant data. This intensive business collaboration continued after 1433, until 1438. Since it began in the 1420s, it means that it lasted for almost twenty years.

The intensity of these commercial relations is also evidenced by an account statement (*chonto*), which Grioni and *Riço* sent by ship from Venice on 5 December 1435 and the Kabužić brothers received in Dubrovnik on 27 December, i.e. twelve days later. The six-page account statement put together according to the double-entry bookkeeping system is quite exhaustive and detailed. Of particular interest to us are the first and third pages with their data about auriferous (*glamsko*) silver. The term *partidura* standing beside each recorded quantity of silver means that it was only in Venice that the silver underwent the process of separating gold from silver. The fee charged for this service is also stated. The same two pages contain information about pure gold, mentioning as many as six gold ingots (*peça de verige 6 d'oro*).

Nicolo Grioni no doubt was a successful businessman with a wide network of associates. The sixth page lists the names of several of them, including a few Catalanians. Bills of exchange were in common use in various business transactions at the time.¹⁶

The fourth page of this extensive account statement concerns the Venetian mint. First, Nicolo Grioni confirms that he received the 13 ingots of *argenti bianchi* that Nikola and Luka Kabužić had sent by ship on 18 October. Half of

¹⁴ Kovačević Kojić, *Trgovačke knjige*, 180.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 174–175.

¹⁶ M. Spremić, "Pravo i ekonomija. Propisi i praksa o poslovanju menica u Dubrovniku i Srbiji 15. veka", in *Srednjovekovno pravo u Srba u ogledalu istorijskih izvora*, eds. S. Ćirković and K. Čavoški (Belgrade: Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti, 2009), 165–178.

the quantity belongs to cousin Radulin, while the other half, weighing *libra* (L.) 176 *oncie* (on.) 0 *saggi* (s.) 2 according to the Ragusan system of weights (*al peso di Ragui*), is to be taken to the mint (*in zecha*). Even though it was fine, white, silver, each of the 13 ingots was subjected to the refining process, and then their weight was established according to the Venetian system of weights, i.e. it was expressed in the Venetian marks (*marcha*). The total weight of the 13 ingots expressed in marks was: mr.241 on.5 s.3 ch.18.

The silver bullion was alloyed, however. Namely, the silver was *ligado per ser Aluisse a ch.3 de piu per marcha, per liga mr.4 on.6 s.10*. The total weight of the alloyed silver now was: mr.246 on.4 s.6 ch.18. Of this, however, the loss of weight in the process of alloying (*tara*) was on.4 s.0 ch.18. The end result of the whole process was *l'arzeno ligato* with a total weight of mr.246 on.0 s.0.

It is not known what silver was alloyed with in this case. The Venetian coinage was notable for the purity of the silver used and it is known that there was resistance to its being alloyed with copper. Thus, according to Marino Sanudo, a fifteenth-century Venetian historian, there was a debate over whether the new coinage should be struck from *argento fino come il grosso* or from silver alloyed with copper. The Council voted for *argento fino*.¹⁷

The alloyed silver, *l'arzeno ligado mr.246 on.0 s.0*, was taken to *ser Rafael Barissan maser ala zecha*, i.e. to the Venetian mint. He minted *grossi*, and from a mark of silver: (L.) 30 *solidi* (sol.) 8, or L.7478 sol. *parvoli* (p.) 0 *grossi*. Once the fees charged by the mint were settled (L.20 sol.2 p.0), there remained: L.7504 sol.10 p.0 of *grossi*. This is the quantity of *grossi* struck from the silver that Nicolo Grioni took to the Venetian mint, which weighed L.176 on.2 s.0 according to the Ragusan system of weights. The value of the ducat and *solidi* is also cited: sol.110 p.6, respectively L.735 sol.16 di 6 [...].

The information concerning the mint ends there. There follow specifications of various expenses, for example, for transport, mint fees (*per dazio ala zecha*) etc. Finally, a balance statement was given (*saldo*), including the obligation of the Kabužić brothers *di aver 5 decembrio per resto del deto chonto*.

On the operation of the Venetian mint

From the account statement of Nicolo Grioni of 1435 to the Kabužić brothers

Nickola e Lucha di Chaboga die aver a di 18 octubrio per ligazi [...] d'arzeno bianco peçe 13. ricevuto per la barcha pa(t)ron Antuonio Zialapia, scrisse eser la mitade de

ser Primo de Radolin e l'altra mitade so[.] disse [...]

L.176, on.0, s.2 al pesso de Ragui el qual fo messo in zecha

¹⁷ Nicolo Papadopoli, *Le monete di Venezia* (Venice: F. Ongania, 1893), 301.

peça una no.1 neta de sazio a peça ess[.]	mr. 32	on.0	s.0	[.....]	pezo ch. 34
peça una no.1 neta de sazio	....	mr. 35	on.1	s.2	ch. 18 pezo ch. 36
peça 3 no.1 neta de sazio	....	mr. 19	on.7	s.0	pezo ch. 64
peça una no.1 neta de sazio	....	mr. 34	on.0	s.0	ch. 0 pezo ch. 32
peça una no.1 neta de sazio	....	mr. 25	on.0	s.0	ch. 0 pezo ch. 40
peça una no.1 neta de sazio	....	mr. 19	on.0	s.0	ch. 0 pezo ch. 60
peça una no.1 neta de sazio	....	mr. 7	on.4	s.3	ch. 0 pezo ch. 40
peça una no.1 neta de sazio	....	mr. 29	on.0	s.0	ch. 0 pezo ch. 44
peça una no.3 neta de sazio	....	mr. 27	on.0	s.0	ch. 0 pezo ch. 32
peça 3 no.3 neta de sazio	....	mr. 13	on.0	s.2	ch. 0 pezo ch. 32
Summa:	....	mr.241	on.5	s.3	ch.18

ligado per ser *Aluvisse*

[.....] a ch. 3 de piu per *marcha* per la liga mr.4 on.6 s.10

Summa: in tuto, mr.246 on.4 s.0 ch 18, tara ai fondadori

mr.4 s.0 ch. 18, resta *l'arzento ligado* mr.246 on.0 s.0 [.....]

ser *Rafael Barissian maser ala zecha* fato grossorum [d...] 8 [....]

per L.30 sol.8 *la marcha*, monta L.7478 sol.8 p.o per cressimento

de la zecha L.20 sol.2 p.o

Summa: in tuto, L.7504 sol.10 p.o

valoro a sol 110 p.6 per ducatos

L.735 sol.16 di 6 [....]

Information about Serbian silver being invested in the Venetian mint can also be found in an account statement that Marco di Stai presented to the Kabužić brothers. The account statement addressed to *ser Nichola e Lucha de Chaboga de Ragusio* and their partner *ser Pribislavo* was sent from Venice on 27 February 1435 and arrived in Ragusa on 25 March 1436. The interval of one whole year between the dates can be explained by the fact that the sender followed Venetian mores, *more veneto*, according to which the year began on 1 March.

Marco di Stai states that Nikola and Luka Kabužić in partnership with Pribislav Radolin sent him a silver shipment – *l'arzento bianco* L.47 on.3 s.3 *l'arzento bianchi fini* – which he received and took to the mint. He first cites the name of the mint master, *signor ala zecha ser Rafail Barixan*. The weight of the shipment from Ragusa was established according to the local system of weights, i.e. expressed in marks (*mr.64 on.7 s.2*). When the silver was refined (ch. 32 *per marcha*), an alloy was added (ch. 31 *per marcha*), but the name of the person who performed the process is not cited. The weight of the silver after the deduction of the waste (*tara*) of on.1 s.2 was *mr.66 on.4 s.0*. *Grossi* were struck from a mark of silver – L.29 s.8 *la marcha*. After the deduction of the mint fees, L.1955 s.2 *grossi* were obtained out of the silver invested in the mint. The value of the ducat was sol.105, i.e. L.37, sol.4, d[...].

So, all elements in the operation of the mint needed to obtain coins from silver bullion were taken into account. They, however, are summary and do not reveal the sequence of steps which must have been followed in the mint's operation process. In this respect Marco di Stai's account statement is quite different from the manner in which Nicolo Grioni drew up the account statement he sent to the Kabužić brothers in 1435.

In the list of mint masters (*massari alla moneta, massari all'argento*), which was instituted in the last years of the thirteenth century (1298), the name of *Rafaele Barisan* occurs in 1434.¹⁸ So, he was a contemporary of Nicolo Grioni and Marco di Stai. In Grioni's account statement of 1435 he is referred to as *Rafael Barisian maser ala zecha*, and in Di Stai's one of the same year, as *ser Rafail Barixan*.

A decision of 6 February 1420 determining the weight and fineness of the Venetian silver coinage also prescribed that its design include the name of the mint master (*massaro all'argento*) responsible for the issue, which the Venetian mint would continue to practise in the future as well.¹⁹ Rafaele Barisan's mark was *RB*.²⁰ The initials of the mint master (*iniziali del massari*) are helpful in establishing the fineness of particular issues. In Barisan's case, the issues of silver *grossi* minted under his supervision had the high fineness of 0.949.²¹

Christophore Alberto's letter of 1431 to the Kabužić brothers does not specify the quantity of silver taken to the mint. Nicolo Grioni, however, is known to have supplied L.176, on.0, s.0, and Marco di Stai, L.47, on.3, s.3, which would be about 74 kilograms combined.

* * *

The quantities of silver discussed by Alan M. Stahl based on the accounting books of the Venetian merchant Guglielmo Condulmer are much larger than the 74 kilograms mentioned above.²²

Guglielmo Condulmer, a money changer, son of Nicolo, was of a non-noble class. His public activity was limited to the confraternities of the Celes-

¹⁸ Ibid. 301, 305.

¹⁹ Ibid. 301.

²⁰ Ibid. 305.

²¹ Ibid. 270, 271.

²² Alan M. Stahl, "Ingots and the Venetian Mint in the Later Middle Ages: The Accounts of Guglielmo Condulmer", in *Essays in Honour of Professor Peter Spufford*, eds. Martin Allen and Nicholas Mayhew (London: Royal Numismatic Society, 2017), 75–84; Alan M. Stahl, *Zecca: The Mint of Venice in the Middle Ages* (Baltimore - London: The Johns Hopkins University Press with the American Numismatic Association, 2000).

tia and San Giovanni Evangelista, where he is referred to as a member of the “noble popolo”. He had political and commercial importance, but, unlike some of his family members, did not rise to the status of hereditary nobility. He died in 1421.

For some reason, he appointed the *Procuratores* of San Marco as executors of his will. His estate included his personal accounts, which comprised nine individual books, all on paper, ranging from 16 to 32 folios, and spanning the period from 1389 to 1413, with the exception of the years 1395 and 1396.

Condulmer’s accounting books concern the processing of silver by the Venetian mint. Alan M. Stahl has dealt with several related topics in a well-documented manner convincingly supported with graphs. A set of data concerns the quantities of silver Condulmer received back from the mint in the form of coins or ingots. According to Stahl, the production of metal in ingot form was an important part of the Venetian mint’s operations, being used in long-distance trade in the later middle ages.

Especially relevant to the topic discussed here is the total of 491 named individuals who supplied silver to Guglielmo Condulmer over the period of twenty-three years (1389–1413). Some of them are Venetians known from other sources, both noble and non-noble. In some cases it is not clear if they came from Venice. Some came from nearby cities, such as Padua (6) and Treviso (5), and some from more distant parts of Italy.

Some of those who supplied less than 70 kg of silver to the mint came from the German and other northern lands (41), from Bohemia (Prague, Bratislava) and Hungary. Those from the eastern coast of the Adriatic came from Zara (3), Sebenico and Spalato (2 each), Ragusa, Rassa (Serbia), Thessalonica.²³

The origin of those who supplied more than 70 kg of silver has been more difficult to establish, however. The biggest supplier was Marin di Gradi. Stahl singles him out, and assumes from his name that the Gradi family was from somewhere on the Adriatic coast east of Venice. Between 1406 and 1412 he supplied 165 kg of silver to Guglielmo Condulmer.

As far as the origin of the other fifteen or so biggest suppliers of silver, whose individual total quantity exceeded 70 kg, Stahl assumes that their names may suggest Venetians, but none of them matches any of the known patrician families. These are:

²³ Ibid. 78–79.

*Marin di Gradi and the other biggest silver suppliers (more than 70 kg each)*²⁴

Marin di Gradi	165 kg
Simon de Lapazin	160 kg
Lucca de Bon	136 kg
Elia di Tripo (?)	124 kg
Raticho di Menzo	124 kg
Raticho and Elia together	124 kg
Corrado Prechimet	122 kg
Nicolo Granata	118 kg
Martore di Giovanni Magno	117 kg
Guglielmo Romole	91 kg
Tomaso di Martore	81 kg
Giacomo Granata	81 kg
Giacomo Granata	81 kg
Nicolo da Poza	78 kg
Bindo di Girardo	73 kg
Marco de mercer	73 kg
Paolo di Radin	70 kg
Bono di Nadal	70 kg
	1,807 kg

In fact, *Marin di Gradi*, son of *Johannes*, came from a well-known Ragusan family, Gradić (De Gradi), one of the most influential patrician families. He figures in the sources from 1396 to 1427.²⁵ In 1396 he established a *fraterna societatis* with his brother Matija (*Matheus*). The brothers' activity can be followed from the end of the fourteenth century and over the first three decades of the next. They traded in various goods in Dubrovnik, Venice, at the mines at Novo Brdo and Srebrenica, but silver seems to have been the focus of their business.²⁶ There is a reference in the will of Marin Gradić to the mine pits exploited by him and his brothers, specifically *le parti che io o delle fosse in Srebrniča et in Nouaberda*. Ragusan merchants frequently purchased mine pits in order to secure silver supplies for their businesses.²⁷ We can also learn from the will that

²⁴ Ibid. 79 n. 21.

²⁵ I. Manken, *Dubrovački patricijat u XIV veku*, vol. I (Belgrade: SANU, 1960), 285.

²⁶ R. Ćuk, "Delatnost dubrovačkog trgovca Luke Milanovića dvadesetih godina XV veka", *Istorijski časopis* (1991), 2, 23, 27.

²⁷ S. Ćirković, "Dubrovčani kao preduzetnici u rudarstvu Srbije i Bosne", *Acta historico-oecologica Yugoslavicae* (1979), 4 n. 10.

Gradić had 6,000 ducats, largely earned during the two years he spent at the Srebrenica mine.²⁸

The noble Gradić family enjoyed high social prestige in Ragusa. Its members were assigned to important diplomatic missions. Thus, in 1455, faced with the imminent Ottoman threat, Despot Djuradj Branković of Serbia assigned the Ragusan nobleman Junije Gradić (*Giunio di Gradi*) as a member of a joint Hungarian-Serbian embassy sent to seek help across Italy, including Mantua, where pope Callixtus III was trying to organize a crusade against the Ottoman invasion.²⁹

Besides Marin Gradić, the list includes some other silver merchants coming from noble families: *Lucca de Bon* (136 kg), *Ratico de Menzo* (124 kg), *Nicolo da Poza* (73 kg), all three of them in fact well-known from Ragusan sources: Luka Bunić (*Lucca de Bon*),³⁰ Ratko Menčetić (*Ratico de Menzo, filius naturalis Marini Lampre de Menze*)³¹ and Nikola Pucić (*Nicolao di Poza*).³²

Among them, especially prominent in silver trade and export in the second half of the fourteenth century was Luka Bunić, son of Mihailo,³³ figuring in the sources from 1363 to 1417.³⁴ He and his brother Marin conducted business in Venice from the early 1390s.³⁵

The Bunić brothers were partners of Luka Milanović, a well-known Ragusan merchant who lived, worked and died in Venice. Apart from Ragusa, Serbia, Bosnia and Hungary, the Bunić brothers pursued their business ties with Venice, Sicily and various lands in the vast area to the east as far as the Levant.³⁶ Being a reputable man, Luka Bunić was frequently entrusted by the Ragusan government with political or economic missions.³⁷ Based on all we know about Luka Bunić, a business biography may be put together, as is the case in particular with the Ragusans who traded in precious metals along the Serbia–Ragusa–Venice line. The Bunić family was among the pioneers in Ragusa’s literary history, too.³⁸

²⁸ D. Kovačević Kojić, *Srednjovjekovna Srebrenica, XIV–XV vijek* (Belgrade: SANU, 2010), 45.

²⁹ M. Spremić, “I Balcani et la criocata (1455–1464)”, in *Il sogno di Pio II e il viaggio da Roma a Mantova*, eds. A. Calzona et al., (Florence: Leo. S. Olschki, 2003), 481–592.

³⁰ Manken, *Dubrovački patricijat*, vol. I, 146, 148.

³¹ *Ibid.* 301, 315, 330.

³² *Ibid.* 367, 370.

³³ Ćuk, *Srbija i Venecija*, 104, 150.

³⁴ Manken, *Dubrovački patricijat*, vol. I, 151.

³⁵ *Ibid.* 465.

³⁶ Ćuk, “Delatnost dubrovačkog trgovca Luke Milanovića”, 20.

³⁷ Manken, *Dubrovački patricijat*, vol. I, 153–155.

³⁸ *Ibid.* 156.

Besides the four aristocratic Ragusans, the list includes four citizens of whom some have patronymic surnames: *Elia di Tripo* (?), *Paolo di Radin*, *Bono di Nadal*, while *Raticho* (Ratko) and *Elia* (Ilija) are common local Slavic names. All four were citizens of Ragusa trading, like the aristocrats, in precious metals, mostly in silver from the hinterland of Ragusa, i.e. from Serbia and Bosnia.

So, it may be reliably argued that some of the fifteen or so biggest silver suppliers were of Ragusan origin:

from the ranks of nobility	
Marin di Gradi	165 kg
Lucca de Boni	136 kg
Raticchio di Menzo	124 kg
Nicolo da Poza	73 kg
from the citizen class	
Elia di Tripo (?)	124 kg
Raticho and Elia combined	124 kg
Paolo di Radin	70 kg
Bono di Nadal	70 kg
Total:	891 kg

This accounts for as much as about 49 per cent of the 1,807 kg supplied by the other biggest suppliers of silver.

The amount of 891 kg reached the Venetian mint through Ragusans. This fact may explain how it comes that the silver that mostly came from Serbian mines is classified as Ragusan silver in European historiography.

* * *

The first half of the fifteenth century saw an abrupt and rapid development of mining in Serbia³⁹ and, in parallel, an increase in its export to Europe, notably to the Venetian market. The Kabužić brothers provide a good enough proof. From December 1428 to November 1432, i.e. within the span of six years, they procured in Serbia, through their business associates, 10,600 pounds of silver – or 3,480 kg – worth about 100,000 ducats. Only some 200 kg of the total quantity came from Bosnia, all the rest came from the Serbian state's mines. Nearly the entire export (88 %), i.e. more than three tonnes of silver (3,056 kg) went to

³⁹ Recent research has shown that the output of Serbian mines was much larger than previously assumed, see D. Kovačević Kojić, "Les métaux précieux de Serbie et de Bosnie: Estimation de la production (XIV^e–XV^e siècle)", in *Der Tiroler Bergbau und die Depression der europäischen Montanwirtschaft im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert: Akten der internationalen bergbaugeschichtlichen Tagung Steinhäus*, eds. Rudolf Tasser and Ekkehard Westermann (Innsbruck–Vienna–Munich–Bozen : Studien Verlag, 2004), 87–93.

Venice (*viaggio di Venezia*) in the *Main Ledger*.⁴⁰ Some researchers suggest that there were in Ragusa itself about forty larger trading houses, some of them even stronger than that of the Kabužić brothers.⁴¹

Since the first half of the fifteenth century saw another and considerable increase in Serbian silver imports into Venice, it has been reasonable to assume that some of the silver ended up in the Venetian mint. Three account statements sent from Venice to the Kabužić brothers in Ragusa convincingly confirm this assumption. Even more information about the Venetian mint being supplied with Serbian silver can be found in the accounting books of Guglielmo Condulmer discussed by Alan M. Stahl. Moreover, the account statements of Nicolo Grioni and Marco di Stai provide information about the operation of the mint, from the processing of silver to the minting of *grossi* from it.

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⁴⁰ Kovačević Kojić, *Trgovačke knjige*, 14; D. Kovačević Kojić, "I libri contabili dei fratelli Caboga (Kabužić) (1426–1433), fonte importante per la storia dei rapporti economici fra la Serbia e Venezia (comprese le città marchigiane)", *Glas CDIV, Odeljenje istorijskih nauka SANU* (2006), 107–118; D. Kovačević Kojić, "La Serbie dans l'économie de Venise au XV^e siècle", in *Balcani occidentali, Adriatico e Venezia fra XIII e XVIII secolo = Der westliche Balkan, der Adria-raum und Venedig (13.–18. Jahrhundert)*, eds. Gherardo Ortalli and Oliver Jens Schmitt (Venice–Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2009), 39–52.

⁴¹ J. Tadić, "Privreda Dubrovnika i srpske zemlje u prvoj polovini XV veka", *Zbornik Filozofskog fakulteta X-1* (1968), 528.

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Aleksandar Fotić*

Faculty of Philosophy
University of Belgrade

Coping with Extortion on a Local Level: The Case of Hilandar's *Metochion* in Zdravikion (Draviskos, Strymon Region) in the Sixteenth Century

Abstract: In the Ottoman Empire extortion on a local level was a frequent practice and it took diverse forms. The Ottoman documents preserved in the archive of the Monastery of Hilandar (Mount Athos) give us a picture of the ways in which its monks struggled to preserve their privileges and protect their large *metochion* at Zdravikion (about 700 *dönüms*). Their basic tax obligation to the "master of the land" (*sahib-i arz*) was paid annually in a lump sum (*maktu'*) ever since 1481, when sultan Bayezid II exempted them from paying the tithe at the express request of the Wallachian voivode Basarab II Țepeleuș. The annual lump sum of 600 *akçes* accounted for only a half of the total tax burden – they had been relieved of paying the other half by the sultan himself. This privilege was confirmed by all subsequent sultans, most likely until 1569. Local masters of the land (at first *sipahis*, then *hass* and finally *vakif* authorities) persistently and in various ways sought to impose the payment of the tithe. This paper presents different arguments they used in the attempt to extort the payment of the tithe and the monks' firm attitude in defending their rights before the *kadi's* court and the Imperial *Divan*. Monks were able to prove their rights because they conscientiously kept, sometimes for centuries, all the necessary documents relating to their land possessions, producing them as evidence in court proceedings.

Keywords: Hilandar Monastery, *metochion*, Zdravikion, extortion, sixteenth century

The Ottoman conquest of the Balkans dealt a heavy and irreparable blow to the economy of the monasteries on Mount Athos.¹ However successful the Athonite monasteries may have been, as a community or individually, in adapting to the new situation and improving their condition and, however much the Ottoman state, in the first century of its rule, may have sought to ensure a relatively high level of protection and even privileges, it was obvious that the status of the Christian monasteries and their estates was not the same as it had been under the patronage of Byzantine rulers or regional lords.

* sasafotic@gmail.com

¹ A shorter version of this paper was presented at Workshop II: "Does Monastic Economy Matter? Religious Patterns of Economic Behavior", organized by the Centre for Advanced Study, Sofia, and the Centre for Governance and Culture in Europe, University of St. Gallen, held in Sofia, 9–11 November 2018.

The status of the Athonite monasteries' landholdings beyond Mount Athos changed over the centuries. At first, during the best part of the fifteenth century, the monks held the status of "masters of the land" (*sahib-i arz*). And even when reduced to the status of *re'aya* by the end of the fifteenth century, they kept some privileges, the most important of which was the annual payment of an aggregate lump sum (*maktu', kesim*) instead of the tithe ('*öşr*) and other taxes. Such privileges, enjoyed by the confirmed large estates (*metochia*), lasted until 1568/9 and the so-called "confiscation affair", and in some cases and by exception even after that.²

Various questions relating to the modes of monastic land tenure and management on Mount Athos under Ottoman rule have been studied for more than two decades based on the surviving Ottoman sources.³

The history of Hilandar's *metochion* in Zdravikion shows the ways in which the monks struggled to preserve their privileges, protect their possessions and put a stop to extortion. The sultan's protection and some privileges depended on the influence of Wallachian *voivodes* too. On a local level, the monks were subjected to extortion mostly by "masters of the land" and in these cases usually sought protection directly from the Porte. Another source of their problems were neighbours who held the same legal status of *re'aya*. When the motivation was sheer self-interest: a crop field, a vineyard, a boundary, the use of water, livestock grazing... it did not matter if the claimants were Muslim or Christian. Such disputes were usually settled at the local *kadi's* court in Zihne.

² A. Fotić, *Sveta Gora i Hilandar u Osmanskom carstvu (XV–XVII vek)* (Belgrade: Balkanološki institut SANU, Manastir Hilandar, Sveti arhijerejski sinod Srpske pravoslavne crkve, 2000), 42–52; A. Fotić, "Sveta Gora u doba Selima II", *Hilandarski zbornik* 9 (1997), 143–162; J. C. Alexander (Alexandropoulos), "The Lord Giveth and the Lord Taketh Away: Athos and the Confiscation Affair of 1568–1569", *Mount Athos in the 14th–16th Centuries* (*Athonika Symmeikta* 4) (Athens 1997), 154–169.

³ To mention but a few referent titles: Fotić, *Sveta Gora i Hilandar*, 241–396; A. Fotić, "Kassandra in the Ottoman Documents from Hilandar Monastery (Mount Athos), 16th–17th Centuries", *Balcanica* XL/2009 (2010), 57–73; E. Kolovos, "Chorikoi kai monachoi sten othomanike Chalkidike kata tous 150 kai 160 ai" (PhD thesis, Aristotle University, Thessaloniki, 2000); E. Kolovos, "Negotiating for State Protection: *Çiftlik*-Holding by the Athonite Monasteries (Xeropotamou Monastery, Fifteenth-Sixteenth C.)", in *Frontiers of Ottoman Studies: State, Province, and the West*, vol. II, eds. C. Imber, K. Kiyotaki and Rh. Murphey (London, New York: I. B. Tauris, 2005), 197–209; Ph. Kotzageorgis, *He athonike mone Agiou Paulou kata ten othomanike periodo* (Thessaloniki: University Studio Press, 2002); Ph. Kotzageorgis, "Agioreitika metochia ste Lemno kata ten othomanike periodo", *He exaktinose tou Agiou Orou ston orthodoxo kosmo: Ta metochia. Praktika synedriou*, ed. K. Chrysochoidis (Thessaloniki: Agioreitiki Estia, 2015), 107–119.

Hilandar was granted an estate in the village of Zdravikion in 1318 according to an agreement between Emperor Andronikos II and King Stefan Uroš II Milutin. The *metochion* was confirmed in 1319 and 1321, obtaining further immunity privileges. It was bounded by estates of the Bishopric of Kaisaropoli, a *metochion* of the Great Lavra (the village of Doxompos), a *metochion* of Karakallou (Dekalista), a *metochion* of Vatopedi (Zavarnikeia ?), estates of the Modinos family, the Angista river and Lake Strymonas. Greek documents refer to the (ζευγηλατειον) Zdravikion *metochion* as either the *Old Zdravikion* or the *Other Zdravikion* to distinguish it from the neighbouring Zdravikion, a large estate of the Modinos family. Most of the Modinos estate, about 3,000 *modioi* or about 281 hectares in area, extended from Hilandar's Old Zdravikion in the south and west to the Angista river in the north, but there were fields on the other side of the river as well. Hilandar acquired their land less by gift and more by several purchases in 1320 and 1321. Its *metochion* in Zdravikion is mentioned two more times, in the general confirmation charters of Emperor Dušan of 1348 and Emperor John Palaiologos of 1351: in the former, still as "the village of Zdravikion both" (σελο ΖΔΡΑΒΗΚΑ ὄββα), and in the latter, as a single Zdravikion.⁴

From 1351 all trace of Hilandar's *metochion* in Zdravikion is lost until 1481. In those hundred and thirty years that saw many clashes, conquests and the transitional period of Ottoman rule in the Balkans, there is not a single piece of information about it. It may be assumed nonetheless that it continued in existence, though, of course, in a different, adapted form and with considerably smaller incomes. It was one of the so-called "six pieces of land" (*altı pare yerleri*), one of Hilandar's six most important privileged *metochia* from 1481.⁵

Even back in Byzantine times, the name of the village was recorded in several different ways, which suggests its Slavic origin.⁶ Ottoman documents usually refer to it as *İzdrāvīk*, *İzdrāvīk* (prosthetic "I"), less frequently as *Izdravnik* (*İzdrāvnik*) and, in the mid-sixteenth century, a few times as Big *Izdravik* (*İzdrāvīk-i Büzürg*, *Büyük İzdrāvīk*). The village still exists under the

⁴ *Actes de Chilandar I: Dès origines à 1319*, Archives de l'Athos XX, éd. diplomatique par M. Živojinović, V. Kravari et Ch. Giros (Paris: Éditions du CNRS, 1998), 67–68; M. Živojinović, *Istorija Hilandara*, vol. I: *Od osnivanja manastira 1198. do 1335. godine* (Belgrade: Prosveta, 1998), 218. The medieval history of the *metochion* has been studied in detail by M. Živojinović, "Hilandarski metoh Zdravik i njegovi raniji posjednici", *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta XX* (1981), 85–98.

⁵ Hilandar Monastery Archive, Turcica (hereafter HMAT), 7/2 (published in V. Boškov, "Dokumenti Bajazita II u Hilandaru (Sveta Gora)", *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju XXXI* (1982), 152–153).

⁶ Živojinović, "Hilandarski metoh Zdravik", 85.

name of Draviskos, on the left side of the former lake, on one of the tributaries of the Angista.⁷

In Ottoman times Zdravikion was situated in the Edirne (Pasha) *sancak*. In the fifteenth century it belonged territorially and administratively to the *vilayet* of Keşişlik. Towards the end of the century, and from 1491 certainly, it was in the *nahiye* and *kaza* of Zihne until the end of the sixteenth century and probably even for some time afterwards.⁸

According to the imperial survey registers of 1454/5 and 1478/9, Zdravikion was the largest village in the area with more than 150 almost exclusively Christian households. Even though the *metochion* of Hilandar almost certainly existed even then, the imperial registers make no mention of it. In 1454/5 the revenue of the village was divided among four *timars*. The village belonged to *timars* for much longer afterwards. About 1535 it formed part of the *timar* of Mustafa, *nişancı* of the Sublime Porte. In early 1539 the estate was still referred to as the *hass* of the *nişancı*. Then it became an imperial *hass*, judging by the firman of 1552. It was at that time (1549–1557) that a large charitable complex, the *vakıf* of sultan Süleyman the Magnificent, was being built in Istanbul. Zdravikion was one of the villages the revenue from which was intended for the maintenance of the famous Süleymaniye mosque and the imperial *‘imaret*. In the

⁷ *Topographic map of Greece*, 1:50,000 (Army Geographic Service, 1949–1955); P. Bellier et al., *Paysages de Macédoine, leurs caractères, leur évolution à travers les documents et les récits des voyageurs*, présenté par J. Lefort (Paris: De Boccard, 1986), 260; E. Krüger, *Die Siedlungsnamen Griechisch-Makedoniens nach amtlichen Verzeichnissen und Kartenwerken* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1984), 104, 170, 547, 561; *Turski dokumenti za istorijata na Makedonija. Opširen popisen defter za vakafite vo Paša sandžakot od 1568/69 godina*, t. XI, vol. I, transl., ed. and comment. by D-r A. Stojanovski (Skopje: Državen arhiv na Republika Makedonija, 2008), 257; HMAT, 1/1a, 1/8a, 7/12, 7/14, 7/16, 7/17, 7/18, 11/5, 6/3, 6/7, 6/9, 7/23). There are documents in which its name is severely distorted or some letters are omitted, such as, e.g., *Erzenova*, which used to be the cause of misidentification (HMAT, 7/19, summary in V. Boškov and D. Bojanić, “Sultanske povelje iz manastira Hilandara. Regesta i komentar za period 1512–1601”, *Hilandarski zbornik* 8 (1991), 179).

⁸ *Turski dokumenti za istorijata na makedonskiot narod. Opširen popisen defter od XV vek*, IV, transl., ed. and comment. by D-r A. Stojanovski (Skopje: Arhiv na Makedonija, 1978), 304–306, 308, 337, 339; H. Lowry, “Changes in Fifteenth-Century Ottoman Peasant Taxation: the Case Study of Radilofo”, in *Continuity and Change in Late Byzantine and Early Ottoman Society*, Papers given at a Symposium at Dumbarton Oaks in May 1982, eds. A. Bryer and H. Lowry (Birmingham, England – Washington, USA: Univ. of Birmingham – Dumbarton Oaks, 1986), 36; H. Lowry, “The Fifteenth Century Ottoman *Vilayet-i Keşişlik*: its Location, Population and Taxation”, in *Humanist and Scholar. Essays in Honor of Andreas Tietze*, eds. H. W. Lowry and D. Quataert (Istanbul – Washington: The Isis Press – The Institute of Turkish Studies, 1993), 15–26; HMAT, 1/1a, 7/7a, 7/12, 7/15, 6/2, 6/14, 11/5, 12/7/7 etc.

Ottoman documents from Hilandar it is referred to as part of Süleyman's *vakif* in 1560, 1575 and 1576.⁹

The core estate was termed *çiftlik* and it encompassed three *çifts*. It was an area of land which could be ploughed by three pairs of oxen (*üç çiftleri yürir imiş*). If the average size of a *çiftlik* was between 60 and 150 *dönüms*, its area should not have exceeded 450 *dönüms*, but a *hüccet* of 1492 is clear that the estate in Zdravikion was much larger, about 700 *dönüms*, or a little more than 64 hectares.¹⁰

In 1492 the *çiftlik* was bounded as follows: on the east – by the *mülk* (private property owned in freehold) of Yaso, son of Belumi (if the reading is correct?) and a ruined church; on the north – by papa Yani's flourmill and the public road; on the west – by the field of Filato (?), son of Sotir, a boundary stone and the fields of Kosta and Dimo; and on the south – by the public road and the Zdravikion village boundary. The *vakifname* of 1569 describes the boundary in less detail: "on one side, the said village [Zdravikion], on one side, the stream (*mesil-ma*), on one side, the mountain, and on one side, the public road."¹¹

Literally speaking, the term *çiftlik* denoted agricultural land. As on the other *çiftlik*s in the Strymon river valley, the most common crop was wheat. The monks of Hilandar, however, did not grow grain crops only. In early 1490, the large *metochion* also included vineyards. Between 1542 and 1567 certainly, and probably even before, there were a vineyard (one or more), a flourmill (at least one) and beehives. At the time of the confiscation and redemption of monastic estates in 1568/9, and from then on until 1596, only vineyards and vegetable gardens (*bağat ve zemin-i bostan*) were recorded in connection with the *çiftlik*. Unlike the imperial survey registers, the *vakifname* of March 1569 makes no mention of vegetable gardens, and records only one two-*dönüm* vineyard.¹²

In 1569 there were on the *çiftlik* a house (*ev*), a stable, a barn and a hay barn. At least this is what the *vakifname* tells us. Information about livestock is scarce, but there must have been some, as suggested by the stable and the barn. As early as 1504 there was a shelter for (water) buffalos (*su sigır*), and it is also

⁹ Fotić, *Sveta Gora i Hilandar*, 389–390; *Turski dokumenti za istorijata na makedonskiot narod*, 304–306, 308, 337, 339; *Turski dokumenti za istorijata na Makedonija*, 257; Lowry, "Changes", 36; Lowry, "The Fifteenth Century", 24–25; HMAT, 1/2, 1/1a, 7/7a, 7/19, 1/24, 7/20, 1/26a, 1/29a, 7/23, 7/27, 1/58, 1/60a.

¹⁰ HMAT, 7/12, 7/14, 7/15, 7/16, 7/17, 12/7/7, 1/1a. *Hüccet* HMAT 1/1a was partially used in Boškov, "Dokumenti Bajazita II", 139, 142, 143, 145. Instead of 700 *dönüms*, as recorded in the *hüccet*, V. Boškov gave the wrong size of 100 *dönüms* (!) (p. 142), which was later quoted in the literature (Živojinović, "Hilandarski metoh Zdravik", 96).

¹¹ HMAT, 1/1a, 11/5.

¹² HMAT, 7/44a, 1/2, 1/29a, 6/2, 6/3, 6/7, 6/9a, 6/14, 7/22, 7/23, 7/34, 12/37/57, 6/8, 6/10, 6/11, 6/12, 11/5; T. C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı, Osmanlı Arşivi, Tahrir Defterleri 723, 1053; Fotić, *Sveta Gora i Hilandar*, 390.

known that in 1537 the monks gave up oxes (*kara sıgrır öküz*) in order to restore possession of a vineyard. They raised sheep without having to pay taxes, at least not until 1505.¹³

All the above concerns the large *çiftlik* and whatever came with it. Apart from it, Hilandar owned some other real property within the village boundaries of Zdravikion. First of all, a 40-*dönüm* crop field known as *Şahin-oglu's* field. In early January 1496 the monks of Hilandar exchanged their 50-*dönüm* field in the village of Patos for it. Before the exchange it had been a freehold property (*mülk*) of the *zaim* Mahmud Bey, son of 'Osman Bey. If it had a common border with Hilandar's large *çiftlik* at all, they were separated by the public road. The road bounded it on three sides, and the boundary marker on the fourth side was a fig tree.¹⁴

Hilandar did not enlarge the estate further until November 1575. The monks purchased a 12-*dönüm* field, whose boundary was "known to the neighbours", from a certain papa *Drāmetōn* (?) for 400 *akçes*. Of course, they also had to pay the title deed tax (*resm-i tapu*) to the *cabi* of the *vakıf*, Mustafa Çelebi.¹⁵ The following year the usufruct of a 3-*dönüm* vegetable garden and the flourmill built by the monk Mardarije was transferred to the monks of Hilandar. The only condition set for them to fulfil by the *mütevelli* Mehmed and Mustafa Çelebi, *emin* of the *mukata'a* of Zihne, in this case probably acting in his capacity as *cabi* of the *vakıf*, was the regular annual payment of a 60-*akçe* for the rent (*mukata'a*) to the *vakıf*.¹⁶

The obligations of the monks residing on the core *metochion* in Zdravikion to the "master of the land", be it the *sipahi*, the *hass emini* or the *mütevelli* of the *vakıf*, remained unchanged until 1569: instead of the tithe (*bedel-i öşür*), they paid the fixed annual lump sum of 600 *akçes* (*ber vech-i maktu'*). The amount had probably been set as early as 1481 when Wallachian *voivode* Bassarab III Țepeluș procured some privileges for Hilandar. At his express request, Bayezid II exempted six major Hilandar's *metochia* (*çiftliks*) from paying the tithe. And that was not all. He cut by half the *maktu'* (annual lump sum) set for those estates. This was a precious privilege because the *maktu'* for most estates had not changed for at least half a century. Hilandar was the first Athonite monastery on behalf of which a Wallachian *voivode* requested that its *metochia*, and all of them, be exempted from paying the tithe (*öşr*). As for the *maktu'* being cut by half, no source can confirm such a privilege having been granted to any other Athonite

¹³ HMAT, 12/37/57, 6/8, 6/10, 6/11, 6/12, 11/5; 1/8a, 1/25, 7/9; Fotić, *Sveta Gora i Hilandar*, 390–391.

¹⁴ HMAT, 1/4. The document was mentioned in Boškov, "Dokumenti Bajazita II", 142, 145, where the village name Pato was read as Panik.

¹⁵ HMAT, 1/58.

¹⁶ HMAT, 1/60a.

monastery! By the way, tax payment in a fixed lump sum was first mentioned only in a firman of 1503, which is explicit that the amount of 600 *akçe* is only one half of the due amount, the other half being fully written off. All subsequent sultans, Selim I, Süleyman the Magnificent, at first Selim II as well, confirmed this privilege and did not raise the fixed tax despite a heavy decrease in the value of the *akçe*.¹⁷ After the “confiscation and redemption affair”, in January 1569, the payment of taxes in a lump sum was supposed to be abolished and the monks subject to paying the tithe, the *salariye* and all other taxes like the rest of the *réaya*. Other examples show, however, that this measure was not strictly implemented and that lump-sum tax payment was kept here and there. As far as the *metochion* in Zdravikion is concerned, documents cannot confirm either.

The “masters of the land”, ever dissatisfied with such low taxes, kept trying to introduce the tithe, sometimes asking permission from the Porte or from the *kadı* of Zihne, but usually without asking anyone, but instead acting wilfully and enforcing coercion. Owing to firmans and other official documents that the monks of Hilandar kept with care and produced as evidence in court, they always won their case. Sometimes without any difficulty, sometimes only after years of haggling and fighting against intrigues. At least, that is what the surviving documents are telling us.

The earliest surviving document pertaining to one such case is a *hüccet* of 1490. *Sipahis* complained to the sultan, and he ordered that the case be looked into and that both parties submit evidence. The *kadı*s of Serres and Zihne confirmed the monks’ privileges.¹⁸ Two years later the *sipahis* Koçi and ‘Ali worked out a clever way to extort the tithe if not from all then from most of Hilandar’s crop fields. In the fundamental and one of the most important fifteenth-century orders of the sultan, the one issued in 1481, privileges had been granted to “six pieces of their land” (*altı pare yerleri*), among which the estate in Zdravikion figured as one piece. The *timar*-holders chose to bypass the facts by interpreting the phrase “one piece of land” as meaning one field. Although well aware that according to the imperial survey register the phrase referred to the whole *çiftlik*, they manipulated the factual situation and wilfully collected the tithe from all fields but one. The case was brought before the Imperial *Divan* but the interested parties kept interpreting the sultan’s decree in their own favour. When the monk Grigoriye, son of Sava, submitted to the *kadı* court of Zihne evidence for the exact boundary of the *çiftlik* subject to the privileges, the *sipahis* defended themselves by claiming that they had not known its exact size. A commission composed of the *kadı* of Zihne, *mevlana* Emir Ishak, and four *sipahis* from near-

¹⁷ HMAT, 1/1a, 1/2, 1/24, 1/26, 1/29a, 6/1, 6/2, 6/3, 6/7, 6/9a, 6/14, 7/2, 7/7a, 7/12, 7/13, 7/14, 7/15, 7/16, 7/22, 7/23), 7/25, 7/27, 7/34, 12/7/7, 12/7/18. The amount of 604 *akçe*s occurs two times, most probably by scribal error (HMAT, 1/26a, 7/17).

¹⁸ HMAT, 1/2; Fotić, *Sveta Gora i Hilandar*, 392.

by villages made an on-site inspection. They finally established that the monks of Hilandar were in the right, and the *kadı* ruled that the *timar*-holders must return the unlawfully collected tithe.¹⁹

When, in 1506, the monks turned some of their crop fields into vineyards, vegetable gardens and gardens, the *sipahis* tried to collect the tenth of the produce at least from that land. However, the sultan ruled that the change of land use within the *çiftlik* of Hilandar did not interfere with the prescribed lump sum in any way, and banned the *sipahis* from extracting more than the amount laid down in the imperial survey register. It seems that the *sipahis*, motivated by the planting of new vineyards and vegetable gardens, were not ready to give up their intention easily. Thus, in 1513, upon the accession of Selim I, the monks renewed their right to lump sum payment and procured the order forbidding the *sipahis* to disturb them on that account. They did the same in 1520. In 1529 they managed to obtain a general decree forbidding the *sipahis* to demand more than prescribed, but it is not clear whether the reason for their action was the *metochion* in Zdravikion or some other of the remaining five *metochia* that enjoyed the same privileges.²⁰

The monks had much more trouble coping with the *nişancı* Mustafa after their land within the village boundaries of Zdravikion became his *hass*. In 1535 this prominent court official managed to have the privileges enjoyed by the *metochion* revoked by the Porte and the tithe imposed. But the monks did not give up. A year later, despite the fact that the *nişancı* had the sultan's decree, the monks Nikifor and Zaharije proved the monastery's rights at the *kadı*'s court of Zihne by submitting as evidence the earlier orders (*hükms*) issued by Bayezid, Selim and Süleyman. Based on the *kadı*'s *hüccet*, they sent representatives to Istanbul together with those of the well-known monastery of Kosaniçe (Panagia Ikosifinissa), whose property rights in Zdravikion had also been injured. Namely, the monastery of Kosaniçe had a *çiftlik*, a vineyard and a church in Zdravikion. The result of their joint efforts was the restoration of the earlier privileges. But the *nişancı*'s men did not give up either: they demanded the tithe again, in 1538 and 1539, but, as it turned out, both times without success.²¹

The troubles with the "masters of the land" extracting more than the prescribed lump sum were the reason that the monks of Hilandar turned to the Porte in 1542, to the *kadı* of Zihne in 1545, and again to the sultan in 1551, 1552, 1560, 1562 and 1567. In all these cases their privileges were confirmed,

¹⁹ HMAT, 1/1a; Fotić, *Sveta Gora i Hilandar*, 392.

²⁰ HMAT, 12/7/7, 7/12, 7/15, 7/17.

²¹ HMAT, 7/19, 1/24, 7/20, 1/26, 1/26a; T. C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı, Osmanlı Arşivi, Tahrir Defterleri 723, 1050; Fotić, *Sveta Gora i Hilandar*, 393.

even when Zdravikion became an imperial *hass*, and then a *vakif* village of Süleyman the Magnificent's great imperial *vakif* in Istanbul.²²

It was not only *sipahis* that caused the monks troubles. As in any other *metochion* of Hilandar's, it was immediate neighbours that sometimes attempted to grab some of its land. The earliest such case was an encroachment upon the public road that the monks of Hilandar used to fetch water. In 1491 the neighbouring *timar*-holder Tatar Mahmud turned the public road and, as it seems, a part of Hilandar's crop field into his yard. It was only a sultan's order that enabled the monks to reclaim their land and the right to use the road as the common good.²³

Much later, in 1533, a certain Grdan and a few other Christians cast a covetous eye on some of Hilandar's land. To prevent damage and disturbance, the monks were forced to seek protection from the sultan.²⁴

Only a few months later, another dispute arose, this time with the Zdravikion villagers Yani, son of Paraskevo, Paraskevo, son of Dimo, and Kosta, son of Paraskevo. They had planted a 100-dönüm vineyard on a crop field of Hilandar's without permission, using the land unlawfully until January 1534 when the monks forced them to pull out of their land based on the imperial order and the resulting *kadi's hüccet*.²⁵

In 1537 the monks were in a dispute with a certain Todor, a villager of Zdravikion, who had been using the monastery's vineyard for twenty years. They were restored to the possession of their vineyard, but as a result of a settlement. They had to give Todor two oxen as compensation for the effort he had put into embedding the poles.²⁶

There were also cases of power abuse by specially assigned imperial officials. Thus, in 1589 they demanded, contrary to custom, that the monks hand over grain surpluses, claiming that they were selling them, which was forbidden. The monks kept proving that they used the grain for their own needs only.²⁷

The Ottoman documents preserved in the archive of the Hilandar Monastery give us a picture of the ways in which its monks struggled to preserve their privileges and protect their large *metochion* at Zdravikion. This paper presented different arguments they used in the attempt to extort the payment of the tithe and the monks' firm attitude in defending their rights before the *kadi's* court and the Imperial *Divan*. Monks were able to prove their rights because they consci-

²² HMAT, 7/22, 1/29a, 7/25, 7/23, 7/27, 12/7/18, 7/34.

²³ HMAT, 7/5; Fotić, *Sveta Gora i Hilandar*, 393.

²⁴ HMAT, 7/18.

²⁵ HMAT, 12/8/21.

²⁶ HMAT, 1/25; Fotić, *Sveta Gora i Hilandar*, 393.

²⁷ HMAT, 7/44a.

entiously kept, sometimes for centuries, all the necessary documents relating to their land possessions, producing them as evidence in court proceedings.

The history of Hilandar's *metochion* in Zdravikion can be followed in Ottoman documents continuously from 1481 to 1589. After that year there is no further news about it. It does not figure in an extract from the 1598 imperial survey register and neither do the other Hilandar's *metochia* in the Strymon region, except the one for Serres.²⁸ The answer to the question as to what happened to Hilandar's *metochia* in the Strymon region will have to wait until new sources come to light.

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²⁸ HMAT, 12/12/15.

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Lothar Höbelt*

University of Vienna

Balkan or Border Warfare? Glimpses from the Early Modern Period

“Balkan’ had become shorthand for a geographic area but
also for a state of mind.”

Margaret MacMillan, *Peacemakers* (London 2001), 121

Abstract: At the beginning of the early modern period, the concept of Europe did not yet exist. Religion, not politics or geography, was the defining criterion. It was Christendom that people referred to – not Europe – when they wanted to introduce the concept of burden-sharing. In military terms, differences between Oriental and Occidental empires were less obvious; if anything, the Ottomans seemed to have a head-start in terms of centralization and professionalism. It was not the impact of Ottoman rule as such that created the conditions for “Balkan warfare”. It was the unsettled character of the borders between “East” and “West” that gave rise to a form of low-intensity conflict that might be said to provide a foretaste of what came to be known as Balkan warfare.

Keywords: Balkan warfare, Early Modern period, Ottomans, Habsburgs, Venice

Regular vs. irregular warfare

There is probably no hard and fast definition for what is often referred to as Balkan warfare, except a geographical one. If there is a popular image associated with that term, it is probably one not far from the anecdote recounted by Elizabeth Roberts in her history of Montenegro about the tribesman who offered to cut off his wounded (Russian) comrade’s head so that the Turks would not get it; and the postscript by a civilized Montenegrin teacher a few generations later, who pleaded with visitors to appreciate the improvement that his countrymen were no longer cutting off prisoners’ heads but only noses.¹

Put in structural terms, the salient features of “Balkan warfare” can probably be summed up as a preponderance of “irregular” troops and warfare, accompanied by a measure of brutality allegedly lacking in the more civilized or more central parts of Europe. In many ways this image of Balkan warfare is a

* lothar.hoebelt@univie.ac.at

¹ Elizabeth Roberts, *Realm of the Black Mountain* (London 2007), 172, 292.

product of the late nineteenth century when European warfare appeared to have been domesticated to brief, sharp, tournament-like engagements fought in an allegedly gentlemanly manner, like “duels among friends”.² We should not forget, however, that during the same period the Southern – rather than the Eastern³ – part of Europe was ravaged by insurrections and “counter-insurgency”, liberally sprinkled with massacres, from the original “guerrillas” of Napoleonic Spain⁴ and the Carlist Wars to the “brigantaggio” of the Italian “mezzogiorno” in the early 1860’s.⁵ The “Bulgarian horrors” of the late 1870’s that played such a prominent part in the lore of British election campaigns fit into that pattern rather easily.⁶ After the Congress of Berlin in 1878, multi-ethnic Macedonia⁷ continued to be racked by incursions of komitadji bands. Karl May, the popular German fiction writer, immortalized that image when he sent his first person hero Kara Ben Nemsi from the “Hollows of the Balkans” into the “Land of the Skipetars”.

That sort of nineteenth-century exceptionalism of course begs the question whether “Balkan warfare” in the early modern period was actually all that

² Egon Caesar Conte Corti, *Kaiser Franz Joseph I.*, vol. 2 (Graz 1952), 376 (Wrangel to Hess).

³ The Polish rising of 1830, at least, was conducted in a far more conventional style; whereas the one of 1863 was characterized as “one of the world’s earliest examples of urban guerrilla warfare” by Norman Davies, *God’s Playground: A History of Poland*, vol. 2 (Oxford 1981, 353). Jozef Pilsudski, *Erinnerungen und Dokumente*, vol. 3 (Essen 1936), 143, 159 – who tried to defend its legacy politically and morally, while criticizing its military activities – once characterized the 1863 rising as an “armed demonstration”, fuelled by the illusionary hope to trigger either an all-Russian revolution or an intervention by the Western Powers. Interestingly, for a Pole, Pilsudski felt he had to defend Russian terror against the civilian population as an appropriate activity that everybody who wanted to throttle a revolution – “be he Russian or English” – would always use (*ibid.* 144).

⁴ Charles Esdaile, *Fighting Napoleon: guerrillas, bandits, and adventurers in Spain, 1808–1814* (New Haven 2004).

⁵ Giordano Bruno Guerri, *Il sangue del Sud. Antistoria del Risorgimento e del Brigantaggio* (Milan 2010).

⁶ Richard Shannon, *Gladstone. Heroic Minister 1865–1898* (London 1999), 175, points out that initially Gladstone himself was quite surprised at the impact of the Balkan atrocities on British public opinion: “I have been astonished at its [the Bulgarian agitation’s] commencement and progress.” Hence “his lateness in perceiving it and tardiness in jumping on to it”. A. N. Wilson, *The Victorians* (London 2002), 404, notes that Gladstone’s “campaign-manager, Lord Rosebery, had attended Democratic rallies in the United States and modelled the meetings partly on American political conventions.” German novelist Dieter Schwanitz, *Der Campus* (Frankfurt/M. 1995) has also made use of the topic of the Bulgarian atrocities in his marvellous satire on trendy German university professors.

⁷ Because of Macedonia’s patchwork of ethnic groups, a multi-coloured fruit-salad was named after it in Mediterranean cuisine.

different from Central or Western European warfare.⁸ After all, “regular” troops were only just being invented by baroque states-in-the-making; the establishment of “standing armies” was a by-product of the ‘Forty Years’ War’ against Louis XIV (1672–1712);⁹ whereas the preceding Thirty Years’ War fought in the very centre of Europe certainly did have more than its share of atrocities of almost any imaginable sort. Massacres among “non-combatant” civilians were not confined to conflicts infused – or camouflaged – by religious tensions. Or, put the other way round: “The prospect of a sack, not salvation, underwrote every successful jihad or crusade.”¹⁰ In particular, the routine practice of allowing towns that were taken by storm to be sacked by the conquering army served the besieger’s interests as it provided a powerful incentive both for his men to fight – and for the enemy to surrender in time.¹¹ During the conquest of Buda in 1686 Imperial commanders took good care looting did not start before fighting had actually ended but then turned the town over to the victorious soldiers.¹²

It might be argued that most of the Balkans lent itself to irregular warfare because its mountainous terrain was unsuited to the ponderous manoeuvres of sizeable armies, including the artillery that could only be transported along the coast or the “broad Danube which provided the only easy route across Eastern Europe for any army equipped with siege weapons.”¹³ The Ottomans found Szigetvar a little bit too close to the Danube for comfort, as the Habsburg garrison sometimes tried to interrupt the traffic on the river. At one point during the 1550’s, the Ottomans complained that almost a thousand boats had been plundered by enemy raiders.¹⁴ The Imperial side could also float supplies downstream on the Drava, whereas the Turks tried to use the Sava to send siege guns

⁸ One more element missing in the early modern period was the sort of rural over-population that allowed men to be absent from the farm for extended periods throughout the year. That Malthusian situation was exacerbated by the early marriage age made possible by the networks of the extended, *zadruga*, family. Marie-Janine Calic, *Sozialgeschichte Serbiens 1815–1941. Der aufhaltsame Fortschritt während der Industrialisierung* (Munich 1994), 58–60.

⁹ Actually the term “Forty Years War” was coined a few years earlier by a French diplomat who correctly forecast a war of forty years if the Dutch persisted in their efforts to put a stop to French expansion in Flanders. See Herbert H. Rowen, “John De Witt and the Triple Alliance”, in Craig E. Harline, ed., *The Rhyne and Reason of Politics in Early Modern Europe. Collected Essays of Herbert H. Rowen* (Dordrecht 1992), 130.

¹⁰ Barnaby Rogerson, *The Last Crusaders. East, West and the Battle for the Centre of the World* (London 2009), 85.

¹¹ Lothar Höbelt, “Surrender in the Thirty Years War”, in Holger Afflerbach and Hew Strachan, eds., *How Fighting Ends. A History of Surrender* (Oxford 2012), 141–151.

¹² Ferenc Toth, ed., *Journal des campagnes du duc Charles V de Lorraine* (Paris 2017), 400.

¹³ Rogerson, *Last Crusaders*, 251.

¹⁴ James D. Tracy, “The Road to Szigetvar: Ferdinand I’s Defense of His Hungarian Borders, 1548–1566”, *Austrian History Yearbook* 44 (2013), 33; Klara Hegyi, “The Ottoman Network

upstream, towards Sisak and Zagreb.¹⁵ But they did find it rather difficult to carry heavy guns across the coastal mountain ranges when they wanted to lay siege to Venetian towns in Dalmatia. In 1657, they attempted to mount an attack on Kotor with less than a dozen cannon.¹⁶ On a large-scale map, the “thin green line” of Venetian strongholds along the Dalmatian coast might look dangerously exposed to the giant land mass of the Ottoman Empire. But the Venetians would usually manage to move reinforcements far more quickly by sea than their enemies could do so by land.

However, it would probably be going too far to reduce the notion of Balkan warfare to a matter of logistics only or to “deconstruct” it altogether. There do seem to be two elements connected with the presence of the Muslim Ottoman Empire that served to inject an extra element of brutality into early modern warfare, i.e. into the way combatants treated each other – rather than the way combatants treated the hapless civilians where rules of engagement were far less strict, as “the cultural and social assumptions of the soldiers themselves did little to restrain lawless behaviour against those who were outside of the bounds of internal loyalty and recognition.”¹⁷

First of all, the cultural divide between Orient and Occident, Muslim and Christian societies that is such a touchy subject of present-day polemics did to all intents and purposes worsen the fate of prisoners. True, there was a long-standing practice almost everywhere that prisoners of a certain stature would be ransomed by their captors. If someone offered to stand bail for them, they might even be furloughed to try and raise money on their own behalf.¹⁸ The brother of the Imperial Court Chamberlain, Count Hans Christoph Puchheim, who had been captured by the Swedes in 1639 spent years criss-crossing the “front” while trying to negotiate his release.¹⁹ In 1661, Transylvanians voting for a new Prince were faced with the choice of two candidates, Janos Kemeny and Michael Apafi, who had both become prisoners of war after George Rakoczi’s disastrous Polish campaign and had only recently returned from captivity in the Crimea.²⁰

of Fortresses in Hungary”, in Geza David & Pal Fodor, eds., *Ottomans, Hungarians and Habsburgs in Central Europe* (Leiden 2000), 164, 166.

¹⁵ James D. Tracy, *Balkan Wars. Habsburg Croatia, Ottoman Bosnia and Venetian Dalmatia, 1499–1617* (Lanham 2016), 176, 255, 262, 284, 291.

¹⁶ Marko Jacov, *Le guerre Veneto-Turche del XVII secolo in Dalmazia* (= Atti e Memorie della Societa Dalmata di Storia Patria, Venice 1991), 123. I want to thank Maddalena Guiotto (Trento) for bringing that book to my attention.

¹⁷ David Parrott, *The Business of War: Military Enterprise and Military Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge 2011), xxx, 36.

¹⁸ Geza Palffy, “Ransom slavery along the Ottoman-Hungarian frontier in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries”, in Geza David & Pal Fodor, eds., *Ransom Slavery along the Ottoman Borders (Early Fifteenth-Early Eighteenth Centuries)* (Leiden 2007), 57.

¹⁹ Lothar Höbelt, *Ferdinand III. Friedenskaiser wider Willen* (Graz 2008), 148 f., 161, 199.

²⁰ Maria Ivanics, “Enslavement, Slave Labour and the Treatment of Captives in the Crimean Khanate”, in David & Fodor, eds., *Ransom Slavery*, 193–219.

But what happened to the lowly “privates”? Unless they were also covered by some sort of exchange mechanism (or ‘cartel’), they were usually forced to take service with their captors. In that case they were sometimes transferred to a different “front” in order to decrease the likelihood that they would desert back to their former employers. Thus, Britons in French service who were captured at Tuttlingen in 1643 were sent to Hungary.²¹ During the ‘Glorious Revolution’ the remnants of James II’s Irish army were offered to the Habsburgs by William III who praised them effusively as “some of the choicest troops ever seen” but was so eager to get rid of them that he was even willing to pay for their transport to the continent.²²

However, while a number of renegades were prominent in the Ottoman service (quite apart from the janissaries, who were originally forcefully recruited from Christian families as boys), there is little evidence that prisoners of war from Christian armies were routinely inducted into Ottoman armies (or the other way round). The assumption is that more than the usual percentage of such prisoners of war were either summarily killed, or permanently enslaved by their captors for private gain.²³ Observers noted that as a result of the conquest of Buda by the Elector, the sedan bearers and gardeners at the Bavarian castle of Schleissheim consisted of Ottoman prisoners.²⁴ The Imperial resident was shocked when during the Candian War the Pasha of Bosnia not only sent 1800 heads as trophies to Constantinople after a battle in Dalmatia, but also made the few surviving prisoners do the dirty work of cutting their dead comrades heads off, cleaning them and treating them with salt so they would not rot on the way to the capital.²⁵

²¹ Höbelt, *Ferdinand III*, 218.

²² Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv Wien (HHStA), Vorträge 7, 1689, fol. 28a (14 March 1689), based on a report by the Austrian resident in London about a conversation with William III. In fact, the Habsburgs would have preferred for them to be sent to Ragusa/Dubrovnik straight away. In fact, once the Irish arrived in Hamburg, they declared they had been deported against their will and would only fight for king James (HHStA, Kriegsakten 217, fol. 84-95, 102-5, reports 1 & 4 June 1689).

²³ That statement might, of course, be qualified by the observation that, technically at least, most of the Ottoman bureaucracy and armies consisted of slaves. Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (Cambridge 2010), 92, argues that this kind of “political slavery” was actually the equivalent of feudal relations within the “patrimonial” stage of the Ottoman Empire: “The slave servants of the sultans became the new nobility of the land.”

²⁴ Janos J. Varga, “Ransoming Ottoman Slaves from Munich”, in David & Fodor, eds., *Ransom Slavery*, 169–181.

²⁵ HHStA, Turcica 126, Mai-Sept. 1654, fol. 48 v., 26 May 1654. Jacov, *Guerre Veneto-Turche*, 109, quotes a Turkish chronicle that puts the number at 1200 (plus 250 slaves). Previously, a

To put that episode into perspective: 1800 Venetians killed in battle did seem a disproportionate number considering the small size of the armies operating in Dalmatia.²⁶ Yet, contemporaries' disgust was directed less at the presumable massacre of prisoners than at its ritual character. Prisoners might be killed and robbed in Central Europe, too, but heads were publicly displayed as a deterrent only in the case of rebel leaders.²⁷ Indeed, that is presumably why the head of a famous turncoat, Giafer Aga alias Voin Tujcovich, who had apparently changed sides several times, was also sent to Venice a few years later.²⁸ The head of Hassan Pasha, who had been responsible for delivering 2000 heads to Constantinople a year earlier, was sent to Rudolph II as a trophy after the second battle of Sisak in 1593.²⁹ Of course, it might be argued that in the Ottoman worldview, all enemies of the padishah were supposed to be rebels. Still, killing prisoners, while at the same time organizing raids to bring in more captives, did seem to be economically counterproductive.

On the other side of the hill, Hungarian grandees used to sell Turkish captives to Venice as galley slaves at prices several times higher than the bounties paid to recruits which served as a standard per capita rate for ransom arrangements.³⁰ During the 1650's, when the Emperor wanted his Hungarian subjects to hand over their captives in preparation for a comprehensive settlement of grievances with the Turkish authorities, he was warned that most of these warlords would kill their prisoners rather than hand them over.³¹ Apparently, the Batthyany castle of Nemetujvar/Güssing was filled to overflowing with captives

Venetian report claimed the heads were put on display on the walls of the Ottoman outpost of Tenin.

²⁶ After the first battle of Sisak in July 1592, Hassan Pasha of Bosnia is said to have "sent 2000 heads to the Porte, with two hundred captives and five large cannon." (Tracy, *Balkan Wars*, 262)

²⁷ Just as there were massacres of rebels, like Alba's infamous reprisals in the Netherlands. Some sorts of ritual cruelty – like being burned at the stake vs. being impaled on stakes – were supposed to be specific to certain cultures, but were every now and then copied by their opponents.

²⁸ Jacov, *Guerre Veneto-Turche*, 125

²⁹ Tracy, *Balkan Wars*, 289.

³⁰ Geza Palfy, "Ransom Slavery, 35–83. The practice began when Venice started to buy convicts from its neighbours, including the Emperor, from the 1570s onwards, as their own citizens would no longer volunteer in sufficient numbers or accept to be drafted into service as oarsmen. Alberto Tenenti, *Venezia e i corsari 1580–1615* (Bari 1961), 147–163; Ruggiero Romano, "Economic Aspects of the Construction of Warships in Venice in the Sixteenth Century", in Brian Pullan, ed., *Crisis and Change in the Venetian Economy in the 16th and 17th Centuries* (London 1968), 65.

³¹ Höbelt, *Ferdinand III*, 243, 360.

during that period.³² Prisoners were freely sold and resold on both sides of the border. When a particular group of Hungarian captives was supposed to be ransomed after a longer period of tedious negotiations, the result was disappointing: only five could be located; the rest had in the meantime changed hands several times.³³ For all the brutality of the Thirty Years' War, no group of Christian, e.g. Swedish or French, prisoners seems to have met with quite such a fate, once they had survived the heat of battle (and pursuit). We do find reports, however, that some of the civilian hostages, e.g. Bosnian girls, captured by Christian raiders were also traded and sold as far away as Livorno.³⁴

The second element associated with the Ottoman way of warfare³⁵ was the widespread use of light cavalry of an East-European type. The function of those raiders from akindji to Cossacks can perhaps be compared to the bombing raids of the first half of the twentieth century: they were supposed to spread terror and ravage the hinterland of the enemy rather than hit any specific military targets. Alpine villages started building fortified churches as early as the 1470's to provide a minimum of protection in case of akindji raids. "On the border itself, the long-standing Ghazi tradition of incessant raiding brought low intensity attacks on a more or less permanent basis."³⁶ That sort of cavalry found its natural habitat not in the mountains of the Balkans but in the steppe of Eastern Europe but it was imported into the battle zone between Ottomans and Habsburgs – and sometimes re-exported to areas as far afield as the killing fields of Flanders. When Richelieu was on the point of declaring war on Spain in 1635, his counterpart, the Count-Duke of Olivares, had high hopes of the deterrent effect of Croatian and Cossack raids on French morale.³⁷ However, the Cossacks recruited by the Habsburgs during the 1630's were atypical in one respect: they insisted on proper and punctual payment.

³² Palffy, "Ransom Slavery", 41.

³³ HHStA, Turcica 126, May–Sept. 1654, fol. 93 v., 15 June 1654.

³⁴ Jacov, *Guerre Veneto-Turche*, 135; Tracy, *Balkan Wars*, 257, 342, mentions a report about Apulian merchants buying slave girls in Senj.

³⁵ Rhoads Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare, 1500–1700* (London 1999).

³⁶ A. Wess Mitchell, *The Grand Strategy of the Habsburg Empire* (Princeton 2018), 125.

³⁷ Heinrich Günter, *Die Habsburger-Liga 1625–1635* (Berlin 1908), 436, 444 (Olivares to Onate, 16 Feb. & 7 April 1635); Lothar Höbelt, "Barocke Bomberflotten? Die 'polnischen Völcker' als habsburgische ergeltungswaffen 1635/36", in *Heeresgeschichtliches Museum* (Hg.), *Vom Söldnerheer zu UN-Truppen. Heerwesen und Krieg in Österreich vom 17. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert* (= *Acta Austro-Polonica* 3, Vienna 2011), 29–43; David Parrott, "The Causes of the Franco-Spanish War of 1635–59", in Jeremy Black, ed., *The Origins of War in Early Modern Europe* (Edinburgh 1987), 72–111.

Border warfare and the “Wild East” of Europe

The sort of “irregular” warfare associated with the Balkans does not just refer to guerrilla operations or cavalry raids accompanying regular campaigns but also includes the sort of border skirmishing that went on even during periods of peace or at least truces among the belligerents, a sort of “Wild East” of early modern Europe. In Balkan terms those belligerents consisted of the Ottoman Empire, the Republic of Venice and the Habsburgs (in their many incarnations from Holy Roman Emperors and Kings of Hungary to Dukes of Styria or Carniola). Actually “keeping the peace” on the porous and provisional borders of those three empires was first and foremost a matter of internal discipline, of asserting the centre’s authority over wayward frontiersmen.

If we ask ourselves which of those great powers was best qualified to exercise strict control over their vassals and subordinates, it is easy to spot the winner: in all likelihood it was Venice that was able to police its border best of all, the only cautionary note being that we know far less about Venetian warfare on land than about their glorious exploits at sea. As a city-state the Republic was used to running a tight ship. That is why Venetian diplomats were shocked to observe the tolerance Vienna emperors extended towards aristocrats accused of violating border agreements (or even of other criminal infractions): “In Germany one is not accustomed to inflict major penalties on gentlemen unless they are declared guilty of *lèse majesté*.”³⁸ As between Habsburgs and Ottomans, it is the Habsburgs, or rather their Hungarian (including Croatian) subjects who seem cast in the role of the main culprits. The sheer repetitiveness of restraining orders directed at Hungarian nobles to stop harassing the Turkish border garrisons is a tell-tale sign in that respect.³⁹

Still, in that case we are dealing with a difference of degree only. The Ottoman Empire did not always live up to its reputation as a disciplined if despotic centralized state, either. “While possessing the core of a standing army,

³⁸ HHStA, *Dispacci di Venezia*, vol. 89, no. 182, 18 June 1644: “[...] non accostumandosi in Germania di dar maggior castigo alli Cavalieri quando non sono dichiarati rei di Lesa Maesta.” In that case, the Venetian Ambassador was furious because the gentleman in question was Count Philipp Thurn, who as commander of the scenic Adriatic castle of Duino had opened fire upon Venetian ships (*Dispacci*, vol. 88, no. 97, 28 Nov. 1643). Fortunately for Austrian researchers, the dispatches of the Venetian ambassadors to the Imperial Court were copied by the Vienna archives before being returned to the Italians after 1866.

³⁹ While the amount of correspondence that survived in the collections of *Alte Feldakten* (AFA) in the Austrian War Archive (*Kriegsarchiv*) depends on the fortunes of the papers of individual commanders (there is very little e.g. on the wars against the Turks after 1683!), a short resume of the orders of the Aulic War Council can always be found in the “registratur” volumes of the “*Hofkriegsrat*”.

the system supporting it was unstable and contingent on victory.”⁴⁰ Quite apart from the mountain regions which it did not pay to administer properly, even in strategically important areas such as the river region between Vienna and Buda, standards of rule enforcement declined during the seventeenth century, especially during the interval between Murad IV’s death in 1640 and the rise of the Koprülü’s at the end of the 1650’s. Increasingly, centrifugal tendencies made themselves felt even in the one empire devoid of the feudal heritage that served to make “absolutism” such a questionable term in the rest of Europe.⁴¹ In the 1520’s, Luther had still warned German knights: “The Turk knows how to discipline and humiliate the nobility.”⁴² In the meantime, however, Western-European monarchies and Ottoman rulers seemed to be on converging tracks: European monarchies became more centralized at the same time as the Ottomans reached the outermost geographical limit of their expansion and fell prey to “Imperial overstretch.”⁴³

There is a fascinating exchange about common problems and different procedures to be found in the protocol of a meeting between an Imperial diplomat and the Pasha of Buda in 1652. The background to that visit was an increase in border raiding after 1648. The Peace of Westphalia in the West, coupled with signs of internal turmoil in the Ottoman Empire (like the successful janissary revolt against Sultan Ibrahim “the Mad” in 1648) had raised hopes among Hungarian nobles that the Habsburgs would use the opportunity to lead a crusade for the reunification of their kingdom. Military authorities in Vienna used that well-known longing to persuade the Hungarians to accept some 10,000 veterans of the Thirty Years’ War as reinforcements – not because they actually wanted to start a fight against the Turks but in order to shift the expense of their upkeep to the Hungarians.

In turn, among Hungarians nobles there was a strong undercurrent to push the Emperor into war against his will by provoking incidents over and above the usual expeditions to squeeze rent or tribute from their possessions beyond the provisional frontier running through Hungary. The Venetian am-

⁴⁰ Mitchell, *Grand Strategy*, 128.

⁴¹ Wolfgang Reinhard, *Geschichte der Staatsgewalt. Eine vergleichende Verfassungsgeschichte Europas von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich 1999), 51, argues the term has been “deconstructed” so much that it should no longer be used.

⁴² “Der Türke weiß den Adel zu mustern und zu demütigen” (Martin Luther: Vom Kriege wider den Türken).

⁴³ Tracy, *Balkan Wars*, 380, comes to a similar conclusion. Tezcan, *Second Ottoman Empire*, 197, 240, would argue that this “Second Empire” with its empowerment of local notables represented an improvement in terms of state-society relations. William Godsey, *The Sinews of Habsburg Power. Lower Austria in a Fiscal-Military State 1650–1820* (Oxford 2018), offers a somewhat similar argument for the Habsburg administration that knew when to rely on the cooperation – and the credit – of the estates.

bassador approvingly quoted a Hungarian aristocrat, Count Adam Forgach, the nephew of the Hungarian Palatine, Count Pal Pálffy. Forgach wanted to use every possible means to make the Emperor break with the Ottomans.⁴⁴ He argued for retaliation as the only possible means of defence against Turkish raiders who grew insolent if they did not have to fear any revenge (the report used the Italian term *vendetta* or “*vindita*”). The Emperor’s order to fight raiders only when they were caught “*in flagranti*” was impossible to execute. Only angels – or devils – might be able to do so.⁴⁵ Some of Forgach’s countrymen even added threateningly that if the Emperor did not declare war on Turkey, he was bound to lose the whole kingdom in a short time.⁴⁶

When Kara Murad, the then Pasha of Buda and former Grand Vizier, received Johann Metzger, a secretary of the Imperial War Council, he assured his visitor that the Turks had no grievances against the Germans, but regarded them as friends, as partners at least in what a later age might have called “peaceful coexistence”. In his view it was only the Hungarians that caused all the trouble.⁴⁷ But of course, once provoked, Turkish commanders could not be blamed for retaliating in kind. Once again, as with early strategic bombing doctrine, retaliation seemed to be the only available option. That sort of escalation had led to the Battle of Vezekeny, in present-day Slovakia, on 26 August 1652, famous because of the death of no fewer than four members of the powerful Esterhazy family in an ambush.⁴⁸

To demonstrate his good faith, Kara Murad Pasha offered to have the offending local commander, Mustafa Bey of Esztergom, beheaded in his guest’s presence if the Imperials would agree to do the same to Forgach, who was the commander of their border district north of Esztergom. This gracious offer proved to be embarrassing to the Imperial envoy. Gingerly, he tried to explain that Forgach could not be removed just like that. After all, as a member of an ancient noble family he actually owned the lands he was fighting for. If that is so, the Pasha replied, I have to say, my Mustafa is just as ancient and noble, too.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ HHStA, Dispacci 94, no. 154, 7 August 1648: “[...] vorrebbero in ogni maniera condur l’Imperatore a romper la guerra al Turco.”

⁴⁵ Kriegsarchiv (KA), AFA 135 VII/2, letter to Piccolomini, 13 July 1654.

⁴⁶ HHStA, Dispacci 96, no. 250, 16 April 1649: “[...] e sicuro di perdere in breve tempo tutto questo regno.”

⁴⁷ That attitude found a parallel a century earlier, in 1547, when Grand Vizier Rüstem Pasha had wanted to exclude the Zrinyi family from the truce of Edirne. (Tracy, *Balkan Wars*, 152)

⁴⁸ Laszlo Berenyi, “Die Schlacht bei Vezekeny (26. August 1652)”, *Burgenländische Heimatblätter* 64 (2002), 95–120; Lothar Höbelt, “Friedliche Koexistenz – unfriedliche Grenze: Der Hintergrund der Schlacht von Vezekeny 1652”, *Burgenländische Heimatblätter* 73 (2012), 1–34.

⁴⁹ HHStA, Turcica 125, Sept.-Dec. 1652, fol. 90 v., Metzger’s report of 23 Oct. 1652.

There is a footnote to that tongue-in-cheek offer, however. When rumours spread that Kara Murad wanted to have Mustafa Bey arrested nevertheless, the janissaries of Buda staged a mutiny. Mustafa left Buda quite jauntily and continued to be a thorn in the side of the Austrians for years to come.

The impression is that in practice, if not in theory, the autonomy of local commanders seems to have reached a similar stage on both sides of the border at that particular point in time. When referring to the last incidents along the Austro-Turkish borders in the early nineteenth century, Gunther Rothenberg commented: "This time, however, the incidents were not signs of an aggressive spirit, but merely the outward manifestations of the increasing disorganization and discontent in the Ottoman lands."⁵⁰ The same observation already holds true for mid-seventeenth century raiding when Ottoman centralism was no longer working and Habsburg centralism not yet. In both cases, the raiding on the frontier was also a result of trying to run a border on the cheap, with proper pay and provisions for the garrisons frequently withheld or in arrears. The small part of Hungary that remained in the Habsburg hands after the mid-sixteenth century was clearly unable to pay for more than at best a fourth of the frontier garrisons.⁵¹ As a result, many of the key fortresses were turned over to be administered by the neighbouring provinces of the Holy Roman Empire. Of course, "fortresses depended on supplies from populated hinterlands."⁵² Thus, on the Ottoman side, the situation seems to have improved after the hinterland of the garrisons had been expanded during the 1550s and 1560s.⁵³ Maybe the secret was "to fight as the Ottomans fought, by hiring low-paid raiders."⁵⁴ However, even on the Ottoman side, the economic situation seems to have deteriorated after the Long War of 1593–1606. David Parrott has summed up the dynamics of the "wild East" with respect to the Adriatic part of the Habsburg-Ottoman frontier: "The combination of a proportion of the male Uskok population performing virtually unpaid service in garrison, and the rest of the community dependent on land with limited agricultural potential, turned banditry and piracy

⁵⁰ Gunther E. Rothenberg, *The Austrian Military Border in Croatia, 1522–1747* (Urbana 1960), 124 f.

⁵¹ Geza Palfy, "Border Defence Systems against the Ottoman Empire in Hungary", in David & Fodor, eds., *Ottomans, Hungarians and Habsburgs in Central Europe: The Military Confines in the Era of Ottoman Conquest* (Leiden, 2000), 41.

⁵² Tracy, "Road to Szigetvar", 28.

⁵³ Gabor Agoston, "The Costs of the Ottoman Fortress System in Hungary in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century", in David & Fodor, eds., *Ottomans, Hungarians and Habsburgs*, 211.

⁵⁴ Tracy, *Balkan Wars*, 166.

from activities connected with the defence of the frontier into a *modus vivendi*, with its own economic and social dynamics.”⁵⁵

The Uskoks settled in the area where all three Empires met in what has become a trouble-spot again in the late twentieth century, namely the Krajina and its surroundings, located at the crossroads between Venetian Dalmatia, Habsburg Croatia and Ottoman Bosnia. The implosion of the medieval kingdom of Hungary after the battle of Mohacs in 1526 had left a few isolated garrisons, precariously wedged between Venetian coastal strongholds like Zadar or Šibenik and the waves of the Ottoman advance. To make matters worse, at the very beginning, there was still a certain element of collusion between the Muslim superpower and their Venetian trading partners, both of them opposed to Habsburg hegemony in Europe (and in Italy, in particular). Accordingly, the Uskoks lashed out at both of them, but received only lukewarm and halting support from the Habsburgs. The first Uskok stronghold was Klis, a mountain fortress overlooking the harbour of Split. When Klis fell to the Ottomans in 1537, the centre of resistance moved to Senj on the Adriatic. Raiding could now also be conducted by sea.⁵⁶

Uskok herders and villagers were routinely uprooted and “displaced”. Both voluntarily and involuntarily, they moved from one side to another of an uncertain and shifting border. Their fighting men were recruited and dismissed according to the vagaries of great power politics in a three-cornered contest. Venice could only afford brief periods of fighting against the Turks, as between 1537 and 1540 or at the time of the Lepanto campaign in 1571–73. The Habsburgs in Vienna usually followed a more ambivalent strategy that combined a desire to avoid a full-scale confrontation with clandestine encouragement of anti-Turkish forces. The Habsburgs did not want to relinquish their claims on the whole of the Hungarian inheritance. That is why in 1562 they rejected a proposal to establish firm boundaries by dividing Hungary once and for all.⁵⁷ Thus, a broad frontier zone with overlapping claims of jurisdiction and tax-raising remained the norm. The cadet branch of the Habsburgs in Graz – with their links to powerful Croatian nobles – was even more committed to the defence of that frontier zone.

Venice, on the other hand, resented the raiding activities of the Senj Uskoks. In their 1573 treaty after the Battle of Lepanto, the Ottoman Empire had agreed not to send any of their warships into the Adriatic, in return for Venetian

⁵⁵ Parrott, *Business of War*, xxx (6).

⁵⁶ Tracy, *Balkan Wars*, 109, 160; Catherine W. Bracewell, *The Uskoks of Senj. Piracy, Banditry, and Holy War in the Sixteenth Century Adriatic* (Ithaca 1992). “Uskok” was the Serb term for refugee. Venetian reports spoke of Morlacchi.

⁵⁷ Tracy, *Balkan Wars*, 216. Maximilian II showed some interest in such a deal a few years later but by that time the offer had apparently been withdrawn.

protection of their commerce. Uskok activities threatened to undermine that agreement, or at least force Venice to pay indemnities to the Turks for the losses they had suffered at the hand of the raiders.⁵⁸ In 1615–17, Venice even fought an inconclusive war against the Styrian branch of the Habsburgs to force a resettlement of the Uskoks. Ominously, the Spanish viceroy of Naples, the Duke of Osuna, came to the Uskoks' help and actually fought a pitched battle against the Venetian fleet in the waters around Korčula.⁵⁹

Thus, the constellation of the 1520's, with Venice and the Turks combining forces against the Habsburgs, seemed to have come alive again. A generation later, however, both governments had switched sides, in their attitudes towards those doughty exiles and pirates. After the mid-1640's, the Vienna government of Ferdinand III, hard pressed as it was during the last years of the Thirty Years' War, desperately tried to keep on the good side of the Turks who reciprocated by restraining the Transylvanians from adding their forces to the Franco-Swedish anti-Habsburg coalition.⁶⁰ Venice, however, involved in the early stages of the Candian war, tried to stir up trouble along the "wild East" of the Habsburg Empire and thus create a "second front" for the Ottomans.⁶¹

Sources do offer us fascinating glimpses of Venetian agents recruiting Catholic Bosnians for a sabotage attack on the crucial bridge at Osijek⁶² or encouraging the Archbishop of Esztergom to subvert the peace the Emperor was trying to uphold.⁶³ The Venetians also bribed some of the powerful Croatian lords along the border, like the Frangipan or the Zrinyis, to continue raiding the Turks or at least provide the Venetian army with extra recruits.⁶⁴ The Emperor did not want to compromise Habsburg neutrality and banned these enterprises. In practice, though, his orders were difficult to enforce as the Zrinyis were in

⁵⁸ Mario Nani Mocenigo, *Storia della Marina Veneziana de Lepanto alla caduta della Repubblica* (Venice 1935), 93; Tenenti, *Venezia e i corsari*, 15.

⁵⁹ Luis M. Linde, *Don Pedro Giron, duque de Osuna. La hegemonia española a comienzos del siglo XVII* (Madrid 2005), 147; Nani Mocenigo, *Storia della Marina Veneziana*, 99–112.

⁶⁰ The influential Spanish ambassador, the Duke of Terranova, was even supposed to have said that at a pinch the Austrians would have to allow Turkish troops to cross their territory to attack the Venetian "terra ferma", rather than be involved in the fighting themselves (HHStA, Dispacci 91, no. 400, 12 May 1646).

⁶¹ Unfortunately, there is apparently no modern history of the Candian War. See G. Cozzi, "Venezia nello scenario europeo (1517–1699)", in G. Galasso, ed., *Storia d'Italia*, vol. XII: *La Repubblica di Venezia nell'età moderna 2* (Torino 1992), 5–200.

⁶² HHStA, Dispacci 96, no. 247, 9 April 1649, quoting a letter by the archbishop.

⁶³ HHStA, Dispacci 91, no. 474, 7 Dec. 1646.

⁶⁴ Nicolas Zrinyi had already offered his services to Venice in 1639 when the first sign of trouble with Turkey appeared on the horizon (HHStA, Dispacci 82, Nr. 119, 5 Feb. 1639).

possession of an Adriatic port of their own, Buccari.⁶⁵ Only a few years before, the Zrinyis had still been eyed suspiciously by the Venetians as likely to provide the Pope with troops to be used against Venice during the so-called War of Castro.⁶⁶ But the Ottoman attack on Crete turned those troublesome neighbours into potential allies of the embattled “Serenissima”.

These intrigues were linked with another aspect of Balkan military establishments, the so-called Military Frontier in Croatia, a cordon sanitaire that formed a curious example of religious heterodoxy within the Counter-Reformation Habsburg Monarchy, as it was administered by Styrian officers, most of them Lutherans in the early stages, and manned by mainly Orthodox refugees from the Ottoman Empire. This military enclave was heartily disliked by the Catholic Croatian aristocrats like the Frangipanis who accused its officers of harbouring runaway serfs. As a result, whenever the threat of war seemed to have receded, the Croatian estates petitioned for the abolition of the Military Frontier (or at least for a reduction of its privileges). Usually, the Vienna Court would make soothing noises in their direction – until a new crisis served to remind them of the usefulness of the Military Frontier, which proved its value not just as an “antemurale” against the Turks but as a bulwark against unruly Hungarians, too. Thus, Ferdinand III had been on the point of listening to the complaints of the Croatians when the war with George Rakoczi erupted in 1644; as a result, the “graničari” (frontiersmen) returned to favour. The same mechanism came into play in 1703/4 when his son Leopold I faced the rebellion of Ferenc Rakoczi, George’s grandson.⁶⁷

In the meantime, however, the Habsburgs had managed to reconquer Hungary. In 1698, after the Battle of Zenta and the peace of Rijswyk in the West, the Ottomans finally proved willing to enter into peace negotiations on the basis of *uti possidetis*. Most of the military experts in Vienna were keen on retaining the fortress of Peterwardein that would help to close the Danube to any Ottoman advance in future conflicts. Interestingly, there was a dissenting voice, based on the experiences of decades of border warfare. Count Ulrich Kinsky, the leading statesman of the monarchy at the time, argued that to avoid any future conflicts, it was far more important to turn the frontier zone quite literally into a desert: thus, in the future, the sort of raiding that had always sparked wars in the past, would be impossible. As a result, friction would be minimized and both

⁶⁵ HHStA, Dispacci 91, Nr. 374 & 375, 10 March 1646.

⁶⁶ Lothar Höbelt, “Der Kaiser, der Papst, die Lega und Castro: Eine Fallstudie zur österreichischen Neutralität”, *Römische historische Mitteilungen* 47 (2005), 217.

⁶⁷ Tracy, *Balkan Wars*, 305; Rothenberg, *Military Border* I, 77–79, 98–99. The 1643/4 dispute pitted the Frangipanis against the founder of the Schwarzenberg fortune, Count Louis, in his capacity as Colonel of the Varaždin border district.

sides would be able to enjoy “safety and quietness”.⁶⁸ A supplementary clause of the peace treaty was also supposed to provide for the return of all prisoners without any ransom. If owners refused to return their prisoners they were to be fined 200 ducats for every male and 300 ducats for every female prisoner.⁶⁹

Summary: Europe’s “Frontier”

Differences between European and extra-European styles of warfare certainly sharpened during the nineteenth century. The internal decomposition of the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire, coupled with a certain infusion of European-style nationalism and a background of over-population, helped to put the Balkans into a sort of intermediate position on that scale. The Ottoman Empire was neither a great nor a European power – and yet, to some extent, it must still be regarded as both.

At the beginning of the early modern period, the concept of Europe did not yet exist. Religion, not politics or geography, was the defining criterion. It was Christendom that people referred to – not Europe – when they wanted to introduce the concept of burden-sharing. In military terms, differences between Oriental and Occidental empires were less obvious; if anything, the Ottomans seemed to have a head-start in terms of centralization and professionalism. It was not the impact of Ottoman rule as such that created the conditions for “Balkan warfare”. It was the unsettled character of the borders between “East” and “West” that gave rise to a form of low-intensity conflict that might be said to provide a foretaste of what came to be known as Balkan warfare. That endemic conflict included a naval component of Mediterranean piracy that stretches from the heyday of Khair-ed-Din Barbarossa and the Maltese knights in the early 1500s⁷⁰ to the American Marines and Tripoli in the early 1800s;⁷¹ there was the

⁶⁸ HHStA, Turcica 166, fol. 153 v. (conference on 17 August 1698). Count Ernst Rüdiger Starhemberg as President of the Aulic War Council, heatedly argued against Kinsky’s idea of abandoning Peterwardein (ibid., fol. 167–175). Of course, Peterwardein could also be regarded as a springboard for an attack on Belgrade in any future war.

⁶⁹ HHStA, Turcica 166, fol. 177 v., Instructions for the Imperial delegates to the peace conference, 26 Sept. 1698.

⁷⁰ Rogerson, *Last Crusaders*, 148 ff.; Rinaldo Panetta, *Pirati e Corsari. Turchi e barbareschi nel Mare Nostrum. XVI secolo* (Milan 1981); Miguel Angel de Burnus, *Los Barbarroja. Corsarios del Mediterraneo* (Madrid 2004), 106 (“corso di subsistencia”); Bruno Cianci, *Le Navi della Mezzaluna. La Marina dell’Impero Ottomano (1299–1923)* (Bologna 2015); Michel Fontenay, “Corsaires de la foi ou rentiers du sol? Les Chevaliers de Malte dans le ‘corso’ méditerranéen au XVII siècle”, *Revue d’Histoire moderne et contemporaine* 35 (1988), 361–84.

⁷¹ At the Congress of Vienna, Castlereagh was asked why Britain, who had tried to keep on good terms with the Barbary States during her wars with France and Spain, was apparently

unsettled border that for a century and a half – from 1541 to 1686 – cut across the overlapping claims of Hungarian nobles and Ottoman administrators;⁷² finally, there was the Ukrainian steppe where Tatar slave-raiding “was a nearly constant threat and inflicted heavy costs.”⁷³

Maybe the Ukraine was the authentic “Wild East” of the emerging Europe. Slave-raiding was said to be “the only sure means of subsistence” for the Crimean Khanate. The Ukraine and Russia did provide a flow of white slaves that is sometimes overlooked when concentrating on the early modern Atlantic slave-trade only.⁷⁴ The character of the Hungarian “frontier” was far less one-sided. Its endemic small-scale warfare cannot be blamed on one side alone.⁷⁵ Border raiding did supply an extra source of income for underpaid garrisons but cannot be said to constitute a mainstay of the economy. In Croatia the Habsburgs tried to keep control of events by instituting the famous Military Frontier; in Hungary proper no such cordon sanitaire was established before the eighteenth century. The Ottomans had effectively destroyed the Serb and Bulgarian nobility; in Hungary, they only succeeded in driving the aristocracy into a sort of internal exile in the Northern and Western counties of the realm. But the Hungarian magnates and their private militias retained the power to

only concerned with abolishing the international trade in black slaves, see C. Northcote Parkinson, *Britannia Rules. The Classic Age of Naval History 1793–1815* (London 1977), 174.

⁷² Rothenberg, *Military Border* I, 124, notes that “the last flurry of Turkish incursions” actually took place between 1835 and 1846, long after Metternich had proved himself to be a staunch defender of the Ottoman Empire. See Friedrich Spigl, *Repressaliengefechte an der kroatisch-türkischen Grenze in der Zeit von 1809–1845* (Vienna 1882). In my youth, the Austrian public was treated to a romantic TV-version of that milieu in a series about Omar Pasha alias Michael Latas (1806–1871), an Austrian officer who switched sides to join the Turks in 1828.

⁷³ Brian L. Davies, *Warfare, State and Society on the Black Sea Steppe, 1500–1700* (London 2007), 23.

⁷⁴ Ivanics, “Crimean Khanate”, 193; Rogerson, *Last Crusaders*, 95, claims: “In this period the soft steppe-land underbelly of Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine and Southern Russia was milked of about twenty thousand sad souls a year by Tartar raiders.” Charles King, *A History of the Black Sea* (Oxford 2004), 116, reduces that figure to 10,000 a year for the 16th century; the Cossacks favourite way of retaliation, at least during the 17th century, was piracy in the Black Sea. For a general overview see Manfred Pittioni, ed., *Die muslimische Sklaverei. Das “vergessene Verbrechen”* (Vienna 2018); Murray Gordon, *Slavery in the Arab World* (New York 1989).

⁷⁵ Marc L. Stein, *Guarding the Frontier. Ottoman Border Forts and Garrisons in Europe* (London 2007), has based his study explicitly on a comparison with the American concept of “frontier”, whereas Rothenberg, *Military Border* I, 125, emphasized the difference between “the seeds of democracy and social mobility” in Frederick J. Turner’s thesis and the “highly despotic and all-pervading paternal despotism” of the Austrian version; however, at least in the early stages the status of Austrian *granicari* obviously did have its attractions vis-à-vis Croatian serfs.

hit back. Thus, old-style European feudal customs had at least as much to do with the lawless character of the Hungarian “frontier” as the Asiatic traditions attributed to the Ottomans.⁷⁶

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⁷⁶ Ironically, during the 19th century the lack of an intermediate ruling-class – except for the Orthodox Church – may have reinforced the violent and chaotic nature of Balkan guerrilla warfare. In the early modern period it was the other way round.

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Paschalis M. Kitromilides*

National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

Spinozist Ideas in the Greek Enlightenment**

Abstract: In this paper I discuss the religious ideas and religious criticism voiced by a Greek eighteenth-century philosopher, Christodoulos Efstathiou from Acarnania, also known by the pejorative surname Pamblekis (1730?–1793). He is known in Greek intellectual history on the basis of three works, *Αληθής Πολιτική* (True Politics) published in 1781, *Περί Φιλοσόφου* (On Philosopher), published in 1786, and *Περί Θεοκρατίας* (On Theocracy), published in 1793. The paper presents an analysis of the criticism of the clergy, the Church and organized religion voiced in the latter work. It is argued that Christodoulos's religious ideas were inspired by the historical criticism of religion that emanated from the ideas of Spinoza and thus he could be considered a rare representative of the Radical Enlightenment in the Greek Enlightenment tradition and its broader Southeastern European context.

Keywords: Radical Enlightenment, religious criticism, anticlericalism, Spinozism, Orthodox Church

In the broad debate on the “radical Enlightenment”, which has renewed in substantial ways our understanding of the intellectual history of Europe prior to the French Revolution, it has been suggested that as a consequence of the impact of Spinoza's arguments it became possible to distil from the Dutch philosopher's thought “a complete system of social, moral, and political ideas built on philosophical principles totally incompatible with authority, tradition, and revealed religion, which could be effectively popularized and infiltrated into the consciousness of the non-academic reading public, without readers necessarily even realizing they were imbibing Spinozism.”¹

* pkitrom@eie.gr

** An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Conference of the International Society for Intellectual History, Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria, June 2017.

¹ Jonathan Israel, *The Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity* (Oxford University Press, 2001), 431.

I do not wish on the present occasion to go into the debate on the character and limits of the radical Enlightenment. I will attempt instead to illustrate the claim concerning the far-reaching, chronologically and geographically speaking, impact of the heritage of Spinozist ideas on continental Europe by drawing attention to the evidence supplied by a totally ignored and until very recently essentially inaccessible text, which registered in substantial ways this heritage without ever mentioning the name of the controversial progenitor of the radical Enlightenment.

I am referring to a work with the characteristic title *On Theocracy*, published anonymously in modern Greek at Leipzig in 1793 but with certainty attributed to one of the few genuine representatives of the radical Enlightenment who wrote in Greek, the encyclopaedic philosopher Christodoulos from Acarnania, known in the sources with the pejorative surname Pamplekis, ascribed to him by his detractors.² Biographical information on Christodoulos is limited but we do know that as a student he was connected with one of the major Enlightenment experiments in Greek culture, the Athonite Academy under Evgenios Voulgaris in the 1750s. We also know that he travelled in Italy and in central Europe where he published two books, one anonymously in Venice in 1781 and another under his name in Vienna in 1786. His first book was a Greek translation of the *La véritable politique des personnes de qualité* by Remond de Cours, a rather conventional text, to which, however, Christodoulos added extensive comments modernizing the arguments put forward by the seventeenth-century courtier author of the original. The second book was much more interesting and openly aligned to the Enlightenment. It appeared under the title *Of philosopher, philosophy, physical, metaphysical, spiritual and divine principles*. It consisted of translations and adaptations of entries on the subjects listed in the title from the *Encyclopédie* of Diderot and D'Alembert. In this text Christodoulos talks extensively of Newton and his work in physics and mentions the names of many philosophers, including Wolff, Locke and Descartes. His real philosophical hero appears to be Leibniz because, Christodoulos suggests, through his monadology he managed to harmonize the understanding of the physical phenomena of nature with a conception of the spiritual power that rules the world. In this book Christodoulos refers twice to Spinoza's philosophy of nature only to reject it and call it a frought, because Spinoza, he claims, makes all things in nature their own cause.³ His objection to Spinoza and his followers, "who are called materialists", is based on their refusal of the existence of spiritual powers and the reduction

² On Christodoulos and his place in the Greek version of the "Radical Enlightenment", see Paschalis M. Kitromilides, *Enlightenment and Revolution. The Making of Modern Greece* (Harvard University Press, 2013), 251–253.

³ Περὶ Φιλοσόφου, φιλοσοφίας, φυσικῶν, μεταφυσικῶν, πνευματικῶν καὶ θεῶν ἀρχῶν (Vienna 1786), 301.

of everything to material nature, which, however, following the scholastics, they endow with mind.⁴

Christodoulos's philosophical views brought him into conflict with professional and ideological antagonists, who were more philosophically conventional and obviously found insufficient his condemnation of Spinozist materialism. The ideological and personal confrontation that ensued in the environment of the Greek and Balkan Orthodox community of Vienna, where Christodoulos had settled as a private tutor and proofreader in printing establishments, pushed things to extremes. His enemies circulated a hostile satire in the guise of a religious service attacking Christodoulos for heresy and atheism. He replied in kind with his treatise *On Theocracy*, which is a vehement denunciation of the clergy, the Church and the fundamentals of Christian belief, without, however, espousing atheism.⁵

What I propose to do in what follows is to outline his religious criticism and try to appraise the relation of his arguments to Spinozist ideas in order to illustrate the variety of religious radicalism espoused and articulated by Christodoulos in the context of late Enlightenment religious thought. Although in November 1793 he was condemned posthumously by the Patriarchate of Constantinople, the highest authority in the Orthodox Church, as a follower of the doctrines of Spinoza, the affinity of his ideas with those of Spinoza can only hypothetically be perceived in his text. The name of the Dutch renegade is never mentioned in this text, although Christodoulos's definition of God (= God is a necessary and infinite substance, independent of any other external cause, subject to its own natural necessity [...], having as equally necessary and infinite predicates extent and intellect)⁶ recalls that of Spinoza in the *Ethics*. It is impossible, however, to document any form of intertextuality between Christodoulos's text and the work of Spinoza.

It would be more historically relevant to suggest that all that Christodoulos writes on religion derives from the heritage of religious criticism, which had its distant origin in the philosophy of Spinoza, but a century later had become more diffused as an almost commonplace questioning of conventional religious orthodoxy. Thus in Christodoulos's texts, especially in *On Theocracy*, we encounter formulations, definitions and arguments which reflect the intellectual climate associated with Spinoza's religious thought, in the form it had been ren-

⁴ Ibid. 333–334.

⁵ Christodoulos from Acarnania, *Απάντησις ἀνωνύμου πρὸς τοὺς αὐτοῦ ἄφρονες κατηγοροῦς ἐπονομασθεῖσα περὶ θεοκρατίας*, [A Response by Anonymous to His Foolish Detractors Entitled *On Theocracy*], 2nd ed., ed. P. M. Kitromilides (Athens: Cultura, 2013; hereafter cited as *On Theocracy*). The new edition contains an extensive introductory study on the broader significance of the Pamphlektis case, 9–56.

⁶ *On Theocracy*, 214–215.

dered as a shared substratum of religious dissent during the later phases of the age of the Enlightenment.

Let us examine the textual evidence more closely. Christodoulos himself rejects categorically the charges of his enemies for atheism and pantheism. As it had also been the case in his earlier work *On philosopher*, his critical religious attitude does not derive from the espousal of atheism but from a conception of a rationalized religious belief as an element of a broader critical epistemological position. At this philosophical level his conception of God as an “infinite and necessary substance” could not of course be identified with the conception of a personal God as understood in Judaism or Christianity.

The decisive element which defines the religious attitude that pervades *On Theocracy* is an unconditional and uncompromising anticlericalism. The criticism of the clergy to which Christodoulos resorts, nevertheless, is not limited to the denunciation of the excesses of the clergy in matters of personal morality, economic behaviour, misguidance and deception of the simpler masses of the Christian people through the cultivation of superstition and the exercise, through the manipulation of fears abetted by superstition, of tyrannical power over them. All of these issues are extensively and mercilessly treated in his pages and from many points of view set the background and produce the critical vocabulary of anticlericalism that will be voiced by the radical strand in the Greek Enlightenment in the following decades.

Christodoulos, however, does not stop at this vociferous version of social criticism. He goes several steps further beyond the denunciation of the moral and pastoral failures of the clergy to the questioning and refutation of many central and fundamental theses of the sacred tradition of the church, especially teachings concerning the communion of the Saints and the place of the prophets in the plan of Divine Providence for the salvation of humanity. At this point Spinoza’s historical criticism of the Bible in the *Tractatus theologico-politicus* can be detected in the distant background. Christodoulos, however, is much more violent in his expressions and does not spare words and denigratory adjectives in characterizing all these holy presences in the make-up of the religious world of the traditional Churches of Christian Europe, Orthodox and Roman Catholic. His most biting argument that prophets and saints were impostors and were used only as a mechanism for the imposition of “theocracy” upon the simple-minded believers place him unquestionably outside the community of the faithful of the Orthodox Church.

The views by means of which Christodoulos articulates his religious criticism do not represent a conversion to Protestantism, which Christodoulos explicitly rejects denying that he was a follower of Luther.⁷ We cannot furthermore detect a straightforward espousal of the views of Spinoza, which as we saw are

⁷ *On Theocracy*, 122.

only critically referred to in Pamblekis's earlier work. The historical criticism of the Bible and of the Christian Church, reflect with reasonable clarity relevant views and ideas of the religious thought of the Enlightenment. To this kind of argumentation Christodoulos had been obviously exposed by studying the relevant entries in the *Encyclopédie*, on which he had also drawn in composing his earlier work. That had been an apprenticeship in the "enlightenment", which means "virtue and philosophy", as Christodoulos himself explicitly mentions in the opening sentence of his proemium to the work *On Theocracy*.⁸

The broader appraisal that Christodoulos articulates in this light in considering the practice of the Church and its ministers turns out to be deeply radical and subversive of the established order of things in the ecclesiastical space of the Orthodox East, an order of things he calls *theocracy*.

Theocracy is the continuous and persistent will of the clergy to exercise total power upon the minds of the laity by means of the manipulation of religious feelings and metaphysical fears.⁹ On these issues "enlightenment", in whose pursuit Christodoulos feels existentially committed, leads him to frontal collision with the entire structure of power and exploitation, which he perceives, as an independent and emancipated observer, to be integrated at the heart of the ecclesiastical polity. His enemies and detractors were the closest and most familiar representatives of that awesome, as he understands it, product of darkness and corruption.

The term *theocracy*, which Christodoulos uses as a characterization and at the same denunciation of the system of thought and practice of his enemies, is used in modern Greek for the first time by Christodoulos. Obviously the term is not modern Greek. Its authorship belongs to the first-century A.D. Hellenizing Jewish historian Josephus Flavius, who coined the term in order to describe the polity of the ancient Hebrews. Christodoulos must with certainty have encountered the term, if not in the editions, of Josephus's works in the Greek original that had been available since the early sixteenth century, at least in the pages of the *Encyclopédie*, from which he had gleaned the material of his book *On philosopher* in the mid-1780s. In the relevant entry in the *Encyclopédie*, volume XVI, pp. 210–212, the careful reader can notice the origins of all the ideas and interpretations that Christodoulos would transfer to the Greek vocabulary of philosophical and religious criticism. In the *Encyclopédie* entry "théocratie", we find the definition that was going to be employed by Pamblekis: "theocracy is a government of a nation directly by God, who exercises his sovereignty over it and announces his will through the medium of prophets and clergy". It is also pointed out that the unique example of a "true theocracy" was that of the ancient Hebrews. Accordingly Christodoulos in explaining the term theocracy cites ex-

⁸ Ibid. 141.

⁹ Ibid. 179–184.

tensively the example of the Hebrews (“first theocracy”).¹⁰ He goes on to offer other examples of theocratic regimes, citing Islamic and Christian models, but insists on the more purely theocratic organization of the Jewish people (second theocracy).¹¹

The broader question that arises from the consideration of the “Pamblekis case” concerns the relevance of the evidence of the particular case to the understanding, in more general terms, of the religious thought of the Enlightenment and of the contribution of religious criticism to intellectual change in early modern European culture. On this level of analysis the fragments of the historical picture supplied by the Pamblekis case might be fitted into a more general tapestry of ideological conflict and intellectual problematization.

Beyond its significance for understanding issues involved in the interplay of religious criticism and intellectual change in the culture of the Greek Enlightenment, placed in the wider comparative framework of the evolution of religious ideas and criticism in the intellectual history of early modern Europe, Pamblekis’s *On Theocracy* could be seen as a Greek offshoot, as an expression in the Greek language, of the problems and soul-searching provoked by the propagation of Spinoza’s ideas and by the consequences of these ideas for the formation of moral conscience. On the evidence of his work Christodoulos could be seen to move in the orbit of religious skepticism and of the criticism of the sacred, which emanated from what has been described, by the great Italian historian of religious ideas Antonio Rotondò, “the centrality of doubt”.¹² Pamblekis’s ideas and personal tragedy, which resonates painfully in his last work, could and should be interpreted and appreciated in connection and as part of living through the doubt of religious belief as a personal struggle of intellectual liberation. This is precisely how the connection between religious criticism and intellectual change works in the actual flow of historical experience through the drama, most of the time, of the personal life of individuals who feel they cannot compromise with injustice, hypocrisy and obscurantism.

¹⁰ Ibid. 175–178.

¹¹ Ibid. 179–184.

¹² See *La centralità del dubbio. Un progetto di Antonio Rotondò*, eds. Camilla Hermanin and Luisa Simonutti (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2011).

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Miloš Ković*

Faculty of Philosophy
University of Belgrade

Great Britain and the Consular Initiative of the Great Powers in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1875

Abstract: This paper examines on the basis of the British archival records the attitude of Great Britain towards the consular initiative of the Great Powers in August and September 1875. It was the first joint undertaking of the European powers in the Great Eastern Crisis (1875–1878). In the British view, it was the ambitions of the League of the Three Emperors in the Balkans and Austria-Hungary in Bosnia-Herzegovina that underpinned the initiative. Although the consuls had limited authority, Britain accepted the initiative with reluctance and mistrust – and only after the Ottoman Empire had given its consent. When the League of the Three Emperors proposed more extensive powers for the consuls in order to prevent the failure of their mission, both the Ottoman Empire and Great Britain declined this proposal. This meant that the Consular Mission could accomplish nothing.

Keywords: Great Britain, Great Eastern Crisis, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbs, Austria-Hungary, Consular Mission

Great Britain's policy in the Great Eastern Crisis of 1875–1878 has been discussed in several monographs.¹ This Great Power played the key role in that momentous crisis. However, the British attitude towards the Serbian question, which was central to the uprising in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the wars of 1876–78, has not been explored. Serbian historiography has not produced a comprehensive and thorough account of the events that constituted the Great Eastern Crisis either.² Therefore, this paper, which aims to continue earlier re-

* mkovic13@gmail.com

¹ R. W. Seton-Watson, *Disraeli, Gladstone and the Eastern Question. A Study in Diplomacy and Party Politics* (London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd, 1971); R. Millman, *Britain and the Eastern Question 1875–1878* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979); M. Ković, *Disraeli and the Eastern Question* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2011).

² Nevertheless, there are some important works: M. Ekmečić, *Ustanak u Bosni 1875–1878* (Belgrade: Službeni list SRJ and Balkanološki institut SANU, 1996); V. Čubrilović, *Bosanski ustanak 1875–1878* (Belgrade: Službeni list SRJ and Balkanološki institut SANU, 1996); M. Stojanović, *The Great Powers and the Balkans 1875–1878* (Cambridge: Cambridge Uni-

search on Britain's policy towards the Serbian question at the time, particularly in Bosnia-Herzegovina,³ may be seen both as a study on British foreign policy and as a contribution to Serbian national history and to our knowledge, still not complete, of the Great Eastern Crisis.

There is no study of the consular initiative. It lasted from 19 August to 28 September 1875 and marked the first attempt of the European Powers to take a joint stance in the Great Eastern Crisis. A similar commission composed of consuls appointed by the Great Powers had been formed in 1861, during an earlier uprising in Herzegovina, but it had failed because of the lack of Ottoman support. The main goal of the consular mission in 1875 was to prevent the insurgency from spreading to neighbouring countries and turning into an international crisis. It also ended in failure, but it showed, as will be seen, that London was right in suspecting that the members of the Three Emperors' League intended to take initiative and try to exploit the events in the Balkans to their own benefit.⁴

The intentions of the signatories of the Three Emperors' League had raised doubts ever since it came into being in 1873. Formally, it was a reconstruction of the alliance between Russia, Austria-Hungary and Germany, the three strongholds of European conservatism and the guardians of the order established at the Congress of Berlin in 1814–1815. In the spirit of the Holy Alliance, these three empires declared that they would protect the peace of Europe against all revolutionary attempts after the bloodshed of the Paris Commune.

versity Press, 1939). See also the publicist but thorough monograph by V. M. Gutčić, *Opšta i diplomatska istorija ustanka u Hercegovini i Bosni iz 1875–1878*, 2 vols. (Belgrade: Filip Višnjić, 2016).

³ For a synthesis on the Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina, see D. T. Bataković, *The Serbs of Bosnia and Herzegovina: History and Politics* (Paris: Dialogue, 1996); see also several articles by M. Ković: "Vojvoda Argajl i Istočno pitanje", *Tema: Akademik Dragoljub Živojinović, Mitološki zbornik* 19 (2008), 129–145; "Velika Britanija i Bosna i Hercegovina u Istočnoj krizi (1875–1878)", *Zbornik za istoriju Bosne i Hercegovine* 6 (Belgrade: SANU, 2009), 159–173; "The Beginning of the 1875 Serbian Uprising in Herzegovina: The British Perspective", *Balcanica* XLI (2010), 55–71; "Misija Roberta Lojd-Lindzija u Srbiji 1876", *Istorijski časopis* LX (2011), 377–391; "Britanci i Hadži-Lojina revolucija: Konzul Edvard Frimen o pobuni i okupaciji Sarajeva 1878", *Mešovita gradja/Miscelanea, n.s. XXXII* (2011), 381–414; "Dve imperije: Britanci i Osmanlije (1774–1923)", in *Turska: regionalna sila?* eds. M. Djurković and A. Raković (Belgrade: Institut za evropske studije, 2013), 191–204; and "Disraeli's Orientalism Reconsidered", *Serbian Political Thought* 7–13 (2016), 5–14.

⁴ On the 1875 consular mission see D. Harris, *A Diplomatic History of the Balkan Crisis of 1875–1878: The First Year* (Stanford, London and Oxford: Stanford University Press and Oxford University Press, 1936), 88–98; Čubrilović, *Bosanski ustanak*, 87–92; Stojanović, *The Great Powers and the Balkans*, 22–25; Millman, *Britain and the Eastern Question 1875–1878*, 23; Seton-Watson, *Disraeli, Gladstone and the Eastern Question*, 21; Ković, *Disraeli and the Eastern Question*, 90. On the 1861 consular mission see D. Berić, *Ustanak u Hercegovini 1852–1862* (Bileća and Gacko: SPKD Prosvjeta, 2007), 700–770.

The three emperors committed themselves to opposing not just socialists, but also nationalists. They agreed specifically to prevent the realisation of “Greater Serbian” plans and any disturbance of the Balkan *status quo*.⁵

The Conservative Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli (1874–1880) was in control of British foreign policy. He was convinced that the Three Emperors’ League had been formed in order for its members to exploit the decline of France and Britain’s isolation for the purpose of dividing the remaining Ottoman lands. The League had emerged immediately after the defeat of France in the war against Prussia and the North German Confederation. The two western Powers, Britain and France, had for centuries guaranteed the maintenance of the Ottoman Empire in Europe. On the other hand, the three conservative Powers had been traditional enemies of the Turks. The Romanovs and Habsburgs had waged war against the Ottomans for centuries and expanded their domains at their expense. Furthermore, Russia seized the opportunity offered by the Franco-Prussian War to announce the return of her fleet to the Black Sea, which annulled the most important stipulation of the Paris Peace Treaty of 1856.⁶

The Serb uprising in Herzegovina only strengthened Disraeli’s concerns. Both he and the Foreign Secretary, Lord Derby (Edward Henry Stanley, earl of Derby), were convinced that Austria-Hungary had stirred the rebellion. The same was believed in Paris. Indeed, the uprising was preceded by the secret meeting of the Viennese Crown Council in January 1875 which decided that Austria-Hungary would occupy Bosnia-Herzegovina if there was a danger that these provinces might be absorbed by Serbia and Montenegro. The military governor of Austrian Dalmatia, General Gavriilo Rodić (Gabriel von Rodich), undertook a series of measures designed to collect information and strengthen the position of the Dual Monarchy in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In April and May, Emperor Francis Joseph visited Dalmatia and heard the complaints made by Herzegovinian Roman Catholics. He then met in Kotor with the Russian protégé, the Montenegrin Prince Nicholas Petrović, who requested support from the Three Emperors’ League for Montenegro’s territorial expansion into Herzegovina immediately after their meeting. The Herzegovinian Catholics started the rebellion in June 1875. Eye-witnesses reported that Austro-Hungarian flags had been flown over their positions. It was only later that the uprising spread to the Orthodox Christian part of Herzegovina, while it almost died down in

⁵ V. M. Khvostov, *Istoria diplomatii II 1878–1914* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel’stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1963), 34–41; G. H. Rupp, *A Wavering Friendship: Russia and Austria 1876–1878* (Harvard, London and Oxford: Harvard University Press and Oxford University Press, 1941), 17–23.

⁶ Ković, *Disraeli and the Eastern Question*, 76–90.

the Catholic areas. The aid for the insurgents was coming from Dalmatia and Montenegro.⁷

London also suspected Serbia of being involved in Austro-Russian plans to dismember the Ottoman Empire since the time Prince Milan Obrenović had paid visit to Vienna and met Emperor Francis Joseph and Foreign Minister, Count Julius Andrassy, in early August 1875. Moreover, volunteers from Serbia were going to Herzegovina. The suspicions were confirmed by the news that Prince Milan, upon returning from Vienna, had dismissed the peaceful cabinet of Danilo Stefanović. After the election, the winning Liberal and bellicose government of Stevča Mihailović took office. During the consular mission in Herzegovina, reports constantly reached London on volunteers crossing from Serbia into Bosnia, bashi-bozouk detachments making raids from Bosnia into Serbia and troops being gathered on the border between Serbia and the Ottoman Empire.⁸

There were two other bad news that reached the Foreign Office. The rebellion spread to Bosnia on 19 August. On the same day, the Russian Ambassador in Constantinople, Count Nikolai Pavlovich Ignatiev, took the initiative that the Powers signatories of the 1856 Paris Treaty send their consuls to Herzegovina in a mediating mission.

That could be the start of a definitive division of the Ottoman Empire between Russia and her allies from the Three Emperors' League. But Prince Alexander Mikhailovich Gorchakov, Russian Foreign Minister, did not want the situation in the Balkans to deteriorate at that particular moment. He was in favour of the closest collaboration within the League and with other Powers with a view to bringing about a joint solution to Balkan crises. As a diplomat who had matured during the era of the Holy Alliance, he was in principle against all revolutionary turmoil, including the movements of Balkan nationalists. However, the influential Count Ignatiev had no confidence in any agreements with the western Powers which, in his view, used to combine against Russia and he was particularly distrustful of Austria-Hungary. Unlike Gorchakov, he did not want to negotiate about Austria-Hungary's entry into Bosnia-Herzegovina in order to protect Russian interests in the eastern Balkans. He argued for settling disputes in direct cooperation between Russia and Turkey, without any involvement of the western Powers. The aim was to work towards the formation

⁷ Rupp, *Wavering Friendship*, 34–45; M. Ekmečić, *Dugo kretanje između klanja i oranja: Istorija Srba u Novom veku (1492–1992)* (Belgrade: Zavod za udžbenike, 2007), 278–279; M. Ekmečić, *Stvaranje Jugoslavije*, 2 vols (Belgrade: Prosveta, 1989), vol. II, 283–284; Ković, “Beginning of the 1875 Serbian Uprising”, 55–71.

⁸ Ekmečić, *Stvaranje Jugoslavije*, II, 255–256, 277–282; Č. Popov, “Srbija u Istočnoj krizi 1875–1878”, in *Istorija srpskog naroda*, vol. V-1, ed. V. Stojančević, (Belgrade: Srpska književna zadruga, 1981), 369–373; Ković, *Disraeli and the Eastern Question*, 92–93.

of an alliance between the Balkan national states under the auspices of Russia. That alliance and Russia would dismantle Ottoman rule at a favourable moment. Russian statesmen were divided into supporters of Ignatiev's policy and supporters of the much more influential Gorchakov.⁹

The idea of taking consular initiative to deal with the rebellion was ascribed to Gorchakov's people in Russian diplomacy, namely the Consul in Dubrovnik, Alexander Petrovich Yonin, and the Ambassador in Vienna, Eugen Petrovich Novikov. Count Ignatiev was on the leave of absence at the moment when that decision was made in St. Petersburg. Emperor Alexander II, who personally favoured Ignatiev but always sided with Gorchakov, yielded to the demand of the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister, Count Andrassy, to have negotiations held in Vienna. Shortly before the initiative, in August 1875, a special "consultative conference", a "centre for agreement" among the Powers of the Three Emperors' League was established in Vienna. It was there that the instructions for the consular mission would be formulated in cooperation between Andrassy, pro-Austrian Novikov and the German Ambassador, General Hans Lothar von Schweintz.¹⁰

Ignatiev claimed that Austria-Hungary was involved in the outbreak of the Herzegovinian rebellion. He was bitter because Gorchakov was drawing European Powers, especially those inimical to Russia, into resolving the crisis and because Andrassy was now in charge of the situation. Ignatiev also believed that the rebellion had broken out too early. Austria-Hungary alone could benefit from it and it was thus necessary to make peace between the insurgents and the Turks. But Ignatiev had to follow Gorchakov's instructions. Ignatiev instructed Consul Ivan Stepanovich Yastrebov, who was sent from Shkodra to Herzegovina, to follow what had been agreed in Vienna, to examine together with other consuls what was the real situation and to encourage the insurgents to negotiate with the Sultan's envoy in Herzegovina, Server Pasha.¹¹

At the same time, Ignatiev's main efforts were directed towards preventing Andrassy's initiatives, suspecting them to be designed to lead to the occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary. In order to diminish the influence of the Viennese "consulting mission" in the second half of August, Ignatiev summoned in his residence a conference of the Ambassadors of the Great Powers, signatories of the Paris Treaty, to consider together the consular reports and agree on further steps to be taken. Among the decisions reached at that conference, outlined by Ignatiev, it was agreed that all Powers, that is to

⁹ V. M. Khevroлина, *Nikolai Pavlovich Ignatiev: Rosiskii diplomat* (Moscow: Kvadriga, 2009), 114–119, 136–151, 186–190, 219–221, 226–266.

¹⁰ Harris, *Diplomatic History*, 72–83.

¹¹ N. P. Ignatiev to I. S. Yastrebov, Pera, 14 August 1875, in *Rossia i vosstanie v Bosnii i Gertsegovine 1875–1878: Dokumenti* (Moscow: Indrik, 2008), 55–57.

say their representatives in the consular mission, make their communications through Yastrebov, who was the only one with codes and special couriers to be in contact with Constantinople. But the idea of a conference in Constantinople failed because of the opposition of Gorchakov and his chief associate in the Foreign Ministry, Baron Alexander Henrikovich Jomini. Ignatiev bitterly noted that another attempt on his part to keep in check Vienna's ambitions in Bosnia-Herzegovina had failed.¹² As British records will show, he would not give up easily.

The British Ambassador in Constantinople, Sir Henry Elliot, reported to Lord Derby on 20 August 1875 on the initiative originating from Vienna which was supposed to be presented to the Sultan on behalf of the Three Emperors' League. In Elliot's view, the purpose of the consular mission was to let the insurgents know that they should give up the rebellion, that they could expect no external support, and to direct them to negotiate with the Sultan's special envoy. The French Ambassador in Constantinople said that his country was prepared to join the initiative. The Grand Vizier was also willing to accept the idea, but he asked of Britain to be part of it. He stressed that the Ottoman government had "perfect confidence" in the British Consul in Sarajevo, William Richard Holmes, who had already been in Mostar.¹³

Disraeli was rather suspicious, but he was left with little choice after the Turkish consent. He told Derby that he "does not like it, but see it is inevitable".¹⁴ Replying to Elliot's dispatch, Derby accepted the participation of Britain in the consular mission, but only "with great reluctance" and because the Sublime Porte had requested it. He underlined that the British government "would have thought it better that the Porte should have dealt with the insurgents, without foreign intervention of any kind".¹⁵ Disraeli, Derby and Elliot made it clear that, in their view, the best solution for the crisis in Herzegovina was a rapid suppression of the rebellion by the Ottomans.¹⁶

Elliot observed that the Porte's success in suppressing the insurrection would depend on the willingness of Austria-Hungary to prevent volunteers, money and munitions crossing from Dalmatia into Herzegovina. An advantage of the consular mission was, in his view, that the Habsburg Monarchy com-

¹² N. P. Ignatiev, *Zapiski (1875–1878)* (Sofia: Otechestveni front, 1986), 78–90; Khevtrolina, *Nikolai Pavlovich Ignatiev*, 262–265.

¹³ The National Archives (TNA), Foreign Office (FO), 1875, 424, vol. 39 (Telegraphic), Elliot to Derby, Therapia, 20 August 1875; TNA, FO, 1875, 424, vol. 39 (No. 460), Elliot to Derby, Therapia, 20 August 1875.

¹⁴ 24 August 1875, *The Diaries of Edward Henry Stanley, 15th Earl of Derby (1826–93). Between September 1869 and March 1878*, ed. J. Vincent (London: UCL, 1994), 239.

¹⁵ TNA, FO, 1875, 424, vol. 39 (No. 258), Derby to Elliot, London, 24 August 1875.

¹⁶ Ković, *Disraeli and the Eastern Question*, 87–90; Harris, *Diplomatic History*, 87–88.

mitted itself to non-interference and cooperation with the other Powers.¹⁷ In a telegram of 27 August, he relayed to Derby the joint instructions for the consuls which stipulated, along with the necessity that the insurgents lay down their arms, negotiate with the Sultan's envoy and abandon any hope in the support of the Great Powers, that the consuls were forbidden to advocate any other measures beyond what the insurgents might agree on with the Porte's representative.¹⁸ Derby was also informed about the instructions which Server Pasha had received just before he had left for Mostar.¹⁹

Elliot forwarded to Derby on 26 August the instructions he had sent to Consul Holmes, a member of the mission. Those were, as had been agreed, in compliance with the instructions of the other Ambassadors in Constantinople. Moreover, Elliot was familiar with the instructions Ignatiev had given to Yastrebov. Holmes was ordered to hear the complaints made by the insurgents so as to be able to report on the real situation, to be reserved and not to give them any reason to believe that they could receive support. It should be made clear to them that there was no prospect whatsoever of receiving assistance from the Great Powers. Holmes had to direct them to negotiating with the Sultan's envoy. The consuls were not expected even to be present during those negotiations. Holmes was supposed to conduct himself in such a manner as to make it clear that he was a representative of a Power friendly to the Ottoman Empire. In particular, he had to avoid anything that might look to the Turks as a joint undertaking of the consuls and to make sure he was working on his own. Holmes was also informed about the pressure which the Great Powers exerted on Serbia and Montenegro to stop them from aiding the insurgents in Bosnia-Herzegovina.²⁰

Holmes was the first member of the consular mission to arrive in Mostar on 20 August together with Dervish Pasha, Governor-General of Bosnia unpopular among the local Christians. Even without Elliot's instructions, Holmes' reports brimmed with sympathy for the Turks and hostility to the insurgents. On 22 August he reported that Dervish Pasha cried while he was describing how the insurgents "spitted and roasted two children before their parents, whom they afterwards murdered".²¹ He was dead set against the Christians' demand and the subsequent decision of the Porte to replace Dervish Pasha. He depicted, based on the news he received from the Turks, how the rebels burned Nevesinje

¹⁷ TNA, FO, 1875, 424, vol. 39 (Telegraphic), Elliot to Derby, Therapia, 25 August 1875; TNA, FO, 1875, 424, vol. 39 (No. 474), Elliot to Derby, Therapia, 25 August 1875.

¹⁸ TNA, FO, 1875, 424, vol. 39 (Telegraphic), Elliot to Derby, Therapia, 27 August 1875.

¹⁹ TNA, FO, 1875, 424, vol. 39, Musurus Pasha to Derby, London, 11 September 1875, Inclosure 1 and 2.

²⁰ TNA, FO, 1875, 424, vol. 39 (No. 479), Elliot to Derby, Therapia, 26 August 1875, Inclosure 1 and 2.

²¹ TNA, FO, 1875, 195, vol. 1061, Holmes to Elliot, Mostar, 22 August 1875.

to the ground and killed all the women and children they laid their hands on in the town.²²

Elliot also claimed, based on Server Pasha's reports from Mostar, that the insurgents "pillaged and destroyed upwards to seventy villages".²³ Commenting on the letters which John Russell, earl of Russell, favourable to the rebels, published in the *Times* and the reports on Turkish atrocities in Herzegovina of the *Times* correspondent, William James Stillman,²⁴ Elliot professed that such writing served only to encourage the rebellion and further aggravate the situation. He argued, contrary to the *Times*, that the rebels were but bandits and that the whole movement was characterized by pillaging and killing of Muslim civilians.²⁵ As it would turn out, this was the beginning of a split in British public opinion in which Elliot would be labelled a soulless executor of the Benjamin Disraeli government's immoral policy in the East.

On 23 September, there were news about the end of the mission and the return of the consuls to Mostar. They reported that the rebels refused to negotiate with the Turks except in the presence of the representatives of Great Powers and demanded an armistice prior to the negotiations.²⁶ That was, however, outside the scope of the consuls' authorisation.

Holmes also reported that the insurgents wanted a ceasefire and a guarantee from the European Powers. Having returned to Mostar on 22 September together with his Russian and French colleagues, he informed Elliot about the failure of the consular mission. He reiterated his conviction that "Serbian agitation" caused the rebellion and that the insurgents would be content to remain under the rule of the Sultan with some improvement in their material situation. The Austro-Hungarian, German and Italian consuls arrived in Mostar the next day.²⁷

Holmes submitted to Elliot a detailed report on the consular mission on 28 September and forwarded it to Derby two days later. The consuls moved

²² TNA, FO, 1875, 195, vol. 1061, Holmes to Elliot, Mostar, 30 August 1875; TNA, FO, 1875, 195, vol. 1061, Holmes to Elliot, Mostar, 2 September 1875.

²³ TNA, FO, 1875, 424, vol. 39 (No. 535), Elliot to Derby, Therapia, 8 September 1875.

²⁴ See W. J. Stillman, *Herzegovina and the Late Uprising: The Causes of the Latter and the Remedies* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1877); R. Subić, *Stilman i Balkanski ustanci (1866–1878)* (Belgrade: Phoenix Press, 2016), 77–103.

²⁵ TNA, FO, 1875, 424, vol. 39 (No. 543), Elliot to Derby, Therapia, 10 September 1875.

²⁶ TNA, FO, 1875, 424, vol. 39 (Telegraphic), Buchanan to Derby, Vienna, 25 September 1875.

²⁷ TNA, FO, 1875, 424, vol. 39 (No. 6), Holmes to Derby, Mostar, 24 September 1875, Inclosures 1, 2; TNA, FO, 1875, 424, vol. 39 (Telegraphic), Elliot to Derby, Therapia, 26 September 1875; TNA, FO, 1875, 424, vol. 39 (No. 594), Elliot to Derby, Therapia, 26 September 1875.

through Herzegovina in two groups. The British, Russian and French consuls headed to Nevesinje and Gacko, whereas their Austro-Hungarian, German and Italian colleagues went to Trebinje and Zupce.²⁸ From 12 to 22 September, Holmes' group spent their time in Nevesinje and then among the Herzegovinian rebels in Biograd and Trusina. They did not meet with the principal leaders; they were told these were busy fighting the Turks. Still, they managed to gain a clear insight into their demands. After all the failed reforms and agreements, the insurgents did not believe any guarantees coming from Server Pasha and other Turks. They requested the presence and guarantees of the Great Powers in the course of negotiations. The consuls could not promise that, but Holmes nevertheless concluded in his report that under the existing critical conditions the mediation of the Great Powers was a better possibility than the increasingly likely Austro-Hungarian occupation. At the advice of the rebels, the consuls headed to Bileća instead of Gacko, but they were surprised to run into Turkish troops near Stoce marching to attack the insurgents gathered in Trusina for their talks with the consuls. Once they had realised that their lives were in danger, since the Turks attacked the rebels only a few hours after their departure, and that the confidence of rebels in them would be destroyed by the Turkish offensive, the consuls cancelled the visit to Bileća and decided to wait for the return of their colleagues in Mostar.²⁹

A few days later, Holmes was given a detailed memorandum in Italian on the position and demands of the insurgents titled "To the Representatives of European Powers in Bosnia-Herzegovina" and dated 17 September 1875. This "pamphlet", as Holmes called it, was translated into English and forwarded to his superiors in London on 1 October. It was a lengthy and thorough account of all taxes imposed by the state and *sipahis*, and of the available evidence about judicial abuses and the absence of even the basic protection of life, honour and prop-

²⁸ The French Consul in Mostar, Dozon, travelled with Holmes and Yastrebov. The mission which headed to Trebinje in order to meet with Trivko Vukalović, Luka Petković and Mića Ljubibratić in Zupce consisted of the Austro-Hungarian Consul in Shkodra, Von Wassitsch, the German Consul in Dubrovnik, Von Lichtemberg, the Italian Consul in Bosnia and a member of the Danube Commission, Durando. See Harris, *Diplomatic History*, 90.

²⁹ TNA, FO, 1875, 195, vol. 1061, Holmes to Elliot, Mostar, 28 September 1875; also see TNA, FO, 1875, 195, vol. 1061, Holmes to Elliot, Mostar, 23 September 1875; TNA, FO, 1875, 195, vol. 1061, Holmes to Elliot, Mostar, 24 September 1875; TNA, FO, 1875, 195, vol. 1061, Holmes to Elliot, Mostar, 26 September 1875; TNA, FO, 1875, 195, vol. 1061, Holmes to Elliot, Mostar, 27 September 1875. Elliot also had to report to Derby that the Russian and French Consuls had informed their Ambassadors in Constantinople how the Turks had used the occasion of the meeting between the Consuls and the insurgents to attack the latter. See TNA, FO, 1875, 424, vol. 39 (Telegraphic), Elliot to Derby, Therapia, 24 September 1875; TNA, FO, 1875, 424, vol. 39 (No. 607), Elliot to Derby, Therapia, 28 September 1875; Harris, *Diplomatic History*, 93.

erty in Herzegovina. In conclusion, it was suggested that Bosnia-Herzegovina be established as an autonomous state with a Christian ruler, or “to put a strong body of troops from some neighbouring State into the principal cities of the Province”, along with the appointment of representatives of European Powers to judicial institutions.³⁰

Holmes had to admit that he could not dispute the content of this document, although he pointed out that it was biased in favour of the insurgents. On the basis of that document and his own observations, he compiled a list of the most necessary tax, judicial and administrative reforms.³¹ Holmes would later report to Derby and Elliot that the author of the memorandum was “a very respectable man, the Catholic Bishop of Mostar”.³²

However, Yastrebov and Ignatiev did not share Holmes’s pessimism. Yastrebov’s report was written with much sympathy for the rebels. He described how they cried while telling him about Turkish atrocities. He enumerated the same complaints as the abovementioned memorandum which clearly had been handed to him as well. His report, however, also contained the complaints by the insurgents about the avarice of the Greek bishops and their hostility to the Herzegovinian Serbs.³³

In conversations with Elliot, Ignatiev criticised the instructions for the consuls coming from Vienna and pointed out Andrassy’s ambitions. For those reasons, he stressed that he preferred the idea of cooperation between all the Powers, signatories of the Paris Treaty of 1856, to the action of the Three Emperors’ League. He assured the British Ambassador that the autonomy of Bosnia-Herzegovina, which was known to have been championed by Gorchakov, was impossible of achievement. He suggested that the consuls be authorised to discuss matters with Server Pasha and then make a plan of reforms in Bosnia-Herzegovina. He also assured Elliot that all the Ambassadors in Constantinople backed this idea. It was necessary, he claimed, to bring the uprising to an end, secure peace and introduce moderate reforms, which could be applied to other parts of the Ottoman Empire as well. Elliot was satisfied with what he had heard from Ignatiev. However, he rejected the proposal, stating that Turkey and Britain had accepted the idea of the consular mission only with the clear and limited mandate. From a conversation with the French Ambassador in Constantinople, De Bourgoing, Elliot understood that he was prepared to send instructions for expanding the scope of the consular mission. Moreover, Ignatiev handed an official note to Elliot, in which he proposed that the consuls exchange opinions

³⁰ TNA, FO, 1875, 195, vol. 1061, Holmes to Elliot, Mostar, 1 October 1875.

³¹ TNA, FO, 1875, 195, vol. 1061, Holmes to Elliot, Mostar, 5 October 1875.

³² TNA, FO, 1875, 195, vol. 1061, Holmes to Elliot, Mostar, 13 October 1875.

³³ I. S. Yastrebov – N. P. Ignatiev, Mostar, 15 sentiabria 1875, *Rossia i vosstanie v Bosnii i Gertsegovine*, 117–120.

with Server Pasha and then send to the Ambassadors in Constantinople “si c’est possible, un project de solution pratique et acceptable pour tout le monde”. This document also claimed that the Ambassadors of Austria-Hungary, France and Italy were in agreement with such a step. Ignatiev again warned Elliot in a letter of Vienna’s ambitions, suggesting that it would be much better to settle the crisis in Constantinople in cooperation with the Porte.³⁴ However, Elliot remained cautious and persistent, and instructed Holmes again not to participate in the joint actions of the consuls. He asked to be informed about the course of the mission and the discussions with Server Pasha and fellow consuls.³⁵

Andrássy expressed his moderate optimism in a conversation with the British Ambassador in Vienna, Andrew Buchanan, on 23 September. He waited for an official report on the consular mission before considering further measures for calming down the rebellion.³⁶ Four days later, Andrássy still had no detailed information. He then received a telegram from the consul in the presence of Buchanan in which a suggestion was made that negotiations between the insurgents and Turks be held in Dubrovnik with representatives of the Great Powers present. Andrássy considered it too big a concession to be asked of the Turks and expressed hope that the proposal could be modified. He also pointed out to Buchanan his dissatisfaction because of the articles published in the *Times*, which argued for the autonomy of Bosnia-Herzegovina.³⁷

Odo Russell, Ambassador in Berlin, noted the full unanimity of the members of the Three Emperors’ League in advocating what he described as “improvement of the *status quo*” in Bosnia-Herzegovina. He observed a general favourableness of German public opinion to the insurgents.³⁸ As expected, the news about favourable attitude of Russian public opinion towards the insurgents was coming from St. Petersburg.³⁹ Reports from Constantinople, Vienna, Berlin and St. Petersburg only contributed to London’s fear of the League’s

³⁴ TNA, FO, 1875, 424, vol. 39 (No. 565. Very confidential), Elliot to Derby, Therapia, 17 September 1875; TNA, FO, 1875, 424, vol. 39 (No. 596.), Elliot to Derby, Therapia, 26 September 1875; TNA, FO, 1875, 424, vol. 39 (No. 597.), Elliot to Derby, Therapia, 26 September 1875, Inclosures 1, 2, 3, 4.

³⁵ TNA, FO, 1875, 424, vol. 39 (Telegraphic), Elliot to Derby, Therapia, 26 September 1875.

³⁶ TNA, FO, 1875, 424, vol. 39 (No. 303. Confidential), Buchanan to Derby, Vienna, 23 September 1875.

³⁷ TNA, FO, 1875, 424, vol. 39 (Telegraphic), Buchanan to Derby, Vienna, 27 September 1875.

³⁸ TNA, FO, 1875, 424, vol. 39 (No. 397. Confidential), Russell to Derby, Berlin, 24 September 1875.

³⁹ TNA, FO, 1875, 424, vol. 39 (No. 307. Very confidential), Doria to Derby, St Petersburg, 12 October 1875.

plans. Elliot appreciated that Ignatiev was trying to take over initiative from the hands of Andrásy, but that could not do away with his suspicions.

The League's Ambassadors in Constantinople met on 26 September to discuss the reports of the consuls. The mission could be regarded as a failure, since the consuls reported that the insurgents refused to negotiate without guarantees from the European Powers. The Ambassadors thus broadened the scope of the consular instructions. They were told to have a discussion with Server Pasha after their conversations with the rebels and then to propose measures which would satisfy both sides. The French Ambassador gave his assent later.⁴⁰ On the same day, Ignatiev tried, as has been seen, to win over Elliot for that idea.

On the next day, however, the consuls, including Holmes, accepted the proposal made by the Austro-Hungarian member of the mission, Conrad von Wassitsch, to the effect that following an armistice a conference be organised between the insurgents and Turks in Dubrovnik in which the consuls would also take part.⁴¹ Judging by Andrásy's reaction of the same day, he either feigned surprise in front of Buchanan or was not familiar with the idea of a conference in Dubrovnik.

The Porte, however, firmly refused the broadening of the consular mission. The Grand Vizier, Mahmud Nedim Pasha, informed Elliot as early as 28 September that he had not accepted the proposal for a conference in Dubrovnik between the consuls, Server Pasha and the insurgents. Elliot welcomed such decision, but he suggested to the Grand Vizier to have Server Pasha receive the consuls individually instead of having a conference in order to avoid an incident. After that, Mahmud Nedim Pasha reminded Server Pasha that he was only authorised to listen to the consuls' individual opinions and not to negotiate with them collectively.⁴²

Elliot then found out that it was the German Ambassador in Constantinople, Baron Carl von Werther, who had suggested the failed proposal to the Grand Vizier. Mahmud Nedim Pasha had replied to him that the consular mission had been ended after they had listened to the rebels, relayed to them the views of their governments and received from them a negative answer. But Ignatiev assured Elliot that his German colleague had made no proposal to the Porte and only passed on the view of the consuls.⁴³

⁴⁰ Harris, *Diplomatic History*, 94.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* 94–95.

⁴² TNA, FO, 1875, 424, vol. 39 (Telegraphic), Elliot to Derby, Therapia, 28 September 1875, 2.50 p.m.; TNA, FO, 1875, 424, vol. 39 (No. 604), Elliot to Derby, Therapia, 28 September 1875.

⁴³ TNA, FO, 1875, 424, vol. 39 (Telegraphic. Confidential), Elliot to Derby, Therapia, 28 September 1875, 3.00 p.m.; TNA, FO, 1875, 424, vol. 39 (No. 610. Confidential), Derby to

Holmes confirmed, however, that there had been such an agreement. His telegram made it clear that he had agreed to the proposed measures:

My colleagues of Austria, France, Germany and Russia have received instructions to suggest a practical project acceptable to all for the pacification of the country. We agree that the only means would be a recognized constitution: Armistice: Reunion of the Commission with Server Pasha at Ragusa [Dubrovnik], where his Excellency and the insurgents, with the co-operation, of the European Delegates, could easily discuss the details with the Pasha. This must be arranged at Constantinople, and I shall take no steps in this matter, without your Excellency's instructions.⁴⁴

This development was, in fact, a consequence of Ignatiev's initiatives with a view to preventing Austria-Hungary's rule over Bosnia-Herzegovina. But a conference in Dubrovnik was not his idea. After the Turks' rejection and the British resistance, Ignatiev backed down temporarily. He informed Elliot that he had instructed Yastrebov not to exceed the initial mandate of his mission. The French Ambassador in Constantinople did the same.⁴⁵ Elliot then reminded Holmes again of his instructions.⁴⁶ Derby sent a special telegram to approve of Elliot's message.⁴⁷

Ignatiev now claimed that the initiative for expanding the consuls' authorisation had originated with Andrassy and that he had even proposed that a conference in Dubrovnik be held between the consuls and the rebel leaders, without Turkish representatives. The Russian Ambassador continued, however, to persuade Elliot that the Great Powers ambassadors in Constantinople rather than in Vienna should deal with the solution of the crisis in Bosnia-Herzegovina.⁴⁸

In a long report to Derby written on 28 September, Elliot assessed that at the moment there were two, almost equally bad, possibilities for resolving the crisis. The first one was an intervention on the part of the Three Emperors'

Elliot, London, 28 September 1875; TNA, FO, 1875, 424, vol. 39 (No. 611. Confidential), Derby to Elliot, London, 29 September 1875.

⁴⁴ TNA, FO, 1875, 195, vol. 1061, Holmes to Elliot, Mostar, 27 September 1875; TNA, FO, 1875, 424, vol. 39 (No. 600), Elliot to Derby, Therapia, 28 September 1875.

⁴⁵ TNA, FO, 1875, 424, vol. 39 (Telegraphic), Elliot to Derby, Therapia, 28 September 1875, 10.00 p.m.; TNA, FO, 1875, 424, vol. 39 (No. 604), Elliot to Derby, Therapia, 28 September 1875.

⁴⁶ TNA, FO, 1875, 424, vol. 39 (Telegraphic), Elliot to Derby, Therapia, 28 September 1875, 11.00 p.m.

⁴⁷ TNA, FO, 1875, 424, vol. 39, (Telegraphic), Derby to Elliot, London, 1 October 1875, 2.25 p.m.

⁴⁸ TNA, FO, 1875, 424, vol. 39 (No. 606. Confidential), Elliot to Derby, Therapia, London, 28 September 1875; TNA, FO, 1875, 424, vol. 39 (Confidential. Telegraphic), Elliot to Derby, Therapia, 8 October 1875.

League, without other Great Powers, to the benefit of Austria-Hungary, which the British diplomat considered the main threat in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The second possibility was an international conference, which could bring about the harmful involvement of Powers in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire, but that would perhaps allow Britain to rein in the ambitions of the League and Austria-Hungary. Elliot did not trust Ignatiev, but he concluded that the latter really aimed at keeping Andrásy in check.⁴⁹

The British Ambassador was thus basically in agreement with Holmes's opinion that European mediation would be necessary after all. More importantly, Elliot was correct in his assessment of Ignatiev's intentions. The Russian Ambassador's initiatives were welcome insofar as they could deepen a rift between St. Petersburg and Vienna and halt Austria-Hungary's thrust in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Nevertheless, Britain regarded any broadening of the consular mission as an impingement on the integrity of the Ottoman Empire.

The consular mission finally collapsed on 28 September. The last blow was dealt by the Ottomans and British. The Ottoman Foreign Minister, Safvet Pasha, stated to the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador in Constantinople, Count Ferenc Zichy, that the Porte considered the consular mission over.⁵⁰

The consuls stayed for another several months in Mostar but without any impact on the events. Holmes reported on Server Pasha's declarations of reform to which no one paid any attention.⁵¹ At the same time, he justified his participation in expanding the consular mandate by the danger of Austria-Hungary's expansion into Bosnia-Herzegovina and Russia's preparedness to exploit that to realise her interests in other parts of the Balkans. He repeated that it was necessary to cease conflicts and, given the unwillingness of the Turks to undertake reforms, that that was possible only with the mediation of the European Powers.⁵²

Ignatiev turned to his old idea of separate negotiations between Russia and Turkey with a view to persuading the Porte to carry out the necessary reforms. However, the subsequent Sultan's irades and fermans had no effect on the situation in the rebellious provinces.⁵³

Military tension in relations between Turkey and Serbia also subsided. On 4 October, Prince Milan dismissed the bellicose, Liberal, Serbian government under the pressure of the Great Powers. That was welcomed with relief

⁴⁹ TNA, FO, 1875, 424, vol. 39 (No. 608), Elliot to Derby, Therapia, 28 September 1875.

⁵⁰ TNA, FO, 1875, 424, vol. 39 (No. 631), Elliot to Derby, Therapia, 4 October 1875.

⁵¹ TNA, FO, 1875, 195, vol. 1061, Holmes to Elliot, Mostar, 11 October 1875.

⁵² TNA, FO, 1875, 195, vol. 1061, Holmes to Elliot, Mostar, 13 October 1875.

⁵³ TNA, FO, 1875, 424, vol. 39, Musurus Pasha to Derby, London, 5 October 1875, *Inclure 1*; TNA, FO, 1875, 424, vol. 39 (No. 621), Elliot to Derby, Therapia, 2 October 1875.

in Britain's capital.⁵⁴ Satisfied because of the change of government in Serbia, Disraeli wrote to Queen Victoria that "Herz: business seems virtually settled".⁵⁵ The real complications in the Balkans, however, had just started.

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The consular mission of August-September 1875 was the first joint undertaking of European Powers in the Great Eastern Crisis. Behind this initiative the British statesmen saw the intention of the Three Emperors' League (Russia, Austria-Hungary and Germany) to dismember the Ottoman Empire. Since the initial news of the uprising in Herzegovina had been received, London regarded the ambitions of Austria-Hungary as the main threat to Turkey.

Indeed, Russia showed willingness to follow Austria-Hungary's initiatives in Bosnia-Herzegovina on this occasion as well. The idea of the consular mission was a Russian one, but the instructions for the consuls were written in Vienna. Their limited mandate deprived the consuls from any substantial influence on the developments in the rebellious areas. Their failure to win over the insurgents for negotiations with the Sultan's envoy, Server Pasha, without the mediation of European Powers marked the collapse of the mission. It was sealed with the sudden Turkish attack on the insurgents who assembled to negotiate with the consuls. The failed attempt in late September 1875 to have the consuls' authorisation extended and to allow them to compose a plan of reforms resulted from Count Ignatiev's attempt to transfer decision-making with regard to Bosnia-Herzegovina from Vienna to Constantinople. He wanted in that way to prevent the sliding of Bosnia-Herzegovina into the hands of Austria-Hungary, contrary to the intentions he sensed in Count Gorchakov's entourage.

The British Ambassador in Constantinople, Elliot, appreciated Ignatiev's intention to oppose Austria-Hungary in Bosnia-Herzegovina and, despite all his mistrust, supported him to that end. Nevertheless, Britain regarded the broadening of the scope of the consular mission advocated by the Three Emperors' League as an encroachment on the rights and the very existence of the Ottoman Empire. The refusal of the Porte to accept that idea and the support Britain extended to it marked the definitive end of the consular mission.

⁵⁴ TNA, FO, 1875, 424, vol. 39 (Telegraphic), White to Derby, Belgrade, 6 October 1875; TNA, FO, 1875, 424, vol. 39 (No. 62), White to Derby, Belgrade, 8 October 1875; TNA, FO, 1875, 424, vol. 39 (No. 63), White to Derby, Belgrade, 8 October 1875; TNA, FO, 1875, 424, vol. 39 (No. 66), White to Derby, Belgrade, 9 October 1875; TNA, FO, 1875, 424, vol. 39 (No. 659), Elliot to Derby, Belgrade, 12 October 1875.

⁵⁵ Ković, *Disraeli and the Eastern Question*, 92.

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Mile Bjelajac*

Institute for the Recent History of Serbia
Belgrade

The Austro-Hungarian Creation of a "Humanitarian" Pretext for the Planned Invasion of Serbia in 1912–1913: Facts and Counter-Facts

Abstract: This paper argues that reporting on the Balkan Wars by some of the Austro-Hungarian media and state officials on the ground was not impartial, but rather aimed to obtain international public support for the planned military intervention against Serbia in late 1912 and mid-1913. The primary task of the newly-established Albanische Korrespondenz Büro or Budapest Korrespondenz Büro was to disseminate horrifying news from the Balkan theatre of war, especially on the alleged Serbian misconduct, to the media in Europe and the United States of America. The famous *New York Times*, alongside other papers, put those Austrian-made reports on its front pages. Historians believe that influenced the Carnegie Endowment to start a comprehensive inquiry in the aftermath of the Balkan Wars. As early as the spring of 1913 the propagandist and journalist, Leo Freundlich, published in Vienna his still famous book *Albania's Golgotha: Indictment of the Exterminators of the Albanian People*, calling out for someone to "stop those barbarians": "Tens of thousands of defenceless people are being massacred, women are being raped, old people and children strangled, hundreds of villages burnt to the ground, priests slaughtered. And Europe remains silent!" Austria-Hungary mobilized its army, but its ally Germany pulled back. This paper offers facts listed in those reports as well as stories that circulated at the time, along with the Serbian primary sources intended for internal purposes and some narratives of foreign observers on the ground who were often annoyed with the Korrespondenz Büro's reporting or other papers of the kind. It suggests, however, that responsibility for the atrocities committed in the war still needs to be examined carefully, just like it was concluded long ago: "The wrong they did leave a sinister blot upon their record, but it must be viewed in its just proportion."

Keywords: Austro-Hungary, Serbia, Balkan Wars, "Humanitarian" Pretext.

The 1990s Balkan crisis has once again aroused much interest in Balkan history. A host of analysts or historians was keen on producing theories which would explain deep (historical) roots of these events. Some resorted to "ancient hatreds" or "civilization incompatibilities" as paradigms to explain the "real" roots of the crisis. Somehow, the legacy of the Second World War in the western parts of Yugoslavia was overlooked, and so was the legacy of the First World War in Serbia, not to mention comparative studies of European experience. Instead,

* mile.bjalajac@gmail.com

the emphasis was placed on the Balkan Wars. Media reports or commissions' reports of the time were "reinvented" in the 1990s.¹ In the opinion of some, including Morton Abramowitz, the Balkan conflict once again tormented Europe and "the conscience of the international community, and when our willingness to act has not matched our capacity for moral outrage".² Many jumped to support such views by quoting from "discovered" reports. Even a cursory glance at some well-known accounts would suffice to prove that.³ Historian Maria Todorova felt provoked to respond, finding that the excerpts were grossly taken out of historical context.⁴

My personal experience with the content of official records and many personal papers concerning the issue, in conjunction with the republished reports, aroused my professional curiosity. I set out to go back over my understanding of the issue through the bundle of evidence, and have since published several articles.⁵

¹ *The War Correspondence of Leon Trotsky: The Balkan Wars, 1912–1913* (Pathfinder Press, 1991); *The Other Balkan Wars. A 1913 Carnegie Endowment Inquiry in Retrospective with New Introduction and Reflections on the Present Conflict*, prefaced by George F. Kennan (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment Book, 1993), a reprint of *Report of the International Commission to Inquire into Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1914); Leo Freundlich: *Albanian Golgotha: Indictment of the Extermination of the Albanian People* (Riverdale, NY: Juka Pub. Co., 1998; first published in German, Vienna: J. Roller, 1913), http://www.albanianhistory.net/texts20_1/AH1913_1/html); Dimitrije Tucović, *Srbija i Arbanija. Jedan prilog kritici zavojevačke politike srpske buržoazije* (Belgrade: Most Art, 2011; first published in 1914); *Die Albanische Korrespondenz. Agenturmeldung aus Krisenzeiten Juni 1913 bis August 1914*, ed. Robert Elsie (Munich: Oldenburg, 2012).

² *The Other Balkan Wars*, 1.

³ Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821–1922* (New Jersey: Princeton, 1995); Noel Malcolm, *Kosovo: A Short History* (London: Macmillan Publishers, 1998); Miranda Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian: A History of Kosovo* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); Tim Judah, *The Serbs, History, Myth & Destruction of Yugoslavia* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2000); Francois Grumel-Jacquignon, *La Yougoslavie dans la stratégie française de l'entre-deux-guerres (1918–1935) aux origines du mythe serbe en France* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1999); Holm Sundhussen, *Geschichte Serbiens, 19.-20. Jahrhundert* (Vienna: Bohlaus, 2007).

⁴ Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), esp. Foreword.

⁵ E.g. Mile Bjelajac, "The Other Side of the War: Treating Wounded and Captured Enemies by Serbian Army", in *The Salonica Theatre of Operations and the Outcome of the First World War* (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 2005); Mile Bjelajac, "Instrumentalizacija instrumentalizacije: Uporno oživljavanje propagandne interpretacije o dobrima i lošima na Balkanu tokom i neposredno posle Balkanskih ratova", paper submitted at the International Conference "The First Balkan War 1912/1913: The Social and Cultural Meaning", Vranje June 1–3, 2012.

The period in question has since 1914 been discussed worldwide in historical accounts and personal diaries. This period was always presented as a part of the history of global rivalry among the Great Powers at the time. The discussion about Austro-Hungarian plans and its strife with Serbia is older than the 1990s crisis. The accounts were also based on research conducted in Vienna archives. The reporting of Austrian or British consuls from various parts of the Balkans was performed also in capacity of historians and was cross-examined as well. In brief, neither their reports nor the media coverage of the time were completely impartial, especially after the outbreak of the war and during the "humanitarian crisis" in 1913.⁶ One should bear in mind the words of a British reporter from the Balkan battlefields:

To-day the first and primary object of a belligerent nation is to try and convince the world that the enemy is using or planning to use every dirty underhand trick which could be devised by the human brain. To disseminate this news the agents or representatives of that nation do not hesitate to make use of the Press of a neutral and supposedly impartial people, a Press which in many cases is represented locally by those who have the very best reasons for not being impartial themselves.⁷

The view expressed above can be extended to all involved in the crisis with their respective interests in the region.

In light of their records, the Austro-Hungarian consuls proved sometimes intentionally partial observers. They had to carry out the policy of their ministry, which was hostile to the Serbian interests. Historian Novica Rakočević has shed light on the "Ballhausplatz" mechanisms, which had been in operation since the Annexation crisis of 1908. One example shows the extent of clandestine preparations undertaken in order to disturb Montenegro along its eastern borders. Special agents were sent from Vienna. "On 21 October 1908 the Austro-Hungarian foreign minister Aerenthal informed the ambassador in Athens and the consulates in Salonika and Scutari that he has the intention to recruit and arm the Albanian tribes on the border of Montenegro if the latter should attack Bosnia and Herzegovina." The minister felt that such action might discredit

⁶ Andrej Mitrović, *Prodor na Balkan: Srbija u planovima Austro-Ugarske i Nemačke 1908–1918* (Belgrade: Nolit, 1981; 2nd ed., 2011); Bogumil Hrabak, *Arbanaški upadi i pobune na Kosovu i u Makedoniji od kraja 1912. do kraja 1915. godine* (Vranje: Narodni muzej, 1988); Andrej Mitrović, "Albanians in the policy of Austria-Hungary towards Serbia 1914–1918", in *Serbs and Albanians in the 20th century* (Belgrade: Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 1991), 107–133; Novica Rakočević, "Montenegrin-Albanian Relations 1878–1914", in *Serbia and the Albanians in the 19th and Early 20th Centuries* (Belgrade: Serbian Academy of Science and Arts, 1990), 61–197; Teodora Toleva, *Uticao Austro-Ugarske imperije na stvaranje albanske nacije 1896–1908*, transl. from Bulgarian (Belgrade: Filip Visnjic, 2016).

⁷ By a 'Special Correspondent' [Cyril Campbell], *The Balkan War Drama* (London: Andrew Melrose, 1913), 181. Campbell was a correspondent for the *London Times*.

the consul in Scutari and asked the consul in Salonika if he could quickly supply Albanians with arms, ammunition and an unlimited supply of money. The consuls, for their part, suggested concrete measures: "The consul, however, proposed organizing raids by Mirëditët on Podgorica and the first person he intended to recruit was their priest Dolcia who was known for his avarice. Negotiations with him were to be conducted in Trieste and Rijeka. The ambassador in Athens was more cautious ... Austro-Hungarian consul Kral in Skutari reported that the Catholic Albanian tribes were willing to attack Montenegro, but he feared the Muslim Albanians and Turkish troops in their rear. ... It was necessary to prepare a certain number of arms and ammunition for Albanians." Other Austro-Hungarian diplomatic officials were also involved in recruiting Albanians against Montenegro and they made suggestions; Consul Openheimer developed a plan: "1) To provoke the Montenegrin military command to action and thus pin the Montenegrin army down on the southern border, and 2) Action should be organized in such a way that Albanians seem to be taking up arms for defence, not for attack."⁸

Nothing changed during the new crisis in 1912/13, and consuls again acted alongside Catholic priests. Consul Oskar Prochaska and Vice-consul Pözel in Prizren, Ladislav Tihi in Mitrovica, and others were fully engaged. The rumours that Prochaska was mistreated and even killed by the Serbian Army provoked the Ballhausplatz to send Theodor Edel, special envoy to Serbia, to check the situation of the Austrian consuls himself. According to the report of the Serbian Consul, Milan Rakić, who accompanied him, he told him that no one complained about priests and nuns being mistreated and that no one was kicked out from the Consulate. As for atrocities against Albanians, "he received basically false or exaggerated accusations".⁹

While the "Prochaska Affair" was still shaking public opinion in Austria, the Serbian 3rd Army prepared an entire dossier about the case and sent it to the Supreme Command. One can find an interesting point in Appendix (ad.19) about the letters written on 23 October, sent by Prochaska and seized at the Post Office in Ferizaj (Uroševac). Prochaska claimed that the "Serbian Army bombarded and set Priština on fire and massacred its inhabitants". He labelled Serbs and Montenegrins as savages (*die Wilden*), writing about them with hatred. He reported that 3,000 Albanians from Ljuma/Luma in Prizren were not Turkish regulars. Contrary to his false report on Priština, "no house

⁸ Rakočević, "Montenegrin-Albanian Relations", 167.

⁹ *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije* [Documents on the Foreign Policy of the Kingdom of Serbia; hereafter DSPKS], from 5 October 1912 to 31 December 1912 (Belgrade: Serbian Academy of Science and Arts, 1986, vol. 5/III, doc. 351, Rakić to Pašić, 18 Nov. (1 Dec.) 1912.

was destroyed or burned in Priština and peaceful inhabitants were protected". Both letters were immediately handed over to Prince Alexander.¹⁰

Vice-consul Pözel in his report from Prizren to the Ballhauseplatz of 23 March 1913 described British involvement in his mission: "Miss Gibl was sent by the British consul from Uskub to gather data on Serbian atrocities, under the pretext of delivering 5000 Fr from the Macedonian relief fund to inhabitants of Prizren. She met the Serbian Mayor, a hodja and Don Paskvale Krasnići, a Catholic priest. She had demanded from Don Paskvale to inform her on the issue. He then turned to the vice-consul for information and for instruction what stance to take and how to speak."¹¹

One who analyzes the media coverage of the time will easily see that many of the reports, basically second-hand accounts, circulated as unquestionable "proofs" even in some scholarly accounts. A few examples would be enough to demonstrate that the media coverage must be verified before any further use.

The Norwegian Colonel Henrik August Angell and his fellow countrymen (including Captain Nandrup, medical doctors Øyvind Platou, Gran, Videre, Harold Natvig, Captain Dr H. Schen, Captain Dr Bang, nurse Magda Dirhorn), showed great admiration for the Serbian Army, its men, its wounded and, especially, for the way they treated the locals. Angell had been attached to the Montenegrin and Serbian army as an observer long before the wars, so he knew the language. In his published memories he felt invited to challenge propaganda and claims made by the "Hungarian" press and reporters as well as their further dissemination elsewhere in the European press. In the chapter entitled "Unspeakable brutality' by Serbian soldiers (!?)" he remembers completely fabricated reports by a Budapest correspondent, which were published in British dailies. One of these reports spoke of the thousands and thousands of massacred and hanged Albanians along the road from Kumanovo to Uskub. Angell explained: "The correspondent lied far beyond modest arrogance, since there are no trees along the road but a shrub here and there, not big enough to hang even a cat. Near Kumanovo there are only dozens of poplars but no hanged Albanians there. ... I happened to be there and I stayed at the police chief's house ... I have been all around, and I followed the trail of Turkish retreat and Serbian advancement. I had to be blind and deaf not to see or hear about thousands hanged." Since all the Norwegians were there (Kumanovo, Uskub), especially Captain Nandrup, a member of the international police department in Uskub, they knew about the crimes committed against Christians before the hostilities and witnessed the subsequent cases of revenge but, as they put it, these were "understandable cases". On one occasion Colonel Angell himself shared a shelter

¹⁰ Ibid. doc. 262, pp. 362–364, Report of 7/20 Nov. 1912.

¹¹ Hrabak, *Arbanaški upadi i pobune*, 19 (based on HHSA, PA XXXVIII, box 405, No 3458, von Pözel from Prizren, 23 March 1913, tlg. no.15; tlg. no.10. of 7 March 1913).

with Muslim refugees and saw how troops looked after them, providing them with food and transport. All they got from their local compatriots in the village was tobacco. The refugees felt safe with Serbs, so when the Serbs moved, they immediately moved too. In conclusion of his chapter, he repeated: "I and several of my Norwegian friends saw Macedonian villages occupied by Serbs, we saw how police officers dealt with them, we accompanied Serbian troops, and we saw and came to view them in a completely different light from those sitting in Budapest. I left with full admiration of how the Serb civilian and military authorities dealt with the population in the new territories. In Kočani, I saw them feeding helpless women and children, distributing flour and firewood, and on equal or even larger scale than in Monastir..."¹²

It was noted that some horrifying rumours regarding the attitude of the commander of the Ibar Army, General Živković, towards prisoners and civilians had circulated among a small number of correspondents on the ground. Allegedly, he had not sent back any prisoners whatsoever and one among them had learned from the Serbian officer "that none were expected". A British correspondent commented, "Let us hope that he is only boasting." He also expressed professional scepticism about what he heard or read.¹³ If one turns to official or private diaries of the time, one will easily find where the prisoners of war were sent from the western front, what their ethnic origin was etc. The first POWs captured by the Ibar Army arrived in Kraljevo on 15/28 October 1912. Those captured on Mt Javor were sent to Užice (180).¹⁴ On the other hand, the Serbian press reported on Serbian refugees fleeing to Serbia or hiding in the woods of the very same region, as well as on the atrocities committed by local Turkish irregulars (*basibozuk*).¹⁵

General Mihailo Živković was also the main figure in the *New York Times* article "Serbian army left a trail of blood" (based on Hungarian reports) on 31 December 1912. He was linked to the execution of 950 Turkish and Albanian

¹² Henrik August Angell, *Naar et lidet Folk Kjamper for Livet. Serbiske soldaterfortællinger* (Kristiania: H. Aschehoug & Co. (W. Nygaard), 1914), Serb. ed.: *Kad se jedan mali narod bori za život. Srpske vojničke priče* (Belgrade: Itaka, 1995), 19, 20, 73–77.

¹³ *Balkan War Drama*, 184. He also added a comment: "Enough, however, has been said to show how in many cases the Press is used, often, alas, deliberately, to stir up the vilest passions of men."

¹⁴ Stanoje M. Mijatović, *Iz rata u rat, 1912–1920: ratni dnevnik* (Belgrade: Potez, 2004), 14; General Miloje Jelisijević, "Ibarska vojska u ratu 1912 godine", *Ratnik XI-XII* (1928), 27, stated that enemy casualties during the battle for Novi Pazar were 300 dead, 700 wounded and around 200 captured.

¹⁵ *Politika* (Belgrade), 30 Sept./13 Oct. 1912; 5/18 Oct. 1912; 11/24 Oct. 1912,

notables in Sjenica. The alleged witness was a doctor of the Red Cross.¹⁶ Had such doctor really existed, he could not have seen General Živković there since the small town of Sjenica was out of his reach. Another formation with a separate chain of command was in charge there – the *Javor* Brigade.¹⁷ In contrast to the *NYT* article, a personal diary recorded the General's attitude as follows: "Today (8/21 November) is the great Turkish feast, Kurban Bayram. Early in the morning, after the hodja's call to prayer, Muslims have gathered at the mosque, young and old, and teenagers too ... Our commander of the Ibar Army [General Živković] issued the strict order to his troops to behave in a decent manner and act kindly towards Muslim women and hodjas."¹⁸ The new authorities made sure that the Muslims in Skopje celebrated Bayram according to their custom.¹⁹

The Belgrade- and Sofia-based correspondent, Leon Trotsky (alias Otto Antid), suggested that even Pavel Nikolayevich Miliukov, a member of the Carnegie Commission, was ready to blame the Serbian side, even King Peter himself: "Perhaps Mr. Miliukov heard in well informed circles in Serbia, where this amazing episode has become well known, how King Peter, encountering on the way to Kumanovo a party of Albanian prisoners who were being led away under the escort, stood up in his car, in all his little height, and shouted: 'What use are these men to me? They should be killed, not by shooting, that would be a waste of ammunition, but with clubs.'"²⁰

If Trotsky did not invent this rumour, he obviously did not try to investigate it. In reality, according to the Serbian press, the King left Vranje by train and travelled directly to Skopje, where he arrived at 3:15 p.m. on 19 October (1 November) accompanied by the Prime Minister and his nephew Prince Paul. His arrival took place nine days after the Battle of Kumanovo and, also, the railway did not pass through Kumanovo at the time. At the Skopje railway station, the King was welcomed by dignitaries of all three religious' communities, Serbian, Bulgarian and Muslim. By his gestures King wanted to encourage Muslims. During his brief stay he paid a visit to the Sultan Murat Mosque and

¹⁶ Zločini nad Albancima u Balkanskim ratovima, http://sh.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zločini_nad_Albancima_u_Balkanskim_ratovima, Wikipedia, *NYT* article: "Serbian Army left a Trail of Blood" (Say Hungarian Reports), 31 December 1912.

¹⁷ Mile Bjelajac and Predrag Trifunović, *Između vojske i politike. Biografija generala Dušana Trifunovića 1880–1942* (Belgrade: INIS, Kruševac: Muzej Kruševca, 1997). Trifunović was the Chief of Staff in the *Javor* Brigade (12,000 men). I have never seen any document that suggests any difficulties with the civilian population in their war zone. On the contrary, it was frequently reported that refugees returned to their homes soon. A person who alleged that Sjenica was the scene of such horror apparently did not know that it was too small a place to have as many as 950 notables.

¹⁸ Mijatović, "Iz rata u rat", 17 (entry for 8 Nov. 1912).

¹⁹ *Srpske novine*, 10/23 Nov. 1912, report of 9/22 Nov. from Skopje.

²⁰ Trotsky, *The Balkan Wars*, 290.

invited the representatives of all religious groups to dinner. He also paid visits to all hospitals.²¹ With all this view, the real question is what was the purpose of Trotsky's false account – to discredit his political opponent Miliukov or to “expose” the Serbian king at all cost, or perhaps both?

The publicist and leftist political propagandist, Leo Freundlich, vehemently claimed: “The Serbs came to Albania not as liberators, but as exterminators of the Albanian people. The Ambassadors’ Conference in London proposed drawing the borders of Albania according to ethnic and religious statistics to be gathered on site by a commission. The Serbs have hastened to prepare the statistics for them with machine guns, rifles and bayonets. They have committed unspeakable atrocities.”²² Was this really the intention of the Serbian government? Is this claim based on the verified information? What were his sources at this early stage of the crisis? He himself would encounter Albania for the first time in 1915.

His fellow socialist on the Serbian side, Kosta Novaković, came out with the claim that some 120,000 Albanians had been killed.²³ On the other hand, some historians are not inclined to accept his estimates and turn to the testimonies of Lazër Mjeda, Catholic Archbishop of Skopje, who claimed that 25,000 Albanians had been killed in Kosovo by the end of 1912. Noel Malcolm writes: “This was in agreement with the other reports in the European Press, which had given an estimate of 20,000 in early December.”²⁴ But who could supply the European Press with accurate information amidst the war? Who supplied the consuls with such information? How did Archbishop Mjeda collect his data for the Muslim enclaves?

According to historian Tamara Scheer, no media in Austro-Hungary questioned the accuracy of the reports on atrocities in the Balkan Wars committed by belligerents, namely Serbs and Montenegrins. The *Marburger Zeitung* expressed sympathies for the Turks, claiming that all decent Europeans should feel the same.²⁵

²¹ *Politika*, 22 Oct./2 Nov. 1912; 27 Oct./9 Nov. 1912.

²² Freundlich, *Albania's Golgotha* (http://www.albanianhistory.net/texts20_1/AH1913_1/html).

²³ Kosta Novaković, *Srbizacija i kolonizacija Kosova* (http://sh.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zločini_nad_Albanicima_u_Balkanskim_ratovima).

²⁴ Malcolm, *Kosovo*, 254. Malcolm considers the claim that 120,000 fled in exile probably overestimated. He referred to the Austrian official record that 20,000 men from the Gjakova district and 30,000 from Prizren had fled into Bosnia, together with 21,000 from the Muslim clans of those areas (ibid. 358); Sundhaussen gives the estimates of 20,000 killed and 60,000 forced into exile (H. Sundhaussen (Serbian edition), 238).

²⁵ Tamara Sheer, “The First Balkan War from the Perspective of Habsburg Empire’s German Media”, in *The Balkan Wars 1912/1913: New Views and Interpretation* (Belgrade: Strategic Institute and Institute of History, 2013), 277–291.

If we doubt the trustworthiness of the aforementioned claims and reports disseminated throughout the media in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, should we fully trust the opposite claims by the journalists who had access to battlefields, including a German one (correspondent to the A.B.C and *Leipziger Nachrichten*)? So, what about correspondents for the French *Journal*, *L'Illustration*, the Swedish *Svensk Lakartidning*, *Alfonbladet-Dagen*, *Stocholms Dagblad*, not to mention the Russian press or the letters and diaries of many foreign medical staff assigned to various hospitals.²⁶ At least they offer a more complex approach and picture. Interestingly, it did not take them long to notice differences in conduct between the regular armies, even the Ottoman one, and irregular troops on all sides. Unlike Austro-Hungarian reporting, they observed misdeeds of Albanians in the recent past and present.

It is worth clarifying a frequently misused episode of a sudden Albanian attack across the demarcation line in September 1913 directed towards Djakovica, Prizren and Debar, with about 10,000–12,000 troops against 3,000 Serbian and Montenegrin troops stretched along a 140 kilometres long line.

Instead of reporting on what really happened, we can confirm an obvious tendency in the Austro-Hungarian media at the time to put the blame on the Serbian government's maltreatment of the new subjects that provoked an uprising, that is to say behind Serbian lines. Count Berchtold and General Conrad von Hötzendorf firmly insisted on this interpretation. The official line was followed by Albanische Korrespondenz Büro, which put emphasis on the alleged killing of some 1,070 Albanians, including several notables, by Serbian authorities. In addition, reports on the advancement of the Serbian 8th Regiment to Peshkopia were far from the truth. In order to toe the line, the well-organized Albanian attack across the demarcation line that came after Serbian demobilization and the Bucharest Treaty in August 1913 was or still is downplayed as a simple revolt that started in the village of Fshaj. The story goes like this: "In September, after a Serbian officer tried to rape an Albanian woman and had been shot dead by her husband in the village of Fshaj, that village and two others were destroyed and thirty-five Albanians burnt to death." Then the revolt spread across Ljuma.²⁷ The *Radničke novine* republished the Albanische Korrespondenz report that the Malisori tribe took to arms because of terrible crimes committed by Serbian troops in Fshaj (Išan). Serbs had attacked the village and completely burned it down along with four families as well as six persons in the village of Spisaj.²⁸ This report made no mention of rape.

²⁶ Johannes Tangeberg, "Semi-barbarians, courageous patriots and Orientals: Swedish views of the Balkan Wars in 1912–1913", *Annual of Social History* 11/1 (2004), 55–69.

²⁷ Malcolm, *Kosovo*, 257–258 (based on the Kohlruess report, 18 Sept. 1913 (Fshaj); *Cana Socialdemokracia*, p. 147 (Fshaj).

²⁸ Albanische Korrespondenz Büro, Vienna 16 September 1913; *Radničke novine*, Telegrami, 18 Sept. 1913.

How then should we take Leon Trotsky's statement that the Serbian Army forbade rape and made efforts to strictly ensure the observance of that order? Trotsky gives the example of how at night, when the troops stopped in a Muslim village, a patrol led by an officer first collected all Turkish women and moved them into one part of the village: "The soldiers were billeted in houses only when men were left. If some women were left in harem, access to it was barred to the soldiers by an N.C.O. under threat of most severe punishment. The soldiers often grumbled like, 'If the Turks came into our country they would not behave like this.' In Monastir, a soldier was severely punished for lifting a Turkish woman's veil as a joke."²⁹ Did it depend then on individuals whether they would obey orders or not?

A person that followed media reports at the time would never find out what was the basic attitude of the Serbian military and leadership as regards POWs, the wounded or civilians and, consequently, what was really considered improper behaviour of individuals or groups. There is no discussion of the reprisals permitted under the international war law.³⁰

Good Faith towards Civilians, Conduct in Practice and Different Narratives

Several days before the war was declared, the Serbian Minister of War, Colonel Radivoje Bojović, had requested that the Chief of the General Staff, General Radomir Putnik, issue the following order to all troops: "In the future war, when our Army crosses the border it must handle with the utmost care and spare peaceful citizens, women and children from suffering. Force should be applied only against those who side with the enemy in armed resistance."³¹ The spirit of the aforementioned instructions was captured in King Peter's war proclamation to his Army, as well as in the proclamation made by Prince Alexander, Commander-in-Chief of the First Army (126,000 men). Finally, the instructions were included in the order issued by the Chief of Staff of the Supreme Command, General Putnik:

²⁹ Trotsky, *The Balkan Wars*, 121.

³⁰ *Medjunarodno ratno pravo sa pravilnikom* (Belgrade), 3, ad. 17 (When reprisal is allowed: When one belligerent does not respect the Law of War, the other one has the right to return "eye for an eye". The order for reprisal should be issued by the commander of the troops against whom violation of the law was committed ... Retaliation must not be applied on peaceful civilians.)

³¹ Velimir Ivetić, "Brutality of all the participants of the Balkans Wars according to Holm Sundhaussen. The case of Serbia in the First Balkan War", paper submitted at the International Conference "First Balkan War 1912/1913: The Social and Cultural Meaning", Vranje 1–3 June 2012, 8–9 (based on Vojni arhiv [Military Archives; hereafter VA], Belgrade, P 2, f 1, g 2, doc. 1).

There, my soldiers, our brothers wait for us. All those longing for freedom, peace and order wait for us there. There, you will find not only Serbs, but also Albanians of different confessions. Do not attack those among them who do not take side with Turkey and who accept us in a friendly manner; furthermore, do not attack their children, their homes and their lands. Soldiers, be led by this grand and illustrious popular saying: War to the enemy, brother to the friend! Brother is dear no matter what his religion is! Peter, signed by his own hand³²

A similar attitude was expressed in Prince Alexander's proclamation:

The enemy who is defeated and surrendered should be treated as human beings, mercifully, because they then cease to be enemies and become only humans, and humans should be treated kindly. The houses, properties, honour and pride of the defeated enemy and their families should be preserved and protected just like the houses, lands and honour of our own people; this is not only required by the laws of humanity and Orthodoxy, but this is also heroic behaviour, thus the enemy will prefer to surrender instead of pursuing infinite combat, because they know that they face heroes, and that neither they nor their wives and children should fear such soldiers...³³

In his last instruction to the division commanders before the outbreak of hostilities, General Putnik said: "The Albanians should be treated nicely, but when nice behaviour does not help, force should be applied."³⁴

King Peter also addressed all Serbs on 5/18 October and emphasized once again that they would bring freedom, brotherhood and equality to all inhabitants, including Serbs, Serbs of Muslim faith, Albanian Christians and Muslims "with whom they have lived for thousand and three hundred years sharing good and bad".³⁵ This proclamation was commented on in foreign circles and the press. *Die Zeit* (20 October) underlined that the King did not want to ignite religious fanaticism and to mobilize the Cross against the Crescent. He portrayed harsh conditions in Old Serbia very accurately. Unlike the Bulgarian proclamation, there were no ambiguities in his words.³⁶ The same daily com-

³² An extract from King Peter's Proclamation to his Army, October 1912, in Bjelajac, "The Other Side of the War", (based on Aleksandar M. Stojićević, *Istorija naših ratova za oslobodjenje i ujedinjenje od 1912–1918* (Belgrade: Štamparija Gl. Saveza Srpskih Zemljorad Zadruga 1932), 69). For a distorted translation of this proclamation see Freundlich, *Albania's Golgotha* (http://www.albanianhistory.net/texts20_1/AH1913_1/html).

³³ An extract from Prince Alexander's order to his First Army, in Bjelajac, "The Other Side of the War", 128.

³⁴ The instruction of General Radomir Putnik, Chief of the General Staff, during his meeting with the highest officers of the First Army in Vranjska Banja, 3/16 Oct. 1912, in Dragutin Milutinović, *Timočka divizija II poziva u I i II Balkanskom ratu 1912–1913* (Belgrade: Štamparija Skerlić, 1926), 12.

³⁵ *Srpske novine*, 6/18 Oct.

³⁶ *Srpske novine*, 11/23 Oct. 1912, Review of the Press.

mented on the Sultan's proclamation not without irony – "Too late". The commentator referred to the Sultan's call to his troops to spare women and children of suffering.³⁷

Soon after the fall of Monastir (6/19 November), the Serbian Supreme Command disseminated the general instructions as regards the attitude towards civilian population and emphasized that all necessary measures would be undertaken to eradicate any behaviour that could provoke unrest, suspicion and mistrust among civilian population in the new territories. Once again it was stressed that all citizens must be treated equally. As regards the Turkish and Albanian population, the instructions demanded that military and other authorities should take a firm, but legally justified, attitude. But of no less importance was the demand that Turks and Albanians be protected from any violent acts by the native Serbian population, especially "since the Serbian population was still intoxicated by hatred and eager to take revenge". It was repeatedly forbidden to violate any religious rights, property and family. In addition, it was strictly forbidden to take property and supplies from civilians without paying an adequate price. The subordinate authorities were warned not to give false promises and to respect previous agreements. In selecting police personnel, special attention was to be paid to their moral qualities and strict control was to be imposed over all personnel, whether senior or newly selected. In all places where Muslims showed loyalty and lived in large numbers, the subordinate authorities should not hesitate to select them for the posts in municipalities. The instructions also referred to the month-long experience with irregulars and their impact on peace and order: "Pay attention to many armed persons moving about ever since and calling themselves 'komitaji', who in fact are plundering, taking revenge and committing violence against local people. They must be disarmed and punished or brought before the military court."³⁸ Finally, *Decree on the Management of the Liberated Areas* was introduced on 14 December 1912. The pre-war municipal boundaries were preserved, just like Muslim courts for Muslims in the domain of matrimonial law, in the eleven new territorial districts.³⁹

Prime Minister Nikola Pašić, in part guided by political reasons, demanded that Albanians be treated humanely. He permanently insisted that the Supreme Command should treat Albanians of both faiths with care, especially Muslim lords and other notables, given their dominant influence on the com-

³⁷ *Srpske novine*, 13/26 Oct. 1912, Review of the Press: *Die Zeit*, 22 Oct. 1912 ("Too late").

³⁸ Ivetić, "Brutality", 21–22, n. 57, quotes the whole instruction in nine points (based on VA, P 2, box 18, f 1, doc. 2 and 3).

³⁹ Miroslav Svirčević, *Lokalna uprava i razvoj moderne srpske države* (Belgrade: Balkanološki institut SANU, 2011), 547–549.

mon people.⁴⁰ He believed it to be the best way to counter Austro-Hungarian propaganda and intrigue. In addition, he counted on Albanian lords to support Serbia's claims at the upcoming Peace Conference. Pašić also believed that Serbian authorities should protect Albanians from potential Montenegrin rage and misconduct: "Upon the request of our Government, it is absolutely necessary to behave properly towards Catholics and Muslim Albanians who might flee the Montenegrin zone and seek refuge on our side. We must receive these refugees well and provide them with food. In the places where both authorities coexist, our authorities should prevent any crime against Albanians since it would create bad impression abroad and negatively impact common interest."⁴¹

The Montenegrin authorities in Metohija, including district authorities in Peć, as the highest administrative authority, did not always treat the Albanian population as they should have. As soon as Montenegrins arrived, some individuals expressed the wish to convert from Islam to Orthodox Christianity. In 1913, the conversion turned from voluntary to forced one, which had a deplorable effect on the Albanian Muslims. Taking into consideration complaints from the Serbian side and from abroad, the Montenegrin government instructed its authorities in May 1913 to abandon this policy and thus Albanians were allowed to return to the Muslim faith if they preferred so.⁴²

Pašić wanted to be absolutely sure as to what was going on as regards religious conversion in the Serbian zone. The Supreme Command responded to his inquiries on 26 March (8 April) 1913 that in the Kosovo divisional district only South Slav Muslims who had fled Bosnia after 1878 converted to Christianity of their own will (117 men, 98 women, seven children).⁴³

Somewhat earlier, the Chief of the General Staff, Field-Marshal Putnik, and his first assistant General Mišić issued the order with similar demands: "We

⁴⁰ Similar suggestions also came from other quarters. The first mayor of Skopje, Panta Gavrilović, suggested to the Supreme Command to order that local notables and their properties in the environs of the city must be protected. In his words, the Christians still plundered their lands and possessions outside the city. Since they had a great influence on local Muslims (mostly Turks and some Albanians), it would be useful to win them over by being sympathetic and meeting their needs. See DSPKS, vol. 5/III, doc. 122, p. 245, 24 Oct./6 Nov. 1912.

⁴¹ VA, P 2, box 50, f 1, 1/7, Third Army Command, Prizren, 8 March 1913, to Mayor of Prizren; Chief of Prizren District; Commanders of the Šumadija Division 1st and 2nd age groups; Kosovo Divisional District; Commander of the City of Djakovica. The request was transmitted to the Chief of Novi Pazar District too.

⁴² Rakočević, "Montenegrin-Albanian Relations", 193–194; See also DSPKS, vol. 5/III, docs. 198, 209, 256 (HQ of the Serbian Third Army to the Supreme Command on the situation in Djakovica, 7/20 November 1912), doc. 303 (Prime Minister to the Legation in Montenegro, on the situation in Sjenica and Prijepolje, 14/27 November 1912).

⁴³ VA, P 2, box 18, f 33, doc 1. See also VA, P 2, Box 52, f 32, doc 16.

have information that Albanians have prepared an attack against us. It has been said that they will be supplied with rapid-fire guns and plenty of ammunition, instigated by both known rivals from the Adriatic. Take measures to prevent agitation. Issue the orders for the utmost vigilance to prevent any surprise. Try to inspire good mood among Albanians on our behalf. Frequent reports on the aforementioned points are required.”⁴⁴

Bearing in mind many “testimonies” and “explanations” concerning what was “really” going on during the war, it is worth mentioning that the Serbian Supreme Command intervened with its own Ministry of Foreign Affairs to solve the problem of misconduct of Bulgarian and Greek irregular units in the Serbian-occupied zone in Macedonia. The Supreme Command demanded from the Foreign Ministry to request urgently from the Bulgarian and Greek governments to recall their irregulars; otherwise, the Supreme Command did not rule out potential clashes, since local population had already demanded protection. It also emphasized that it was absolutely necessary to preserve peace and order. Disorder and plundering were reported in Štip, Radovište, Struga, Dojran, Kukus, Kratovo, Gevgelija, Sveti Nikola and in many smaller villages.⁴⁵ This observation tallies with that of General Milutinović as recorded in his operational diary.⁴⁶

The Serbian military authorities asked ethnic Albanian or Turkish notables to encourage the fearful refugees, suffering under winter conditions, to return home. They, however, should give guarantees of full loyalty. The response was always quick. The subordinate military authorities were ordered to help refugees with food and shelter if their homes had been destroyed. The only precondition for them was to surrender their arms. The deserted villages such as those in the Lab valley, or south of Prizren, or in the vicinity of Debar, on which the Army had reported during its advance became centres for the returning refugees. It was not only Muslims who returned to their homes, but also Christians. They had fled into the mountains or nearby woods and hills at the beginning of the operations.

The limited space makes it impossible to list numerous examples of how the military and civilian authorities saw the problems and what their recommendations for proper action in the best Serbian interest were.

⁴⁴ VA, P 2, box 50, f 1, 1, 1/1 VK [Supreme Command] ord. no. 2547, 4 Jan. 1913, to Commander of Third Army in Prizren 12:53 h.

⁴⁵ DSPKS, vol. 5/III, doc. 317, Supreme Command no. 1292, 15/28 Nov. 1912. Prime Minister Pašić made a note on the verso: “To tell the Bulgarian and Greek commands to issue orders for withdrawal, otherwise the military would pursue them because they are in the habit of plundering”.

⁴⁶ Milutinović, *Timočka divizija*, 48.

The action aiming to take the large quantities of arms from civilians was actually at the heart of discontent among some locals. The fact was that large quantities were distributed on the eve of the war by Turkish authorities (some 60,000 pieces). On the other hand, the local way of life and customs, Albanian most of all, suggested that the real figure was considerably higher. From the Serbian point of view, it was out of question to tolerate such situation when the majority of troops left Kosovo and the war was not finished yet. In light of the Austro-Hungarian intrigue to instigate revolts, on the one hand, and sporadic attacks on individuals, on the other, the military authorities decided to seize arms from the civilian population. The order was issued on 27 October 1912 by the commander of the Third Army. The usual procedure required a proclamation to the locals to surrender their arms without any consequences. If they disobeyed or tried to hide their arms, they were threatened even with death penalty.

Within a day, more than 5,000 rifles were seized in Priština alone, where many Albanians from the Lab Valley ended up hiding in Albanian homes. Only in a few cases the actions to seize arms in central Kosovo encountered difficulties and required the use of force (the Zborce Hana, Crnoljevo, Našec, Skulanovo and Kabaš villages). The 6th Regiment suffered casualties (10 dead and 50 wounded) in Crnoljevo. There were incidents in the vicinity of Uroševac (Ferizaj), where small Serbian detachments came under attack. In Priština, several Albanians were executed in public for shooting at soldiers. Krakov recorded that 27 Albanians were executed for having made a night attack on a military camp, resulting in casualties. Two were sentenced to be hanged for murdering a solitary soldier. At Gazimestan some 60 people were shot.⁴⁷ The villages like Zborce Hana and Crnoljevo were actually on the front line fiercely defended by irregulars from Ljuma (*basibozuk*) before Prizren was captured. The village of Našec, southwest of Prizren, was a different case. Since the villagers had rejected the call to surrender arms and opened fire on soldiers, it was burned down to make an example of it. One of the participants in the action concluded that it made other villages surrender their arms peacefully.⁴⁸

According to the records, it is obvious that the quick collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the credible Serbian force caused most locals to comply. The following example suggests that some pre-war connections also played a role. Father Mitrofan from the monastery of Devič was a mediator in the Drenica district. He kept in touch with Sadik Rama, a local warlord. Without military pressure the locals surrendered 400 rifles and stored them at the monastery. Mi-

⁴⁷ Ivetić, "Brutality", n. 32 (based on VA, P 2, box 47, f 2; box 49 f 23; box 64, f 1); On Priština, see also Stanislav Krakov, *Ratni dnevnik 1912–1916* (Novi Sad: Prometej; Belgrade: RTS, 2019), 45–57.

⁴⁸ Nikola Hristić (Colonel), "Zauzeće Prizrena i Djakovice 1912 godine", *Ratnik*, VII–VIII (1926), 50 (operational diary).

trofan guaranteed that in 150 local villages no rifle would ever be fired at Serbs.⁴⁹ In the following period no incidents were reported from that part of Kosovo. Unrest was not reported before 6 December 1912 (in Lopušnik, near Peć).⁵⁰

The events in the areas which would become part of the future Albanian state (the Drin valley and Ljuma) developed differently. The first Serbian march through this area toward the Adriatic was carried out peacefully and in close co-operation with several local tribes, Mirëditët above all. But as soon as two strong detachments had reached the coast and were engaged in combat against Turkish forces, revolts in the rear (Ljuma) were reported. It prompted the Serbian Third Army to undertake disarming of villages along the main route.⁵¹

South of Prizren, three detachments were engaged in disarming population between 8 and 13 November 1912. One of them came under attack in Ljuma. At first, an estimated 600–800 Albanians were engaged. Even reinforcement from the 10th Šumadija Regiment sent on 14 November could not accomplish the task. The Serbian forces had 176 dead and 88 wounded. To overcome this resistance, the Serbian Command sent reinforcements, four battalion-strong. Finally, on 5 December, resistance in Ljuma was suppressed, but at the price of destroying villages from Feta to Spas, all of which offered armed resistance.⁵² The Serbian authorities blamed the Austro-Hungarian consul in Prizren, Prochaska, for his clandestine activities aimed at instigating local population to disobey the orders and undertake or continue armed resistance, promising them Austro-Hungarian assistance.⁵³

In the autumn of 1913, this area was assigned to the newly-created Albanian state but partly remained under control of the Serbian forces until the final delimitation of the border, which was to be carried out by an international commission. The Serbian Army was demobilized, and only 3,000 soldiers were

⁴⁹ VA, P 2, box 13, f 1, doc. 2, 1/3. Two letters from Fr Mitrofan to General Živković (Mitrovica), 22 Oct./4 Nov. 1912; 29 Oct./11 Nov. 1912.

⁵⁰ Borisav Ratković, *Oslobodjenje Kosova i Metohije 1912* (Belgrade 1997), 258–268.

⁵¹ Nikola Hristić (Colonel), “Marš Drinskog konjičkog eskadrona II poziva kroz Albaniju 1912 godine”, *Ratnik IX* (Sept. 1926), 52–76; Dušan D. Krsitić (Colonel), “Operacije Albanskog odreda 1912 godine”, *Ratnik V* (May 1927), 32–50; Vojislav U. Ilić (Colonel), “Operacije Jadranskih odreda ka Jadrano 1912–1913”, *Ratnik XII* (Dec. 1937), 32–42; I (Jan. 1938), 42–53; Dragiša Vasić, *Karakter i mentalitet jednog pokolenja* (Belgrade: 1919; reprinted Belgrad: Altera, 1990), 37–38.

⁵² Ratković, *Oslobodjenje Kosova i Metohije*.

⁵³ DSPKS, vol. 5/III, doc. 262, pp. 362–364, Report of the Third Army to the Supreme Command, 7/20 Nov. 1912 and Annex on the conducted investigation in 22 points, Prizren, 1/14 Nov. 1912. Point 19 contains the description of two letters sent by Prochaska just before the outbreak of war operations and captured at a post office in Uroševac (Ferizaj). The letters were sent to private addresses. Both letters were forwarded to Prince Alexander. See also docs. 241, 244, 250 (Pašić demanded complete evidence regarding the Prochaska affair).

deployed along the 140 km long border. Weak at many points, Serbian troops would face a great challenge in mid-September. The well-organized and simultaneous attack from Albania (the so-called uprising) advanced successfully in three directions (Prizren, Debar, Ohrid). As a result, two Serbian regiments (10th and 19th) were almost destroyed. Some locals sided with the advancing troops. After the tide turned and the quickly mobilized and reinforced Serbian Army pushed the invaders back, acts of revenge and brutality took place on both sides.⁵⁴ In particular, the survivors of the 10th Regiment took revenge under the pretext of local resistance to disarming in the villages of Suraj, Penaca, Kaljisi and Vilja.⁵⁵

On the eve of the Serbian counteroffensive, the Minister of War issued a special order regarding the treatment of civilians both in Serbian and in Albanian territory, insisting on the harshest measures permitted by the law and avoiding brutality.⁵⁶

The chief commander of the operation followed suit by issuing his own orders in eight points.⁵⁷ He emphasized that although the armed Albanians should be regarded as rebels, "it is forbidden to plunder or carry out atrocities; maltreatment of women, children and the people who have not participated in the rebellion". In addition, he insisted that all measures, even the harshest ones, should be applied in strict conformity with law and that the innocent be protected. As a measure of precaution, he let the locals know that any further attempt of rebellion could lead to punishing entire settlements. It was also ordered that the movement of locals between villages or towns would be restricted during the upcoming operations.

The most detailed procedure was ordered by division commanders. The commander of the Drim Division ordered that peaceful locals who had fled should be allowed to return and assisted. Orphans should be given special care. Private property should also be protected. "Those who have sided with Albanian units or are suspected must be imprisoned and the commander must be informed."⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Mirko Gutić (Lt.-Colonel), "Oružani sukobi na srpsko-albanskoj granici u jesen 1913. godine", *Vojnoistorijski glasnik* 1 (1985), 242; even the Social Democrats' newspaper (*Radničke novine*, of 23 Sept./6 Oct. 1913), highly critical of the government's Albanian policy, predicted the possible course of events: "This Albanian invasion could cost both sides many and pointless victims [...] While they were on the Serbian soil they were plundering, killing and setting on fire. If our troops cross into the Albanian land, they will do the same. Revenge will be horrible."

⁵⁵ Gutić, "Oružani sukobi", 61; "Pokolj u Ljumi", *Radničke novine*, 22 Oct./4 Nov. 1913.

⁵⁶ Gutić, "Oružani sukobi" (based on VA, P 2, box 81, f 12/1, doc. 53/9), 29 Sept. 1913.

⁵⁷ Ibid. (based on VA, P 2, box 81, f 12/1-2).

⁵⁸ Ibid. (based on VA, P 2, box 81, f 12/1-4).

In spite of these orders, it was noted that some villages were burned down once their resistance was crushed. In some cases artillery support was called in. That was the fate of the village of Rečane near Gostivar. Some villages were burned down by retreating Albanian units (Zajas, Sebist, Zabzun, Klenja). Some were spared owing to the Christians who guaranteed for their Albanian neighbours. There was an interesting episode attesting to humanity of the lower-ranking Serbian officers and their superiors. At one point, the commander of the 3rd Cavalry Regiment, Lt.-Colonel Colović, suggested that the village of Žirovnica be spared since its inhabitants had been peaceful. His superior, Colonel Andjelković, commander of the Drim Division, taught him a lesson in his reply: "Who has authorized you to burn down villages and, consequently, to suggest that Žirovnica be spared."⁵⁹

In order to avoid the fury of the retreating Serbian troops, because of fear or some other reasons, Albanians usually fled their villages, taking their livestock with them. After the operation was terminated, their return from Albania became the subject of negotiations between local notables and Serbian authorities. The only precondition for their return was usually the surrender of arms.⁶⁰

A historian may pose the question as to whether the Serbian army officers or soldiers complied with their ruler's or superiors' orders and demands. Or, if they did not, how far did they go in non-compliance, how many of them, and where? How did the dynamic of war situations sometimes lead to ferocity and improper behaviour that would later be condemned? The same officers and men were engaged in combat again a few months later. How did they respect humanitarian law and what was the attitude of other belligerents?⁶¹

⁵⁹ Ibid. (based on VA, P 2, box 81, f 6/2, doc.28/16).

⁶⁰ DSPKS, vol. 7/II, doc. 70, pp. 198–201 (most came from the Debar region; some 5,000 in Tirana and some 2,000 in Elbasan); doc. 97, pp. 227–228; doc.131, pp. 260–261; doc. 363, pp. 495–496; doc. 593, pp. 593–594.

⁶¹ Alan Kramer, *Dynamic of Destruction, Culture and Mass Killing in the First World War* (Oxford University Press, 2007) or Jonathan E. Gumz, *The Resurrection and Collapse of Empire in Habsburg Serbia, 1914–1918* (Cambridge University Press, 2009); Ferenc Pollman, "Austro-Hungarian Atrocities against Serbians During the WWI", in *Prvi svetski rat i Balkan – 90 godina kasnije/WWI and The Balkans 90 Years Later* (Belgrade: Institut za stratejska istraživanja, 2011), 133–142; Dr R. A. Reiss, *Rapport sur les atrocités commises par les troupes austro-hongroises pendant la première invasion de la Serbie présenté au gouvernement Serbe* (Paris: B. Grasset, 1919); R. A. Reiss, *Comment les Austro-Hongrois ont fait la guerre en Serbie. Observations direct d'un neutre* (Paris: A. Colin, 1916); Dr A. Van Tienhoven, *Avec les Serbes en Serbie et en Albanie 1914–1916. Journal de guerre d'un chirurgien* (Paris: Imprimerie typographique H. Richard, 1918); C. Sturzenegger, *Die Wiederauferstehung Serbiens seine gloreichsten und dunkelsten Tage* (Bern-Berlin 1920); Henry Barby, *La Guerre mondiale. Avec l'Armée serbe* (Paris: A. Michel, 1918).

Treatment of Prisoners of War and Wounded Enemies

The Serbian Army had a long tradition of respecting the international rules regulating the treatment of the wounded and captured enemies. The Serbian commanders in the wars of 1876–78 and 1885 issued orders to that effect as well as those concerning proper treatment of civilians. They also forbade pillage. Among the guidelines were the rules of the Geneva conference of 22 August 1864.⁶² The rules adopted by the Ministry of War in peacetime envisaged that every future doctor in the Medical Corps (Service) would be instructed about the Geneva Convention and the role of the Red Cross. That was part of the examination for the medical reserve lieutenants.⁶³ The temporary regulation for the wartime Medical Service issued in 1908 stipulated (Art. 115) that medics in the field had to fulfil procedures for quick aid and evacuation not only for their own troops but also for the wounded enemy. This regulation was part of the annual training courses for reservists.⁶⁴ The cadets in the Military Academy had courses on International and War Law.⁶⁵

The wars of 1912–13 put to test the application of the rules concerning POWs. Some of them, previously wounded, were found left in hospitals, or even in abandoned trains. During the first weeks of war, the concentration points for POWs were in Skopje (the city fortress) and Priština. In November, Niš and Belgrade became the largest centres for prisoners. In the first half of the month, some 2,000 (100 officers) arrived in Belgrade and another 271 wounded (21 officers). Many of them were Albanians, Greeks or other Christians. 183 who arrived in Valjevo were previously held in Užice. They had been captured on Mountain Javor (western front). Many among them were Muslims from Bosnia.

⁶² Nikola P. Ilić, *Oslobodjenje Južne Srbije 1877–1878* (Belgrade: Sloboda, 1977), 152–153; Dr Vladimir Stanojević, *Istorija srpskog vojnog saniteta: naše ratno sanitetsko iskustvo* (Belgrade: Drzavna stamparija, 1925; 2nd ed., 1992), 75; Aleksandar S. Nedok, *Balkanski ratovi 1912–1913. Rad srpskog vojnog saniteta* (Belgrade: Medija centar Odbrana, 2012), 36, 46. Before the outbreak of the Balkan Wars the Serbian Red Cross was recognized as an important element of society with high international reputation. It was given special recognition by the International Red Cross in Geneva: "...Be as human as Serbia was in 1885..." See *Srpski vojni sanitet u Balkanskim ratovima*, eds. Branislav Popović and Veljko Todorović (Belgrade: Medija centar Odbrana, 2012), 230.

⁶³ Stanojević, *Istorija srpskog vojnog saniteta*, 157–158; Nedok, *Balkanski ratovi*, 36.

⁶⁴ Ministarstvo vojno (Sanitetsko odeljenje), *Privremeni uput za ratnu sanitetsku službu* (Belgrade 1908); CVNDI [Centre for Military-Scientific Documentation and Information, Belgrade], rare doc. no 2022, 34; doc. no. 2022 Belgrade, rare document, no. 2022), 34. The text of the Geneva Convention was included as an appendix.

⁶⁵ *Spomenica sedamdesetpetogodišnjice Vojne akademije 1850–1925* (Belgrade 1925), 62, 77, 78.

In addition, some 4,000 POWs were transported to Niš, Pirot, Užice, Kraljevo and Kladovo.⁶⁶

Their number rose after the battles of Prilep and Bitola (Monastir) in the second half of November (5,600). The inflow of the wounded was steady as well.⁶⁷ As a result of the shortage of accommodation in Belgrade, 164 POWs were transferred to Kladovo.⁶⁸ In the same period, the prison in Niš had 730 POWs (60 officers).⁶⁹

The prisoners of war captured in Albania were also transported to Serbia by steamers from Durazzo (Dures) via Salonika.⁷⁰

At the beginning of the war the Serbian Army was releasing the captured Albanians. Since they rose to arms again and engaged in fighting soon afterwards, they were, after having been captured again, sent to POW camps.⁷¹ Many were rounded up in Priština, where they sought to hide after engaging in clashes outside of the city.

Turkish documents report of high numbers of Turkish prisoners, notably after the fall of Bitola (Monastir), but historians agree on the figure of 5,600. Those transported from Durazzo had to march to Bitola POW camp for repatriation after the war, which caused suffering.⁷²

More than 3,000 Bulgarian POWs were in Serbia at the end of the Second Balkan War. They departed for Bulgaria on 15 September 1913 in two trains. The officers were transported in passenger cars. In return, 2,828 Serbian officers and soldiers were released from Bulgarian captivity.⁷³

⁶⁶ "Zarobljenici", *Politika*, 23 Oct./5 Nov. 1912; "Novi zarobljenici", *Politika*, 24 Oct./6 Nov. 1912; "Dolazak zarobljenika", *Politika*, 25 Oct./7 Nov. 1912.

⁶⁷ "Ranjenici sa Prilepa", *Politika*, 3/16 Nov. 1912. It was announced that a train had arrived with 106 wounded Turks out of total of 345 wounded; "Izdržavanje zarobljenika", *Politika*, 6/19 November 1912. The article informed about the arrival of another 50 POWs.

⁶⁸ "Premešteni zarobljenici", *Politika*, 7/21 Nov. 1912.

⁶⁹ "Zarobljenici u Nišu", *Politika*, 11/24 Nov. 1912. According to Albanian historians from Kosovo, some 650 were sent before 27 October and additional 700 on 30 October 1912 (*Istorijski institut Albanaca i kolonizacija Kosova II* (Priština: Istorijiski institut, 1997).

⁷⁰ *Srpske novine* no. 1, 1 Jan. 1913.

⁷¹ According to The Hague Convention of 1907 (Ch. 2, Art. 12): "Prisoners of war liberated on parole and recaptured bearing arms against the Government to whom they had pledged their honour, forfeit their right to be treated as prisoners of war, and can be brought before the courts."

⁷² Ugur Ozcan, "Ottoman prisoners of war and their repatriation challenge in Balkan Wars", in *First Balkan War 1912/1913: The Social and Cultural Meaning*, 159–182 (Nis: University of Nis, 2012).

⁷³ "Razmena zarobljenika sutra", *Politika*, 1/14 Sept. 1913

Unlike the situation in the First World War, Serbia did not establish a central POW command during the Balkan Wars. Combat units fed and guarded prisoners for a while and usually escorted them deeper behind the front lines. Their further destinations were Skopje, Niš, Kraljevo and Užice, and, finally, Belgrade. They were accommodated in suitable military barracks or in regular prisons. All of their needs were met by local military commands. Sometimes they received aid from the Red Cross. Food and hygiene supplies were similar to those received by Serbian peacetime units. Officers were accommodated separately and more comfortably than soldiers.

Immediately after the Second Balkan War the Serbian Socialist paper *Radničke novine* published the testimony of an alleged witness of the killing of captured Bulgarians in the field, with an estimated figure of 300 killed.⁷⁴ We cannot verify this figure.

Serbia was prepared for providing medical services and assistance due to her bitter experience between 1876 and 1878. The Serbian personnel were reinforced by foreign medical missions and volunteer doctors. They prepared not only mobile field hospitals, but also a vast chain of reserve hospitals. For that purpose, they adapted all suitable schools and public buildings, even some factories, across the country.⁷⁵ The Turkish army, for its part, was prepared as well. Foreign medical missions arrived in Macedonia and public buildings, including schools, were prepared as war hospitals.

When Serbian forces drove the Ottoman troops out of Macedonia, they had to cope with hundreds, sometimes thousands, of the wounded and sick enemies who were left behind, in addition to their own men. The railway network was not sufficiently developed, and therefore evacuation from the field could take days.

From the beginning, the Serbian and Ottoman wounded were evacuated together. After the Battle of Kumanovo, the Serbs found an abandoned train with wounded enemy soldiers and they had to provide assistance to them. The nearby city of Skopje was already overcrowded with the wounded Otto-

⁷⁴ *The Other Balkan Wars. A 1913 Carnegie Endowment Inquiry*, 216 (based on *Radničke novine* no. 162, 12/25 Aug. 1913). The quoted paragraph gives no indication whatsoever about the motives or context, but the Commission placed full confidence in the alleged witness. The article was based on an anonymous account given in a military hospital. There is no indication where the alleged event took place or which particular unit was involved.

⁷⁵ Out of 93 reserve hospitals in Serbia, 34 were established in Belgrade alone. Foreign Red Cross missions worked in many of them and even in the permanent Main Military Hospital in Belgrade. See *Srpski vojni sanitet u Balkanskim ratovima*, 111–113. The Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs closed all schools and the University until October 1913. Female students had the duty to make bandages, sheets, socks, gloves etc. See *Srpske novine*, 7 Oct. 1912; "Škole – bolnice!", *Politika*, 28 Sept./11 Oct. 1912.

man soldiers. All hospitals and many public buildings were full to the brink.⁷⁶ In order to improve the situation, the Serbian military authorities directed to Skopje the mobile field hospital “City of Moscow” which had recently arrived in Serbia. The hospital with 153 beds and a surgical ward started to operate on 8 November; they established a separate ward for Muslim women. Soon, another two Russian hospitals started to operate in Skopje.⁷⁷ In Veles, Prilep and Bitola (Monastir), all schools were converted into hospitals, just like many hotels and private buildings in the surrounding areas. In Prilep, the biggest one was the so-called “Bulgarian School” staffed with Swiss doctors. In Bitola, Serbian troops found some 1,500 Turkish soldiers wounded and sick in three schools and a Greek hospital. It was hard to find a place for Serbian casualties. In Djakovica, the Drina Division mobile hospital operated alongside and in close cooperation with the personnel of the former Ottoman hospital (Major Dr Nahif Arif).⁷⁸ They continued to tend to 40 Ottoman wounded and provided some extra space in a school for another ward since the number of the sick rose dramatically to 266.⁷⁹

The operational diaries of the Serbian field hospitals contain much information which shows that the wounded soldiers and the Ottoman medical personnel were treated in full compliance with international humanitarian law.

During the joint operations in Thrace all wounded in the Serbian sector were taken to the field hospitals of the Timok and Dunav divisions with the quarantine set up for the prisoners because of cholera and typhus epidemic. The Serbs lived up to their reputation before the eyes of foreigners assigned to the hospitals, journalists on the ground, military attachés and the Ottomans. It was noted in the Timok hospital diary (entry on 14 March 1913) that Ottoman officers were surprised to see how well their wounded were tended and expressed gratitude for their evacuation along with the Serbs. It was also recorded that “Bulgarian soldiers could not understand why we tended the Turkish wounded just like our own... On this occasion they demanded that the wounded be killed ... but our soldiers did not allow them to do so.”⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Stanoje Stanojević, “Bitka na Kumanovu”, *Ratnik* 2 (1928), 8, 12.

⁷⁷ Galina Igorevna Sevcova, “Etapna poljska bolnica ‘Grad Moskva’ u Skoplju (Uskub) 8. novembra 1912 – 24. februara 1913”, in *Srpski vojni sanitet*, 125–130; The Kijevo and Kaufman Red Cross hospitals operated in a large Turkish school (Nedok, *Balkanski ratovi*, 65).

⁷⁸ On 6/19 November 1912 the Major and his eight compatriots-medics were granted permission to leave after all patients had been cured (Operations log of the Second Drina Field Hospital). See Nedok, *Balkanski ratovi*, 98–99; Stanojević, *Istorija srpskog vojnog saniteta*, 238–239, 248–249.

⁷⁹ Nedok, *Balkanski ratovi*, 98.

⁸⁰ Nedok, *Balkanski ratovi*, 121–122.

There were many witnesses to how the Serbian military treated the wounded. Many foreign doctors left their testimonies. According to them, the treatment was completely in line with the Geneva Convention and even went beyond the proposed guidelines.⁸¹ Only a few incidents have come to our knowledge. These took place during the first days of the war. It was recorded that some wounded enemies fired on or knife-stabbed Serbian medical personnel and were shot on spot as a result.⁸²

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⁸¹ Dr Ivan Orežan, *Med ranjenimi srbski brati* (Ljubljana: Sokolska matica, 1913); Zvonka Zupanič-Slavec and Franc Štolfa, *Dr Ivan Orežan, dobotnik Medicinske fakultete in slovenskega naroda* (Ljubljana: Medicinska fakulteta, 1998); C. Sturzenegger, *Serbisches Rotes Kreuz und internationale Liebestätigkeit während der Balkankriege 1912/1913* (Zurich: Orell Fuessli, 1914), 1–128; Tangeberg, “Semi-barbarians”, 55–72.

⁸² M. Mladjenović, “Dnevnik: Rat sa Turcima 1912. godine”, in *Ratni dnevnički Užičana 1912–1918* (Užice: Istorijski arhiv Užica, 1995), 79; *Ratovanje Petog pešadijskog puka “Kralja Milana” 1912–1918*, ed. Svetomir G. Nikolić (Valjevo: 1998), 11. This account is based on the wartime operations log of the regiment supplemented by some additional sources.

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Jean-Paul Bled*

Professeur émérite
Université de Paris-Sorbonne

La Revue des Deux Mondes et la Serbie en 1915

Résumé : La *Revue des Deux Mondes* est ouverte sur l'Europe et le monde. Au fil du temps, cette orientation ne s'est jamais démentie. Elle est illustrée par la publication dans chacun des numéros de la *Chronique de la Quinzaine* (référence au rythme bi-mensuel de la revue) dans laquelle un auteur, souvent le directeur de la publication, analyse les temps forts de l'actualité internationale au cours de la quinzaine écoulée. Francis Charmes, directeur de la Revue depuis 1908 et auteur de la *Chronique de la Quinzaine* durant l'année 1915 qui nous intéresse. Les idées développées dans la *Chronique de la Quinzaine* sont intéressantes à un autre titre, en raison des liens que la Revue entretient avec le Quai d'Orsay.

Mots clés : La *Revue des Deux Mondes*, Serbie, 1915, France

Fondée en 1829, la *Revue des Deux Mondes* est rapidement devenue une revue de référence. Elle possède toujours ce statut en 1914. Depuis sa création, elle est ouverte sur l'Europe et le monde. Au fil du temps, cette orientation ne s'est jamais démentie. Elle est illustrée par la publication dans chacun des numéros de la *Chronique de la Quinzaine* (référence au rythme bi-mensuel de la revue) dans laquelle un auteur, souvent le directeur de la publication, analyse les temps forts de l'actualité internationale au cours de la quinzaine écoulée. La *Revue des Deux Mondes* se situe au centre-droit de l'échiquier politique. Ses directeurs appartiennent régulièrement à l'Académie française. C'est le cas de Francis Charmes, directeur de la Revue depuis 1908 et auteur de la *Chronique de la Quinzaine* durant l'année 1915 qui nous intéresse. Les idées développées dans la *Chronique de la Quinzaine* sont intéressantes à un autre titre, en raison des liens que la Revue entretient avec le Quai d'Orsay. La *Revue des Deux Mondes* n'est certes pas le porte-parole de la diplomatie française, mais elle en reflète souvent les vues.

Dans les derniers mois de 1914, la Revue a célébré les victoires de l'héroïque Serbie. En ce début de 1915, après l'échec de la dernière offensive lancée par le général Potiorek, la situation sur le front balkanique est revenue au *statu quo ante* de part et d'autre de la Drina. Les forces austro-hongroises ont été chassées de Serbie, mais elles contrôlent toujours la Bosnie-Herzégovine. Il

* jean-paul.bled@wanadoo.fr

est douteux que ce front se rallume avant plusieurs mois. L'armée serbe est sortie victorieuse, mais épuisée des premiers mois du conflit. Pour sa part, l'Autriche-Hongrie est mobilisée sur le front nord face à la Russie. Elle y a subi plusieurs revers. Il a fallu attendre décembre pour que Conrad von Hötzenndorf remportât sa première victoire à Limanowa-Lapanow. D'autre part, se précise la menace de l'entrée en guerre de l'Italie au côté de l'Entente, ce qui entraînerait l'ouverture d'un second front. Pour que le front balkanique se rallume, il faudrait la réunion de plusieurs conditions. Il serait indispensable que l'Allemagne y investisse des forces. Il faudrait encore que la coalition des puissances centrales soit renforcée par l'appoint de la Bulgarie.

Le choix à venir de la Bulgarie domine les prochains mois. Les deux coalitions s'y disputent le ralliement de Sofia. D'emblée la partie est plus difficile pour l'Entente que pour les Puissances centrales. Dès février 1915, Francis Charmes redoute que la Bulgarie n'ait déjà tranché :

Il y a une grande présomption, note-t-il, que son choix a penché du côté de l'Autriche et de l'Allemagne.¹

Il est clair que l'Entente a moins à offrir à la Bulgarie que Vienne et Berlin. Celle-ci réclame la partie de la Macédoine annexée par la Serbie au terme des Guerres balkaniques. Il est aisé aux puissances centrales de lui en faire la promesse. Pour les Alliés de l'Entente, la chose est beaucoup plus compliquée. Comment dépouiller la Serbie d'une province qu'elle a conquise par les armes ? Comment l'en dépouiller de surplus après les sacrifices qu'elle a consentis à la cause alliée ?

Certes, il serait possible de lui offrir des compensations. La cession de la Bosnie-Herzégovine ne serait contestée par aucun des partenaires de l'Entente. Il en va tout autrement lorsqu'il s'agit de la Dalmatie et de la Croatie. Le piège du traité de Londres conclu en avril 1915 avec l'Italie se referme sur les Alliés. La Dalmatie fait partie de la moisson de territoires promis à l'Italie. Rome pousse aussitôt des cris d'orfraie quand elle a connaissance de cette revendication. Il en va de même quand les Alliés font miroiter à la Serbie la perspective d'une annexion de la Croatie. Cette option est inacceptable pour l'Italie qui y voit se dessiner le spectre de la Grande Serbie dont elle ne veut pas entendre parler, une Grande Serbie devant constituer un obstacle à la pénétration de son influence dans les Balkans. Dans la logique de cette hostilité à la Serbie dans laquelle elle tend à voir une menace pour demain aussi redoutable que l'Autriche-Hongrie hier et aujourd'hui, l'Italie proteste contre l'action militaire lancée par Belgrade, au début de juin, en Albanie, autre espace que Rome regarde comme une chasse gardée.

¹ « *La Chronique de la Quinzaine* », *La Revue des Deux Mondes*, I/4, 1915.

Belgrade rejette la note tripartite qui lui est remise le 6 août par l'Angleterre, la France et la Russie. Cette note est porteuse d'un plan qui cherche à concilier les contraires : attirer la Bulgarie dans le camp de l'Entente, sans en éloigner la Serbie, tout en évitant de mécontenter l'Italie. Peine perdue ! Pasic accuse les Alliés de traiter les Serbes comme s'il s'agissait de peuplades africaines. C'est au tour du chef du gouvernement serbe de proposer, le 7 septembre, un contre-plan. C'est trop peu et trop tard. Trop peu parce que les concessions envisagées sont insuffisantes pour satisfaire les Bulgares. Trop tard, parce que les 5 et 6 septembre, la Bulgarie s'est alliée aux puissances centrales pour une durée de 5 ans, tandis qu'une convention secrète lui promet l'acquisition de la Macédoine serbe. En plus de cette assurance, les succès militaires remportés par les Puissances centrales depuis le printemps 1915 (fort recul des Russes sur le front nord, échec des offensives italiennes sur l'Isonzo, échec de l'opération des Dardanelles) l'ont convaincu de franchir le pas.

Avec l'entrée des Bulgares dans la coalition, les conditions sont réunies pour que les puissances centrales lancent une nouvelle offensive contre la Serbie, une offensive à laquelle Conrad s'était longtemps refusé, mais à laquelle il s'est finalement rallié devant l'évolution de la conjoncture. Celle-ci débute le 5 octobre. L'auteur de la *Chronique de la Quinzaine* ne se fait guère d'illusions sur l'issue de la lutte :

La situation des Serbes est critique, observe-t-il, placés qu'ils sont entre deux feux.²

Par quoi il faut entendre les Austro-Allemands du général von Mackensen au Nord et les Bulgares au Sud.

Dans la livraison suivante, il ajoute :

L'héroïque petit peuple donne une fois de plus au monde un admirable exemple d'énergie ; mais il y a entre ses adversaires et lui une si grande disproportion de forces numériques que son succès serait un miracle.³

Certes, une opération de secours pourrait être montée à partir du corps expéditionnaire de Salonique. Celle-ci est bien lancée sous le commandement du général Sarrail. Mais elle est de trop faible ampleur pour inverser le cours de la campagne. Les Bulgares la repoussent avant même que la jonction ait été faite avec l'armée serbe. Réduite à se défendre seule, pliant sous le poids du nombre, cette armée subit un désastre qui est celui de tout un peuple :

Il faut remonter très haut pour trouver un autre exemple d'une aussi lamentable et tragique défaite imposée à une armée qui s'est battue héroïquement.⁴

² Ibid. V/3.

³ Ibid. V/4.

⁴ Ibid.

A l'heure du bilan, devant ce désastre, *La Revue des deux Mondes* distribue les blâmes. Une grande partie de la responsabilité de ces événements incombe à l'Italie :

L'Italie, commente-t-elle, n'a voulu écouter que son « égoïsme sacré ». Tant qu'elle [...] a pu entrevoir une Serbie agrandie qui donnerait un corps aux tronçons slaves et deviendrait peut-être en face d'elle, une puissance adriatique qui au péril autrichien substituerait le péril serbe, alors son égoïsme lui commandait de s'opposer à l'agrandissement de la Serbie, de l'écartier à tout prix de la mer, de l'en rejeter le plus loin possible.⁵

Le dénouement aurait pu être différent, estime l'auteur de la *Chronique*, si la Grèce et la Roumanie s'étaient jointes à l'Entente, mais elles s'en sont abstenues, alors qu'elles avaient été solidaires de la Serbie contre la Bulgarie durant la Seconde Guerre balkanique.

Après ce grave revers, la tentation pourrait être grande de rembarquer les troupes stationnées à Salonique. Il faut surtout n'en rien faire :

Après être allés à Salonique, il faut [...] s'y affermir, s'y retrancher solidement et s'y tenir prêts à profiter des événements ultérieurs qui ne manqueront pas de s'y produire [...] Il faut rester à Salonique, poursuit la *Chronique de la Quinzaine* se projetant dans l'avenir, parce que telle est la condition de la renaissance et, le moment venu, de la victoire. Cette position de défense pourra devenir plus tard une position d'attaque.⁶

une analyse qui se vérifiera deux ans et demi plus tard.

Au total, rien ne serait plus faux, que de s'abandonner au désespoir. La Serbie a subi un grave revers, mais elle n'a pas perdu la guerre :

Un peuple qui a montré de si hautes vertus militaires et politiques, conclut *La Revue de la Quinzaine*, a l'avenir pour lui, il n'a pas voulu périr, il ne périra pas.⁷

⁵ Ibid. 1916, I/2.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

Frédéric Guelton*

*Service historique de l'Armée de terre
Vincennes*

Avec le général Piarron de Mondésir Un aller-retour de Brindisi à Valona, 18–24 décembre 1915

Résumé : Au début du mois de décembre 1915 le Grand Quartier Général français crée une mission militaire commandée par le général Piarron de Mondésir. Envoyée en Italie et en Albanie vers la mi-décembre elle doit principalement informer les autorités françaises sur la situation exacte de l'armée serbe. Lorsque, le 24 décembre les principaux rapports arrivent à Paris, dont le compte rendu d'un entretien direct entre le général de Mondésir et le roi Pierre Ier, le général Joffre et le gouvernement découvrent la réalité de la situation de l'armée serbe proche de l'annihilation et prennent conscience les souffrances qu'elle vient d'endurer. Ils prennent également la mesure du jeu double, mortifère pour les Serbes, joué par les Italiens. Ils décident de tout mettre en œuvre pour sauver l'armée serbe qui représente aussi l'avenir de la Serbie en la ravitaillant et en la transportant vers l'île de Corfou.

Mots clés : Décembre 1915, France, Serbie, Albanie, Italie, Piarron de Mondésir, Pierre Ier, Prince Alexandre, Boppe, Bertotti, armée serbe, mission militaire française en Albanie, Valona, Brindisi, Scutari, Corfou

Novembre 1915. Confronté à l'inefficacité de la Commission interalliée créée en début de ce mois afin d'apporter un soutien logistique à l'armée serbe, puis à l'échec de la mission du génie français bloquée à Tarente en attente d'embarquement pour l'Albanie avec ses quelque 2 500 tonnes de matériel, le Grand Quartier Général (GQG) français envisage dès le 28 novembre, d'envoyer sur place une mission militaire française commandée par un officier général, le général Piarron de Mondésir.¹

Cette intention prend forme, au rythme de l'arrivée de télégrammes toujours plus inquiétants les uns que les autres, envoyés à Paris par l'ambassadeur français Auguste Boppe et l'attaché militaire le colonel Fournier, depuis Scutari, là où s'est replié le gouvernement serbe. Des télégrammes inquiétants mais aussi insuffisants pour permettre au commandant en chef, le général Joffre, de se forger son intime conviction quant à l'action à mener dans les Balkans en direction

* frederic.guelton@gmail.com

¹ *Les Armées Françaises dans la Grande Guerre*, t. 8, vol. 1 (Paris : Imprimerie nationale, 1927), 440.

aussi bien des Serbes que des Italiens. C'est en partie pour régler cette question du manque d'information qu'est officiellement créée, le 10 décembre 1915 la mission militaire du général Piarron de Mondésir. Cette mission strictement française, forte d'une dizaine d'officiers, mais dépourvue de tout mandat interallié et de tout moyen matériel significatif² doit en premier lieu informer le GQG sur une situation balkanique qui demeure à Chantilly, largement incompréhensible voire inconnue.³ Elle doit également participer – ce sont ses ordres – à la réorganisation de l'armée serbe et enfin marquer, dans l'imbroglgio naissant et face aux réticences principalement italiennes, la volonté politique de la France de soutenir la Serbie. Rapidement mise sur pied la mission arrive à Brindisi le 18 décembre.

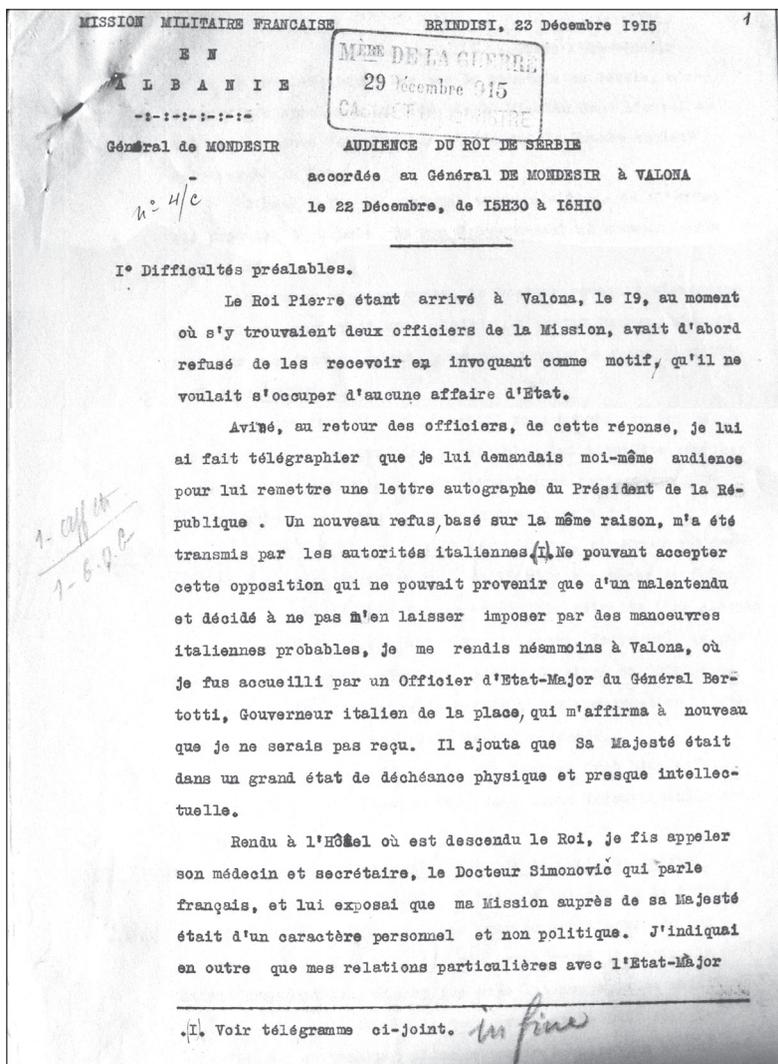
Alors que la mission Mondésir roule vers l'Italie, le ministère des Affaires étrangères, le ministère de la Guerre et le Grand Quartier Général en d'autres termes le gouvernement et le haut commandement français prennent conscience, toujours à la lecture des télégrammes de Boppe et de Fournier, que ce qui menace l'armée serbe ce n'est plus uniquement la défaite, mais la destruction totale, pure, simple et définitive. Une destruction qui résulterait tout à la fois de l'action des armées ennemies, de l'épuisement totale des hommes condamnés à mourir de faim ou de maladie et cyniquement de l'attitude italienne. Ainsi le 16 décembre, rendant compte à Paris d'un entretien qu'il vient d'avoir avec le Premier ministre serbe Nikola Pašić Auguste Boppe écrit, le citant : « *si notre amie et nos alliés qui ont tant de fois aidé la Serbie, en commun ne viennent pas à son secours en ce moment difficile, la catastrophe est inévitable. Le peuple serbe a fait tout ce qu'un peuple qui veut lutter jusqu'au bout avec honneur a pu faire* ». ⁴ Le lendemain, les informations transmises au Grand Quartier Général par le colonel Fournier, qui rencontre régulièrement à Scutari le Prince Alexandre confirment les dires de l'ambassadeur : « [...] *La famine règne actuellement dans ses rangs. [Les soldats serbes sont] affamés, désillusionnés, éprouvés par le froid, insuffisamment vêtus, n'ayant que peu de munitions...* ». ⁵ Quant à l'opinion personnelle du colonel Fournier, elle est sans appel et ébranle ses lecteurs parisiens qui comprennent à quel point la mission qui a été confiée au général de Mondésir ne va pas seulement consister à « réorganiser » l'armée serbe mais bien à éviter, dans des conditions difficiles qu'elle ne disparaisse : « *L'armée et ses chefs, écrit-il depuis Scutari, le 17 décembre, sont toujours disposés à mettre leurs forces reconstituées au service de la cause des Alliés mais si on ne lui rend pas possible son départ par mer et*

² Commandant M. Larcher, *La Grande Guerre dans les Balkans* (Paris : Payot, 1929), 116.

³ *Les Armées Françaises dans la Grande Guerre*, 444.

⁴ Télégramme d'Auguste Boppe au ministre des Affaires étrangères, n° 158, de Scutari à Paris, 16 décembre 1915, SHD, GR 2175.

⁵ Télégramme du colonel Fournier au général Joffre. Le colonel Fournier rend ici compte d'un entretien qu'il a eu avec le Prince Alexandre. Télégrammes chiffrés n° 64 et 65, Scutari, le 17 décembre 1915, SHD GR 2175.



si on ne lui fait pas parvenir des vivres dans un délai de deux ou trois jours j'aurai la douleur d'assister à une catastrophe terrible et imméritée imminente parmi les troupes stationnées en Albanie du Nord ».⁶

C'est cette situation dramatique que la mission militaire française et son chef découvrent dès leur arrivée à Brindisi puis lors des premières missions d'information que le général Mondésir déclenche lorsqu'il décide de tenter de

⁶ Télégramme du colonel Fournier au ministre de la Guerre et au commandant en chef, n°69, du 17 décembre 1915, SHD GR 2175.

.....avec l'Etat-Major serbe et que les sympathies que je comptais en Serbie, m'avaient fait appeler à la tête de la Mission dont l'envoi était une preuve de plus de l'aide que la France voulait apporter à la Serbie.

J'usai enfin de quelques arguments tirés de l'effet que produirait auprès de mon Gouvernement un nouveau refus de la part de S.M.

Quelques minutes après, le Docteur revenait m'annoncer que S.M. me recevrait avec plaisir, à quatre heures, s'excusant sur son état de santé, pour ne pouvoir le faire plus tôt. (Il était 11H30).

Cette facilité et l'accueil reçu auprès du Roi me font douter que les demandes précédentes lui aient été soumises, ou du moins transmises sans commentaires tendancieux... Je n'ai cependant pu pousser une enquête à ce sujet.

2° LE ROI. Le Roi Pierre était en uniforme, vigoureux malgré ses douleurs rhumatismales qui ne l'ont pas empêché de faire, en partie à cheval, une longue et pénible retraite (par Alessio Tirana, Durazzo). S.M. est vive de geste, de regard, de paroles et laissé-voir même par moments, malgré sa tristesse certaine, quelques éclairs de gaieté.. La conversation a été très animée malgré sa surdité assez prononcée.

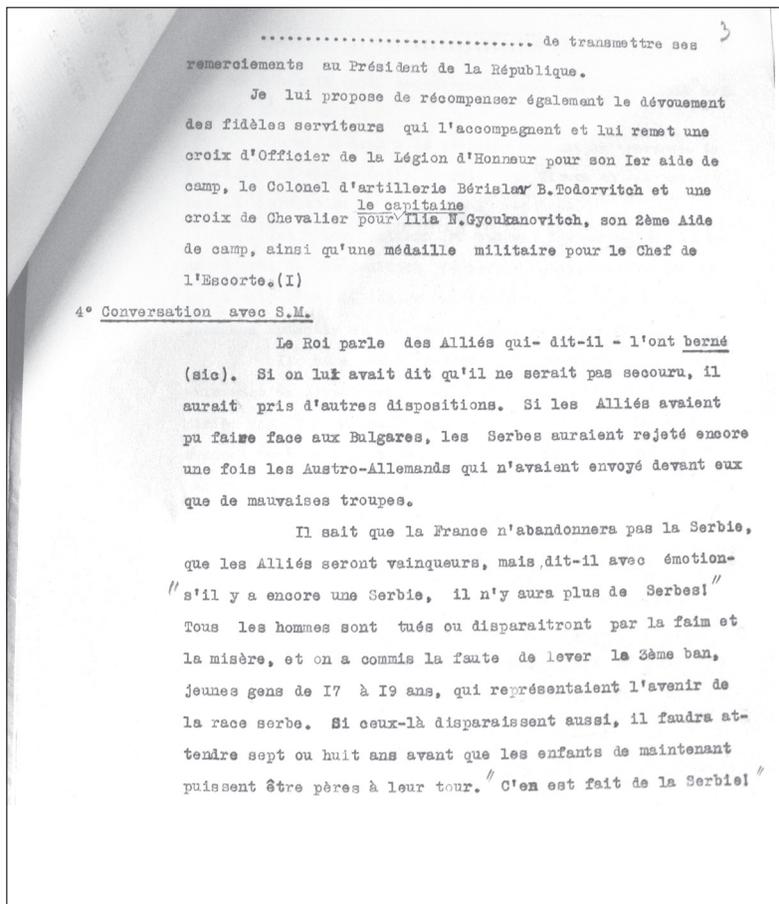
J'ai donc trouvé le Roi dans un état bien différent de celui qui m'avait été, sans doute intentionnellement, dépeint.

3° Remise de la lettre présidentielle et de la Croix de Guerre.

Introduit auprès du Roi, je lui remis la lettre présidentielle; il la lit, ses yeux se mouillent. Je lui présente l'écrin ouvert, il se lève, prend la croix, la baise avec émotion, disant que cela lui rappelle sa médaille de 1870- Je lui demande la permission de la lui épingle moi-même sur sa tunique; il me remercie ensuite en me serrant chaleureusement les mains. Il me charge de transmettre ses

rencontrer personnellement le Roi Pierre I à Valona puis en envoyant le lieutenant-colonel Broussaud et le sous-lieutenant Grandidier à Durazzo ainsi que les commandants de Ripert d'Alauzier⁷ et Coudanne à Saint-Jean-de-Médéa. Ces premières missions s'échelonnent entre le 19 et le 24 décembre 1915. Elles permettent au général Mondésir de se forger, en cinq jours, une opinion solide, tranchée et sans concessions sur la situation de la Serbie et de son armée, sur

⁷ Voir ici Commandant de Ripert d'Alauzier, *Résurrection de l'armée serbe* (Paris : Payot, 1923).



l'attitude italienne et sur ce que devrait faire la France. Est-il excessif ou voit-il juste quand, par exemple, il va jusqu'à rendre compte à Paris que Rome ne serait pas affligé par la disparition de la Serbie en tant que Nation ? Probablement pas, mais peu lui chaut à court terme ! Ce qui lui importe, c'est qu'il parvienne à emporter la décision. Une décision qui doit sauver l'armée serbe et participer à ce qui deviendra peu après son transport sur l'île de Corfou. Cette hypothèse de travail n'est déjà plus neuve vers le 18-19 décembre. Déjà suggérée par d'autres, y compris dans les bureaux du GQG, il faut encore qu'elle devienne, arguments à l'appui, une décision du commandant en chef et du gouvernement français. Mais comment donc le général Mondésir en est-il arrivé à un tel résultat en moins d'une semaine alors que les tergiversations de tous ordres duraient depuis deux mois ?

Tout commence réellement pour Mondésir lorsqu'il décide, dès sa nomination à la tête de la mission militaire et donc avant son arrivée à Brindisi, de s'informer directement, et autant qu'il le pourra personnellement auprès des autorités serbes. Il envisage pour cela de dépêcher ses officiers à Durazzo⁸ et à Saint-Jean de Médéa et de se rendre personnellement à Valona où séjourne le Roi Pierre Ier. Son voyage à Valona est pour lui d'autant plus impérieux qu'il est porteur du lettre autographe du président de la République Raymond Poincaré destinée au roi Pierre Ier.

Peu après son arrivée à Brindisi le 18 décembre le général Mondésir est informé, par deux officiers français qui se trouvent à Valona, qu'ayant sollicité une audience auprès du Roi il se sont vu opposé une fin de non-recevoir au prétexte que ce dernier « *ne voulait plus s'occuper des affaires publiques* ». ⁹ Il envoie aussitôt un télégramme à l'attention du Roi afin d'obtenir une audience. Il y précise qu'il est porteur d'une lettre du président Poincaré. Curieusement, la réponse qui lui parvient n'émane pas du Roi mais du général italien Bertotti qui commandant du Presodio de Valona. Ce dernier lui indique, sans explication, que « *le roi ne le recevra pas* ». ¹⁰ La réponse italienne surprend Mondésir qui, prenant l'affaire à son compte, s'embarque à bord d'un cuirassé italien¹¹ et traverse nuitamment l'Andriaque à destination de Valona, bien décidé à ne pas s'en « *laisser imposer par des manœuvres italiennes probables* ». ¹² A peine débarqué à Valona, Mondésir est accueilli par un officier de l'état-major du général Bertotti qui lui confirme qu'il ne sera pas reçu par le Roi. Au cours du bref entretien qui suit, l'officier italien, qui persiste dans sa volonté à dissuader le Français de rencontrer le roi, lui précise que ce dernier est « *dans un grand état de déchéance physique et presque intellectuelle* ». ¹³ La mauvaise volonté affichée par cet officier renforce Mondésir dans sa volonté de rencontrer le roi. Alors que la matinée n'est pas encore termi-

⁸ Lieutenant-colonel Broussaud du 19 au 21 décembre à Durazzo accompagné du sous-lieutenant Grandidier

⁹ *Résumé des documents envoyés de Brindisi le 24 décembre 1915 par le général Piarron de Mondésir*, Ministère de la Guerre, EMA, Bureau d'Orient, n°50 9/11, SHD GR 2175.

¹⁰ Mission militaire française en Albanie, *Audience du Roi de Serbie accordée au général de Mondésir le 22 décembre 1915*, Compte rendu du général Mondésir, Brindisi le 23 décembre 1915, SHD GR 2175.

¹¹ L'importance accordée par l'Italie à la question serbe et à l'Albanie apparaît sous de nombreux jours. Ainsi le cuirassé qui transporte le général Mondésir à Valona fait partie d'un ensemble de deux cuirassés qui sont les deux navires de guerre les plus importants qui constituent la force navale de Valona et leur chef n'est autre que l'amiral Capomazza, ancien aide de camp du roi d'Italie.

¹² Mission militaire française en Albanie, *Audience du Roi de Serbie accordée au général de Mondésir le 22 décembre 1915*, Compte rendu du général Mondésir, Brindisi le 23 décembre 1915, SHD GR 2175.

¹³ Ibid.

née, il se rend lui-même à l'hôtel où réside Pierre Ier et, dès son arrivée sur les lieux, demande à rencontrer sans délai le docteur Svetislav Simonovic qui est à la fois le médecin et le secrétaire du Roi. Le médecin du Roi étant parfaitement francophone, Mondésir peut lui expliquer le but de sa visite en mettant l'accent sur sa dimension personnelle et non politique. Il précise alors, afin d'appuyer sa demande d'audience qu'il connaît bien l'armée serbe au sein de laquelle il a séjourné en 1913, qu'il est proche de nombre d'officiers de l'état-major général et qu'il vient, pour cette raison, d'être placé à la tête « *de la mission dont l'envoi était une preuve de plus de l'aide que la France voulait apporter à la Serbie* ». ¹⁴ Il lui fait également remarquer fort diplomatiquement mais aussi sans ambiguïté qu'un refus royal produirait, à Paris, le plus mauvais des effets.

Le secrétaire prend bonne note, se retire et revient quelques minutes plus tard à peine pour indiquer au général Mondésir que le roi le recevra « *avec plaisir à 4 heures, s'excusant sur son état de santé pour ne pouvoir le faire plutôt* ». ¹⁵ Le très bref délai pris par le Roi pour faire donner sa réponse, son ton et son contenu renforcent Mondésir dans sa conviction d'un jeu trouble joué par les Italiens. Mais il préfère, à court terme, et ayant d'autres chats à fouetter, de ne pas chercher à en savoir plus.

Lorsque, un peu avant seize heures il est introduit auprès du Roi il ne peut que constater que tous les arguments qui lui avaient été opposés pour empêcher la rencontre sont, si ce n'est faux, du moins largement exagérés et instrumentalisés. En rendant compte à Paris il écrit : « *Le Roi Pierre était en uniforme, vigoureux malgré ses douleurs rhumatismales qui ne l'ont pas empêché de faire, en partie à cheval, une longue et pénible retraite (par Alessio, Tirana, Durazzo). Sa Majesté est vive de geste, de regard, de paroles et laisse voir même par moments, malgré sa tristesse certaine, quelques éclairs de gaieté. La conversation a été très animée malgré sa surdité assez prononcée. J'ai donc trouvé le Roi dans un état bien différent de celui qui m'avait été, sans doute intentionnellement dépeint* ». ¹⁶

Après s'être présenté au Roi, le général Mondésir lui remet la lettre du Président de la République. La lisant, le Roi, pris par l'émotion, pleure. Puis voyant l'écrin ouvert et la Croix de Guerre qui lui est destinée, il se lève prend la médaille et la porte à ses lèvres pour l'embrasser avec émotion déclarant au général Mondésir qu'elle « *lui rappelle sa médaille de 1870* ». ¹⁷ La première émotion

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Il est alors 11 heures 30, *ibid.*

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Celui qui n'était alors encore que Pierre Karadjordjević, avait participé, comme sous-lieutenant participé comme volontaire à la guerre franco-prussienne de 1870-71 dans les rangs de la Légion étrangère après s'être affublé du pseudonyme de Pierre Kara. Son comportement lui avait valu d'être décoré de la Légion d'Honneur.

passée, le général Mondésir épingle lui-même la Croix de Guerre sur la vareuse du Roi.

Puis la conversation s'engage entre les deux hommes. Le premier sujet abordé est celui de l'absence d'aide réelle des alliées lors de l'agression contre la Serbie au cours du mois d'octobre précédent. Le Roi estime qu'il a été, au cours de ces heures sombres « berné » par les Alliés. Il poursuit en précisant qu'une intervention militaire alliée contre les Bulgares lui aurait permis de faire face « encore une fois aux Austro-Allemands ». ¹⁸ Il explique ensuite qu'il demeure persuadé qu'en dépit de la défaite récente subie par l'armée serbe, la Serbie peut continuer à compter sur le soutien de la France et qu'elle croit, à plus long terme, en la victoire des alliés dans la guerre. Mais il n'empêche, il s'interroge « avec émotion » écrit Mondésir sur l'avenir du peuple serbe : Après la victoire « s'il y a encore une Serbie, il n'y aura plus de Serbes ! ». ¹⁹ Confronté aux semaines de douleurs qu'il vient de partager avec ses hommes qu'il a vu mourir au combat, mais aussi de faim et de froid il émet alors un regret personnel, celui d'avoir fait lever le 3e ban de son armée, c'est-à-dire les jeunes âgés de 17 à 19 ans qui représentent pour plus que des combattants car ils sont « l'avenir de la race serbe ». ²⁰

Dans la suite de la conversation, le Roi Pierre loue l'attitude d'Essad Pacha indiquant au général Mondésir qu'il « a tenu à le protéger pendant sa traversée de la région albanaise entre Alessio et Tirana où il passait par le territoire de tribus mal réputées ». ²¹

Puis il revient sur le double jeu des Italiens qui feignent de le conseiller alors qu'ils le maintiennent dans l'ignorance totale aussi bien du sort de son armée que des événements militaires dans les Balkans et partout en Europe. Il précise même que sa seule source d'information réside dans les journaux français qu'il parvient, tant bien que mal, à se procurer. Mais cela ne le préoccupe plus, explique-t-il, qu'à titre personnel car, comme il « n'est plus rien, il suit le sort de l'armée, il a confiance dans son fils pour gouverner. » ²²

Passé cet entretien, qui a duré presque une heure, le général Mondésir se rend auprès du général italien Bertotti.

Très rapidement le général italien met l'accent sur sa double fonction politique de gouverneur du Presidio et militaire de commandant des troupes italiennes. Cherche-t-il à impressionner le général français ? C'est possible. Mais dans ce cas sa tentative demeure aussi inefficace que vaine.

¹⁸ Audience du Roi de Serbie accordée au général de Mondésir le 22 décembre 1915.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

Il explique ensuite son opposition au passage des troupes serbes à Durazzo et à Valona car il ne veut pas de contact entre ses troupes et les Serbes, accablant les seconds de tous les maux. Les unités militaires serbes seraient, selon ses dires, « *en désordre* » – on le serait à moins à cette date –, « *sans doute porteuse du typhus et du choléra* » et elles commettraient par ailleurs « *des déprédations [...] de nature à provoquer un soulèvement des populations* ». ²³ Passées ces remontrances qui montrent le peu de sollicitude qu'il a pour les soldats serbes il tient à préciser à Mondésir que, dévoilant ainsi les objectifs politiques qui lui ont été assignés qu'il attend du Prince Alexandre qu'il « *s'engage solennellement à ne jamais revendiquer la possession ultérieure des territoires albanais que ses troupes seraient amenées à traverser ou à occuper* ». ²⁴

Lorsqu'il quitte le général Bertotti, le général Mondésir éprouve, écrit-il fort diplomatiquement un « *sentiment partagé* » qui le pousse à « *douter de la sincérité de cet officier général* ». ²⁵

Dès le lendemain Mondésir, estimant qu'il n'a plus, dans l'immédiat, rien à faire sur place, décide de rentrer à Brindisi afin de recueillir les comptes rendus des deux autres missions qu'il a envoyé en Albanie et de confronter les avis de ses officiers avec ses sentiments et son ressenti personnels. De retour à Brindisi le 23 après une traversée effectuée cette fois à bord d'un torpilleur français, il reçoit et écoute le rapport que lui fait lieutenant-colonel Broussaud de retour de Durazzo en compagnie et le sous-lieutenant Grandidier. Lorsqu'il écrit et adresse à Paris le lendemain 24 décembre son rapport il n'a pas encore revu les commandants d'Alauzier et Coudanne qui ne sont pas encore revenus de Saint-Jean-de-Médéa.

Son rapport final n'en demeure pas moins fort intéressant tant il semble bien qu'il ait été écrit d'une plume froide, exempte de tout parti pris personnel et dont le seul objectif est d'aider le général Joffre à prendre les décisions qui s'imposeront alors à lui.

S'agissant en premier lieu de l'Italie, dont il connaît l'importance locale et les ambitions territoriales, il comprend et trouve légitime que ses représentants défendent ce qu'ils considèrent comme étant leur intérêt national. Mais il considère que cette compréhension à des limites que ces derniers ont franchies. Il leur reproche une attitude systématique non exempte de cynisme alors qu'ils pourraient fort bien la tempérer au moins « *momentanément [pour] des raisons de pure humanité* ». Cela aurait ainsi évité, comme le lui a rendu compte le lieutenant-colonel Broussard que « *de pauvres recrues [serbes] rencontrées dans un état*

²³ Mission militaire française en Albanie, *Compte rendu de l'entrevue entre le général de Mondésir et le général italien Bertotti, commandant le Presidio de Valona*, après-midi du 22 décembre 1915, n°3/C, SHD GR 2175.

²⁴ Ibid

²⁵ Ibid.

si misérable [...] sur la route de Durazzo à Tirana, meurent sans abri aux portes d'une ville occupée par les Italiens ». ²⁶

En ce qui concerne plus directement les relations qu'il a établi avec les autorités italiennes, où qu'elles se trouvent de part et d'autre de l'Adriatique, Mondésir estime que toutes jouent, vis-à-vis de la mission qu'il commande un double jeu, leur gouvernement « *se mettant certainement en travers des projets qu'il paraît accepter ou, tout au moins, en rend l'exécution très difficile* ». ²⁷ Il estime que les autorités, civiles ou militaires, qu'il a côtoyées tant à Brindisi qu'en Albanie « *tout en montrant une courtoisie parfaite et des formes chaleureuses de sympathie, contrecarrent, dans la mesure où ils le peuvent, toutes nos opérations* ». ²⁸ En d'autres termes, la politique italienne est, dans les Balkans, opposée à celle, pourtant bien modeste, conduite par la France.

En définitive, au cours des premières journées qu'il a passé sur place, le général Mondésir ne peut que constater que les Italiens ont tenté de saboter son action, c'est-à-dire celle de la France, en essayant de l'empêcher de rencontrer le Roi Pierre et de le désinformer en ne lui remettant pas des télégrammes qui lui étaient destinés et qui devaient obligatoirement avoir transité auparavant par les moyens télégraphiques italiens.

En ce qui concerne enfin les Serbes, Mondésir estime que les Italiens retiennent le Roi Pierre Ier à Valona « *pour ainsi dire prisonnier dans le médiocre hôtel dans lequel il est descendu* ». ²⁹ Plus généralement il pense que les Italiens s'efforcent de le duper : « *Ils cherchent à me tromper, cela semble évident ; ils cherchent à cacher l'urgence extrême qu'il y a à agir pour tirer les Serbes de leur détresse* ». ³⁰ Il se montre même d'une sévérité extrême lorsqu'il écrit : « *à n'en pas douter, les Italiens désirent la fin des Serbes en tant qu'armée, sinon en tant que Nation* ». ³¹

Tout cela pousse le général Mondésir à proposer à Paris comme une évidence, de ravitailler dans les meilleurs délais, ce à quoi il s'emploie déjà mais surtout, de la transporter d'urgence à Corfou : ³² « *je crois qu'il faut faire un effort immédiat – indépendamment même du projet d'ensemble, en cours – [...] pour sauver ce qui subsiste encore de cette jeunesse, sans quoi c'est l'existence même de la nation, et*

²⁶ Compte rendu de la situation de la mission à la date du 24 décembre 1915 adressé par le général Mondésir au ministère de la Guerre, n°5/C, page 2, SHD GR 2175.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Il reprend ici à son compte l'idée émise le 11 décembre par le Bureau d'Orient de l'État-major de l'Armée dans une Note au sujet de la reconstitution de l'armée serbe n° 8090 – 9/11, SHD GR 2175.

non pas seulement de l'armée qui est en péril. Il semble que – sous réserve de difficultés diplomatiques insurmontables – l'île de Corfou serait un asile sûr. »

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Dragan Bakic*

*Institute for Balkan Studies
Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts
Belgrade*

The Serbian Minister in London, Mateja Bošković, the Yugoslav Committee, and Serbia's Yugoslav Policy in the Great War 1914–1916

Abstract: This paper seeks to examine the outlook of the Serbian Minister in London, Mateja Mata Bošković, during the first half of the Great War on the South Slav (Yugoslav) question – a unification of all the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in a single state, which was Serbia's war aim. He found himself in close contact with the members of the Yugoslav Committee, an organisation of the irredentist Yugoslav émigrés from Austria-Hungary in which two Croat politicians, Frano Supilo and Ante Trumbić, were leading figures. In stark contrast to other Serbian diplomats, Bošković was not enthusiastic about Yugoslav unification. He suspected the Croat émigrés, especially Supilo, of pursuing exclusive Croat interests under the ruse of the Yugoslav programme. His dealings with them were made more difficult on account of the siding of a group of British "friends of Serbia", the most prominent of which were Robert William Seton-Watson and Henry Wickham Steed, with the Croat émigrés. Though not opposed in principle to an integral Yugoslav unification, Bošković preferred staunch defence of Serbian Macedonia from Bulgarian ambitions and the acquisition of Serb-populated provinces in southern Hungary, while in the west he seems to have been content with the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, part of Slavonia and an outlet to the Adriatic Sea in Dalmatia. Finally, the reception of and reaction to Bošković's reports on the part of the Serbian Prime Minister, Nikola Pašić, clearly shows that the latter was determined to persist in his Yugoslav policy, despite the Treaty of London which assigned large parts of the Slovene and Croat lands to Italy and made the creation of Yugoslavia an unlikely proposition. In other words, Pašić did not vacillate between the "small" and the "large programme", between Yugoslavia and Greater Serbia, as it has been often alleged in historiography and public discourse.

Keywords: Mateja Mata Bošković, Yugoslav Committee, Serbia, Yugoslavia, Nikola Pašić, British (English) friends of Serbia, R. W. Seton-Watson, First World War

Since the outbreak of the Great War the Serbian government set itself on the course of creating a large South Slav (Yugoslav) state which would unite all the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. It was on the second day of hostilities between

* drabakic@yahoo.com

Austria-Hungary and Serbia that Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Nikola Pašić, discussed in an inner circle the envisaged territorial scope of a state which would be formed after the successful conclusion of the war.¹ But it was not before 7 December 1914, during a critical phase of the Austro-Hungarian offensive, that the Serbian parliament declared *urbi et orbi* in the wartime capital Niš that a Yugoslav unification was Serbia's war aim.² This was a bold step as its realization practically presumed the disappearance of Austria-Hungary from the political map of Europe. For that, apart from the requirements of military situation, there was no political will whatsoever among the Entente Powers. The pursuit of Pašić's Yugoslav policy during the war has been a subject of much historiographical interest and controversy, as will be discussed later. The purpose of this essay is to contribute to the debate on that thorny question and, more broadly, on the run-up to the creation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (Yugoslavia) by focusing on three important and intertwined themes. The first one concerns the views and activities of the Serbian Minister in London after November 1913, Mateja Mata Bošković, which have been neglected so far by historians despite being of considerable interest in and of themselves. The second related theme is an exploration of insights into Pašić's Yugoslav policy from the perspective of his reception of and reaction to Bošković's reports, which cast doubts on the intentions and conduct of the Croat politicians who worked with the Serbian government for the formation of a Yugoslavia. Finally, the third theme covers the influence of a group of "British friends of Serbia", distinguished individuals and high profile public people, who propagated the Yugoslav idea and campaigned to associate the British government with the Yugoslav cause. Apart from their efforts in the press and what might be termed public sphere, which have been discussed elsewhere,³ they tried to impress their views on policy-makers largely by means of "the various memoranda and letters and reports which some of us fired off at the F[oreign] O[ffice]";⁴ as well as through personal contacts they made with government officials. But this paper looks specifically at the ways in which these people affected the work of important Yugoslav émigrés in Britain

¹ Panta Draškić, *Moji memoari*, ed. Dušan T. Bataković (Belgrade: Srpska književna zadruga, 1990), 87.

² Dragoslav Janković, "Niška deklaracija (nastajanje programa jugoslovenskog ujedinjenja u Srbiji 1914. godine)", *Istorija XX veka* X (1969), 7–111.

³ Harry Hanak, *Great Britain and Austria-Hungary during the First World War: A Study in the Formation of Public Opinion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962).

⁴ Arthur J. May, "Seton-Watson and the Treaty of London", *The Journal of Modern History* 29/1 (Mar. 1957), 42; see also Kenneth Calder, *Britain and the Origins of the New Europe, 1914–1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976); Hugh and Christopher Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe: R. W. Seton-Watson and the Last Years of Austria-Hungary* (London: Methuen, 1981).

and their relations with Bošković and, by implication, the Serbian government, which is another facet which has not been a subject of a sustained analysis.

Bošković was a diplomat who had been closely involved in Serbia's political and military successes in the two Balkan Wars of 1912-1913.⁵ As part of his six years as Minister in Athens, he had participated in the diplomatic preliminaries leading to the conclusion of the Balkan Alliance between Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece and Montenegro which had defeated the Ottoman Empire and ousted it from most of its Balkan territory. He had then negotiated with the Greek Prime Minister, Eleftherios Venizelos, and contributed to the making of the Serbo-Greek defensive treaty of 1 June 1913 which had prepared the ground for a victorious war against Bulgaria arising out of a conflict over the distribution of Ottoman territory. Bošković also proved his abilities in London during the July crisis: he sensed an imminent danger for Serbia and sent a clear warning to Pašić in marked contrast to the uncertainty of the Serbian Minister in Vienna, Jovan Jovanović nicknamed Pižon.⁶

Bošković made it clear to the Serbian Foreign Ministry (MID) that the prevailing opinion in the Foreign Office was that the maintenance of Austria-Hungary, perhaps with somewhat reduced territory, constituted a necessity for European balance of power. Since such conviction ran contrary to Serbian interests, he decided to work through prominent British publicists in order to create a faction in public opinion favourable to the idea of the demise of the Habsburg Monarchy and formation of nation-states in its place, which would in turn affect the government policy.⁷ The Minister also realised that the sympathetic British attitude towards Italy and Hungary, along with the mistrust for the Slavs, would cause much difficulties in respect to territorial settlement for Istria, Dalmatia and potential Hungary's access to sea in Fiume (Rijeka). It was exactly those musings that led Pašić to propose the urgent formation of a Yugoslav committee in London which would represent all the Yugoslav

⁵ For an account of Bošković's career, see forthcoming Dragan Bakić, "Mateja Mata Bošković: prilog za biografiju srpskog diplomate", in Ljubodrag Ristić, ed., *Srbija 1918: oslobodjenje domovine, povratak ratnika, život u novoj državi* (Čačak, Belgrade, Ljubljana: Medjuopštinski istorijski arhiv Čačak, Centar za istoriju Jugoslavije i savremenu nacionalnu istoriju, ZRC SAZU – Institut za kulturne in memorialne studije, 2019).

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Arhiv Jugoslavije (AJ) [Archives of Yugoslavia], Jovan Jovanović-Pižon Papers [collection no. 80], 80-2-10, Bošković to MID, 6 September 1914, no. 186. Dates in the archival documents and diaries are given according to the old style (Julian calendar), which was in official use in Serbia until 1919, unless that was not the case in the original text. In the main text of the article, dates are always given according to the new style (Gregorian calendar). The difference between the two is 13 days (6 September is 19 September according to the new style).

provinces and make propaganda in British and European public opinion.⁸ What Pašić had in mind was to transform a group of Yugoslav émigrés gathered in still neutral Italy into a more formal organisation. It all started with three Dalmatian politicians, Frano Supilo, Ante Trumbić and Remiggio Gazzari, who arrived in Venice after the outbreak of war and discussed what to do on a daily basis, largely animated by their fear of Italian agitation and pretensions on their native province. They were soon joined by other émigrés, among them a well-known sculptor, Ivan Meštrović, another Dalmatian who lived in Rome at the time. As it soon became apparent, Supilo, Trumbić and Meštrović were the three most prominent and important Croat figures. Their political campaign commenced in Rome where lively diplomatic activities were taking place and where they were met most cordially in the Serbian Legation by Charge d'Affaires, Ljubomir Mihailović (there was no appointed Minister at the time). It was Mihailović who introduced the Croat émigrés to the world of high politics: he arranged for their audiences with the French, Russian and British Ambassadors whom they apprised of the Yugoslav ethnic claim on Dalmatia and the desire of their compatriots to unite with Serbia. There were also plans for propaganda activities, namely publishing a brochure on the Yugoslav question and launching a French language journal in Switzerland. The émigrés appreciated themselves a need for organisation and, independently of Pašić, considered the possibility of forming an irredentist committee which would be joined by a number of people fleeing from Austria-Hungary. Nevertheless, the initiative rested with Pašić. He convened a private meeting in Niš during which he laid down his ideas and sent two Serbs from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Nikola Stojanović and Dušan Vasiljević, to work with the "Yugoslavs" and be a mouthpiece of the views and intentions of the Serbian government, and decided to provide financial support without which the work, and the sustenance, of many émigrés would not be possible. These were the origins of an organisation that would later become known as the Yugoslav Committee.⁹

⁸ AJ, 80-2-10, two telegrams from Bošković to MID on 23 September 1914 and Pašić's note, 12 October 1914; Nikola Stojanović, *Jugoslovenski odbor (članci i dokumenti)* (Zagreb: Nova Evropa, 1927), 10-11.

⁹ AJ, 80-21-106, Remiggio Gazzari to Jovan Jovanović, private, Rome, 10 January 1915; Dragovan Šepić, "Iz korespondencije Frana Supila", *Arhivski vjesnik* I/1 (1958), 252-254, 262-264; Dragovan Šepić, "Trumbićev 'Dnevnik'", *Historijski pregled* V (1959), 167-175. The most exhaustive work on the Yugoslav Committee remains that of the Czech historian Milada Paulova, *Jugoslavenski odbor u Londonu: povijest jugoslavenske emigracije za svjetskog rata od 1914-1918* (Zagreb: Prosvjetna nakladna zadruka, 1925). However, this work is not impartial to conflicts that emerged during the war between the Croat émigrés and Pašić. This has much to do with the fact that Paulova's most important source of information was the conversations she had with the members of the Yugoslav Committee after the war, mostly with its president Ante Trumbić. Moreover, Paulova even sent some chapters of her book to Trumbić to read

While the realisation of the Yugoslav programme was a matter of a more long-term perspective, Serbia faced a tangible danger that neutral Bulgaria might attack her from the rear tempted by an opportunity to snatch Macedonia. The Entente diplomacy made efforts to win over Bulgaria to enter into war on its side, for which Serbia was supposed to pay the price by ceding to Sofia at least part of her own territory in Macedonia - the diplomatic representatives of the Entente Powers sounded the Serbian government in this respect since the outbreak of war. Bošković believed that Bulgaria would not dare to attack Serbia if St. Petersburg made it clear that it would consider any such action an attack on Russia herself and if Greece was prepared to honour its commitment in accordance with the Greco-Serbian alliance treaty of 1913. On the other side, the Minister was certain that no assistance could be expected from Bulgaria against Austria-Hungary regardless of potential Serbian concessions in Macedonia. For that reason, he recommended, in case it was deemed necessary to make some concessions to Sofia, that those should be made only "in agreement with Greece and Romania and in proportion to concessions the latter two [countries] are willing to make to Bulgaria."¹⁰ The Serbian government found that Athens was obliged to provide military assistance if Bulgaria invaded Serbia and because of

them before publication. As she explained to the renowned Serbian geographer, Jovan Cvijić, Paulova believed that because of her conversations with the participants she "understood and was able to include in the book some of that spirit, which has gone today, and which others, under the impression of the present, cannot any longer and will not reproduce, like I have. In time others can also cover the facts - but they will hardly be able to do this." Even more importantly, Paulova was biased as she had neither the wish nor professional inclination to try to understand the standpoint of Pašić in his dispute with the Croat émigrés. She had no qualms about admitting that "the policy of Mr Pašić has not warmed me up in the slightest, and I have turned against it. For the sake of 'Yugoslavism!'" (Arhiv Srpske Akademije nauka i umetnosti (ASANU) [Archives of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts], Papers of Jovan Cvijić [collection no. 13484], 13484/946-2, Milada Paulova to Jovan Cvijić, 25 April 1923). Paulova thus accepted the stereotype imposed by Croat politicians, the members of the Yugoslav Committee - which would later be replicated uncritically in communist Yugoslav historiography - to the effect that Pašić's views in the matter of Yugoslav unification were exclusively (Greater) Serbian, whereas the Yugoslav émigrés, including the leading Croats, allegedly had a truly Yugoslav outlook. Other relevant works include Vaso Bogdanov, Ferdo Čulinović and Marko Kostrenčić, *Jugoslavenski odbor u Londonu: u povodu 50-godišnjice osnivanja* (Zagreb: JAZU, 1966); Gale Stokes, "The Role of the Yugoslav Committee in the Formation of Yugoslavia", in Dimitrije Djordjević, ed., *The Creation of Yugoslavia 1914-1918* (California: Clio Books, 1980), 51-71; Milorad Ekmečić, *Ratni ciljevi Srbije 1914*, 2nd ed. (Belgrade: Prosveta, 1990), 302-348; Djordje Stanković, *Nikola Pašić i jugoslovensko pitanje*, 2 vols (Belgrade: BIGZ, 1985), II, 11-38; Connie Robinson, "Yugoslavism in the Early Twentieth Century: The Politics of the Yugoslav Committee", in Dejan Djokić and James Ker-Lindsey, eds, *New Perspectives on Yugoslavia: Key Issues and Controversies* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 10-26.

¹⁰ AJ, 80-7-40, Bošković to Pašić, 8 September 1914, conf. no. 433.

that they were all the more concerned by the Greek government's interpretation to the effect that such obligation was non-existent in a situation in which the other side took part in a European-scale conflict. Having been one of the key participants in the conclusion of the Serbo-Greek treaty, Bošković stressed in early 1915 that such interpretation was "inaccurate and contrary to the text and spirit of the treaty, which has been concluded for general defence against external attacks no matter from which direction they might come, with the single exception [contained] in the attached declaration on Albania. And that specifically envisaged exception proves that *casus foederis* exists in all other cases."¹¹ More importantly, the intransigent attitude in the Macedonian question was, in view of the Minister, crucial to pre-empting the pressure on the part of the Entente Powers, which could otherwise reach a decision unfavourable to Serbia. The objective of Serbian diplomacy, as he saw it, was "to force [their hand] rather than expect and hope for a voluntary recognition of what is our right and national requirement of the highest order in Macedonia."¹²

In the meantime, efforts were made to ensure a benevolent attitude of the British press and public opinion in both Yugoslav and Macedonian matter with a view to influencing official circles. In this respect, Bošković mostly affected the coverage of these affairs in the press through paid services of Crawford Price, the *Times* correspondent from Greece, whom he had come to know personally during the Second Balkan War against Bulgaria.¹³ In propaganda, Bošković had major assistance from a group of noted scholars which the Serbian government sent to London, especially from the spring and summer of 1915 onwards. The most prominent of these were Jovan Cvijić, brothers Pavle and Bogdan Popović, literary critics, father Nikolaj Velimirović, a well-known Orthodox theologian, and the geologist Jovan Žujović.¹⁴ They worked tirelessly to win over British sympathies for Serbia by getting in touch with a number of persons from the press and public sphere, and also by making contact with the Foreign Office

¹¹ AJ, 80-8-41, Bošković to Pašić, 30 December 1914, conf. no. 587; also Arhiv Srbije (AS) [Archives of Serbia], Ministry for Foreign Affairs - Political Department [MID-PO], 1915, f[ascicle]. XXVIII, d[ossier]. IV, Bošković to Pašić, 8 October 1915, conf. no. 993.

¹² AJ, 80-8-41, Bošković to Pašić, 11 January 1915, conf. no. 40.

¹³ AJ, 80-2-10, Bošković's telegrams to MID on 27 December 1914, no. 579; 3 March 1915, no. 259; 11 March 1915, without number; 4 May 1915, no. 508; 80-8-41, Bošković to MID, 22 July 1915, without number; AS, MID-PO, f. XXVIII, d. IX, Bošković to MID, 20 November 1915, no. 1160; f. VI, d. VI, Bogdan Popović to Pašić, 9 March 1916.

¹⁴ Ljubinka Trgovčević, "Politička delatnost Jovana Cvijića u Londonu 1915. godine", *Istorijski časopis XX* (1973), 385–396; Ljubinka Trgovčević, *Naučnici Srbije i stvaranje Jugoslavije* (Belgrade: Narodna knjiga, 1986), 163–176; Dragoslav Janković, "Profesor Pavle Popović i jugoslovensko pitanje u Prvom svetskom ratu", *Letopis Matice srpske* 416/3 (1975), 219–233; Slobodan G. Markovich, "Activities of Father Nikolaj Velimirovich in Great Britain during the Great War," *Balcanica XLVIII* (2017), 143–190.

officials. They also carefully observed propaganda activities of the influential Bulgarophiles in Britain, particularly those gathered in the Balkan Committee, something of a pressure group in which two brothers and Liberal members of parliament, Noel and Charles Buxton, were instrumental. But despite this strong pro-Bulgarian current among chiefly liberal politicians, Bošković was not too much concerned about its impact. As he pointed out to Pašić, Serbia's importance as a military factor was too valuable for official Britain to allow for resorting to measures that might weaken her for the benefit of Bulgaria.¹⁵ He believed, however, that schemes about dispatching Anglo-French troops to Serbian Macedonia in connection with the negotiations about the Greek army's entry into war and support for Serbia were potentially dangerous, because their presence there would, so the British Bulgarophiles wished, facilitate granting territorial concessions to Bulgaria. Bošković thus underscored to Pašić that the only meaningful military assistance to Serbia was that provided on the main northern front against the Austro-Hungarians, while "we can easily defend ourselves the Macedonian parts and I think that we should not accept foreign assistance there from anyone and not even from Greece."¹⁶

As for realisation of the Yugoslav programme, and consequently cooperation between the Serbian government and Croat émigrés, the foremost difficulty concerned the very possibility that wartime combinations of the great powers would allow for the formation of a single Yugoslav state. Supilo learned in Rome from Charles Loiseau, the French press attaché, about the idea of an independent Croatia which would encompass Dalmatia, the Slovene lands and part of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Mihailović received confirmation of this information from the counsellor of the French Embassy in Rome, who also assured him that Serbia would, in such a case, be granted an outlet to sea next to the Greek coast or perhaps even as far up as the town of Split, an arrangement to which Italy would consent.¹⁷ Indeed, reports to that effect had already reached the Serbian government from other sources.¹⁸ Niš deplored an arrangement along these lines as it was designed to thwart a Yugoslav unification, Serbia's proclaimed war aim. The Croat émigrés viewed such a possibility from the standpoint of saving Dalmatia from annexation to Italy which was, to their mind, a worse outcome than remaining within Austria-Hungary. It would tear apart

¹⁵ AJ, 80-8-4I, Bošković to MID, 12 March 1915 (new style), conf. no. 240.

¹⁶ AJ, 80-8-4I, Bošković to Pašić, 2/15 March 1915, conf. no. 255; also AS, MID-PO, 1915, f. XI, d. VIII, Bošković to MID, 20 September 1915, no. 965.

¹⁷ Dragovan Šepić, "Srpska vlada i počeci Jugoslavenskog odbora", *Historijski zbornik XIII/1-4* (1960), 7; see also from the same author "Supilo u emigraciji: prvi dio studije o radu Frana Supila u emigraciji (srpanj 1914. – lipanj 1915)", *Jadranski zbornik: prilozi za povijest Istre, Rijeke i Hrvatskog primorja I* (1956), 48–50.

¹⁸ Ekmečić, *Ratni ciljevi Srbije*, 309–310.

the lands populated by Croats and expose the Croat population annexed to Italy to a great danger of assimilation which was non-existent in the multinational Habsburg Empire. For Supilo, the only feasible solution was the creation of a Yugoslavia and he thus rejected out of hand the notion of a separate Roman Catholic, Slovene-Croat state. Trumbić and Meštrović were not, however, disinclined to the idea, since they thought that a Yugoslav state might be impossible of achievement, if the Serbian government were not prepared to go to any length and the Entente Powers refused it out of consideration for Italy.¹⁹ But Supilo was so determined that they did not contradict him; he remained a moving spirit for some time to come. Besides, his policy was no doubt the most rational one for the Croats: if Italy took over the most important points in Dalmatia and Serbia gained a stretch of the Dalmatian coast, then Croatia would become “a victim”, as Trumbić later put it.²⁰ On other occasion, Trumbić concluded that Italian possession of the western Istria, together with Hungary’s likely access to sea in Fiume, meant that the war would result in the creation of a “Greater Serbia, along with the content Hungary and Italy”.²¹ The rest of territory left to constitute a Croat state would serve only as a tool for sparking constant conflicts among the South Slavs; because of that the Croat émigrés did not want such an independent state to come into being. In the words of Supilo, that was “the danger of an independent Croatia with a mission to be a splitting wedge and a bone of contention, which would be easy to accomplish with the sacrifice of Dalmatia, Istria.”²² It was clear then that Yugoslavia offered the best possibilities for safeguarding exclusive Croat interests, namely holding together all the territory which the Croats considered their own, and that any other policy could have been pursued only out of necessity.

Supilo headed to France and Great Britain to lobby against Italian imperialism and for unification of the Croats and Slovenes with Serbia. Just like Mihailović in Rome, the Serbian Minister in Paris, Milenko Vesnić, extended him a warm welcome upon his arrival in mid-September 1914 and arranged for Supilo’s audience with the Russian Ambassador, Alexander Izvolsky, and the French Foreign Minister, Théophile Delcassé.²³ Just like Mihailović, Vesnić praised Supilo’s efforts for the cause of “general national work” and he provided him, along with Izvolsky and Delcassé, with a letter of recommendation for his further journey to Britain in October. In retrospect, he was convinced that “this smart-looking patriot” had left “a very good impression” in both Paris

¹⁹ Šepić, “Trumbićev ‘Dnevnik’”, Rome, 1. X. 1914, 176–177.

²⁰ Šepić, “Iz korespondencije Frana Supila”, Trumbić to Supilo, Rome, 27. XI. 1914, 276–277.

²¹ Ibid., Trumbić to Supilo, Rome, 29. I. and 4. II. 1915, 353–357; see also Šepić, “Trumbićev ‘Dnevnik’”, Rome, 9. II. 1915, 188.

²² Šepić, “Iz korespondencije Frana Supila”, Trumbić to Supilo, Athens, 28. V. 1915, 363–367.

²³ AJ, 80-2-9, Milenko Vesnić to Jovan Jovanović-Pižon, 21 September 1914.

and London.²⁴ During his mission in Britain, Supilo got in touch with the Serbian Legation in London. His relations with the Serbian representative there appeared to be different from those in Italy and France: "The Serbian Minister, Mr Bošković, who has received me most kindly, does not take me anywhere or introduce me at my specific request; rather I make my way among Englishmen on my own as a Croat, a Catholic and a shoreman."²⁵ This was part of a tactical approach approved by Serbian Minister and Russian Ambassador, Alexander Benckendorff, for the purpose of stressing the home-grown nature of the South Slavs' aspirations and avoiding any involvement with official Serbian and Russian policies bound to cause weariness in the Russophobe and Slavophobe British environment. But it was Supilo's second visit to London in January 1915 that was more successful in establishing contact with the British government. With Bošković standing aside, it was two prominent Britons, Robert William Seton-Watson, a Scottish historian and renowned expert on south-eastern Europe, and Henry Wickham Steed, foreign editor of the *Times*, with whom Supilo had been acquainted long before the war, who were central to his success. In particular, Steed introduced Supilo to Prime Minister, Herbert Henry Asquith, and Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey.²⁶ Despite these opportunities to advocate the Yugoslav cause, the impression was that Britain was least receptive of all the Allies to the prospect of a Yugoslav unification, resembling "a dangerous stepmother" as the Croat émigré put it.²⁷ Aside from his conversations, Supilo was interested in the preparations for Meštrović's exhibition which was eagerly awaited as an excellent opportunity for Yugoslav propaganda. Supilo asked Bošković - acting "For the Yugoslav Committee of A[stro].-H[ungarian]. Émigrés", still not formally constituted - for financial support to Dimitrije Mitrović, an avant-garde man of literature, "on account of his involvement with Meštrović's exhibition in London". After having been informed of this request, Pašić approved.²⁸

Difficult as it was, Serbia's situation became more complicated because of the intertwinement of the Yugoslav and Macedonian questions. The Entente Powers argued in Niš that Serbia should cede to Bulgaria at least that part of Macedonia which had been a contested zone prior to the Balkan Wars and the possession of which had been left for arbitration of the Russian Emperor

²⁴ AJ, 80-2-9, Vesnić to Pašić, Bordeaux, 4 November 1914.

²⁵ Dragovan Šepić, ed., *Pisma i memorandumumi Frana Supila* (Belgrade: Naučno delo, 1967), doc. 6, Frano Supilo to Nikola Pašić, London, 21. X. 1914, 8-13.

²⁶ Šepić, "Trumbićev 'Dnevnik'", Rome, 25. I. 1915, 184.

²⁷ Šepić, *Pisma i memorandumumi Frana Supila*, doc. 17, Supilo to Dušan Vasiljević, London, 3. I. 1915, 37-39.

²⁸ AS, MID, Legation London [PsL], f. 1, pov r 649/1915, Bošković to Pašić, 8-I-1915, conf. no. 31; Pašić to Bošković, 13/26-I-1915, conf. no. 347.

according to the 1912 alliance treaty between the two countries. In return, the Entente Powers offered Serbia concessions in the west at the expense of the Habsburg Monarchy, the minimum of which was an outright annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and an outlet to the Adriatic Sea after the successful conclusion of the war. In doing so, and without consulting the Serbian government in advance, they proposed a settlement on the basis of a territorial bargain which would, in their view, satisfy the essential Serbian requirements. None of the Entente Powers was interested in, or took seriously an integral Yugoslav unification. Pašić and the Serbian government were averse to accepting such an offer, but despite their protests and reservations they could hardly reject out of hand what was, after all, a unanimous demand of their allies. The Croat émigrés, on the other side, hoped that Serbia would be willing to renounce Macedonia in order to have the western Yugoslav provinces, above all Dalmatia, included in a future Yugoslav state rather than have them become an object of compensation in the transactions made by Entente Powers, mostly to meet Italy's requests. Although they could not, for obvious reasons, state openly their opinion to the Serbs, the latter were familiar with their attitude. "Trumbić once [...] very angry: let the Serbs cede Macedonia, just as long as Dalmatia is saved; Dalmatia is the main [thing]"; Pavle Popović found out.²⁹

The information on the Croat émigrés' utterances to the effect that Macedonia was of secondary importance to Serbia in relation to the western parts and that concessions could be given to Bulgaria in that province reached Bošković, as well as Cvijić and Pavle Popović, and caused his aversion to their activities. Bošković asked of Pašić himself to draw attention of the émigrés to the necessity of not making such statements, with which the Prime Minister agreed and issued instructions in that sense.³⁰ But the warnings had no effect and Bošković, just like Cvijić, came to think that the émigrés should best be removed from London and prevented from causing damage, and that they should be directed to organise an armed resistance to Italian pretensions in their own native provinces:

²⁹ Pavle Popović, *Iz dnevnika*, ed. by Bogdan Lj. Popović (Belgrade: Zavod za udžbenike, 2001), 11 June 1915, 186. Some ten months later, Supilo had no qualms about lecturing Pašić himself how Serbia which had "already solemnly renounced Macedonia" according to the 1912 agreement with Bulgaria, as he interpreted it, would now have "to make all possible compromises in order better and more solidly to resolve the great Yugoslav question" (AS, MID, PsL, f. I, pov r 831/1916, Supilo [Rome Legation] to Pašić, 3 April 1916, no. 495; Dragovan Šepić, *Supilo diplomat: rad Frana Supila u emigraciji 1914–1917. godine* (Zagreb: Naprijed, 1961), 183). With the fall of Serbia in late 1915, Supilo clearly thought that such advice to the exiled Serbian government would not be considered outrageous.

³⁰ AJ, 80-2-10, Bošković to MID, 17 March 1915, no. 310 and Pašić's note on the back, 18 March 1915.

Therefore, I share Cvijić's opinion that revolutionary work should commence and that Yugoslav leaders should be engaged with it, so that the people are prepared to resist Italian occupation, which would no doubt provide the best document [*sic*] for settling the question to our benefit. Presence and work of the Yugoslav émigrés there for the purpose of preparing a national movement for unification with Serbia could be much more useful than their staying here where the official circles are very well, and the public fairly, informed about the ethnographic situation in Dalmatia and Istria, and where the Yugoslav émigrés could be detrimental to [our] work for Serbia relating to the Macedonian question which is more difficult and important for us, because of their lack of understanding and depreciation of the Serbian state's interests in the central area of the Balkan peninsula. Supilo has good connections here, but he has already done [what he could] and gave all information where necessary, so I think he would also be more useful there in preparing the real reasons which could dispose favourably our allies for whom the most beautiful sheer words will hardly have that persuasive power that lies in a lively action. The solution of the western question cannot depend on settling relations with Bulgaria in Macedonia, because the factors of these questions are different and without mutual connection. These are two completely separate matters. [...] Thus it should not be thought that we will have more success in the west if we are giving way in Macedonia. We will succeed in the west insofar as Italy and the Triple Alliance feel a danger from further difficulties and conflicts on that side, in case injustice is done to the Yugoslavs, and not if they make concessions to the Bulgarians. Our Yugoslav brethren do not understand that and, wishing to have as much success in the west as possible, they are willing unconsciously to harm Serbia's great interests in Macedonia. Thus I find that they should be directed to work energetically for [the benefit of] their own parts and let us take care about preserving Serbia's rights in Macedonia for which prospects are quite good.³¹

In parallel with the Yugoslav question and the pressure exerted on her to make concessions in Macedonia, Serbia had to deal with another threat: there was a possibility that her allies might promise to Romania the entire province of the Banat in the course of secret negotiations with Bucharest to induce that country to join them in the war. Part of the Banat was populated by Serbs and obtaining it was envisaged as part of Serbia's war aims. To justify their conduct, the allies not only invoked the necessities of warfare, but also presented Serbia's sacrifice of the Banat as a reasonable concession which would be compensated in the western provinces. After having heard all Bošković's appeals that the allies should not make any decisions on Serbia's northern borders without consulting the Serbian government, the delivery of a memoir concerning the Banat and delimitation with Romania (a map made by Cvijić was attached to the memoir with the Serbian proposal for the Romanian border), Grey explicitly warned the Serbian Minister "that it would not be wise perhaps not to acquire Bosnia

³¹ AJ, 80-2-10, Bošković (and Cvijić) to Pašić, 4 April 1915, no. 387; also Bošković to Pašić, 15 April 1915, no. 430.

and [an outlet to] sea in case we do not succeed to beat the enemy.”³² Bošković recommended to Pašić that no effort should be spared to defend Serbian interests in St. Petersburg where negotiations with the Romanians were taking place. Anticipating that the allies would request from Serbia to assist the Italian and Romanian armies once they had started their operations, the Minister argued that should be refused without territorial compensations, making the most of the situation and redressing the border settlement with both countries. Cvijić appears to have spoken on his behalf as well when he advised that it was better to mark time and have a free hand at a decisive moment to settle matters in the field than to indulge in futile protests: “Do not make a fuss. Let us deal kindly with Italy, but in such manner as not to assume any commitment. In due course, when the General Staff considers it opportune, undertake a military action, but in Croatia rather than in Bosnia.”³³

Bošković believed that once the matter of Serbian-Romanian border had been settled the Entente Powers would increase their pressure on Serbia to make concessions to Bulgaria in Macedonia. In that case, Bošković suggested to Pašić to adopt a determined stance towards the allies. In his view, any Serbian weakness and conciliatoriness might encourage the allies to reach a unilateral solution and present Serbia with a *fait accompli*. “However, if we are resolved to defend the territory of our state from Bulgaria even by force of arms, I am firmly convinced,” Bošković wrote, “that we have already and finally won that game because the powers of the Triple Alliance, our allies, cannot in any case use physical force against Serbia, and they will not want to cause a fresh catastrophe in the Balkans in order to satisfy Bulgaria.”³⁴ Aside from that, the Minister recommended that Serbia cling to her alliance agreement with Greece, to the conclusion of which he had contributed considerably, in case of a Bulgarian attack. “Feeling that the critical moment is fast-approaching, I consider it my duty, just like I have done on several occasions before, in the face of dangers threatening Serbia, especially prior to the war against Bulgaria and last summer prior to Austria-Hungary’s preparations to attack Serbia, to present my opinion to you in this extremely important matter and to ask of you to pay attention to it.”³⁵

³² AJ, 80-2-10, Bošković’s telegrams to Pašić on 22 April 1915, no. 450; 24 April 1915, no. 479; 9 May 1915, no. 521 [quoted]; 29 June 1915, without number.

³³ Andrija Lainović, “Misija Jovana Cvijica u Londonu 1915. godine”, *Vranjski glasnik*, VII (1971), doc. 23, Cvijić to Pašić, 9 June 1915, conf. no. 628, 318-319; Trgovčević, “Politička delatnost Jovana Cvijica u Londonu 1915. godine”, 391-392.

³⁴ AJ, 80-2-10, Bošković to Pašić, 19 May 1915, no. 546. The Minister also suspected the British Minister in Niš, Sir Charles des Graz, of not relaying accurately either Pašić’s or the Foreign Office’s messages regarding Macedonia, toning down the former and amplifying the latter, in order to score a personal success by roping Pašić into accepting the Entente Powers’ demands (AS, MID-PO, 1915, f. XI, d. VIII, Bošković to Pašić, 22 May 1915, conf. no. 562).

³⁵ *Ibid.* Bošković’s opinion was in full agreement with that of Cvijić expressed in his telegram to Pašić (AJ, 80-2-10, 16 May 1915, no. 540). On that occasion, Cvijić provided a rather

In March and April 1915, the negotiations between Rome and the Entente Powers about Italy's entry into war were intensified in London. For all their secrecy, the Serbian government learned from several sources, including from Supilo who was then lobbying in St. Petersburg, that the allies were willing to agree to Italy's having not just Istria and Gorizia, but also a large part of Dalmatia in an attempt to step up Italian military intervention. Since Pašić believed that Italy could at most receive Trieste, Trentino and a half of Istria with the port of Pula and the Croat émigrés envisioned the Italian border as far north as along the Isonzo (Soča) river, it is not difficult to understand the horrific impression made by the extent of Italian ambitions.³⁶ Pašić reacted with resolve. After the Russian Foreign Ministry had rebuffed his intention to visit St. Petersburg to defend the Yugoslav cause, the Serbian government sent a note to their allies on 6 April with the request that "the Yugoslav provinces not be made an object of transactions between them and Italy at the expense of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and the peace of Europe."³⁷ The attitude of the British government was not encouraging either, as Bošković was given to understand that considerable concessions would have to be made to Italy. The Permanent Under-Secretary in the Foreign Office, Sir Arthur Nicolson, stated to him on behalf of Grey himself "that as a minimum of gains, Herzegovina and a wide stretch of Dalmatian coast will be secured for Serbia." Bošković did not respond to Nicolson's statement, which effectively ignored the Yugoslav programme of the Serbian government, and insisted on the significance of a favourable arrangement of the northern borders with Hungary and Romania. However, Pašić had no intention to abandon a Yugoslav unification. "What did [Nicolson] say about Bosnia? - And what did [he] say [about] Croatia, Slovenia? - And what about the Banat and

striking description of what all his attempts to present the Serbian view of the Macedonian problem to influential Britons amounted to: "After having admitted and accepted a well-known series of our reasons for the importance of the [river] Vardar communication for Serbia, for the inconvenience of letting Bulgaria drive a wedge between ourselves and Greece and making contact with Albania and Italy, and after some have even allowed for the possibility that the Macedonians are not Bulgarians, contrary to a deep-rooted opinion here, almost all of them still conclude that they rely on the judiciousness and conciliatoriness of our Government inasmuch they will find a way to satisfy the Bulgarians with [the town of] Bitolj for the sake of a future Balkan concord and because they need the Bulgarians for [waging war against] Turkey." It was exactly this British reliance on the conciliatoriness of the Pašić government that motivated both Bošković and Cvijić to make their case to convince the Serbian Prime Minister in the necessity for being inflexible.

³⁶ Šepić, "Iz korespondencije Frana Supila", Trumbić to Supilo, Rome, 5. I. 1915, 342-347; Dragovan Šepić, "Srpska vlada, Jugoslavenski odbor i pitanje kompromisne granice s Italijom", *Jugoslovenski istorijski časopis* 3 (1964), 37-40.

³⁷ Šepić, "Srpska vlada i počeci Jugoslavenskog odbora", 29.

Bačka? - If he did not say explicitly, did he think of those parts as well?" Pašić asked for further information.³⁸

In the circumstances when the greatest danger to the Yugoslav lands came from Italy, the moving of the émigrés out of Rome and that country was imperative. They left for Paris where the Yugoslav Committee was formally constituted on 30 April 1915 with Trumbić as its president - from that moment onwards he was a central figure in the work of Yugoslav irredentists.³⁹ Through the agency of Vesnić the émigrés went to see Delcassé the next day and handed him a memorandum on the aspirations of the Yugoslav people to form a single state. On 9 May, the Yugoslav Committee arrived in London which would become its headquarters for the rest of the war. London had long been envisioned as a centre for irredentist action by both Pašić and the émigrés - the Croats among the latter had their special reasons as they thought that Britain's capital would offer them best possibilities to safeguard their particular interests.⁴⁰ In this, as will be seen, they would be proven right. But the main impetus to move to London was the fact that the fate of Dalmatia and other Yugoslav lands was then being decided there. There were also other reasons:

1) it was predicted that Great Britain would have the most significant role in the war and at a peace conference; 2) our action was in large part based on the response our movement met with among [our] émigrés in the United States of America, with whom it was easiest to correspond from London; 3) the chances were that we would have most freedom to act in London, eventually even against the aspirations of the Italian government; 4) our great friends and renowned experts on the situation of Austria-Hungary, W. Steed and Seton-Watson, were there; 5) professor [Tomáš Garrigue] Masaryk [the leader of the Czech national movement] decided to move his seat from Geneva to London.⁴¹

Of these reasons, the role of the "English friends" of Serbia, as they were regularly referred to in Serbian diplomatic correspondence, should be specially noted. Along with Seton-Watson and Steed, it was the famous archaeologist, Sir Arthur John Evans, familiar with Balkan affairs since the 1875 uprising in Herzegovina - he had written a popular account of his personal experience of the area⁴² - and George Macaulay Trevelyan, another distinguished historian,

³⁸ AJ, 80-2-10, Bošković to Pašić, 22 April 1915, no. 455, and Pašić's note on the back, 23 April 1915.

³⁹ Hinko Hinković, *Iz velikog doba: moj rad i moji doživljaji za vrijeme svjetskog rata* (Zagreb: Komisionalna naklada Ćirilo-Methodske nakladne knjižare, 1927), 150.

⁴⁰ Stojanović, *Jugoslovenski odbor*, 11; Šepić, "Supilo u emigraciji", 62-63.

⁴¹ Stojanović, *Jugoslovenski odbor*, 14: also see discussion in Ekmečić, *Ratni ciljevi Srbije*, 345-347.

⁴² Arthur Evans, *Through Bosnia and the Herzegovina on Foot during the Insurrection, August and September 1875: with an historical review of Bosnia and a glimpse at the Croats, Slavonians,*

who mattered most. It was not a coincidence that these four prominent Britons, together with Cvijić, comprised "a committee for working in the English public opinion" which was supposed to "ask of the more eminent English politicians and writers who are regarded as being favourable to Serbia to present their views on the Yugoslav question and make them public."⁴³ These people had also played a major part in the founding and promotion of the Serbian Relief Fund which had been providing much humanitarian aid to Serbia after September 1914. They and a group of their supporters became distinct in the British public sphere as champions of the nationality principle, which meant that they advocated the break-up of Austria-Hungary and the right to freedom for the oppressed peoples under the Habsburgs, an objective alien to the British government until the last year of the war.

The moving spirit of their campaign, especially in the press, was Seton-Watson (also known by his pen name Scotus Viator) whose views on the nationality question in Austria-Hungary, Yugoslav unification and his personal commitment have been a matter of much discussion in historiography.⁴⁴ His attitude had evolved over time. At first he had been an advocate of the need to reform the Habsburg Empire in a liberal spirit, considering it an important and useful factor in European order. As he had grown disappointed with the methods of rule over the politically subdued Slavs and Romanians, especially on the part of Hungarian aristocracy, Seton-Watson had come to favour a trialist rearrangement of Austria-Hungary in which the South Slavs would have formed a third constitutional unit, along with Austria and Hungary, of a confederation.⁴⁵ On the basis of information that had reached him, Seton-Watson had pinned his hopes for transformation of the Habsburg Monarchy on the personality of

and the Ancient Republic of Ragusa (London: Longmans, Green, and Co, 1876).

⁴³ Lainovic, "Misija Jovana Cvijica u Londonu 1915. godine", doc. 3, Bošković to Pašić, 26 February 1915, 305.

⁴⁴ Hugh and Christopher Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe; Gábor Bátonyi, Britain and Central Europe, 1918–1933* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999); James Evans, *Great Britain and the Creation of Yugoslavia: Negotiating Balkan National Identity* (London and New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2008); May, "Seton-Watson and the Treaty of London", 42–47; Arthur J. May, "R. W. Seton-Watson and British Anti-Hapsburg Sentiment", *The American Slavic and East European Review* 20/1 (Feb., 1961), 40–54; Hugh Seton-Watson, "Robert William Seton-Watson i jugoslavensko pitanje", *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 2/2 (1970), 75–97; Nicholas J. Miller, "R. W. Seton-Watson and Serbia during the Reemergence of Yugoslavism, 1903–1914", *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism* XV/1-2 (1988), 59–69; László Péter, "R. W. Seton-Watson's Changing Views on the National Question of the Habsburg Monarchy and the European Balance of Power", *The Slavonic and East European Review* 82/3 (July 2004), 655–679.

⁴⁵ R. W. Seton-Watson, *The Southern Slav Question and the Hapsburg Monarchy* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1911).

Franz Ferdinand. As for Serbia, he had shared the wide-spread prejudices in Britain arising out of the disrepute in which that country had fallen following the brutal murder of the last Obrenović monarch and his wife in 1903. The animosity to corruption and wickedness of the Serbian regime, if not the entire society, served to reinforce his propensity for settling the Yugoslav matter within the framework of the Habsburg Monarchy. It was only after the outbreak of war and Vienna's definite siding with Germany that Seton-Watson embraced the notion of Austria-Hungary's demise and the creation of a large Yugoslav state, including Serbia and Montenegro. In a memorandum addressed to the Foreign Office on 1 October 1914, he put on record his vision of such a country which would be "a federal union" under the Serbian king and consist of the Triune Kingdom Croatia-Slavonia-Dalmatia, a nominal virtually non-existent autonomous unit within Austria-Hungary, and Serbia with which Montenegro would be merged, each unit having its own parliament. A common parliament would hold its sessions in alternating cities, or in Sarajevo as a permanent capital of a prospective Yugoslavia. This transfer of political centre from Belgrade to Sarajevo was designed to reflect the Yugoslav as opposed to Serbian character of a new state, a point which Seton-Watson stressed throughout his memorandum.⁴⁶ As far as the Slovenes were concerned, they were supposed to be incorporated in the Triune Kingdom rather than allowed to preserve their own political and cultural individuality. With this in view, it is clear that Seton-Watson envisaged a would-be Yugoslavia arranged in constitutional terms as something of a dualist Austria-Hungary on the ruins of which it was intended to emerge.

No wonder then that his vision tallied with that of a large number of Croat politicians whose frame of mind was grounded in the ideology of the nationalist Croatian Party of Right and who believed that all the Yugoslav lands of the Habsburg Monarchy could and should centre on Croatia. This resulted in the fusion of their ideas. It was no coincidence that the words of Croat émigrés often reflected Seton-Watson's conceptions,⁴⁷ the only real difference being that Scotus Viator could speak his mind openly, whereas they were constrained, to certain degree, out of regard for the position of the Serbian government. This sort of relationship between them also meant that the Croat émigrés were encouraged to show more determination and persistence in their dealing with

⁴⁶ R. W. Seton-Watson *i Jugoslaveni: Korespodencija, 1906–1941*, ed. Ljubo Boban et al., 2 vols (Zagreb, London: Sveučilište u Zagrebu – Institut za hrvatsku povijest i Britanska akademija), I (1906–1918), doc. 109, R. W. Seton-Watson to Foreign Office, I. X 1914, 180–186. A year later, at the moment when Serbia was under immense pressure from her allies to cede to Bulgaria part of her own territory, Seton-Watson underlined to Regent Alexander the necessity for Serbia to protect the constitutional rights and traditions of the Triune Kingdom and to refuse categorically any breach of its territorial integrity (doc. 151, Seton-Watson to Regent Alexander, 17. IX 1915, 237–240).

⁴⁷ This interplay is noted in Ekmečić, *Ratni ciljevi Srbije*, 356–367.

the Serbian Minister, and even the Pašić government. It is indeed difficult to overstate the extent of Seton-Watson's support for the Croat as opposed to the Serb view of a Yugoslav unification. A few instances are particularly revealing in this respect. In late 1914, en route to Niš, Seton-Watson and Trevelyan met with Trumbić in Rome. The former spent almost a whole day discussing the Yugoslav and Macedonian affairs with the Croat politician. "Since he is our great friend", Trumbić wrote to Supilo, "I told him outright our fears regarding an eventual Serbian particularism, which he duly noted as necessary [for him] to sound out in Niš and he will inform me of it on his way back."⁴⁸ Scotus Viator did as he had promised and reassured Trumbić as to the political mood in Serbia during their next meeting. As he was going to report in the Foreign Office on his journey to Serbia and the Balkans, Seton-Watson asked Trumbić if there was any message on his part he could pass on to Grey. The Croat émigré availed himself of this opportunity and let him know of the plans for the formation of an émigré committee in London. As for a Yugoslav unification, Trumbić explained that it was envisaged "with the aim of preventing the cession of our lands, now part of Austria-Hungary, to Italy, on the one side, and to Serbia and Montenegro, on the other [...] I recommended him, as a very important matter, which he understood and accepted to do so, to deliver this [message] to Grey."⁴⁹ As can be seen, Seton-Watson's views and actions may have easily been those of another Croat émigré. In political terms, notwithstanding his admirable humanitarian work for the Serbian people and the army, he was a friend of Croatia, not of Serbia. Against this backdrop, it is not that much surprising to see Seton-Watson in the spring of 1915, when the negotiations with the Italians involving extensive territorial concessions in Dalmatia were coming to the fore, dissatisfied with Bošković, of which more will be said later, consider "quite definitely working for an independent Croatia."⁵⁰ Given that this consideration was part of a memorandum Seton-Watson prepared for a conference with Yugoslav leaders, one can only guess what passed between them and what the depth of their intimate collaboration was.

Although the assistance that British public figures extended to the Yugoslav Committee is part of any narrative about the Yugoslav question during the war, it is clear from the above analysis that its full extent and impact on the Yugoslav émigrés, and their relations with the Serbian government, have not been fully appreciated. Seton-Watson and Steed were convinced that the Yugoslav representatives, above all Trumbić and Supilo, were making a serious mistake because they were not present in London while the secret talks between Italy and the allies were underway. They believed that the Committee's, and

⁴⁸ Šepić, "Iz korespondencije Frana Supila", Trumbić to Supilo, Rome, 24. XII. 1914, 283–286.

⁴⁹ Šepić, "Trumbićev 'Dnevnik'", Rome, 9. II. 1915, 186–189.

⁵⁰ May, "Seton-Watson and the Treaty of London", 43, note 10.

especially Supilo's, contact with the Foreign Office and the press, in which the two of them would provide substantial support, could have made a difference and prevented the extortionist territorial concessions to Italy on the eastern Adriatic coast.⁵¹ Seton-Watson's and Steed's assumption was certainly much exaggerated as the decision of the Entente Powers was dictated by urgent political and military requirements which left little room for ethnographic, moral or any other considerations. The "English friends" urged Trumbić to arrive immediately, but he was with the Serbian government in Niš, while Supilo was staying in St. Petersburg, operating under misapprehension that Russia rather than France and Britain bore the greatest responsibility for conceding to Italy so much and that it was there that he must exert all his powers of persuasion. It was a testament to their persistence that they "sent them [Yugoslav émigrés] an urgent wire every day for a week, on the plea that it was vital that they should publish their manifesto before the fait accompli of Italy's entry [into war]".⁵² In addition, the British friends also appealed to the "Yugoslavs" through Cvijić and Bošković to make an appearance in London and throw their weight in the scales. Their suggestion was to have Bošković introduce the Committee to Grey and the Serbian Minister was in agreement.⁵³ He also found that the moment was ripe for a decisive action and himself proposed to Pašić that a Yugoslav manifest be published - the Prime Minister agreed.⁵⁴ Just like distinguished Britons, Pašić thought that the time had come for the émigrés to base their activities in Britain: "The Yugoslav Committee should have its seat in London, and as necessary its people in Paris, Rome, St. Petersburg, America, also in Geneva." Its task would be to prepare an organisation of all Yugoslavs for the purpose of unification, since Pašić gauged that the realisation of a union after the successful war would

⁵¹ Henry Wickham Steed, *Through Thirty Years, 1892-1922: A Personal Narrative*, 2 vols (London: William Heinemann, 1924), II, 54; the introduction in *Seton-Watson i Jugoslaveni: Korespodencija*, I, 23-24; Hugh and Cristopher Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe*, 131.

⁵² May, "Seton-Watson and the Treaty of London", 44.

⁵³ AJ, 80-2-10, Cvijić to Pašić, 23 April 1915, no. 462; 80-11-50, Bošković to Paris Legation, no date, conf. no. 449; Lainovic, "Misija Jovana Cvijica u Londonu 1915. godine", doc. 10, Cvijić to Pašić, 21 April 1915, 309. Vesnić sent a message to the London Legation on 23 April (no. 675), presumably for Seton-Watson, "that Trumbić and the others cannot leave tomorrow because of an unexpected hindrance." In reply to this delay, Cvijić relayed what nearly amounted to an ultimatum: "The English friends say that if Trumbić and the others do not arrive tomorrow evening, it is then too late and they will not be bothered about them any longer." Vesnić explained that the reason for their delay was a refusal of the British consulate to grant them visas (Cvijić to Paris Legation, 23 April 1915, conf. no. 464 and Vesnić to Cvijić, 25 April 1915, no. 686).

⁵⁴ AJ, 80-2-10, Bošković to Pašić, 8 April 1915, no. 405, and Pašić's note on the back, 9 April 1915.

“depend mostly on the people in Croatia and Slovenia.”⁵⁵ Besides, Bošković had been making practical preparations for the arrival of an émigré committee for some time. Expecting that around ten people would come to London from Rome, he had informed the Foreign Ministry that there was some office space in the Legation for their meetings and other activities, but he had asked for financial means to buy furniture and cover other expenses in the ever more pricy London. Pašić replied that the committee would have their own accommodation for which all the expenses would be met.⁵⁶ The Serbian government, therefore, also did their part to have the émigrés relocated to Britain, but the latter seem to have been more roused to action by their British friends.

Once it had arrived in London, the Yugoslav Committee found itself under Seton-Watson's and Steed's instant and even more intensive pressure to make its political programme public. They had urged both Cvijić and Bošković in mid-April to telegraph Supilo and ask him to draw up a programme which they would publish immediately.⁵⁷ Convinced in the infallibility of his judgement to remain in Russia, Supilo had not replied to their request and Seton-Watson had then turned to Hinko Hinković twelve days prior to the émigrés' moving to London, sending him a draft memorandum for further elaboration or to be forwarded to Supilo and Trumbić. Moreover, Seton-Watson had proposed a list of leading personalities to sign the Yugoslav programme, including Trumbić and Supilo.⁵⁸ Clearly, it was Supilo's unresponsiveness that made Scotus Viator increasingly take matters into his own hands. The strong initiative from Seton-Watson was also apparent from the fact that his draft memorandum included the statement that a future Yugoslavia would be a federation. However, that was left out from the final text as Vasiljević, a Serb from Bosnia-Herzegovina, must have opposed it – Stojanović would have also opposed it, but he was not in London – and the Croats must have had enough political acumen to appreciate that the time was not opportune for discussing such a delicate issue. The opposition of the two Herzegovinian Serbs had already prevented Trumbić from including the request for a plebiscite in the Yugoslav lands of Austria-Hungary in a

⁵⁵ Šepić, “Srpska vlada i počeci Jugoslavenskog odbora”, 34; Vojislav Vučković, “Iz odnosa Srbije i Jugoslovenskog odbora”, *Istorijski časopis XII-XIII* (1961–1962), 356.

⁵⁶ AJ, 80-8-41, Bošković to MID, 1/14 February 1915, without number; Pašić to Bošković, 2 February 1915, no. 1177. A little later Bošković consulted Pašić about whether he should rent furnished or unfurnished premises for the émigrés given the price difference and the possibility that the purchased furniture might remain later for the use in his Legation (10/23 March 1915, without number).

⁵⁷ *Seton-Watson i Jugoslaveni: Korespodencija*, I, doc. 129, R. W. Seton-Watson to Jovan Cvijić, [London], 15. IV 1915, 211; AJ, 80-11-51, Bošković to St. Petersburg Legation, 4 April 1915, conf. no. 389.

⁵⁸ *Seton-Watson i Jugoslaveni: Korespodencija*, I, doc. 133, R. W. Seton-Watson to Hinko Hinković, [London], 28. IV 1915, 215–216; doc. 137, a draft memorandum, 222.

memorandum prepared for and delivered to the French Foreign Ministry and the Russian Embassy in Paris on 10 May 1915 (not to be confused with the memorandum given to Delcassé nine days earlier).⁵⁹ Stojanović and Vasiljević could not possibly agree to proposals which ignored the reality that the Entente Powers had promised Serbia some territories, the largest of which was their own Bosnia-Herzegovina, or laid down the internal constitutional arrangement of a would-be country without consulting the Serbian government. This certainly helped avoid difficulties with the Serbian Minister, since Bošković pointed out to Pašić - and it is safe to assume that the latter was in full agreement - that "the question of relations between the Serbs and Croats as our common internal affair should not now be touched upon or placed before the public and the powers".⁶⁰ Nevertheless, Seton-Watson realised his main intention and the "Appeal to the British Nation and Parliament", in the writing of which he and Steed had taken part no less than the Yugoslav émigrés themselves, was published in the *Times* and other newspapers as early as 13 May.⁶¹ Ironically, all their efforts were in vain, as the London Treaty with Italy had been signed on 26 April. The Serbian government was not informed of that development either. It was only a day later that Bošković managed to find out from a private source "that France took initiative to make these concessions to Italy [...] and that England accepted the matter and helped make Russia, which had long resisted, go along."⁶²

While Pašić apparently hoped that the Yugoslav Committee would provide considerable assistance to the Serbian government to see the Yugoslav programme through, Bošković proved to have been much more sceptical. This probably stemmed from the fact that just two days before the arrival of the émigrés in London he had a conversation with Grey, as well as with the Russian and French Ambassadors, from which he gathered that the allies were prone to accept the proposition of an independent Croatia and that Italy was particularly insistent on such a scheme in order to keep the Croats separated from the Serbs and facilitate its entrenchment in the eastern Adriatic.⁶³ Moreover, Bošković came into conflict with the leading Croat émigrés from the very beginning of their stay in Britain. Dispute between them and the Serbian Minister arose out

⁵⁹ Stojanović, *Jugoslovenski odbor*, 15; Nikola Stojanović, *Mladost jednog pokoljenja (uspomene 1880–1920) i Dnevnik od godine 1914. do 1918.*, ed. Mile Stanić (Belgrade: Istorijski institut, 2015), 263.

⁶⁰ Dragovan Šepić, *Italija, saveznici i jugoslavensko pitanje, 1914–1918* (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1970), 94; Stanković, *Nikola Pašić i jugoslovensko pitanje*, II, 128–129.

⁶¹ "The Southern Slavs: Aims of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes", *The Manchester Guardian*, 13 May 1915, p. 8.

⁶² AJ, 80-8-41, Bošković's note, 2 May 1915 (new style), on the back of Pašić to London Legation, 14 April 1915, no. 4269.

⁶³ AJ, 80-2-10, Bošković to Pašić, 29 April 1915, no. 488.

of the publication of the above mentioned manifest of the Yugoslav Committee. Bošković explained this affair to Pašić as follows:

Before publication that text was not shown to me and they showed it to Cvijić yesterday at noon after they all had signed it. I found that the manifest did not take sufficient account of the role and importance of Serbia in the work for unification of the Croats and Slovenes with the Serbs and that it practically sacrificed the state idea of Serbia around which the South Slavs should gather together. As it might happen that Grey will not receive the committee without my request and perhaps my personal presence at the audience, and I cannot agree to the committee's advancing such ideas in my presence, as that would mean that the Serbian government are also in agreement, I need your instructions and your orders as to what attitude I should take. I think that the committee should present to us beforehand not just the text of the memoir [prepared] for Grey, but also all that they want to say to Grey during the audience and that we should approve of it. Otherwise the matter can turn out to be inconvenient and unpleasant to Serbia. I can tell you that Croat ideas and tendencies have already emerged from the committee, and the English friends are pushing it in that direction. It would be better if the committee could complete its business here as soon as possible without the participation of the Serbian Minister and leave as soon as possible.⁶⁴

Cvijić advised Prime Minister in a similar vein and Pašić decided that the émigrés would have to be in agreement with Bošković about things to be said to Grey, if the Minister was going to present them to the British Foreign Secretary.⁶⁵ But he neither commented on Bošković's dissatisfaction with the Croat émigrés' attitude nor Cvijić's reservations on account of their insistence on using the name Yugoslavia for a future country, though the Serbian government made no decision in that respect. He appears to have been inclined to agree with Cvijić's opinion that the existing difficulties emerged because the Yugoslav spirit had still not matured and that patience and circumspection on the Serbian side would contribute to harmonisation, especially once a common state had become a reality.

As soon as the Yugoslav manifest affair had been settled, Bošković became suspicious of Trumbić's and Hinković's second thoughts about whether they should be received by Grey in his presence, just like Vesnić had taken them to Delcassé in Paris. "I cannot comprehend their attitude and they leave me with the impression that they want to work on their own, while the Legation is supposed to accept everything and be solidary with their work with the English

⁶⁴ AJ, 80-2-10, Bošković to Pašić, 30 April 1915, no. 494; Janković, *Srbija i jugoslovensko pitanje*, 496-497.

⁶⁵ AJ, 80-2-10, Cvijić to Pašić, 30 April 1915, no. 495, and Pašić's note on the back, 2 May 1915; Šepić, *Italija, saveznici i jugoslovensko pitanje*, 97-98; Janković, *Srbija i jugoslovensko pitanje*, 497-498.

government”, he complained to Pašić.⁶⁶ After having returned from Paris, where they had been given opportunity to speak before the members of parliamentary commission for foreign affairs, the émigrés were willing to be introduced to Grey and hand him a memorandum on the Yugoslav question, a copy of what they had earlier given to Delcassé. In fact, the Foreign Office had promised Seton-Watson on 7 May that Grey would receive the representatives of the Yugoslav Committee on the same terms as the French Foreign Minister - that meant that the Serbian Minister had to be present.⁶⁷

The drafting of a memorandum led, however, to wrangle between Bošković and the Croat émigrés which reflected their different conceptions of a Yugoslav unification and, especially, the role Serbia was going to play in that process. Bošković raised objections to the memorandum prepared by the Yugoslav Committee concerning the usage of the name Yugoslavia and the treatment of Dalmatia. As has been seen, attention had already been drawn to the fact that the Serbian government had not approved the Yugoslav label for a prospective country. However, resistance to the name Yugoslavia among many Serbs cannot be understood without appreciating that, in their view, that name had been associated with the alleged Austrian conception of a Yugoslav unification within the Habsburg Monarchy restructured on the trialist basis.⁶⁸ This practically meant that Yugoslav unification within Austria-Hungary would have been completed against Belgrade’s ambitions and goals and that even the Serb population in the Habsburg lands would have remained permanently separated from Serbia. For that reason, a large number of Serbs, and Radicals in particular, were not sympathetic to that name, seeing in it, as Pašić’s deputy, Stojan Protić, explained during the 1917 conference between the Serbian government and the members of the Yugoslav Committee in Corfu, an Austrian product which had been “directed against the Serbian name”.⁶⁹ Contrary to the Serbs, the Croats favoured the name Yugoslavia because it underscored that a new state would not have an exclusive, or even predominant, Serbian character. In this respect, the clash between Bošković and the émigrés with regard to Meštrović’s exhibition held in the Victoria and Albert Museum in June 1915 was revealing. According

⁶⁶ AJ, 80-2-10, Bošković to Pašić, 7 May 1915, no. 516.

⁶⁷ Hugh and Cristopher Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe*, 132.

⁶⁸ Mirjana Gross, “Hrvatska politika velikoaustrijskog kruga oko prijestolonasljednika Franje Ferdinanda”, *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 2/2 (1970), 9–74; John Zarnetta, *Folly and Malice: The Habsburg Empire, the Balkans and the Start of World War One* (London: Shephard-Walwyn, 2017), 71–96.

⁶⁹ *Krfska konferencija* (Belgrade: Štamparija “Skerlić”, 1934), 82, 84. Pavle Popović later confirmed that the Serbs had been in general opposed to the name Yugoslavia and that he had also expressed such opinion to the members of the Yugoslav Committee (“Memorandum Jugoslovenskog odbora i poslanik Srbije”, *Srpski književni glasnik* XXI/1 (1927), 426–434).

to Meštrović's and Seton-Watson's recollections, the Minister shunned the opening of the exhibition after Meštrović had declined to present himself as a Serbian instead of a Serbo-Croatian, i.e. a Yugoslav, artist.⁷⁰ Bošković denied that this had been a true reason for his absence and alluded to the improper attitude of the Croat émigrés towards a prominent Briton with whom he had agreed to act as a patron of the exhibition.⁷¹ But given his views on the Yugoslav name there is no doubt that this was, at least, one of the contributory factors of his dissatisfaction. However, Vesnić wanted to be present because the event provided an opportunity for a public display of Serbian-British friendship; he proposed to Jovanović-Pižon he should go as a friend of Meštrović rather than in an official capacity out of regard for Bošković's position. Jovanović-Pižon agreed with his suggestion, probably after having consulted Pašić, and instructed Vesnić to go to London together with Jovan Žujović.⁷² Vesnić's presence at the opening of the exhibition certainly helped to mitigate the impression made by Bošković's absence, although neither Vesnić nor the Serbian Foreign Ministry were familiar with what was going on between the Minister in London and Meštrović, or could have anticipated that the former would not make an appearance at the event.

The second issue Bošković took with the memorandum concerned the stress it laid on a union between Dalmatia and Croatia (and Slavonia) on the basis of the Croatian state right. As he pointed out to Pašić, he endeavoured "not to have some Croatia's special and exclusive rights on Dalmatia emphasised, as it emerged from the committee's first draft. For if it occurs that Croatia must be organised as an autonomous [i.e. independent] state or province, then Serbia should preserve her rights on Dalmatia so that it cannot be said that we have admitted Croatia's claim by accepting such wording of the memoir and mediating for its submission to the English government."⁷³ Bošković later described his stance in an informal conversation as a struggle against an attempt on the part of the Croats from the Yugoslav Committee to "outline the borders of Croatia with

⁷⁰ Ivan Meštrović, *Uspomene na političke ljude i događaje* (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1969), 52–53; R. W. Seton-Watson, "Kako je postala Jugoslavija (Jugoslovenski odbor i Srbijanska Vlada u Londonu, za vreme Rata)", *Nova Evropa* XV/1, 11 January 1927, 6–18.

⁷¹ Mateja Bošković, "Jugoslovenski odbor i Srbijanska vlada", *Politika*, 13 May 1927, p. 2.

⁷² AJ, 80-2-9, Vesnić to Jovan Jovanović, Paris, 18/31 May 1915 and Jovanović's note on the back, 1 June 1915. Nevertheless, Bošković supported Meštrović's idea to exhibit his works in Russia in 1916, which he deemed an effective form of national propaganda (AJ, 80-11-51, Bošković to Miroslav Spalajković (St. Petersburg), 15/21 December 1915, conf. no. 1254). The Serbian government dropped the idea because of considerable expenses involved and the difficulties of transporting Meštrović's pieces (Dragoslav Janković, "O odnosima Jugoslovenskog odbora sa srpskom vladom u 1916. godini", *Historijski zbornik* 29-30 (1976-1977), 455, note 2).

⁷³ AJ, 80-8-41, Bošković to Pašić, 19 June 1915, conf. no. 653; Janković, *Srbija i jugoslovensko pitanje*, 499.

Dalmatia, Istria and Bosnia".⁷⁴ Dispute between him and the Croat émigrés, especially Trumbić, took a long time, was bitter and overcome mostly due to Pavle Popović's mediation.⁷⁵ The other Serbs in London had much tactfulness and patience, making allowance for the mentality of the Habsburg subjects, but they were essentially in agreement with Bošković, though they appear not to have shared his doubts about the "separatism" of the Croat émigrés. Speaking for the Serbs of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Stojanović and Vasiljević supported the Serbian Minister's standpoint.⁷⁶ Finally, Trumbić realised that power relations were such as to make it impossible for him and other Croats to impose their views on the diplomatic representative of Serbia. After having inquired of Pavle Popović whether Bošković was acting under instructions from Niš and having been replied that he was not aware that this was the case, Trumbić concluded, not entirely reassured, that they would do as required.⁷⁷

With the agreed text of the memorandum, it was not before 2 July 1915 that Bošković took eight members of the Yugoslav Committee to the Foreign Office where Lord Crewe received them instead of the indisposed Grey. It was only after this audience – during which Lord Crewe significantly warned the Yugoslavs that no nation had ever fulfilled all its aspirations and never would – that the Minister reported to Pašić on the differences which had emerged between himself and the émigrés, sent him both versions of the memorandum (that initially proposed by the Yugoslav Committee and the final one submitted to the Foreign Office) and expressed his expectation that his conduct would be approved.⁷⁸ Clearly, Pašić had not been aware of the conflict between Bošković and the émigrés while it had been going on prior to the audience with Lord Crewe. Once he had been apprised of what had transpired, the Prime Minister neither minuted nor replied to Bošković's report. The latter was consequently justified to take this as a tacit approval of his handling of the affair. The rift between Bošković and the Croat members of the Yugoslav Committee, though it had been settled, remained in the mind of both parties, as well as Seton-Watson, a serious incident which brought into relief the differences in their conceptions of Yugoslav unification and foreshadowed the conflicts to come. Some years after the war it was still central to an altercation between Bošković and Seton-Watson

⁷⁴ Jovan Žujović, *Dnevnik*, 2 vols (Belgrade: Arhiv Srbija, 1986), II, 30 August / 12 September 1915, 183.

⁷⁵ Popović, *Iz dnevnika*, 31 May 1915, 180; 1 June 1915, 181; 2 June 1915, 182.

⁷⁶ Stojanović, *Dnevnik od godine 1914. do 1918*, 265–266; Popović, *Iz dnevnika*, 10 June 1915, 185.

⁷⁷ Popović, *Iz dnevnika*, 1 June 1915, 181–182.

⁷⁸ AJ, 80-8-41, Bošković to Pašić, 19 June 1915, conf. no. 653. It should be noted that Bošković later claimed that the members of the Yugoslav Committee had not published the memorandum handed to Grey and that they had distributed the older one instead, clearly a version he had objected to (Žujović, *Dnevnik*, II, 7/20 September 1915, 187).

arising from their different interpretations of the past events in the pages of the Zagreb and Belgrade press.⁷⁹

As the summer of 1915 went by and military situation was increasingly deteriorating for the Entente Powers with the success of the German army against the Russians in Poland, the failure of the British on the Dardanelles and a stalemate on the Italian front, Serbia was exposed to the growing pressure to make territorial sacrifices in Macedonia and the Banat. Facing the unanimous demands of his allies, Pašić was forced to back down; he strove to extract as many concessions as possible in return for what Serbia would have to yield in Macedonia. Replying to the allied offer of 16 August which promised Bosnia-Herzegovina, Srem, Bačka and part of southern Dalmatia, perhaps Slavonia if possible at the end of the war, Pašić accepted on 1 September to give way in Macedonia, notwithstanding certain modifications in delimitation with Bulgaria, on condition that the allies agreed to assigning the western Banat and Croatia to Serbia and allowing the Slovenes to decide for themselves in the matter of unification with Serbia.⁸⁰ In effect, Pašić requested the Entente guarantee of a Yugoslav unification for concessions to be given in Macedonia. Bošković was, on the other hand, much more concerned with maintaining Serbian territory in the south than securing a Yugoslav union, despite his observance of the Prime Minister's instructions. He did not just doggedly defend the territorial integrity of Serbia in his conversations with Grey and other Foreign Office officials, only reluctantly consenting to minimal concessions to Bulgaria (between the Bregalnica and Vardar rivers), but also tried to impress his determination on Pašić. Speaking of the suggestions that Bulgaria should be given territory across the Vardar, he reminded the Prime Minister that he "has always been against it and I do not see what great benefits for Serbia would have to be on the other side to make me depart from my conviction."⁸¹ Bošković assessed that Grey would not resort to the utmost pressure or give concessions to Sofia without the consent of Serbia, of which he suspected the French and Russian governments, and he was hopeful that Serbia might stand her ground. Nevertheless, the allies seemed to make endless combinations at the expense of his country and the Minister came to fear "that the massacre of the Serbian people's interests will be complete."⁸² Once Bulgarian military action against Serbia had become certain, the only hope to avert disaster lay either in the urgent arrival of Anglo-French

⁷⁹ Janković, *Srbija i jugoslovensko pitanje*, 500–501.

⁸⁰ Ibid. 127–130; Šepić, *Italija, saveznici i jugoslavensko pitanje*, 125–129, 137–140, 143–144; Andrej Mitrović, *Srbija u Prvom svetskom ratu* (Belgrade: Srpska književna zadruga, 1984), 245–246.

⁸¹ AJ, 80-8-41, Bošković to Pašić, 3 June 1915, conf. no. 711; 80-2-10, Bošković to Pašić, 10 July 1915, no 731; Bošković to Pašić, 17 July 1915, no. 752 [quoted].

⁸² AJ, 80-8-41, Bošković to Pašić, 1 August 1915, conf. no. 794.

troops or a preventive Serbian attack to thwart mobilisation of the Bulgarian army. Bošković's conversation with Lord Kitchener, War Secretary, laid bare the extent of self-deception of the allies which would soon cost Serbia dearly. Indicating that Serbia was about to receive a large-scale assistance from her allies and that Greece would assume a benevolent attitude and allow the transit of the allied troops through its territory, Kitchener believed that Bulgaria might reconsider her military engagement and was against a preventive Serbian attack as it could step up a German and Austro-Hungarian offensive before the arrival of Anglo-French troops. Fearful that Serbia would still be requested to make concessions to Bulgaria, Bošković expressed his personal opinion to Pašić that such a development, as well as allowing Bulgarian troops to enter Macedonia, would be disastrous for the morale of Serbian soldiers, whereas Bulgaria would remain an enemy just the same and mark her time until the beginning of an offensive from the north. "The Powers cannot give us sufficient guarantee that the demise and material destruction of Serbia would not be brought about in this way, since it must be clear in advance how the Bulgarian and German troops would treat the people in Serbia. Even if our allies win [the war] later, the Serbian people will not reap much benefit as Serbia will be devastated", he warned.⁸³

The tension in relations between the London Legation and Supilo carried on. When the latter had informed him about his conversation with Grey on 30 August 1915, and especially about Foreign Secretary's interest in Croatia and Slavonia, Bošković drew attention of Pašić, not for the first time, to the likelihood that this exchange arose from the idea of creating an independent Croatia. In the context of the ongoing negotiations about compensations that Serbia should receive for her ceding territory in Macedonia, the Minister explained the significance of that matter as follows:

If the idea of a Croatia prevails, there will certainly be a danger that Slavonia gets lost for Serbia, which would be a great pity for future Serbo-Croat relations in case it turns out that complete political unification cannot be realised as a result of this war. In my opinion, the unconditional acquiring of Slavonia for Serbia is a question of capital importance on which no transactions should be made, if a favourable further development of Serbo-Croat relations is to be secured. Therefore, I find that under no circumstances the idea should be accepted that Slavonia could freely decide, along with Croatia, if it wants [to unite] with Serbia or not. A request should be clearly made, among the conditions for our concessions to Bulgaria, that Slavonia have to go to Serbia unconditionally. Of course, this [should be the case] unless the whole of Croatia is required to unite with Serbia unconditionally rather than granting Croats the right to self-determination. This should not be agreed to in case of Slavonia: it [that province] needs to be attached to Serbia directly, and not through Croatia.

⁸³ AS, MID-PO, 1915, f. XI, d. VIII, Bošković to Pašić, 18 September 1915, no. 955.

If Dalmatia has not been consulted, what would be the need of doing so with Slavonia. If we do not pay attention to this question while there is time, we can easily have the same bitter experience we have suffered with Dalmatia and which awaits us with the Banat.⁸⁴

Bošković's analysis did not just concern the need to secure the possession of Slavonia if an independent Croatia was created instead of Yugoslavia. He also considered that a mere diplomatic acknowledgement of Slavonia as a preserve of Serbia, together with other territories which could become a matter of dispute between the Serbs and Croats, would practically force the latter to opt for a common South Slav state. "For if Croatia gets Dalmatia, Slavonia and north-west Bosnia, then she is dangerous. And if we get Bosnia and part of Dalmatia and part of Slavonia, then we are a point of gravity for Croatia and they have to go with us."⁸⁵ This was the meaning of the Minister's reference to the necessity of ensuring "a favourable further development of Serbo-Croat relations".

Bošković was particularly alarmed by the fact that proposal for a plebiscite to decide the fate of Bosnia-Herzegovina, southern Dalmatia, Slavonia and Croatia after the war had been mooted during the conversation between Supilo and the British Foreign Secretary. He was convinced "that such combinations, which open the possibility to dispute Serbia's right not just to Croatia, Dalmatia and Slavonia with Srem, but even to the Balkan peninsula [i. e. Bosnia-Herzegovina, a geographically inaccurate reference], could have occurred to neither Grey nor others." Bošković reminded Pašić that Grey had never discussed with him anything else apart from admitting to Serbia "the right to Bosnia and a wide stretch of the Dalmatian coast." "If that had not been the case", he wondered rather rhetorically, "how could have Serbia considered to cede even the smallest part of her present territory to Bulgaria. The idea suggested to the Foreign Office about attaching all the western Serb lands to the narrower Croatia [meaning the *Banska* Croatia as an autonomous unit within Hungary] is full of dangers for Serbia's interests."⁸⁶ The Minister was no doubt correct in his assessment of the origins of the plebiscite idea as the record of the conversation in the Foreign Office shows that it was Supilo who suggested it to Grey.⁸⁷ Bošković

⁸⁴ AJ, 80-2-10, Bošković to Pašić, 19 August 1915, no. 847.

⁸⁵ Popović, *Iz dnevnika*, 29 July 1916, 507-509.

⁸⁶ AJ, 80-2-10, Bošković to Pašić, 21 August 1915, br. 582.

⁸⁷ Hugh and Christopher Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe*, 139; Šepić, *Italija, saveznici i jugoslavensko pitanje*, 141-142. Moreover, Supilo stated to Grey in line with the old nationalist Croat view to which he subscribed that all the provinces in question were "inhabited by Croats" (quoted from the Foreign Office record in Šepić's book). For Britain's policy towards the Yugoslav unification, see Dragoljub Živojinović, "Velika Srbija ili Jugoslavija? Velika Britanija i jugoslovensko ujedinjenje 1914-1918. godine", in *Stvaranje jugoslovenske države 1918: zbornik radova i diskusija* (Belgrade: Institut za savremenu istoriju

was also correct with regard to the ominous nature of the proposal, because it concerned only those territories that could be contested between the Serbs and Croats, leaving aside northern Dalmatia, Istria and the Slovene lands claimed by Italy, on the one side, and Bačka and the Banat on Serbia's northern border, on the other. Aware of the weakness of his position, Supilo admitted to Pašić the deficiencies of "Grey's formula", but still recommended that it be accepted on the grounds that it would set the precedent for other Yugoslav territories.⁸⁸ In fact, following the Treaty of London and after having got wind of the Entente Powers' offer to Serbia of considerable compensations in the Austro-Hungarian territory for concessions in Macedonia, Supilo feared that the Croatian lands would be divided between Italy, Serbia and, possibly, Hungary.⁸⁹ His suggestion to Grey was made for the sole purpose of thwarting the assigning of the Habsburg territories to Serbia, which would make the creation of Yugoslavia, and even of an independent Croatia, an unlikely proposition.

Having been informed of the matter from both Bošković and the British Minister in Niš, Pašić was resolute in his adherence to the Yugoslav programme. The Prime Minister insisted on unification of Croatia with Serbia. If the allies did not accept such a solution because of Italy's opposition, he found that the right course of action was to work to ensure that "Croatia does not hesitate, but to make a decision [in favour of Yugoslavia] when the question of unification with Serbia is posed. Only if we work in this way, we can count on unification of all the Yugoslav lands." Pašić refused to consider any alternative policy certain that Italy stood behind all other combinations, "because we would open the door to all kinds of agitations and intrigues, and turn a safe basis [of our policy] into an uncertain business, the outcome of which we cannot predict."⁹⁰ This was also a rebuff to the plebiscite suggestion as conceived by Supilo. Discussion in the Yugoslav Committee that followed reflected a wide array of opinions on both Supilo's undertaking and Pašić's reply. Having been kept in the dark about Supilo's dealings with the Foreign Office and regarding them as going too far, Trumbić agreed with Pašić's views and geared the Yugoslav Committee towards supporting the Serbian government. It concluded that it was unnecessary in principle to have recourse to a plebiscite, but, if Great Powers were bent on

& Narodna knjiga, 1983), 153–171; Victor Rothwell, "British Policy on the South Slav Question during World War I", in *Jugoslovensko-britanski odnosi: Saopštenja sa okruglog stola, održanog 23–25. septembra 1987. godine u Kragujevcu, povodom 150 godina od dolaska prvog britanskog konzula u Srbiju* (Belgrade: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 1988), 167–190.

⁸⁸ Šepić, *Pisma i memorandumima Frana Supila*, doc. 67, Supilo Pašiću and doc. 68, Supilo Pašiću, London, I. IX. 1915, 103–105.

⁸⁹ Dragovan Šepić, "Hrvatska u koncepcijama Frana Supila o ujedinjenju", *Forum: časopis odjela za savremenu književnost JAZU VII/XV/2–3* (1968), 358–359.

⁹⁰ AJ, 80-2-10, Pašić to Bošković, 22 August 1915, conf. no. 9126.

it, demanded that a plebiscite be held not just in Croatia, but also in all other Yugoslav lands of Austria-Hungary.⁹¹ Supilo insisted on this modification of the plebiscite suggestion with a view to linking the future of Croatia with the rest of Yugoslav territories.

Pašić's attitude left no doubt that he would not depart from the decisions made by the Serbian government after the outbreak of war despite major difficulties Serbia faced in the summer of 1915, reflecting the unfavourable developments for the Entente Powers on the battlefields. Neither the conclusion of the Treaty of London with Italy nor negotiations of the Entente Powers with Bulgaria and Romania in which the interests, and even the territory, of Serbia served as a bargaining chip deterred Pašić from his Yugoslav policy. His stance was clearly different from that of Bošković, who was far from Pašić's resolve in the matter of Yugoslav unification. Although Bošković was not against a Yugoslav union as Serbia's maximal war aim, that was certainly not an indispensable programme in his view. The Minister believed that the vital interests of Serbia concerned the maintenance of Macedonia, or at least the right bank of the Vardar river, as part of the existing state territory and the acquisition of a large part of the Banat including the towns of Vršac and Timișoara (Temišvar). As for the western provinces, he believed, just like all other Serbian statesmen and diplomats, that annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina was a foregone conclusion and hoped for as wide an outlet to sea as possible in Dalmatia and perhaps on the Albanian coast.

A comparison between the views of Pašić and Bošković is especially interesting for the purpose of throwing additional light on the perennial dilemma in historiography as to what Pašić was really after during the Great War. It has been long argued that the Serbian Prime Minister kept two irons in the fire: he balanced between two complementary political programmes, the "large" and the "small" one, the former being a Yugoslav unification and the latter, a reserve option in case the creation of Yugoslavia proved unattainable, a Serb unification, meaning annexation to Serbia of all ethnically undisputable Serb lands and those which were regarded as Serb with more or less justification. Other authors have, on the contrary, emphasised the persistence and permanence of Pašić's championing of the Yugoslav programme.⁹² A careful examination of Pašić's

⁹¹ AJ, 80-2-10, Bošković to Pašić, 27 August 1915, without number; Stojanović, *Dnevnik od godine 1914. do 1918*, 272-275; Janković, *Srbija i jugoslovensko pitanje*, 217-220, 510-512; Šepić, *Italija, saveznici i jugoslovensko pitanje*, 142-143.

⁹² For the accounts which endorse the duality of the "large" and "small" programme see: Paulova, *Jugoslavenski odbor u Londonu*; Jovan M. Jovanović, *Stvaranje zajedničke države Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca*, 3 vols (Belgrade: Štamparija "Mlada Srbija", 1930), III, 82; Šepić, "Srpska vlada i počeci Jugoslovenskog odbora", 9, 39; Šepić, *Italija, saveznici i jugoslovensko pitanje*, 102, 105; Ivo Petrinović, *Ante Trumbić, politička shvaćanja i djelovanje*, 2nd ed. (Split: Književni krug, 1991); Ivo Goldstein, "Resistance to Centralism", in *Yugoslavia from a Historical*

instructions and minutes, on the one hand, and Bošković's reports in which he disclosed his personal opinions, on the other, shows that the "small" programme interpretation could be applied to the musings and recommendations of the latter. There were also other prominent and influential Serbs who were prone to this kind of reasoning given the complexities of diplomatic and military situation. For example, Cvijić was personally favourable to the Yugoslav programme of the Serbian government and he spared no effort to contribute to its realisation through his activities in London whether in contact with British public figures and government officials or in his dealing with the Yugoslav émigrés. Nevertheless, he advised Pašić that Serbia must be, in case of necessity, prepared for a different outcome: "If Croatia turns out to be detached [independent], then it is necessary to start working to secure the less extensive [border]line with Srem and part of Slavonia, along with other areas."⁹³ This preparedness was in line with the tenor of Bošković's recommendations to Pašić. But the Serbian Minister never received a reply from Pašić, for even a year later he did not know "whether our government have worked to get part of Slavonia in case of a separate Croatia."⁹⁴ From that, but also from every single undertaking of Serbian diplomacy, it is clear that Pašić took a different view: he unconditionally stood for unification of all the Yugoslav lands of Austria-Hungary with Serbia.

Pašić remained true to an integral Yugoslav union even after the downfall of Serbia in the autumn of 1915 and the retreat of the Serbian army, government and crown through Albania to the island of Corfu. His conversation with Pavle Popović in April 1916 was indicative in this respect. Having been told that the Serbs in London had "worked for Serbia since the invasion" – as opposed to working for a Yugoslav union – the Prime Minister succinctly replied: "That is one and the same, it should not be separated."⁹⁵ It is exactly in this sense of not differentiating between a Serb and Yugoslav unification that one should understand Pašić's well-known usage of the terms Serb and Yugoslav, as well as some others (Serbo-Croat, Serbo-Croat-Slovene), as synonymous rather

Perspective (Belgrade: Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, 2017), 128. On Pašić's Yugoslav orientation see: Dragoslav Janković, "Veliki i mali ratni program Nikole Pašića (1914–1918)", *Anali Pravnog fakulteta u Beogradu* XXI/2 (1973), 151–167; Ekmečić, *Ratni ciljevi Srbije*, 435–445; Alex Dragnich, *Serbia, Nikola Pašić and Yugoslavia* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1974), 129–130; Stanković, *Nikola Pašić i jugoslovensko pitanje*, II, (Belgrade: BIGZ, 1985); Djordje Stanković, *Srbija i stvaranje Jugoslavije* (Belgrade: Službeni glasnik, 2009), 77–97; Djordje Radenković, *Pašić i Jugoslavija* (Belgrade: Službeni list, 1999).

⁹³ Lainovic, "Misija Jovana Cvijica u Londonu 1915. godine", doc. 16, Cvijić to Pašić, 5 May 1915, 312–313.

⁹⁴ Popović, *Iz dnevnika*, 29 July 1916, 507–509.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* 4 April 1916, 414.

than reflecting certain confusion of these terms in his mind, as it has also been interpreted.⁹⁶ Besides, throughout 1916 relations between the Serbian government and the Yugoslav Committee were good in general, as they were based on the pursuance of the Yugoslav programme, despite differences which emerged in some matters such as recruitment of volunteers for the Serbian army, relations with Italy and the vision of a future common country.⁹⁷ In the summer of 1917, Serbia's support for Yugoslav unification was made manifest to all and sundry when Pašić and the leaders of the Yugoslav Committee signed the Corfu declaration, which laid down the principles on which Yugoslavia would be founded.⁹⁸

It was not before early 1918 that there were any signs that Pašić was willing to prepare the ground for the possibility that a Yugoslav state would not come into being. At that point, the British Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, and the American President, Woodrow Wilson (on 5 and 8 January respectively) publically suggested the possibility of the conclusion of a separate peace with Vienna and made it clear that the oppressed peoples of the Habsburg Monarchy would have to settle for an autonomous status within that country. Such prospect meant that the creation of a Yugoslavia would remain a pipe dream. In the circumstances, Pašić wanted to secure formal abolition of the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina to Austria-Hungary and the possession, at least, of that province for Serbia. After all, that was an understandable and rational political move: Pašić simply tried to secure Serbian interests as best as he could in the deteriorating international situation. It should be noted that his instructions to Ljubomir Mihailović, earlier Charge d'Affairs in Rome and now Minister in Washington, reflecting his concern for Bosnia-Herzegovina met with the latter's categorical rejection on the grounds that those denoted the abandonment of the Yugoslav programme.⁹⁹ On the other hand, the members of the Yugoslav Committee felt in the wake of Lloyd George's and Wilson's statements that they had nothing to lose any longer; consequently, they took an uncompromising attitude. The "Yugoslavs" started to pressurise Pašić and the Serbian government – and Regent Alexander – to maintain the full solidarity

⁹⁶ Janković, *Srbija i jugoslovensko pitanje*, 529; Mitrović, *Srbija u Prvom svetskom ratu*, 164–169. On confusion, see Stanković, *Nikola Pašić i jugoslovensko pitanje*, I, 186.

⁹⁷ Janković, "O odnosima Jugoslovenskog odbora sa srpskom vladom u 1916. godini", 455–468.

⁹⁸ Dragoslav Janković, *Jugoslovensko pitanje i Krfska deklaracija 1917. godine* (Belgrade: Savremena administracija, 1967).

⁹⁹ *Gradja o stvaranju jugoslovenske države (1. I–20. XII 1918)*, 2 vols, ed. Dragoslav Janković and Bogdan Krizman (Belgrade: Institut društvenih nauka, 1964), I, doc. 30, N. Pašić to Lj. Mihailović, Salonica, 22. I [1918], 44–45; doc. 34, Lj. Mihailović to N. Pašić, Washington, 23. I [1918], 48–49.

with their stance and, moreover, to fuse the Serbian parliament into something of a new representative body of the entire Yugoslav people.¹⁰⁰ Naturally, Pašić could not consent to abolishing the key elements of Serbia's statehood such as the parliament in the midst of war for the sake of manifesting fidelity to the Yugoslav idea, especially not at the moment when the Entente Powers seemed to have excluded it. Since detailed treatment of this troubled affair is out of scope of this study, it is important to note here that Pašić showed willingness to depart from the ideal of a Yugoslav unification towards the more narrowly defined Serbian national programme only at the juncture in which international situation forced his hand in the late phase of the war. With another change in the political situation after the spring of 1918, when the allies decided to wage war until the defeat of the Central Powers and to dismantle Austria-Hungary to that end, he reverted to the earlier Yugoslav policy – the creation of a large Yugoslav state. Therefore, there is no evidence to support the view that Pašić vacillated between the “large” and the “small” programme since the outbreak of the war.

Pašić's persistence in carrying out the policy on which he set his heart is perhaps best visible in his treatment of the reports on Supilo which he received from the Serbian Minister in London. Bošković's profound distrust of the Croat émigrés which evolved into his firm conviction that they were disloyal to the common cause seem to have been confirmed during a tête-à-tête he had with Supilo. The latter turned up in the Legation and said: “Serbia is abandoning Croatia, does not request her unification [with Serbia]. If that is the case, he as a Croat must demand a strong Croatia, the present-day one with Dalmatia and Bosnia, because without that no conditions for survival exist. The Catholic Bosnians have authorised him for his work. He is convinced that the Muslims will side with them. Mr Bošković told him to write about that to Mr Pašić as soon as possible; and he (Bošković) has telegraphed to him [Pašić] about that today.”¹⁰¹ A striking feature of this conversation was that Supilo did not just defend the territorial integrity of the Triune Kingdom, which was a unanimous stance of almost all the Croat émigrés, but also made claim to Bosnia-Herzegovina in which the Serbs constituted nearly a half of the population. Supilo seems to have never written to Pašić what he had said to Bošković, but the Minister did

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., I, doc. 11, A. Trumbić to Crown Prince Alexander, N. Pašić and A. Nikolić, London, 10. I [1918], 22–23; doc. 23, A. Trumbić to Crown Prince Alexander, London, 15. I [1918], 35; doc. 27, N. Pašić to Yugoslav Committee, Corfu, 17. I [1918], 41–42; doc. 29, Yugoslav Committee to Crown Prince Alexander, the Serbian Government and A. Nikolić, London, 21. I [1918], 43–44; doc. 32, A. Trumbić to Crown Prince Alexander, London, 22. I [1918], 46–47; doc. 50, N. Pašić to Yugoslav Committee, Corfu, 30. I [1918], 62–64; doc. 65, A. Trumbić to N. Pašić, London, 5. II [1918], 82–84.

¹⁰¹ Žujović, *Dnevnik*, II, 3/16 September 1915, 184.

send his report to Niš. "I have a clear impression that Supilo and the likes of him are working to tie Slavonia and Dalmatia with part of Bosnia with the fate of Croatia", Bošković was adamant.¹⁰² In his view, there was no doubt that the Yugoslav programme of the Serbian government in reality developed into the struggle between the Serb and Croat aspirations reflected in the clash over the possession of Dalmatia and Slavonia, and even part of Bosnia. After receiving such a report, Pašić had to take some measures to counteract Supilo's agitation. He reacted by requesting Žujović, Velimirović, Pavle Popović and Stojanović to mediate and ensure harmony in the work of the Yugoslav Committee and in its relations with the Legation, "taking care that persons with Supilo's idea remain isolated."¹⁰³ This was in keeping with Pašić's pragmatic policy to have the Yugoslav emigration demand unification with Serbia in principle and leave all other potentially divisive questions aside to be dealt with after the war.

But no account of the conflict between Bošković and the Croat members of the Yugoslav Committee, especially Supilo, is complete without considering the role played by Seton-Watson and other British friends. Seton-Watson's absolute support for the Croat émigrés was even more pronounced due to his animosity, and even outright hostility, towards Bošković. In his correspondence and conversations held with the Serbian personages in London, Scotus Viator insisted that Serbia was poorly represented by her present Minister. Both he and Steed claimed that the British friends of Serbia found it impossible to work with Bošković, just like the members of the Yugoslav Committee, that the Foreign Office took a dim view of him, that the Minister himself did nothing on his own initiative and did not even bother to get up before the afternoon.¹⁰⁴ It is indeed difficult to tell whether the slandering of the Serbian Minister originated with the Croats from the Committee and was suggested to the distinguished Britons, or the former just used to repeat the argumentation of Seton-Watson and Steed while complaining to the Serbs in London.¹⁰⁵ In particular, Seton-

¹⁰² AJ, 80-2-10, Bošković to Pašić, no. 898 [only the last page has been preserved, without date, but definitely 3 September 1915 on the basis of the above quote from Žujović's diary]. The telegram was received in MID on 4 September 1915 and filed as strictly conf. no. 9606. Pašić wrote on the back: "Read it. I will reply when I get Supilo's letter." Bošković's telegram confirmed an earlier information from the Russian Ambassador Benckendorff to the effect that the Croats did not want a union with Serbia and that they protested "against eventual dismemberment of the parts of Croat lands /that should probably mean at least Dalmatia and Slavonia/" (AJ, 80-2-10, Bošković to Pašić, 27 August 1915, without number).

¹⁰³ Telegram from Niš, 6 September 1915, quoted in: Žujović, *Dnevnik*, II, 192.

¹⁰⁴ Popović, *Iz dnevnika*, 20 May 1915, 168-171; 28 August 1915, 234; 31 August 1915, 235-236; 5 September 1915, 240-242; Žujović, *Dnevnik*, II, 11/24 September 1915, 193-196; 22 September / 5 October 1915, 200.

¹⁰⁵ See, for example, the complaints made by Hinko Hinković and Meštrović, the members of the Committee, in: Žujović, *Dnevnik*, II, 15/28 June 1915, 130; 7/20 September 1915, 187.

Watson defamed Bošković to important persons in Serbian diplomacy, such as Jovanović-Pižon and Vesnić, with a view to bringing about his removal from London.¹⁰⁶ Steed sent a letter to Pašić with the same arguments and for the same purpose.¹⁰⁷ Both Britons pointed out Bošković's inimical attitude towards Supilo and, in order to prove the injustice of such a stance, declared an absolute confidence of all British friends of Serbia in the Croat politician. Seton-Watson's objections to the Serbian Minister were, in fact, unfounded. In his biography written by his own two sons, both noted historians themselves, it is admitted that the perusal of diplomatic material of Serbian and British provenance shows Bošković in a very different light - he was "an intelligent observer and a competent diplomat."¹⁰⁸ With his campaign of defamation, Scotus Viator only proved that he was prepared to turn against people whom he thought were standing in his way with the same zeal and ferocity he demonstrated while fighting for what he believed in.

The assessments made of Bošković by other competent observers, namely the Serbians engaged in national propaganda in Britain, who were more familiar with Serbian policy and the situation in the London Legation than British friends, are not helpful. They were more revealing of their own views on the Yugoslav question and the extent to which they agreed, or not, with the Minister than of his handling of the matters. Those among them who shared much of his views and appreciation of the Croat émigrés, like the Popović brothers, and were also friends with him, held Bošković's abilities in high regard.¹⁰⁹ On the other side, Cvijić was, despite being a friend and, to a large degree, in agreement with the substance of reports Bošković sent to Pašić, more optimistic with regard to Yugoslav unification and thus considered, so it seems, the Minister's opinion

¹⁰⁶ *Seton-Watson i Jugoslaveni: Korespondencija*, I, doc. 153, Seton-Watson to [Jovan M. Jovanović], 20. IX 1915, 242–243 and doc. 156, Seton-Watson to Milenko Vesnić, 26. IX 1915, 245–246.

¹⁰⁷ Hugh and Christopher Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe*, 140.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.* 133. Benckendorff stated in October 1915 that Bošković was well received in the Foreign Office because he spoke openly, although "a few months ago they were not satisfied" (Žujović, *Dnevnik*, II, 29 September / 12 October 1915, 203). Dissatisfaction mentioned by Benckendorff was, according to the Romanian Minister, Nikolae Mishu, caused by Bošković's intransigence concerning Macedonia (Jovan M. Jovanović Pižon, *Dnevnik (1896–1920)*, ed. Radoš Ljušić and Miladin Milošević (Novi Sad: Prometej, 2015), 8 October 1916, 183–184). The Russian Ambassador told Jovanović-Pižon: "Your predecessor has been a little nervous, but I am favourably disposed to him." (*Ibid.*, 29 September 1916, 174–175) Bošković appreciated his French colleague Paul Cambon and Mishu, whereas he said of Benckendorff that "he has never anticipated anything, but he has never tried to anticipate." (*Ibid.*, 11 September 1916, 162)

¹⁰⁹ Popović, *Iz dnevnika*, 27 May 1915, 176–177; Žujović, *Dnevnik*, II, 4/17 September 1915, 185; Janković, *Srbija i jugoslovensko pitanje*, 500–501.

exaggerated. Cvijić complained to Žujović “that Mr Bošković does little work and is interested in nothing except Macedonia”, and he had nothing good, according to the historian and publicist Grgur Jakšić, to report to Pašić concerning the Minister's performance.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, Bošković's job in London was made more difficult on account of indiscipline and lack of dedication of his secretaries in the Legation, of which Žujović warned him on three occasions.¹¹¹ It was characteristic of relations within the Legation that the first secretary, Vojislav Antonijević, one of the correspondents of Seton-Watson, spoke to Žujović no fewer than four times against his head of mission.¹¹²

Constant complaints and intrigues against Bošković were not without their effect in Niš. Jovanović-Pižon drew Bošković's attention to the fact that the members of the Yugoslav Committee had complained about the lack of cordiality and intimacy in their reception in the London Legation in marked contrast to the earlier situation in the Serbian Legations in Rome and Paris. Pašić's deputy suggested that the Minister should invite them more often to the Legation “together with the Englishmen, our friends”.¹¹³ Just two weeks later, Jovanović-Pižon reiterated in a telegram written by himself and signed by Pašić his request to Bošković to change his attitude towards the “Yugoslavs”, but this time he stressed the unfavourable impression made on the British friends.¹¹⁴ In doing so, he indicated the source of his information, at least some of it. Bošković rejected the said “denunciations” and “petty intrigues”, explaining the probity and appropriateness of his conduct; he surmised that “a discreet English friend”, who remained unnamed, stood behind the complaints. He certainly referred to Seton-Watson as it could be made out from his pointing out the dissatisfaction because British financial contributions for the Serbian sufferers were channelled through the Legation instead of the Serbian Relief Fund – in this matter the Minister reminded of the instructions he had been given by the Foreign Ministry. It seemed to him that the spleen which had emerged on that account was later vented “in the advices given to the main émigré committee.” More importantly,

¹¹⁰ Žujović, *Dnevnik*, II, 30 June / 13 July 1915, 146–147; 6/19 July 1915, 151; Popović, *Iz dnevnika*, 5 September, 240–241.

¹¹¹ Žujović, *Dnevnik*, II, 3/16 October 1915, 209–210; also Popović, *Iz dnevnika*, 2 December 1915, 301–302.

¹¹² Žujović, *Dnevnik*, II, 8/21 October 1915, 212. Shortly before Regent Alexander's and Pašić's visit to London next year Antonijević prepared a memorandum for the purpose of drawing attention to the main questions which Serbia would have to face until the end of the war and at a peace conference. His paper did not indicate much of its author's analytical skills, but it was certainly revealing of Antonijević's great personal ambitions (AS, MID-PO, f. X, d. II, memorandum by Vojislav Antonijević, 21 March 1916). After the war he became the Minister of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in Rome.

¹¹³ AJ, 80-2-10, Jovan Jovanović to Bošković, 28 July 1915 (dispatched next day, conf. no. 8268).

¹¹⁴ AJ, 80-2-10, Jovan Jovanović to Bošković, 12 August 1915, conf. no. 8738.

Bošković believed that the crux of the problem was in the question “whether the Legation should accept and carry out everything that the committee or some of its members ask for without [making] its own remarks. In that case, I think that I cannot be held responsible.”¹¹⁵ Bošković’s reply to the accusations made against him shows that he was aware that the “English friends”, and Seton-Watson above all, were among the causes of his difficulties with the Croat émigrés, though he appears not to have fully appreciated either the extent of their unconditional support for Supilo and Trumbić or the depth of their intolerance to himself. His position in the Legation was, however, not threatened as long as Scotus Viator’s and Steed’s endeavours met with no response from Pašić. In November 1915, just at the time of major crisis on the Serbian front due to the Bulgarian attack, the Prime Minister declined the crude insistence from London accompanied by the threat that the “English friends” would deny all further support to Serbia, pleading with them to bear in mind the critical situation.¹¹⁶

Nevertheless, Bošković appears to have sensed that his handling of the Croat émigrés was not well received in the Foreign Ministry, particularly on the part of Jovanović-Pižon, or that he was at least considered not sufficiently tactful and patient in his dealings with them. For that reason, he strove to smooth over the differences and avoid as much as he could any further clashes. When Žujović cautioned him to undertake energetic measures in order to impose order among the staff of the Legation, Bošković’s excuse for not doing so was “that all [of them] would join together against him and he would be guilty just like in the Yugoslav Committee affair.”¹¹⁷ The Minister went so far as trying to improve his relations with Supilo and show his superiors that there was no bad blood between them. Acting on Supilo’s complaint to Jovanović-Pižon that two letters which had been sent to him through the Legation had reached him with considerable delay, Bošković conducted an investigation among his staff and found out that the former clerk, certain Vojislav Petrović, had been negligent to his duties. Bošković also proposed, irrespectively of that matter as he underscored, “that it would be nice to be attentive to Mr Supilo on this occasion and offer him a sum of 2000 dinars [approximately 2000 French francs], all the more so as he has not wanted to take anything from Serbia so far, as far as I know and as he has told me.”¹¹⁸ Supilo and Trumbić were indeed noted exceptions among the members of the Yugoslav Committee, who kept their financial independence from the Serbian government, not just because they had sufficient means of their own, but also because they were anxious to maintain an independent political position.

¹¹⁵ AJ, 80-2-10, Bošković to Pašić, 16 August 1915, no. 838. For disputes concerning financial contributions, see Hugh and Cristopher Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe*, 140.

¹¹⁶ Hugh and Cristopher Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe*, 153.

¹¹⁷ Žujović, *Dnevnik*, II, 3/16 October 1915, 209–210.

¹¹⁸ AS, MID, PsL, f. I, pov r 1327/1915, Bošković to MID, 22 September 1915, confidential, without number.

Bošković referred to confiscation of Supilo's assets by the Austrian authorities as a reason for Niš to extend him financial assistance and show its good will.

After the "Albanian Golgotha" and the reorganisation of the Serbian army in Corfu, the next important task for Bošković was to prepare the ground for a visit which Regent Alexander intended to make to Britain as part of his diplomatic sojourn in all the allied capitals.¹¹⁹ The Regent and Pašić arrived in London on 31 March 1916 and over the next few days met with the British royalties, policy-makers and important public figures.¹²⁰ Seton-Watson placed high hopes in the Regent as a future bearer of Yugoslav policy, since he thought that Pašić was unable or unwilling to be so, and handed him a memorandum in which his and Steed's ideas of the principles on which a Yugoslavia should be founded were spelled out. On that occasion, he apparently raised all his well-known accusations against Bošković and extracted a promise from Alexander that the Minister would be soon removed from London and replaced by Jovanović–Pižon, a fervent advocate of a Yugoslav union.¹²¹ That is why Jovanović–Pižon could tell Pavle Popović with certainty: "Mata will fall; he is clever and intelligent, he has predicted [things] accurately, his reports are good, but it does not take more to make his position untenable than [the fact] that our sole friends – Seton-Watson – are against him."¹²² It is interesting to observe that Bošković himself had a substantially different impression of the reasons behind his dismissal once he had heard from Popović that it was discussed: "his report on Bulgaria, which is the main thing; then comes the Yugoslav Committee and Seton-Watson. It does not seem definite to him."¹²³ A reference to a report on Bulgaria concerned an exchange between him and Vojislav Marinković, an acting Prime Minister during Pašić's absence from Corfu. Marinković inveighed against the Minister in London because of his failure to report on the increased activities of British Bulgarophiles. This was neither a fair assessment of Bošković nor particularly relevant given that the alleged campaign had not been substantial and presented

¹¹⁹ AJ, 80-8-43, Pašić to Bošković, 21 February 1916, no. 1337 and Bošković's note on the back, 22 February 1916; Bošković to Pašić, 3/16 March 1916, conf. no. 162; AS, MID-PO, 1916, f. XI, d. VIII, Bošković to MID, 22 February 1916, no. 131; Bošković to MID, 27 February 1916, no. 144; Bošković to MID, 4 March 1916, no. 158; f. XI, d. IX, Bošković to Pašić, 7 March 1916, no. 172; Bošković to Pašić, 10 March 1916, no. 183; Bošković to Pašić, 12 March 1916, no. 187; Bošković to Paris Legation, 16 March 1916, no. 193.

¹²⁰ For the initial part of the visit, see AS, MID-PO, 1916, f. XI, d. VIII, Bošković to MID, 20 March 1916, without number; Pašić to MID, 20 March 1916, no. 3; for more details, see Čedomir Antić, *Neizabrana saveznica: Srbija i Velika Britanija u Prvom svetskom ratu* (Belgrade: Zavod za udžbenike, 2012), 290–292.

¹²¹ Hugh and Christopher Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe, 156–157*; Vučković, "Iz odnosa Srbije i Jugoslovenskog odbora", 363–365.

¹²² Popović, *Iz dnevnika*, 25 March 1916, 406–407.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 4 April 1916, 414–415.

not much of a danger to Serbia. But this affair was relatively novel, whereas the rift between the London Legation and the Yugoslav Committee was old news, and that explains why Bošković attached more importance to it than warranted in assessing reasons for his removal from Britain.¹²⁴

Be that as it may, he was relieved of his duties on 26 August 1916 when Antonijević took over as Charge d'Affairs until Jovanović–Pižon replaced him as the new Minister on 18 September.¹²⁵ Following the controversy over Supilo's suggestion to Grey of a plebiscite in the Yugoslav lands of Austria-Hungary, the Croat politician was increasingly estranged not just from the Serbian government, but also from the Yugoslav Committee until he finally resigned from the latter in June 1916. Other Croat émigrés, most notably Trumbić, realised that Supilo overstepped the bounds of diplomatic realities and he was left in the political wilderness for the remainder of his life – he died in 1917.¹²⁶ Damage caused by Supilo's actions and his consequent pursuit of the exclusive interests of Croatia was thus contained. Pašić and the Yugoslav Committee continued to work together for the common cause, their differences lying dormant, and, as has been briefly mentioned, it was not before 1918, in a profoundly different international environment, that their major clash emerged over diplomatic approach and, ultimately, the manner of a Yugoslav unification.

In the final analysis, Bošković left London as a rather distinctive personality in the wartime Serbian diplomacy. What sets him apart from other Serbian diplomats is his pronounced reservations to the Yugoslav programme, at least such as it was envisioned on the part of the Croat émigrés. It is small wonder then that the said émigrés were to a man dissatisfied with Bošković and complained, as one of them related to Pavle Popović, that "Mata is not like Ljuba Mihajlović [*sic*], M[ihailo]. Ristić [the new Minister in Rome], M. Vesnić."¹²⁷ The last mentioned diplomat professed his agreement with Seton-Watson when the Scottish historian inveighed against his colleague in London; moreover, he replied that he also despaired over Bošković's intrigues against Supilo.¹²⁸ Bošković was indeed not like other Serbian diplomats in their dealing with the Yugoslav Committee. It is not easy to pinpoint the reasons for his demeanour. In more recent historiography, it has been argued that his department stemmed from the fact that Bošković belonged to the liberal tradition which never had

¹²⁴ Forthcoming Bakić, "Mateja Mata Bošković: prilog za biografiju srpskog diplomate".

¹²⁵ AS, MID, PsL, f. I, pov r 791/1916, Antonijević to MID, 12 October 1916 (new style).

¹²⁶ Šepić, *Supilo diplomat*, 156–249.

¹²⁷ Popović, *Iz dnevnika*, 28 May 1915, 178.

¹²⁸ *Seton-Watson i Jugoslaveni: Korespondencija*, I, doc. 157, Milenko Vesnić to Seton-Watson, 29. IX 1915, 246.

much affection for the Yugoslav idea.¹²⁹ In retrospect, Bošković dismissed Seton-Watson's allegation that he had been hostile to the Yugoslav idea with the claim that "it could only cause a smile of astonishment with people who know me well and know that I have always been faithful to the thought of unification of the previously dismembered parts of our people by [virtue of] both family tradition and personal conviction."¹³⁰ Even if allowance is made for the need to justify his conduct, the fact remains – and tends to support his assertion – that Bošković had written about "the Yugoslav cause in the Balkans" eight years before the Great War.¹³¹ It seems that it was his direct experience with the Croat émigrés and familiarisation with their political views and vision of a Yugoslav unification that played a decisive role in the formation of his attitude. This certainly accounted for his mistrust of which he reported to Pašić in no uncertain terms. But it is also highly likely that as a tried diplomat Bošković was influenced by his own appraisal at the early stage of the war that international circumstances were such as not to favour the formation of a Yugoslav union. Bošković's pessimism in this sense was, apart from the conspicuous reservations of the Foreign Office, probably increased by the exchange of views with the Russian Ambassador Benckendorff who did not believe that Serbia could, in addition to Bosnia-Herzegovina, get more than part of the Dalmatian coast.¹³² But perhaps more striking than his motivation and reasoning is the apparent unqualified enthusiasm of other Serbian diplomats for the creation of a Yugoslavia. Together with Pašić's determination in pursuing Yugoslav policy despite discouraging international situation, it is an exploration of this frame of mind that might provide more fertile field for further studying of pro-Yugoslav proclivities in Serbian foreign policy rather than misleading dichotomy between forging Greater Serbia and Yugoslavia.

¹²⁹ Miloš Ković, "Liberalizam", in: Miloš Ković, ed., *Srbi 1903–1914: istorija ideja* (Belgrade: Clio, 2015), 192.

¹³⁰ Mateja Bošković, "Jugoslovenski odbor i Srbijanska vlada", *Politika*, 13 May 1927, p. 2.

¹³¹ Mateja S. Bošković, *Stara Srbija i reforme* (Belgrade: Štamparija Svetozara Nikolića, 1906), 28.

¹³² AJ, 80-2-10, Bošković to MID, 30 October 1914, without number.

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Georges-Henri Soutou*

*Emeritus Professor, Sorbonne Université
Member of the Académie des sciences morales et politiques*

The Paris Conference of 1919 Between the Traditions of European Congresses and the "New Diplomacy"

Abstract: The conflicting combination of Old and New Diplomacy imparted to the Versailles treaty, through numerous compromises, a flexibility which tends to be overlooked and which was meant also to gain time in face of quite rabid Allied public opinion in 1919. Many provisions could be modified (reparations for instance), many delays could be shortened (as the occupation of the Rhineland). The treaty could be implemented harshly, as in 1921–1923,¹ or more leniently, as after Locarno (1925).² It was one of the few great international treaties which contained the means for its revision. It is not true that all the disasters of the 1930s were implied by the treaties, even if their legacy was much more short-lived and less successful than that of the Vienna Congress.

Keywords: Versailles treaty, Woodrow Wilson, George Clemenceau, "New Diplomacy", Concert of Europe

From the beginning the "peacemakers" of 1919 worked according to two different scripts. France was finally chosen as the host country (President Wilson would have preferred Geneva...) and thus the Quai d'Orsay was in charge of organising and presiding over the event. French diplomats went back to the precedent of European Congresses since Vienna, and suggested in December 1918 a framework which was not much different from, and fully consistent with, the traditions and methods of the Concert of Europe: after a short negotiation between the main Allies the most important clauses of the future peace treaties, and particularly the territorial ones, would be decided and forced upon the Germans and their allies as "Peace preliminaries" enforcing a new European balance, along the lines of Europe's diplomatic tradition. But then a longer negotiation, including the minor allies and the former enemies on equal footing with the "Principal Powers", as they were called, would settle all the remaining questions

* georges-henri.soutou@wanadoo.fr

¹ Gerd Krumeich and Joachim Schröder, eds., *Der Schatten des Weltkrieges. Die Ruhrbesetzung 1923* (Essen: Klartext, 2004).

² Peter Krüger, *Die Aussenpolitik der Republik von Weimar* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1985).

and all the complex details. Keeping in mind the old German proverb according to which details are the favourite abode of the Devil...³

Wilson had other views: the main thing was not so much to settle old accounts or to repair ancient grievances, and to satisfy the victors, but to establish a lasting peace based on the Fourteen Points and the “New Diplomacy”. And creating a foremost vehicle for peacekeeping, not through the traditional, secret and slow, diplomacy of the European concert, but through a permanent League of Nations, “openly arriving at open covenants” and guaranteeing all countries, big or small, protection against aggression. Besides, the roots of war would be eliminated by reaching a peace settlement giving all nations borders they could accept and excluding all forms of discrimination, including economic ones. Potential differences would be evoked, discussed and arbitrated at the League.

Let us note here that if most professional diplomats and European politicians were still thinking in terms of balance of power and consultations among major powers, Wilson was not alone, by far, in defending a New Diplomacy and the concept of collective security: since the end of the preceding century a new breed of politicians, experts and jurists had developed such ideas in the context of the two Peace conferences at The Hague.⁴ Belgian journals of International Law were particularly involved in exploring new ways of maintaining peace, more compatible with the needs of smaller countries.⁵

Those deep contradictions led to constant trade-offs between great principles of International law and more egoist claims. The ensuing peace was partially contradictory, torn between Wilsonianism and the traditional European balance of power. Wilson wanted to usher a revolution in international affairs, but he had to make many concessions to his European partners, who remained largely in favour of the balance of power system, despite some lip service to the

³ Pierre Renouvin, *Le traité de Versailles* (Paris: Flammarion, 1969); Manfred F. Boemecke, Gerald D. Feldman and Elisabeth Glaser eds., *The Treaty of Versailles. A Reassessment after 75 Years* (Cambridge UP, 1998); Margaret Macmillan, *Peacemakers. The Paris Conference of 1919 and Its Attempt to End War* (London: John Murray, 2001); Gerd Krumeich and Silke Fehleemann, eds., *Versailles 1919* (Essen: Klartext, 2001); Pierre Ayçoberry, Jean-Paul Bled and Istvan Hunyadi, eds., *Les conséquences des traités de paix de 1919-1920 en Europe centrale et sud-orientale* (Presse universitaires de Strasbourg, 1987); Claude Carlier and Georges-Henri Soutou eds., *1918–1925 Comment faire la paix?* (Paris: Economica, 2001); Marc Trachtenberg, *Reparations in World Politics. France and European Economic Diplomacy, 1916–1923* (Columbia UP, 1980).

⁴ Even the French were not immune to those progressive views: Peter Jackson, *Beyond the Balance of Power. France and the Politics of National Security in the Era of the First World War* (Cambridge UP, 2013).

⁵ Vincent Génin, *Le laboratoire belge du droit international. Une communauté épistémique et internationale de juristes (1869–1914)* (Brussels: Académie royale de Belgique, 2018).

New Diplomacy and what Clemenceau called the “noble candour” of President Wilson, which translates much less flatteringly in French.⁶

The Conflicting International Visions and the Differences about the Way the Conference Should be Managed Led to a Flawed System of Negotiation

It is necessary to keep in mind that, whatever the merits or demerits of the treaties, the negotiating process itself was less than optimal. The differences we have seen between the Allies, coupled with the fact that President Wilson wanted the Covenant of the League of Nations to be part of the Treaty and actually to form its first part, led to simultaneous negotiations about all the topics, through fifty-eight expert commissions. They took their task seriously, but they often preempted the negotiating process through their technical approach, which blurred the broad political picture. The principals (at the end Wilson, Lloyd George and Clemenceau) tried to redress that drift, but they did not always succeed. Each commission wanted to chisel its own masterpiece. At the end the Versailles treaty was a monster of complexity, and the cumulative overall effect of the decisions taken against Germany was bigger than what the participants, sticking to their own particular agenda, realized.⁷

Another consequence was that it took much more time than foreseen, and finally there were no Preliminaries, because the Allies were unable to settle the most important provisions of the Treaty before the end of April: they did not agree on what was the most important, the League, or the territorial and security provisions, as the French insisted. On 7 May the Germans received a complete treaty, and they had no opportunity to negotiate properly, although they did write numerous and often cogent notes to the Allies.⁸ Hence the term “Diktat”, the most fatal of all the accusations against Versailles in Germany at the time.

Apart from the fact that the Peacemakers did not really agree on the very principles of the future peace, beyond their differences on this or that particular point,⁹ the chaotic negotiating process was also due to two other factors: Clemenceau chose to negotiate first on less important issues, so as to make conces-

⁶ Lloyd E. Ambrosius, *Woodrow Wilson and the American Diplomatic Tradition* (Cambridge UP, 1987).

⁷ That point was made by Harold Nicolson, *Peacemaking 1919* (New York: Grosset & Dunlop, 1974). Olivier Lowczyk, *La fabrique de la paix. Du Comité d'études à la Conférence de la Paix, l'élaboration par la France des traités de la Première Guerre mondiale* (Paris: Economica, 2010).

⁸ Peter Krüger, *Deutschland und die Reparationen 1918/19* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1973).

⁹ Boemecke, Feldmann and Glaser, eds., *The Treaty of Versailles*; MacMillan, *Peacemakers*.

sions and thus garner goodwill for his views when more important topics came on the table. Needless to say it was futile and clogged the proceedings. That he chose that self-defeating tactic was a pity, because he was one of the few statesmen present to understand all the issues: even when he did not agree with Wilson or Lloyd George, at least he understood what they wanted.

Another factor was that there was no Friedrich von Gentz organizing the conference this time: the secretary of the Conference, the French diplomat Dutasta, was not up to his task and he was unable to coordinate the work of the fifty-six commissions.¹⁰

The Wilsonian Aspect of the Treaties

At the time, disillusioned supporters of President Wilson tended to feel he had been outwitted by the European Allies. In my view, it is an excessive claim. Wilson managed to put his imprint on much of the treaties: creation of the League of Nations; international recognition of self-determination (through the stipulation of many plebiscites) for the first time since the Franco-Sardinian Torino Treaty of 1860; rejection of the notion of war costs imposed on the vanquished and the adoption instead of the principle of reparations by the party responsible for the war; internationally supervised duties of the colonial powers towards the indigenous populations.

A major Wilsonian imprint was probably the notion (not formally stated in the treaties, but actually pervasive) that the new European order should rest on democratic Nation-States. The Big Three and also the leaders of the new, reborn or extended countries in Central Europe agreed on this. It had been a major insight since 1848, and again in the years preceding the Great War, that national independence and democracy belonged to each other.¹¹

President Wilson and his team were perfectly aware of the failures of the Treaty. But he was confident he could rely on American economic might after the war (and use the lever of inter-allied debts) in order to redress some glaring problems, like the Reparations settlement, the permanent trade discrimination against Germany, and the failure to admit Germany to the League as soon as peace was achieved. The failure of the Senate to ratify the Treaty (which I believe could have been avoided if Wilson had been more accommodating with Senator Lodge, who was willing to deal...) thus truncated the American role after 1919, with grim consequences.

¹⁰ Jules Laroche, *Au Quai d'Orsay avec Briand et Poincaré 1913–1926* (Paris: Hachette, 1957).

¹¹ Dusan Batakovic, *Les sources françaises de la démocratie serbe (1804–1914)* (Paris: CNRS Editions, 2013).

The Balance of Power Aspect

But many aspects of the former Concert of Europe survived: at the Conference itself and later in the Council of the League major powers enjoyed a privileged status, lesser ones were admitted to defend only their “particular interests”. And the new boundaries did not take into account exclusively the will of the peoples or “clear lines of nationality”, but were quite often, as had usually been the case in the past, adjusted according to the economic, political or strategic interests of the victors (particularly those of France in Central Europe), the interdiction of the *Anschluss* between Germany and Austria being a good instance.

And some of the worst provisions of Versailles were modified in the traditional secret diplomatic way, following direct exchanges between the French and the Germans in Berlin in March. It was decided there would be a plebiscite in Upper Silesia and it would not be attributed outright to Poland, with its annual forty million tons of coal; and the Reparations Commission would keep tabs on German economic life, but it would not control it as the Ottoman Debt administration controlled Turkey before 1914.¹²

In the same vein Paris had provisions introduced in the Saint-Germain Treaty (articles 222 and 267) which would preserve the possibility of recreating a Danube economic area in which Vienna would retain much of its former role. Evidently the French did not wish Germany to take over a ruined Austria! At the same time even for the *Anschluss* the principle of self-determination was not completely discarded: article 10 of the Covenant made it possible if the League Council so decided... The difficult negotiations produced once again complex compromises between the two main opposed systems.

The Case of the League of Nations: Where Old and New Thinking Overlap

Another case was the League. The main concept of the New Diplomacy was “collective security”: security would be from now on established not *against* a potential enemy, but *with* him, by including him in the new international system. That was the whole point of the League. Wilson was convinced Germany should and would join it as early as possible. But the French saw the League as the continuation of the wartime alliance and blocked that idea.

But it soon became evident that the League would at best be an international forum and a loudspeaker for various problems and grievances, but not an efficient body able to enforce peace. The French tried in 1919 to redress that, suggesting that the League should be able to designate an aggressor by majority vote, and not necessarily by a unanimous one, and should be able to

¹² Gorges-Henri Soutou, «La France et l'Allemagne en 1919», in J.-M. Valentin, J. Bariéty and A. Guth, eds., *La France et l'Allemagne entre les deux guerres mondiales* (Presses universitaires de Nancy, 1987).

apply military sanctions. But they were not supported as the Americans and British had an international debating society in mind, not a real executive.

The League was supposed to replace the Concert of Europe. But it was prevented to achieve that by the indecisive stipulations of the Covenant and also by its work methods and its very ideology. Europe no longer had a system of regulation, even informal. That was probably the major failure of the Conference.

But the Europeans Themselves, Apart from Wilson, Could not Restore the Former Concert of Europe

Even the more traditionally minded Europeans could not restore the former Concert of Europe, because some of its most important mainstays were no longer there. Soviet Russia was out of the system and very much against it. The Ottoman Empire was floundering. And the Allies did not really wish to restore the previous European system: they agreed, even Wilson, that Germany should be excluded, until it was fully democratized and accepted the new world order. But German power was not decisively curtailed: the Reich retained the main instruments of might in the twentieth century, its industry and its economic organization. The Germans themselves knew it and considered themselves as temporarily, but not definitively, hampered.¹³

The Worst of Both Worlds? Or Rather a Complex Overlapping and Evolving System?

It could be argued that the treaties ended up as a combination of the worst of both worlds, with the Central Powers being punished either in the name of Wilsonianism, or in the name of European balance, depending on which of the two was less favourable for them.

At the same time, it could be argued that despite its numerous failures the treaties were not a complete break with the former Concert: for instance the minorities treaties which the new States were obliged to sign were not a rupture, but an evolution following the Vienna, Paris (1856) and Berlin (1878) Congresses and their provisions concerning religious minorities. The treaties were an important stage in the development of the international system, and not an aberration or a regression, despite their many failures.

And the conflicting combination of Old and New Diplomacy imparted to the Versailles treaty, through numerous compromises, a flexibility which tends to be overlooked and which was meant also to gain time in face of quite rabid Allied public opinion in 1919. Many provisions could be modified (repa-

¹³ Georges-Henri Soutou, «La République de Weimar: une grande puissance bridée», in *La moyenne puissance au XX^e siècle*, ed. Jean-Claude Allain (Paris: FEDN, 1988).

rations for instance), many delays could be shortened (as the occupation of the Rhineland). The treaty could be implemented harshly, as in 1921–1923,¹⁴ or more leniently, as after Locarno (1925).¹⁵ It was one of the few great international treaties which contained the means for its revision. It is not true that all the disasters of the 1930s were implied by the treaties, even if their legacy was much more short-lived and less successful than that of the Vienna Congress.

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¹⁴ Gerd Krumeich and Joachim Schröder, eds., *Der Schatten des Weltkrieges. Die Ruhrbesetzung 1923* (Essen: Klartext, 2004).

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Boris Milosavljević*

*Institute for Balkan Studies
Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts
Belgrade*

Drafting the Constitution of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (1920)

Abstract: The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was internationally recognized during the Paris Peace Conference in 1919–20. Even though there was neither a provisional nor a permanent constitution of the newly-formed state, factually there was a state as well as a system of governance, represented by supreme bodies, the King and the Parliament. Many draft constitutions were prepared by different political parties and notable individuals. We shall focus on the official Draft Constitution prepared during the premiership of Stojan Protić. He appointed the Drafting Committee as a governmental (multi-ethnic) advisory team of prominent legal experts from different parts of the new state consisting of Professors Slobodan Jovanović (President), Kosta Kumanudi and Lazar Marković (Serbia), Professor Ladislav Polić (Croatia) and Dr Bogumil Vošnjak (Slovenia). After two months of work, the Committee submitted its draft to the Prime Minister. The leading Serbian legal scholar and president of the committee, Slobodan Jovanović (1869–1958), was well-acquainted with the details of Austro-Hungarian and German legal traditions. Since he was an active participant and witness of the events that led to the creation of the new state, while also being an objective and critical historian, it is important to shed light on his firsthand account of the emergence of the state of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.

Keywords: Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, Vidovdan Constitution, Drafting (Constitutional) Committee, Serbo-Croat relations, Yugoslavia

The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was declared on 1 December 1918. The declaration of the unification of the three peoples into one state was preceded by several events which had occurred towards the very end of the First World War.¹ The process of setting up a central representative body of the South-Slav (Yugoslav) lands of Austria-Hungary ended with the creation of the

* borismiloss@gmail.com

¹ For more detail see Dušan T. Bataković, *Srbija i Balkan. Albanija, Bugarska i Grčka 1914–1918* (Novi Sad: Prometej; Belgrade: RTS, 2016); Mira Radojević and Ljubodrag Dimić, *Srbija u Velikom ratu 1914–1918: kratka istorija* (Belgrade: SKZ & Beogradski forum za svet ravnopravnih, 2014), 274; *Gradja o stvaranju jugoslovenske države (1. I – 20. XII 1918)*, eds. Dragoslav Janković and Bogdan Krizman (Belgrade 1964), 674–676; Branko Petranović and Momčilo Zečević, *Jugoslavija 1918–1984. Zbirka dokumenata* (Belgrade: IRO Rad, 1985); Branko Petranović, *Istorija Jugoslavije 1918–1978* (Belgrade: Nolit, 1981).

National Council of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs (*Narodno vijeće Slovenaca, Hrvata i Srba*) on 8 October 1918. Initially a political body which sought to coordinate political action in the context of upcoming events and decisions in world politics, the Council stated ten days after its foundation that it would from now on pursue the interests of the people it represented. It declared a polity, the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, but the latter was not internationally recognized. On 24 November 1918 the Council authorized twenty-eight of its members to take steps towards the creation of a common state in agreement with the government of the Kingdom of Serbia and representatives of all political parties in Serbia and Montenegro. The assembly of Serbs, Croats, Bunjevci, Slovaks, Ruthenians and other peoples from Banat, Bačka and Baranja decided to join the Kingdom of Serbia on 25 November 1918. At its meeting of 24 November 1918 the National Council of Srem called for a common state of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes under the Karadjordjević dynasty. The Great National Assembly of Montenegro held in Podgorica on 26 November 1918 decided that Montenegro should unite with Serbia into one state.

Negotiations between the delegation of the Council of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs and the Serbian government started at the end of November 1918. It was agreed that the act of unification would take the form of a declaration of the Council expressing the will for unification and the acceptance of their will by Prince Regent Alexander Karadjordjević of Serbia. Regent Alexander declared the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes on 1 December 1918 at Krsmanović House on Terazije Square in Belgrade.

As the “constituent act”, the declarations of 1 December 1918 served as the basis of state and legal organisation in the newly-created Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes from the moment of unification to the adoption of the *Vidovdan* (St. Vitus Day) Constitution in 1921. In this interim period, the highest authorities in the Kingdom were Regent (from 1921 King) Alexander, the Government and the Provisional Assembly of the Peoples of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (*Privremeno narodno predstavništvo Kraljevstva Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca*).² The first government of the Kingdom was created on 20 December 1918 and the Provisional Assembly first met in session on 1 March 1919. Both declarations used the word “state”, but it was actually questionable

² This provisional body was composed of representatives elected by the Serbian National Assembly representing the Kingdom of Serbia, on the one hand, and the National Council of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, on the other. There was 296 representatives. The composition of those representing the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs was as follows: Triune Kingdom of Croatia, Slavonia, and Dalmatia (with Rijeka, Medjimurje and part of Istria): 62; Slovene lands: 32; Kingdom of Dalmatia: 16; Bosnia and Herzegovina: 42. Those representing the Kingdom of Serbia (including those that merged into it – Montenegro and the Banat, Bačka, Baranja regions): Kingdom of Serbia: 108; Banat, Bačka and Baranja: 24; Kingdom of Montenegro: 12.

whether there were states except the Kingdom of Serbia. The delegation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes at the Paris Peace Conference was at first officially recognized as the delegation of the Kingdom of Serbia.

The leading Serbian legal scholar Slobodan Jovanović (1869–1958),³ who served as president of the committee that drafted the first constitution of the new state, pointed out that the new state was not created legally, on the basis of a treaty, but rather *de facto*. This did not imply that the new state did not yet exist legally, but rather that it came into existence in reality. The fact that it was created *de facto* did not mean that it could not exist legally: “The state is a legal institution, but its coming into existence is not a legal act, but rather a historical fact.”⁴ Had it been created in a legal manner, it would have been founded on a treaty between the polities that had preceded it. However, its predecessors were two sovereign states, Serbia and Montenegro, on the one hand, and the provinces of a former state, Austria-Hungary, on the other. Since the new state of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was created *de facto*, and not on the basis of a treaty among several states, it was, from the internal standpoint, a new state. On the other hand, the fact that it continued the legal existence of the Kingdom of Serbia in foreign affairs was not contradictory. The new polity was a new state internally, and an old one externally. Jovanović stressed that one and the same state might look like a new state on the outside, and as the old state on the inside. It was also possible for a state to look like an old one on the outside, and on the inside, to be a brand new one (when the system of government is destroyed by revolution, but international treaties remain in force): “It solely depends on whether its system of government would be perceived as a historical or an autochthonous institu-

³ On Slobodan Jovanović see D. Djordjević, “Historians in politics: Slobodan Jovanović”, *Journal of Contemporary History* 3/1 (Jan. 1973), 2–40; M. B. Petrovich, “Slobodan Jovanović (1869–1958): The career and fate of a Serbian historian”, *Serbian Studies* 3/1-2 (1984/85), 3–26; Aleksandar Pavković, *Slobodan Jovanović: An Unsentimental Approach to Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993); D. T. Bataković, Preface to S. Jovanović (Slobodan Yovanovitch), “Sur l’idée yougoslave: passé et avenir (1939)”, *Balkanica* XXXIX (2009), 285–290; Boris Milosavljević, “Liberal and Conservative Political Thought in Nineteenth-century Serbia: Vladimir Jovanović and Slobodan Jovanović”, *Balkanica* XLI (2010), 131–153; Boris Milosavljević, “An Early Critique of Kelsen’s Pure Theory of Law: Slobodan Jovanović on the Basic Norm and Primacy of International Law”, *Annals of the Faculty of Law in Belgrade – Belgrade Law Review* LXI/3 (2013), 151–167; Danilo N. Basta, *Pet likova Slobodana Jovanovića* (Belgrade: Službeni list SCG, 2003).

⁴ Slobodan Jovanović, “O postanku i karakteru naše države” [Jedno objašnjenje g. Slobodana Jovanovića povodom članka Lazara Markovića “Ustav pred Ustavnim odborom”, *Novi život* 4 (1921), 210–211], republished in Slobodan Jovanović’s collected works: *Sabrana dela Slobodana Jovanovića* [hereafter SD], 12 vols, eds. R. Samardžić and Ž. Stojković (Belgrade: BIGZ, Jugoslavijapublik and SKZ, 1991), vol. XI, 382.

tion. Foreign states cannot interfere in this matter, since it is its domestic affair.”⁵ Therefore, it is possible for one and the same country to be new externally and old internally. Under international law, the state of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was not a new one, but rather the old one, given that it inherited the entire system of international treaties signed by the Kingdom of Serbia. Nevertheless, internally, the state of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was not a continuation of Serbia, but rather a completely new state.

Having discussed the creation of the new state, Jovanović embarked on examining the issue whether there had been some kind of a provisional constitution prior to the adoption of the St. Vitus Day Constitution (28 June 1921). He also discussed whether the Constituent Assembly was sovereign or not. He did not deny that the National Council of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs and the Prince-Regent (Alexander) were recognized authorities; however, their declarations of 1 December (1918), which had great political significance, exceeded their legal powers. Therefore, these declarations could not be seen as a provisional constitution. It was possible for the new state to continue operating under the existing constitution of the Kingdom of Serbia, but that required its formal adoption, which, despite several attempts, never happened in 1919. Even though there was neither a provisional nor a permanent constitution, factually there was a state as well as a system of governance, represented by the supreme bodies, the King and the Parliament. Their operation was not constitutionally regulated, and yet a state can exist without a written constitution.⁶ Jovanović mentioned the example of the United Kingdom. There is no written constitution regulating the work of the supreme bodies, and yet their operation is regulated. He suggested that relations between King and Parliament could be regulated in accordance with English experience, “through practice, on their own accord, based on precedent”.⁷ For the same reasons, there was no need for a Constituent assembly, and there was no need for discussion whether it was sovereign or not. The state of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes had already existed with all its supreme bodies (the King and the Parliament), and it only needed rules for regulating their mutual relations. Jovanović stressed that those rules could be set out without a Constituent assembly. The existing supreme bodies could enact the constitution on their own, and it would be the result of the work of the bodies that were

⁵ Slobodan Jovanović, “Kraljevina Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca” [*Ustavno pravo Kraljevine Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca*] (Belgrade: Izdavačka knjižarnica Gece Kona, 1924), 35–36], in *SD*, vol. II, 389.

⁶ Slobodan Jovanović, “Parlamentarna hronika Ustavotvorne skupštine”, *Arhiv za pravne i društvene nauke* 10 (1920), 1(18)/1 [Uvod [1. Postanak države Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca; 2. Da li do donošenja novog ustava postoji bar jedan privremeni ustav?; 3. Kakav će biti pravni položaj Ustavotvorne skupštine?]; Izborni zakon za Ustavotvornu skupštinu; Privremeni poslovnik za Ustavotvornu skupštinu], 51–62; 3, 208–215; 6, 446–451.

⁷ Jovanović, “Parlamentarna hronika”, *Arhiv za pravne i društvene nauke* 1/27 (1920), 51–62.

already set up. If it lasted for some time, there would be no objections from the legal point of view: "As for political institutions, time heals all legal shortcomings, slowly but surely."⁸ He meant to say that corrections were still possible, including the abolition of the then formalized constitutional order by the unlimited will of the legislature. The state was sovereign, and given that it was created *de facto*, the best thing to do was to build its legal framework gradually, based on experience, rather than on abstract principles. Jovanović obviously held to his basic theoretical views in forming his position on the creation of the new state. The current political situation favoured his theoretical conclusions. He was well aware of how the majority of Croats viewed the new state and of their aspiration to be a *corpus separatum*. The Croats wanted to retain the rights they had been granted in Austria-Hungary. Croat jurists even went a step further by claiming that Croatia had been a state within Austria-Hungary. In their view Croatia had existed as an independent state for centuries. Jovanović summed up their view as follows: "Even though the relationship that had existed between Croatia and Austria-Hungary until the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy could undermine the state independence of Croatia, it could not destroy it. Following the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy this relationship was terminated, and Croatia, given its undeniable historical rights, emerged as a fully independent state."⁹ The Croats interpreted the December 1918 declaration of unification as a compromise. They were ready to sacrifice what they saw as their independent state for the sake of the creation of the common state of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, but demanded that the constitution of the new state be passed by a Constituent assembly, which would not make decisions by outvoting the "tribes", since it was the Serbs that made up the majority. That is why the Croats did not want to accept the St. Vitus Day Constitution, which was passed by the freely elected Assembly, in which, however, the Serbs had a majority. Jovanović refuted as ungrounded the claim that Croatia had been a state, as it was not a sovereign state, but a province of the sovereign Habsburg Monarchy which, in its long legal history, sometimes gave it more and sometimes less autonomy.¹⁰ Besides, even if it had been an independent state, the National Council was recognized as the supreme authority by the Croatian Diet's decision of 29 October 1918, endorsed by its *Ban* (viceroy): "Many believed that the old Croatian state merged into the new state of Austro-Hungarian Yugoslavs, which was represented by the National Council."¹¹ However, the December declarations did not have the character of an international treaty.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Jovanović, "Kraljevina Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca", SD, vol. II, 394.

¹⁰ Slobodan Jovanović, "Je li federalizam kod nas mogućan" [1920], SD, vol. XI, 364.

¹¹ Jovanović, "Kraljevina Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca" [1924], SD, vol. II, 396; Mirjana Stefanovski, *Ideja hrvatskog državnog prava i stvaranje Jugoslavije*, 2nd ed. (Belgrade: Pravni fakultet, Izdavački centar, Dosijske, 2008).

Having predicted the course of events, Slobodan Jovanović advised Pašić as early as 1918 to have a study prepared in which the terms “federalism,” “federal state,” “state union” and “autonomous region” should be clearly defined. He wrote to his friend Mihailo Gavrilović, the then deputy foreign minister, suggesting he should discuss this study with Stojan Protić. He was well aware that politicians and jurists in Serbia were not too familiar with the legal terms that the Croatian side would use, since “all of that is terra incognita for us” and nobody in Serbia except him had dealt with the matter ever before. He held that Serbian politicians should be prepared to address the issues concerning federalization and decentralization after the war in the Constituent Assembly.¹² But such a study was never published. Stojan Protić, in his foreword to the booklet on the Draft Constitution (1920), would admit that the intellectual elite in Serbia was ill-equipped and unprepared for many of the questions that needed to be dealt with after the “liberation and unification.”¹³

Many questions were raised at the very beginning of the formation of the new state. For example, the governmental delegate (from Serbia) Matija Mata Bošković consistently advocated the use of the official name of the new state, which is more than evident from the minutes of the Delegation’s meeting of 2 March 1919: “Dr Smodlaka protested against Mr Bošković’s editorial interventions in the *Dalmacija*, when he was erasing the term ‘Yugoslav’ and replacing it with the expression ‘Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.’ He holds that he is entitled to use in official documents, too, the expression ‘Yugoslavia’ to refer to our state, and the expression ‘Yugoslav’ to refer to our people. In the unification resolution that was presented to the Prince-Regent, the National Council in Zagreb used the term ‘Yugoslavia’; the Prince-Regent also used the term ‘Yugoslavia’ in his reply. Dr Smodlaka further implies that we have united with Serbia on that basis and we are rightfully entitled to call the state ‘Yugoslavia’ and our people ‘Yugoslav’ people. Mr Bošković holds that the official name of our state is only ‘The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes’; we are not entitled to change it, especially given the fact that these expressions were discussed for a long time and the term ‘Yugoslavia’ was not adopted in the end. The Serbian people has not accepted this name yet, and you cannot impose your opinion on the majority. [...] The president, Mr Pašić, says that the delegation cannot and is not entitled to resolve such issues [...] This issue was long discussed in Corfu and the name

¹² Arhiv Srpske akademije nauka i umetnosti [Archives of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts; hereafter ASANU], 10403/1, Slobodan Jovanović to Mihailo Gavrilović, Beaulieu, 20 July [2 August] 1918.

¹³ *Nacrt ustava po predlogu Stojana M. Protića, ministra pripreme za Ustavotvornu skupštinu (definitivni tekst posle diskusije sa Komisijom, sa dodatkom: Nacrt ustava izradjen od Ustavne komisije* (Belgrade: G. Kon, 1920), VII.

'Yugoslavia' was not adopted in the end [...] Dr Trumbić shares the opinion of Dr Smodlaka".¹⁴

There was also a debate over the issue of war reparations. It was suggested that if the members of the Delegation adopted the view that war reparations should be demanded from Austria-Hungary as a whole, then they would actually adopt the Italian position, thereby implying that "we regard our territories, which are parts of the former Austro-Hungarian monarchy, as enemy countries".¹⁵ They passed the decision, by majority vote, that war reparations concerning Austria-Hungary as a whole should be claimed only from Austria and Hungary (Vesnić, Bošković, Ribarž, Smodlaka). Pašić, on the other hand, maintained that war reparations were to be paid by the former Austria-Hungary as a whole.¹⁶

The citizens of the new country came from very different, sometimes quite opposite backgrounds. For example, there were, on the one hand, officers and soldiers of the victorious Serbian Army and, on the other, former officers and soldiers of the defeated Austro-Hungarian Army. They had been enemies in various Balkan battlefields. One fighter pilot, K. u. k. Air Force officer from a very prominent Serb family from Vojvodina (then part of Hungary) was praised during the war as a Hungarian "hero of the sky". Almost all Austro-Hungarian general staff officers who applied were accepted in the new Royal Army of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. The first commander-in-chief of the Royal Air Force of the new state had been the last commander-in-chief of the Austro-Hungarian Air Force, General Milan Uzelac (aka Emilo Uzelac) of Serb origin. Former Austro-Hungarian officers tended to speak German among themselves and even in front of their soldiers. The wartime governor of occupied Serbia (1915–1918) retired as an army general of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.¹⁷ Some Serbian officers decorated for bravery resigned from the Army in protest. It was quite an experiment to create a state with such a diverse population, including three different religious communities, Orthodox Christian, Roman Catholic Christian and Muslim (speaking Serbian or Croatian [Serbo-Croatian] in Bosnia, Herzegovina, Novi Pazar and parts of Monte-

¹⁴ *Zapisnici sa sednica delegacije Kraljevine SHS na Mirovnoj konferenciji u Parizu 1919–1920*, eds. Bogdan Krizman and Bogumil Hrabak (Belgrade: Institut društvenih nauka, Odeljenje za istorijske nauke; Kultura, 1960), 65 – minutes of 2 March 1919.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 126, minutes of 11 May 1919.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* 127.

¹⁷ Radojević and Dimić, *Srbija u Velikom ratu*; Dimitrije Djordjević, "The Austro-Hungarian Occupation Regime in Serbia and Its Break-Down in 1918", *Balkanica* XLVI (2015), 107–133; Luka Lazarević, *Beleške iz okupiranog Beograda 1915–1918*, 2nd ed. (Belgrade: Jasen, 2010); Andrej Mitrović, *Srbija u I svetskom ratu* (Belgrade: Stubovi kulture, 2004).

negro, predominantly Albanian-speaking Muslim population in the south of the country, and a Turkish-speaking minority).

The first prime minister of the newly-proclaimed Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was Stojan Protić (20 December – 16 August 1919), from the People's Radical Party. The second prime minister was Ljubomir Davidović (16 August 1919 – 19 February 1920) from the newly-founded Democratic Party, followed by Stojan Protić's second term (19 February 1920 – 17 May 1920).¹⁸ Milenko Vesnić was the next prime minister (17 May 1920 – 1 January 1921), also from the People's Radical Party. The long-standing leader of the Radicals, Nikola Pašić, became prime minister again on 1 January 1921. After many difficulties during his term, the constitution of the newly-created state was finally adopted on 28 June 1921 – the St. Vitus Day Constitution.

There were many draft constitutions drawn up by different political parties and distinguished individuals. We shall focus on the official Draft Constitution prepared during the second term of Stojan Protić as prime minister. Since 18 February 1920 Stojan Protić also acted as minister in charge of organizing a constituent assembly and the alignment of laws.

The declaration of 5 March 1920, in which Protić's government presented its programme to the Parliament, highlighted the work on a draft constitution and on the law on the election of the constituent assembly as the most urgent tasks, which should by all means be completed before the dissolution of the provisional representative body in order for the fundamental principles of constitutionality to be safeguarded.

Protić appointed a drafting committee as a governmental (multi-ethnic) advisory team of prominent legal experts from different parts of the new state: Professor Slobodan Jovanović (President), Professor Kosta Kumanudi, Dr Bogumil Vošnjak, Professor Ladislav Polić and Professor Lazar Marković.

¹⁸ Arhiv Jugoslavije [Archives of Yugoslavia; hereafter AJ] –138, Ministarski savet Kraljevine Jugoslavije (1918–1941); *Službene novine Kraljevine SHS* 1 (12 Oct. 1919); "Proklamacija regenta Aleksandra povodom obrazovanja prve vlade Kraljevine Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca", *Službene novine Kraljevine SHS* 2 (28 Jan. 1919); "Ukaz o postavljenju vlade Stojana Protića", *Službene novine Kraljevine SHS* 1 (12 Jan. 1919); "Ukaz o postavljenju vlade Lj. Davidovića", *Službene novine Kraljevine SHS* 117 (19 Oct. 1919). See Petranović and Zečević, *Jugoslavija 1918–1984; Stenografske beleške Ustavotvorne skupštine Kraljevine Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca*, vol. 1: *od I prethodnog do XXXVII redovnog sastanka*, and vol. 2: *od XXXVIII do LXVIII redovnog sastanka* (Belgrade: Državna štamparija Kraljevine SHS, 1921); *Nacrt ustava vlade Milenka Vesnića* (Belgrade 1920); *Nacrt ustava vlade Nikole Pašića* (Belgrade 1921); Ladislav Polić, "O nacrtima ustava", II, *Nacrt g. Protića. Mjesečnik* 2 (1921), 57–79; *Stenografske beleške Privremenog narodnog predstavništva Kraljevstva Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca* (Belgrade 1920); *Stenografske beleške. Rad Ustavnog odbora Ustavotvorne skupštine Kraljevine Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca, I–IV* (Belgrade 1921); *Ustav Kraljevine Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca* (Novi Sad 1921); Mirjana Stefanovski, "Pravo disolucije u nacrtu ustava komisije jugoslovenskih profesora iz 1920. godine", *Anali Pravnog fakulteta u Beogradu* 67/3 (2019), 34–58.

Three members were from Serbia (Jovanović, Kumanudi and Marković), one from Croatia (Polić), and one from Slovenia (Vošnjak). After two months of work, the Committee submitted its draft to Prime Minister Protić.

The Draft Constitution sought to be a neutral, purely legal document.¹⁹ It should be noted that there was no major divergence of opinion among the Committee members. It is clear from the text what their recommendations were and what their reasonable fears were in view of the composition of the government and the intentions of political parties that would sit in the Constituent Assembly. The Committee's Draft Constitution envisaged a bicameral parliament consisting of the House of Representatives and the Senate. The chapters of the Draft Constitution published in 1920 were as follows: 1) Report of the Drafting Committee; 2) Draft Constitution of the Drafting Committee; 3) Conclusions of the Drafting Committee concerning the Upper House; 4) Separate Opinion of Mr Bošnjak on the Organisation of Provincial Governments.²⁰ The fact that the title "The Draft Constitution of the Drafting Committee" occurs twice – as the title of the whole document and as the heading of one its chapters – may be the source of some confusion. If the whole document with this title is taken into account, then the Drafting Committee's intentions and recommendations are quite clear. If, however, only the chapter with this title is taken into account, disregarding the whole document, it would seem that the body of experts headed by Slobodan Jovanović recommended a unicameral proportional system. This latter misreading has become widespread because the later editors of large collections of constitutional proposals and important acts concerning the creation of the new Yugoslav state tended to include only the chapter titled "The Draft Constitution of the Drafting Committee" rather than the whole document. A careful reading of the published proposal of the Drafting Committee shows that the Committee indeed wrote a chapter in which there is no bicameral system, only to draw attention to the necessity of bicameralism in the next chapter: "Conclusions of the Drafting Committee concerning the Upper House". The "Conclusions" is an integral and unanimously agreed part of the Draft Constitution of the Drafting Committee. Members of the Drafting Committee had separate opinions on several issues and all of these were included in the published version. But, their conclusion concerning the Upper House was unanimous. All experts headed by Slobodan Jovanović advocated the bicameral system:

Article 1

The Legislative power is exercised by the body of popular representatives.

The body of popular representatives consists of the House of Deputies [MPs] and the Senate.

No person can be a member of both the House of Deputies and the Senate.

¹⁹ Different opinions on various formulations were included in its final version.

²⁰ *Nacrt ustava po predlogu Stojana M. Protića.*

Article 2

The House of Deputies [MPs] and the Senate hold meetings and make decisions independently from one another, except in cases where joint action is expressly prescribed by the Constitution.

In line with what then was established practice, the Lower House was supposed to have a predominant position. The Upper House (Senate) had (Article 5) one hundred seats, most of which (62) were distributed on a provincial basis, proportionate to the population of each province, whereas a smaller part (38) of the seats were taken by representatives of different organizations and institutions (a) industrial, trade, craft and workers' chambers and agricultural cooperatives; b) universities of Belgrade, Zagreb and Ljubljana. The inclusion of representatives of different confessions was proposed by Ladislav Polić and Lazar Marković ("organised religious communities – Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestant, Muslim and Jewish, one senator for each").²¹

Senators were not to be younger than forty, and those elected by the provinces had to be university graduates. Article 12 discusses in detail the case of divergent decisions by the two houses and the ways to resolve them.

The legislative power was exercised by the Parliament. The position of the monarch was parliamentary, on the model of the Westminster system. He exercised executive power through the ministers who were held accountable to the Parliament. Particular attention was devoted to the independence of the judicial power, as the weakest point in the separation of powers. It was envisaged therefore that judges would be appointed and promoted by decree, at the request of the minister of justice, by choosing between two candidates, who were selected, for every place and position, by special councils composed of representatives of judicial bodies and bar associations.

Protić endorsed the Draft after making minor, predominantly political, additions and alterations (Protić's Proposal). He added the number and names of provinces of the new state (Serbia; Old Serbia and Macedonia; Montenegro and Herzegovina, the Gulf of Kotor and the Littoral; Banat; Srem and Bačka; Bosnia; Dalmatia; Croatia and Slavonia with Rijeka, Istria and Medjmurje; Slovenia with Prekomurje).²² The boundaries of the provinces were to be determined in more detail by a separate law. The fundamental and continuous problem of the internal territorial organization of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and later Yugoslavia, was the issue of ethnically mixed Serbo-Croat areas. The usually proposed solution to this issue was the formation of mixed

²¹ *Nacrt ustava po predlogu Stojana M. Protića*; "Pitanje ustava i ustavnih nacrtā", *Novi život* III/5 (1920), 159.

²² Branko Petranović and Momčilo Zečević, *Jugoslovenski federalizam. Ideje i stvarnost 1914–1943. Tematska zbirka dokumenata* (Belgrade: Prosveta, 1987), vol. I, 98–102.

Serbo-Croat territorial units. As for the internal organization of the provinces, the Draft Constitution envisaged a provincial governor, assembly, standing committee and administrative court of the first instance for each. A provincial governor would be appointed by the king at the proposal of the prime minister, who had selected one of the three candidates nominated by the provincial assembly.

The issue of the bicameral system as dealt with in the two draft constitutions, those of the Drafting Committee and Prime Minister Protić, was inseparable from the issue of provincial self-government. The question of provincial self-government (*samouprava*) was very delicate and difficult to deal with, as admitted by Protić himself in his foreword to the booklet on draft constitutions:

This issue of provinces and provincial self-government is, regrettably, surrounded by much prejudice and much misunderstanding, which makes it very difficult to discuss it objectively and properly. It is therefore the duty of all serious public figures to rid this issue of such prejudice and misunderstanding and to call for nothing less than cool-headed reasoning, serious examination and study in addressing it.²³

The Drafts defined the province as a unit of local self-government, not as a federal unit. The supreme authority in the state was entitled to abolish self-governments. Therefore, it was a devolution of powers, but it was not irrevocable. It was different from federalism or from the autonomous provinces in socialist Yugoslavia (Kosovo and Metohija, and Vojvodina).

To better understand what the problem was we can simplify the issue of self-government. From the very beginning of the discussion on the constitution of the new state Croats favoured (con)federalism, and Serbs, habituated to a centralised state and fearing that federalism was just another name for confederalism or a real or a personal union, in fact leading to the disintegration of the state, favoured a more unified state. This fear was deeply rooted since Serbia was “a country that fought five wars over the last forty years, of which almost each was a war for survival”.²⁴ The idea of creating more or less historic provinces proposed in Protić’s Draft meant to mark out the undoubtedly Serbian, Croatian and Slovenian lands within the new common country, and then to proceed to solving the most difficult issues of ethnically mixed Serbo-Croat areas.

Slobodan Jovanović published an analysis of Smodlaka’s draft constitution in 1920,²⁵ showing that it was a federalist project. In his article devoted to the question of whether federalism was possible in the new country, he endeavours to explain that federalism might be successful if there are strong political

²³ *Nacrt ustava po predlogu Stojana M. Protića*, p. VII.

²⁴ Slobodan Jovanović, “Univerzitetsko pitanje” [1914], SD, vol. XI, 352.

²⁵ Slobodan Jovanović, “Jedan nacrt ustava (Dr. Josip Smodlaka: *Nacrt jugoslavenskog ustava*, Zagreb 1920)”, *Jugoslavenska obnova – Njiva* 13 [I. Pokrajine. II. Kralj. Narodno predstavništvo. Državni savet] (Zagreb 1920), 273–276.

parties that can unify the state, as in the case of the United States of America, or, if there is hegemony of a military state, as in the case of Prussia in the German Empire: "Just recently, in my presence, a Serb and a Croat discussed the state organization of our new country, and the Serb said the following to the Croat: 'You want to have the status of Bavaria in our new state!? All right then, you can be Bavaria, and we'll be Prussia!'"²⁶ Great federal states have proved successful owing either to strong centralized political parties or to the hegemony of a strong military state; but in the new state, as Jovanović concluded, "there is neither of the two and, therefore, the outcome of this experiment with federalism is quite uncertain".²⁷

The originally English model of devolution of power through local self-government was Jovanović's idea supported by Stojan Protić, the best connoisseur of the British political system among the Serbian Radicals. This understanding between Slobodan Jovanović and Stojan Protić did not mean that the rest of Serbian actors actually understood what their basic position was. In an article devoted to federalism, Slobodan Jovanović pointed to the shallowness and ignorance of the Belgrade press which failed to distinguish between federalism and the organisation of self-governing provinces: "There was a considerable anxiety in the Belgrade press over whether self-government, which was to be granted to some provinces, would eventually lead to federalism. [...] We find that in these discussions about federalism it is of the utmost importance to focus on making a distinction between federalism and self-government. If these two things are mixed up, it can easily happen that by rejecting federalism, we also reject self-governance, which we believe not even the greatest opponents of federalism want."²⁸

Self-government (*Samouprava*) was also the name of the Radical Party's newspaper which entered into a polemic with Slobodan Jovanović. Jovanović did not advocate federalism, but provinces with a certain degree of self-government, as proposed in the Drafts of both Protić and the Drafting Committee. According to Protić's Draft, Serb and Croat populations had their separate provinces, except in the case of mixed-population provinces. Twenty years later Jovanović looked back at the polemic: "Twenty years ago, when the focus was on the St. Vitus Day Constitution, we were convinced that centralism was not only the best but the only way to secure national and state unity. This then led us to the idea that the provinces that had already existed should be broken up, whereas new provinces should not be given the opportunity to become hotbeds

²⁶ Slobodan Jovanović, "Je li federalizam kod nas mogućan", *Srpski književni glasnik*, NS, 1/1 (1920), 435–441.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Slobodan Jovanović, "O federalizmu" [*Srpski književni glasnik*, 1 (1920), 356–361], SD, vol. XI, 361.

of separatism over time. Consequently, the provinces were not supposed to be very large, and they were not to have any legislative powers in addition to their administrative powers. We could put up with self-governance, but not with autonomy. ... At the time of the St.Vitus Day Constitution, federalism was out of the question: if one was a federalist, it meant that one was an opponent of national and state unity. Even Trumbić himself renounced federalism at the time [...] Federalism, which had long been ill-reputed among the Serbs, nowadays has among them most vehement supporters, as a middle-ground solution that would satisfy both the Croatian aspirations for autonomy and the Serbian aspirations for state unity.”²⁹

The Draft Constitution developed by the Drafting Committee he chaired (1920), along with the critique of other drafts and solutions developed by the Constitutional Committee of the Assembly (1921), as well as suggestions concerning state reorganization developed by a group of Zagreb intellectuals (1934–1936), all of them shed light on Jovanović’s views concerning the system of government of the state of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.³⁰ Jovanović was in favour of neither a confederation, nor a federation, nor a unitary state. He was strongly in favour of the Drafting Committee’s Draft Constitution as modified by Stojan Protić (1920), according to which the historic provinces were to be kept with a certain degree of self-government (halfway between centralism and federalism). He explained several times the difference between a federal unit and a province, likening provinces to the existing municipalities, and provincial assemblies to municipal assemblies. The ethnically mixed Serbo-Croat provinces were a separate issue that he pointed to.

As for the proposal of the Zagreb group that was put to Belgrade following the parliamentary election held in May 1935, it was evident to him that ethnically mixed Serbo-Croat areas should be organized differently from the ethnically homogeneous ones. Jovanović held that the best thing to do, given the circumstances and the existence of the common state, was to draw a clear-cut demarcation line between Serbs and Croats. In an interview to the *Politika* in 1937 he offered his view on the 1935 Zagreb proposal: “We argued [Slobodan Jovanović, Božidar Marković, Nikola Stojanović and Mihailo Ilić] that we should point to all those elements in their draft that fell into the category of a confederate state, since, as is already known, a confederation is incompatible with state unity. [...] As for the number of *banovinas* [provinces], the Zagreb draft envisaged their demarcation according to the tribal principle. In our view,

²⁹ Slobodan Jovanović, “Ustavno pitanje” [*Srpski glas* 2 (25 April 1940)], SD, vol. XI, 576.

³⁰ On the memorandum drawn up by intellectuals from Belgrade and Zagreb upon the assassination of King Alexander in 1934 and the Draft Constitution of 1935, i.e. 1936, see Mira Radojević, *Naučnik i političar. Politička biografija Božidara V. Markovića (1874–1946)* (Belgrade: Filozofski fakultet Univerziteta u Beogradu, 2007), 353–361.

the tribal principle, if eventually adopted, had to be implemented consistently – for instance, if all Croats were united into one *banovina*, then, consequently, all Serbs should be united into one *banovina* as well. Having taken into account the difficulties involved in drawing a demarcation line between tribal territories held by Croats and Serbs, the Zagreb draft included the option of forming one ethnically mixed Serbo-Croat *banovina*. In this regard, we pointed out that if political parties accepted such a *banovina*, it would be impossible, given its tribal heterogeneity, to apply the same political system to it as the one applied to tribally homogeneous *banovinas*.³¹

Protić presented the Drafting Committee's Draft Constitution and his own to the government. Neither of them was adopted.³²

The minister in charge of organizing the Constituent Assembly in the Milenko Vesnić government was a former member of the Drafting Committee, Lazar Marković. His own draft constitution was a revised and substantially shortened version of Protić's draft. Slobodan Jovanović, who was still president of the Drafting Committee at the time, gave a negative opinion on Marković's proposal, listing a number of its weaknesses.³³ The draft constitutions of Vesnić's and Pašić's government were two versions of the same draft.

Following the election for the Constituent Assembly, the Radical-led government proposed its own draft constitution, which was then submitted to the Constitutional Committee of the Assembly (1921). Jovanović offered a critique of this draft in the daily *Politika*.³⁴ He pointed to some fortunate solutions contained in Protić's draft in which particular attention was paid to the

³¹ "G. Slobodan Jovanović o ustavnom nacrtu zagrebačke grupe intelektualaca", *Politika*, Belgrade, 26 May 1937; Živorad Stojković, "Slobodan Jovanović, 1869–1958. Biografski podaci i prilozi. Kalendarski pregled", in *SD*, vol. XII, 758.

³² In the government session of 31 December 1941, Slobodan Jovanović supported the project of Stojan Protić. See the note of 31 December 1941 by Milan Grol, *Londonski dnevnik 1941–1945*, 1st ed. (Belgrade: Filip Višnjić, 1990), 84.

³³ Slobodan Jovanović, *Mišljenje o Nacrtu Ustava upućeno Lazaru Markoviću, ministru pripreme za Ustavotvornu skupštinu i izjednačenje zakona* (Belgrade 1920); "O postanku i karakteru naše države. Jedno objašnjenje g. Slobodana Jovanovića", *Novi život* 4 (1921), 210–211; Slobodan Jovanović, "Povodom članka Lazara Markovića, *Ustav pred Ustavnim odborom* objavljenog u ovom časopisu od 12. februara 1921. god."; L[azar] Marković, "Pred Ustavotvornu skupštinu", *Novi život* III/4 (1920), 97–101. [Sa osvrtom na članak Slobodana Jovanovića o karakteru novostvorene države objavljenom u časopisu *Arhiv za pravne i društvene nauke* (knj. I, 1)]; Lazar Marković, "Ustav pred ustavnim odborom", *Novi život* IV/3 (1921), 65–69. Sa osvrtom na shvatanja Slobodana Jovanovića izložena u časopisu *Arhiv za pravne i društvene nauke* od 25. 8. 1920. o novoj državi kao "faktičkoj zajednici"; Lazar Marković, "Jedno objašnjenje g. Slobodana Jovanovića", *Novi život* IV/7 (1921), 210.

³⁴ "Nacrt novoga ustava", *Politika* no. 466417, 17 April 1921, p. 1. See also "Ustav Narodnog kluba", *Srpski književni glasnik*, NS 2/6 (1921), 424–430.

harmonization of the parliamentary system and self-government on the English model. However, the Radicals' draft rejected self-government for the historic provinces, placing emphasis on state centralism instead. Jovanović stressed that the government's proposal rendered many constitutional guarantees of the rights of individuals useless and that the constitution was drafted hastily under the pretext that the state was in danger.³⁵ The Radical government's draft did not reject the bicameral system cited in the Drafting Committee's and Protić's drafts, but it eventually was rejected by the Constitutional Committee of the Assembly. Slobodan Jovanović highlighted that there was no need to insist on a unicameral parliament modelled on the one in pre-war Serbia (Constitutional Committee, 1921).³⁶ The former citizens of pre-war Austria-Hungary did not share the negative prejudices concerning a bicameral system. Ten years later a bicameral national legislature (the Senate and the Parliament) replaced the unicameral parliament (1931).

The Constituent Assembly (1921), which began with disagreements over the oath of allegiance to the King, ended in Croatian withdrawal, and so its decisions were passed without almost a single Croatian representative.³⁷ Jovanović held that the Radicals' unitarism, that is centralism, was wrong and that insisting on a constituent assembly in part was an expression of Radical theoreticians' abstract views, a result of projecting their pre-war political and legal concepts onto the understanding of politics and law of an entirely new state, and in part of their wish to find a solution to the question of the organization of the newly-created state quickly and in one go.

³⁵ "G. Slobodan Jovanović i strategija. Osporavanje utemeljenosti stavova Slobodana Jovanovića o predloženim ustavnim promenama", *Samouprava*, 25 June 1921, p. 1.

³⁶ S. Jovanović analysed the work of the Constituent Assembly on a daily basis. See Slobodan Jovanović, "Pokrajinsko uređenje", *Politika* no. 4671, 24 Apr. 1921, p. 1; Slobodan Jovanović, "Trumbićev govor", *Politika* no. 4677, 30 Apr. – 2 May 1921, p. 1; Slobodan Jovanović, "Štampa", *Politika* no. 4683, 8 May 1921, p. 1; Slobodan Jovanović, "Budžetsko pravo", *Politika* no. 4690, 15 May 1921, p. 1; Slobodan Jovanović, "Uredbe", *Politika* no. 4697, 22 May 1921, p. 1; Slobodan Jovanović, "Vladalački dom", *Politika* no. 4704, 29 May 1921; Slobodan Jovanović, "Vrhovna komanda", *Politika* no. 4711, 5 June 1921, p. 1; Slobodan Jovanović, "Krivična odgovornost ministara", *Politika* no. 4718, 12 June 1921, p. 1; Slobodan Jovanović, "Oblasti", *Politika* no. 4722, 16 June 1921, p. 1; "Predustavne uredbe", *Politika* no. 4727, 23 June 1921, p. 1; Jovanović, "Parlamentarna hronika Ustavotvorne skupštine (nastavak)" [Overavanje punomoćstava u Ustavotvornoj skupštini (s napomenom); zakletva članova Ustavotvorne Skupštine], *Arhiv za pravne i društvene nauke* XI (1921), 1, 56–61; 2, 126–129; "Ministarska odgovornost. Povodom kritike Slobodana Jovanovića", *Samouprava*, 26 June 1921, p. 1; Ladislav Polić, "O nacrtima Ustava", *Mjesečnik* 47 (1921), 1, 4–16; 2, 57–75; 3, 105–122; 4–5, 154–169; "Slobodan Jovanović kao politički kritičar", *Samouprava*, 24 Apr. 1921; "Ustavne odredbe o štampi. (Povodom kritike g. Slobodana Jovanovića)", *Samouprava*, 10 May 1921, 1.

³⁷ Petranović and Zečević, *Jugoslovenski federalizam*, vol. I, 103, 127–140.

Despite much uncertainty, the St. Vitus Day Constitution was eventually adopted on 28 June 1921. The Croatian political parties walked out of the Constituent Assembly in protest, and so did the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav Club. The Radicals were supported by small Slovenian and Muslim parties (Yugoslav Muslim Organization, Peasants' Party/*Kmetijska stranka* and *Džemijet* – a Muslim MP club from Southern Serbia, modern-day North Macedonia). The constitution was voted for by 223 MPs (out of 419).

As it turned out later, Croatian politics in the interwar period pursued Croatian interests, which did not predominantly involve abstract issues such as popular sovereignty or the introduction of a parliamentary system, but rather was focused on the status of Croatia itself. The leaders of the Croatian Peasant Party (HSS) negotiated directly with the monarch when addressing this issue. Jovanović stresses in his analysis of the draft constitution proposed by the (Croatian) National Club that it was the loosest (con)federalist version of a union between two independent states under a common ruler (1921), modelled on the Dual Monarchy, Austria-Hungary. The leader of the Croatian Peasant Party Vladimir Vlatko Maček submitted the same proposal to King Alexander in 1929, who consulted Slobodan Jovanović about it.

After three years of King Alexander's personal regime, the King issued a new constitution of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1931. Under this Constitution, Yugoslavia was a constitutional rather than a parliamentary monarchy. Contrary to the St. Vitus Day Constitution, a bicameral system was introduced, which had existed in Serbia from 1901 to 1903. Under the Constitution, the MPs were elected only from the lists of the nation-wide parties: "Unlike the St. Vitus Day Constitution, the 1931 Constitution put much less emphasis on centralized government and focused on, if we may say so, party centralism instead."³⁸

Under the Constitution, one half of the members of the Senate (Upper House) were elected by a special electoral body composed of provincial [*banovina*] MPs, provincial councillors and presidents of provincial municipalities, while the other half were appointed by the King: "In comparison with the Assembly, the members of which were elected from party lists, the Senate, as it appeared, was supposed to be a body composed of distinguished people, who were appointed as its members either by the King or by their *banovina* on the basis of personal merit."³⁹

Contrary to integral Yugoslavism, Slobodan Jovanović and the Serbian Cultural Club pushed for integral Serbianism within the existing Yugoslav state framework. The Croatian Peasant Party was a broad national movement supported by the vast majority of the Croatian people. The 6 January Dictatorship (1929–1931) could not substantially "destabilize" the Croatian movement,

³⁸ Slobodan Jovanović, "Dvodomni sistem u našem ustavu" [1933], SD, vol. XI, 500.

³⁹ Ibid.

whereas, on the other hand, it had seriously weakened and disorganized Serbian political parties, which were not national movements, but simply parliamentary parties. The Serbian Cultural Club criticized in particular the 1939 Cvetković-Maček Agreement.⁴⁰ The Club did not deny Croats the right to organize themselves into their own ethnic unit (*Banovina* of Croatia), but the same right was demanded for the Serbs. The political developments in Europe and the consequences of the Second World War took the question of the organisation of the Yugoslav state in a new direction.

⁴⁰ Jovanović revisited the issue of a federal state and a state union in his book on the state. After the formation of the Banovina of Croatia in 1939, he published later that year, in the series *Politika i društvo* (Politics and Society), a study on American federalism. In a special notice the editorial board composed of professors of the Belgrade Law School stressed the connection between the subject of the study and the actual political situation in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia: "Now that in reference to the resolution of the Croatian question, which has been officially put on the agenda, a lot of discussion has been generated concerning our internal organization, our editorial board considered it particularly useful to publish this discussion on American federalism by Slobodan Jovanović. The board will do its best to offer its readership articles on other types of political systems, convinced that it is the best way to help clarify concepts and arrive at necessary understanding in our midst." Slobodan Jovanović, *Američki federalizam* (Belgrade: Stamparija Soko, 1939), 117.

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<https://doi.org/10.2298/BALCI950245V>

UDC 323.113(=163.41)(73)

62:929 Пупин М.(082)

271.222(497.11)-726.2-36:929 Николај Велимировић, свети

314.151.3-054.72(=163.41)(73)

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Maxim Vasiljević*

*Faculty of Orthodox Theology
University of Belgrade*

Carrying Their Native Land and Their New Home in Their Hearts

Mihailo Pupin and Bishop Nikolai of Žiča between Their Native and Adopted Country

Abstract: The present study gives us an opportunity to look at the Christian heritage that the Serbian immigrants brought to the new land of Americas through the examples of Mihailo Pupin and Nikolai Velimirović, Bishop of Žiča, since these two names are indelibly inscribed in the history of the so-called *Serbica Americana*. The paper is divided into two sections dealing specifically with their Serbianism and Americanism to show that a distribution of love and loyalty between their native and adopted country functioned in a fruitful way. Based on a detailed analysis of their writings, the author suggests that Serbians and Americans remember Pupin and Velimirović because they enjoy the benefits of their remarkable contributions. The following aspects of Pupin's and Nikolai's lives are examined: their deep concern with the fate of Serbia during and after the First World War; their leading roles among the Serbs in the United States through their assistance in establishing Serbian churches and communities, through their scholarship funds, philanthropic work, etc. Their genuine care for Serbia and Serbs was in no way an obstacle in their adjustment to their adopted country.

Keywords: immigration, Serbia, America, inculturation, church, freedom, integration, identity

The close of the nineteenth and arrival of the twentieth century brought changes of fundamental significance for Christians. The settling immigrants had to make an effort to establish communication between two worlds that, unfortunately, had lived and operated completely cut off from one another for centuries. This effort encouraged many to preach and witness the Gospel in ways which met the cultural needs of the people in American society through

* maxim.bishop@gmail.com

the truth of the Church. This necessity was associated with a sincere concern for the ethnic component: being Serbian was not an impediment in their adjustment to their adopted country. As bishop Nikolai of Žiča, in his address on the first Minnesota Serbian Day, June 8, 1947, stated, "Serbians have become an organic part of America and have made their contribution to the development of America by their sweat, thought, and blood... Before the two world wars the Old Country looked upon America as its daughter. Now, after two terrible wars, they look upon America as their mother."¹

As regards the Americas, there is a history of five waves of Serbian immigration. The first wave, a smaller one, took place before the Congress of Berlin of 1878, and is called "early immigration" (from 1815 to 1880). The second wave, somewhat larger, took place between 1878 and the First World War (1914). This second wave can be extended to include the First World War and it accounts for the largest part of the earlier Serbian immigrations. During this second, very important wave of immigration into the Americas, charitable organizations and Serbian institutions were established, Serbian churches and community centers were built. The third was the interwar wave of immigration, 1918–1941. The fourth took place during the Second World War and in 1945–1965. This war left the Serbian people and the Serbian Church in disarray. A large number of the Serbs who had been in refugee camps in Germany and Italy came to the Americas and thus became associated with the earlier Serbian immigrants, as the fourth major wave of migration to the USA and Canada. The fifth wave of immigration ensued after 1965.

An authentic inventor of symbiosis: Mihailo Pupin

Mihailo (Michael) Pupin (1858–1935) was, along with the scientist Nikola Tesla (1856–1943), a famous Serbian-American inventor. Pupin was also a renowned professor at Columbia University in New York and an honorary consul of the Kingdom of Serbia in the United States. In his book *From Immigrant to Inventor*, Pupin describes the spirit of the first immigrants after their arrival to the States, and before their thorough training in the arts and crafts and with sturdy physiques capable of withstanding the hardships of strenuous labor would begin.

When I landed at Castle Garden, forty-eight years ago, I had only five cents in my pocket. Had I brought five hundred dollars, instead of five cents, my immediate career in the new, and to me a perfectly strange, land would have been the same. A young immigrant such as I was then does not begin his career until he has spent all the money which he has brought with him. I brought five cents, and immediately spent it upon a piece of prune pie, which turned out to be a bogus prune pie. It contained nothing but pits of prunes. If I had brought five

¹ N. S. Chanak, "Minnesota Serbian Day," *Serb World*, January/February 1990, p. 30.

hundred dollars, it would have taken me a little longer to spend it, mostly upon bogus things, but the struggle which awaited me would have been the same in each case. It is no handicap to a boy immigrant to land here penniless; it is not a handicap to any boy to be penniless when he strikes out for an independent career, provided that he has the stamina to stand the hardships that may be in store for him.²

As Fr. Bozidar Dragicevich noted, in Pupin's heart, like on a tablet, names of the greatest figures of both American and Serbian history were engraved. "There was neither a contradiction between Pupin's Serbianism and Americanism, nor was there a conflict between his religion and science. Every single church, especially the church in his Idvor, decorated with beautiful icons of the Orthodox Saints reminded him of the secular colleges, especially that at Cambridge, which for Pupin was a 'temple of external truth.' As the Church has its saints, so science has its heroes and saints."³

Pupin also formulated the most crucial question related to the contributions immigrants make and how integral they are to the fabric of American society. "But what has a young and penniless immigrant to offer who has had no training in any of the arts or crafts and does not know the language of the land?" He replied laconically, "apparently nothing, and if the present standards had prevailed forty eight years ago I should have been deported. There are, however, certain things which a young immigrant may bring to this country that are far more precious than any of the things which the present immigration laws prescribe. Did I bring any of these things with me when I landed at Castle Garden in 1874?"⁴

Pupin also wrote that after some time, he felt that, "after all, there might be many things in America which were just as great as those great things of which the Serbian *guslar* sings in the national ballads of Serbia. Vila [a Serbian fairy] had succeeded in welding the first link between my Serbian traditions and the traditions of America."⁵ Pupin also conveys the sentiments shared by early immigrants in their encounter with the Protestant way of living the faith. "The singing of hymns did not impress me much, and the sermon impressed me even less. Delaware City was much bigger than my native Idvor, and yet the religious service in Idvor was more elaborate. There was no choral singing in the church of Delaware City, and there were no ceremonies with a lot of burning candles and

² Michael Pupin, *From Immigrant to Inventor* (New York–London: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1924), 1.

³ B. Dragicevich, *American Serb* (Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the University of Minnesota, 1973), 42.

⁴ Pupin, *From Immigrant to Inventor*, 1–2.

⁵ *Ibid.* 55.

the sweet perfume of burning incense, and there was no ringing of harmonious church bells. I was disappointed..."⁶

When Pupin later picked out a Congregational Church for religious worship, he was pleased by "a harmonious musical background to the magnificent singing of the large choir", so he felt that the thrilling music was "tuning him up for the sermon which the great orator was about to preach."⁷ He confesses the contrast between his first and later impressions. "Four years previously I had for the first time attended an American church service in Delaware City, and had carried away the impression that in matters of public worship America was not up to the standards prescribed by the Serbian Church. Beecher and his Plymouth Church changed my judgment completely. Beecher's congregation seemed to me like a beehive full of honey hearted beings."⁸

That Pupin was a child of the Orthodox Church is shown by his discernment between vocal and instrumental church music. "The Orthodox church permits no instrumental music. Those who have had the good fortune to listen to Russian choirs know the power and the spiritual charm of their choral singing. Serb choirs are not their inferiors. No music appeals to our hearts so strongly as the music of the human voice."⁹

Quite indicative of the differences between the two approaches to the mystery of faith, is Pupin's following account. About the middle of April that year, 1875, Pupin was on a farm in Dayton, New Jersey. The farmer, Mr. Brown, had an idea that the youth who had lived one whole winter in Norfolk Street, New York, needed spiritual regeneration.

He was a very pious Baptist, and I soon discovered that in his everlasting professions of omissions and commissions he was even worse than that reformed drunkard whose sermons had driven me away from the Bowery Mission and its vigorous bean soup. Every Sunday his family took me to church twice and made me sit between the female members of the family. I felt that the congregation imagined that Mr. Brown and his family were trying their best to convert a godless foreign youth and make a good Baptist out of him. Mr. Brown seemed to be in a great hurry about it, because every evening he made me listen for an hour at least to his reading of the Bible, and before we parted for the night he would offer a loud and fervent prayer that the Lord might kindle his light in the souls of those who had been wandering in darkness. I know now that he had in mind the words of St. Luke, "To give light to them that sit in darkness," but at that time I fancied that he referred to my painting operations in the cellars and

⁶ Ibid. 52. It should be noted that the Serbian Singing Federation (1931) established a silver cup, a masterpiece of hand-wrought English sterling silver, in memory of inventor Mihajlo Pupin, a lover of choral singing and an admirer of the SSF.

⁷ Ibid. 105–106.

⁸ Ibid. 107.

⁹ Ibid. 155.

basements of Lexington Avenue, and interpreted his prayers as having a special reference to me.

Then Pupin proceeds to explain, in an amusing way, how the joy of life which during the day he inhaled in the fresh fields of the early spring was “smothered in the evening by Mr. Brown’s views of religion, which were views of a decrepit old man who thought of heaven only because he had no terrestrial problems to solve. He did his best to strip religion of every vestige of its poetic beauty, and of its soul-stirring spiritual force, and to make it appear like a mummy of a long-departed Egyptian corpse. A Serbian youth who looks to St. Sava, the educator, and to the Serbian national ballads for an interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, could not be expected to warm up for the religion which farmer Brown preached.”¹⁰ Pupin concludes this narrative with a profound insight:

One Sunday evening, after the church service, farmer Brown introduced me to some of his friends, informing them that I was a Serbian youth who had not enjoyed all the opportunities of American religious training, but that I was making wonderful progress, and that some day I might even become an active member of their congregation. The vision of my Orthodox mother, of the little church in Idvor, of the Patriarch in Karlovci, and of St. Sava, shot before my eyes like a flash, and I vowed to furnish a speedy proof that farmer Brown was wrong. The next day I was up long before sunrise, having spent a restless night formulating a definite plan of deliverance from the intolerable boredom inflicted upon me by a hopeless religious crank. The eastern sky was like a veil of gold and it promised the arrival of a glorious April day. The fields, the birds, the distant woods, and the friendly country road all seemed to join in a melodious hymn of praise to the beauties of the wanderer’s freedom. I bade good-bye to the hospitable home of farmer Brown and made a bee-line for the distant woods.¹¹

Without in any way denying the reality and goodness of American religious background, Pupin holds that they are expressions of a lesser reality compared to his Orthodox tradition. His account is equally interesting as an illustration of the immigrants’ perception of the new world now seen through the prism of their heritage. His life was marked by such events, and his understanding of his task became much more substantial.

Princeton was unlike anything that I had ever seen up to that time. I had read about Hilendar, the famous monastery on Mount Athos, on the Aegean Sea, founded by St. Sava in the twelfth century. I had seen pictures of its buildings, where monks lived the life of solitude and study. Princeton, with its many monastic-looking buildings, I imagined was such a place, where young men were given every opportunity to study and become learned men so as to be able to devote their lives effectively to such work as St. Sava did.¹²

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 67–68.

¹¹ *Ibid.* 68.

¹² *Ibid.* 70.

An attempt at synthesis, that curious amalgam of the traditional and the modern, is evident in the following paragraph:

One day, while reading in the Cooper Union Library, I saw quite near me an old gentleman standing and carefully scrutinizing what was going on. I imagined, at first, that he had stepped out of that painting. I looked again and found that the figure in the painting which I fancied had walked out was still there and that the old gentleman near me was undoubtedly the original from which the artist had painted that figure. The ambidextrous youth behind the library-desk told me afterward that the old gentleman was Peter Cooper, the founder of Cooper Union, and that he was one of the group of famous men represented in the great painting. He looked as I imagined the Patriarch of Karlovci must have looked. He was a striking resemblance to St. Sava, the Educator, as he is represented on an ikon in our church in Idvor. The same snowy locks and rosy complexion of saintly purity, and the same benevolent look from two luminous blue eyes.¹³

This testimony of Pupin's is important for yet another crucial reason: the exchange between his two identities. When he was making his first visit to Europe after nine years in the US, he wrote the following words which could serve as a recipe for a successful integration:

As I sat on the deck of the ship which was taking me to the universities of Europe, and watched its eagerness to get away from the busy harbor of New York, I thought of the day when, nine years before, I had arrived on the immigrant ship. I said to myself: "Michael Pupin, *the most valuable asset which you carried into New York harbor nine years ago was your knowledge of, and profound respect and admiration for, the best traditions of your race...* the most valuable asset which you are now taking with you from New York harbor is *your knowledge of, and profound respect and admiration for, the best traditions of your adopted country.*"¹⁴

When he arrived in Serbia in 1883, Pupin attended the funeral of a famous Serbian poet, Branko Radičević. His following words—with liturgical connotations—summarize the sentiment all Serbian immigrants could share:

"On the way back we stopped at the church and kissed the icons of our patron saint and of St. Sava, and lighted two wax candles which mother had brought with her. I confessed to her that I felt as if a sacred communion had reunited me with the spirit of Idvor."¹⁵

¹³ Ibid. 77. Pupin will point to another difference between the new world and the old country (ibid. 84): "I understood why so many blacksmiths and other people of small learning made a great success as preachers in this country, whereas in my native village the priest, who prided himself upon his learning, was obliged to read those sermons only which were sent to him by the bishop of the diocese."

¹⁴ Ibid. 137.

¹⁵ Ibid. 158–159.

Pupin's firm faith in God was his principal inspiration in life which he creatively assimilated in his lifestyle. He used to attend church services even while studying at Cambridge.

"Every time I attended service in this glorious chapel I went away feeling spiritually uplifted. I attended regularly, although, as a member of the Orthodox faith, I was excused from all religious services. What the other students, belonging to the established church, considered a stern duty, I considered a rare privilege. The chapel gave me a spiritual tonic whenever I needed it, and I needed it often."¹⁶

Pupin wrote a programmatic article published in the *Sloboda* calendar for 1930 and there he identified the most important task of the Serbian immigrant organizations of that time:

Our Church also needs young and highly educated priests. I am not saying that older priests should be shunned as old fashioned, but I do think that when the older priests retire due to their age, the new ones who replace them should be like apostles spreading the Serbian idea across the U. S., teaching new generations not only to preserve their loyalty and love for the blessed Serbian state, but also to embrace the ideals that have enabled our people to survive over five hundred years. One who knows these ideals is also proud of them. [...] Every Serb in America should not only join the Serb National Federation, but also become a member of the Serbian Orthodox Diocese and support both organizations in any way they can. This kind of work will be rewarded economically and spiritually in the national progress of our people in this blessed country.¹⁷

Clearly, Pupin spelled out this task very lucidly: to educate immigrant children in the Serbian spirit and to develop a Serbian American identity.

While visiting his old country, Pupin was overwhelmed with invitations to attend concerts and festivals in many places of his native Banat. He was often called upon to say something about America, "and, of course, I spoke about my favorite subject: "The American Doctrine of Freedom."¹⁸ As Fr. Bozidar Dragicevich remarks, "one cannot conclude if Pupin was more proud while praising Lincoln and Franklin or wails exalting the names of St. Sava and Kraljevich Marko. His Serbianism inspired him with great respect for Americanism. Only he who carries his native land in his heart will be an honest and constructive citizen of his adopted land."¹⁹

As Serbian scientist and professor at Columbia University, Pupin worked closely with the clergy of the Serbian Church in North America, and played an important role in establishing Church-School congregations in New York,

¹⁶ Ibid. 173.

¹⁷ Pupin, M. I., "Naše dužnosti", *Sloboda*, 1930, 19–20.

¹⁸ Pupin, *From Immigrant to Inventor*, 61.

¹⁹ Dragicevich, *American Serb*, 43.

Garry (Indiana), etc. He donated a commission to found a particular fund to aid the Serbian Church in America, and he personally gave \$23,000 to the church to pay its debts in the building of St. Sava's Monastery at Libertyville, Illinois.

In 1909, Pupin invited representatives of all to a pan-Serbian assembly in Cleveland, Ohio, halfway between the Chicago and Pittsburgh centers. They founded a single organization: *Savez Sjedinjenih Srba Sloga*, known as "Sloga" or "Unity." The initials, four "S's, were chosen to coincide with the motto of the Serbian crest — *Samo Sloga Srbina Spasava* or Only Unity Saves Serbs. Pupin was elected president, but the union was short-lived, and a more truly national unity was not achieved until twenty years later. Nevertheless, Pupin persisted doggedly during this time to try to maintain Serbian-American solidarity.

A faithful interpreter of the soul of the people: Bishop Nikolai of Žiča in America

St. Nikolai (Velimirović), Bishop of Ohrid and Žiča (1880–1956), along with his many other attributes is regarded, with good reason, as an enlightener of the Americas. He was a theologian, a minister, a missionary, a writer, a poet, an apostle, a saint, and a man of dialogue. The renewed interest in this man and his works has resulted in the materialization of many articles for English-speaking readers who wish to become acquainted with this extraordinary person.²⁰ Many publications provide an extensive overview of his life, present important testimonies about his personality, and offer essential insights into his theology. All authors agree that the appearance of Nikolai Velimirović marks an era of change in the ecclesiastical and theological *paradigm* as a result of his spirituality, ecclesiastical work, and theological position.²¹ The amount of his written work alone is awe-inspiring (it comprises thirty volumes), and the task of specifying the content of the various themes is quite complex. The significance and relevance of his books are time-resistant; moreover, his works gain in importance each day.

Nikolai's work in North America has not been sufficiently studied. From the autumn of 1921, he was the administrator of the newly established Serbian Diocese (with all the Church organs and in accordance with the Church canons) of the United States and Canada, and he remained in America until 1923. Following the Second World War he returned to America, and spent the final years of his life—his longest sojourn—in the United States, until his death. During

²⁰ The manner in which the person of Nicholai is perceived in some circles today announces that it is high time to stop speaking about him in a journalistic manner with a pious-ethnic rhetorical tone. This, actually, results in obscuring and undermining the spiritual, theological, and philosophical magnitude of Nicholai as a thinker.

²¹ See *Treasures New and Old. Writings of St Nikolai of Ochrid and Zhicha*, ed. Bishop Maxim (Vasiljevic) (Los Angeles: Sebastian Press, 2010).

the course of his many visits he participated in peace conferences, church ecumenical meetings and gatherings (the meeting of the World Council of Churches, WCC in Evanston in 1952), at conferences of Christian youth of the world, and at Pan-Orthodox councils. He participated in Christian heterodox Church events, like, for example, the ordination and installation of his old friend (since 1915), Rev. William Manning as the tenth Episcopalian bishop of New York.

The Holy Assembly of Bishops (*Sabor*) of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Belgrade sent the Bishop of Ohrid, Nikolai Velimirović, to investigate the possibility of organizing a diocese in the U.S. and Canada in 1921. When he arrived in America, Bishop Nikolai informed the Russian Metropolitan that, by decision of the Holy Assembly of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church, he was to assume the administration of the church for Serbians in the United States and Canada. Nikolai's visit to America in 1921 marked the first time that any Serbian hierarch had come to the New World. Nikolai impressed all who heard and saw him with his speeches, sermons, and appearances. "Exceptional language, crystal-pure, rich phrasing. Like a skillful blacksmith Father Nikolai systematically hammers in his arguments heavy as mallets on an iron anvil."²²

Thus, in 1921, Bishop Nikolai founded the first diocese of the Serbian Orthodox Church on the North American continent. At that time, Bishop Nikolai appointed Archimandrite Mardarije Uskoković as his deputy and assigned to him the duty of creating a diocesan center along with the construction of a monastery. In October 1923, Bishop Nikolai Velimirović resigned from his duties of administering the American-Canadian Diocese. The first Serbian immigrants in America showed their patriotism during the First World War. Bishop of Ochrid remarked that patriotism is a prevailing feeling among them.²³

It is clear that the new political and economic conditions of twentieth-century mankind have exerted relentless pressures on Orthodox life, compelling its adaptation to the new circumstances. And so, the Orthodox Church

²² Božidar Puric, *Biografija Boze Rankovica: Doprinos istoriji srpskog seljenstva u Severnoj Americi* [Biography of Boza Rankovic: Contribution to the History of Serbian Immigration to North America] (Munich 1963), 94.

²³ "The former wartime Volunteers are especially held in esteem. Immediately following them are those who gave their hard-earned dollars to the Serbian Red Cross or for the orphans. I must immediately add that they truly sacrificed a great deal, considering their pain and poverty. If one considers the sacrifice just in money—leaving blood aside—then the Serbs in America sacrificed more, comparatively speaking, than any other part of our country. No matter who collected the money, or when it was collected, they always gave. Those who didn't have it, borrowed it humbly and gave—wanting to do no less than their brothers, wanting to help their brothers" ("Serbian Church-School Congregation of Saint Sava Cathedral in Milwaukee: Brief History", *Dedication of St. Sava Serbian Orthodox Cathedral* (Milwaukee 1958), 9).

has wandered into developmental currents that are unfamiliar and hitherto unknown in its history; the effects still need to be examined.

Nikolai has bequeathed a singular theological *legacy* that exceeds the established perceptions of his time. The events that took place in Serbia after Nikolai's lifetime—that is, in the second half and particularly at the end of the twentieth century—led to the emergence of a contemporary and creative Orthodox self-consciousness following a complex and painful period of “Babylonian slavery” with all its repercussions. As Metropolitan Amfilohije Radović observes: “Bishop Nikolai was from the very beginning a European man, but one who was pan-Slavically and pan-humanly inclined. He followed the theological, spiritual, scientific and social currents of his time.”²⁴ Hence, he showed a genuine concern for the whole universe, to which his entire life attests and which is exemplified by the following important words about America shortly before his death:

I came from the Old World to this New World. Which one of the two is better, the New one or the Old one? I cannot tell. However, the One Who revealed all truths told both you and me that a wise host brings both new and old things out of his treasury (cf. Matt. 13:52). Not just the new or merely the old, but both. Our Lord Jesus Christ honored the Old Testament and at the same time He revealed the New Testament to us. Now we, His followers, safeguard the one and the other as a singular Holy Book. The greatest wisdom consists in protecting the old and the new treasures alike. The separation of one from the other only leads to poverty, insecurity and confusion.²⁵

Bishop Nikolai was aware that in America, since the nation's founding, people have wrestled with what it means to be free. But politics—which continually speaks about human rights and human dignity—is indifferent to the supposed freedom of the human person. That is why he points out that the dignity of man—in other words, the superior value of man—has real and eternal meaning only if you know and acknowledge the Kingdom of Heaven as the true fatherland of all men, from which we originated and to which we are returning as children of one common Father, Who is in heaven. And freedom is most useful, joyful, and sacred if you exercise moral discipline over yourself and practice competition in doing good.²⁶ St. Nikolai's point of view generates a dynamic understanding of human dignity in comparison with the static opinions prevailing in the West (in both secular and theological approaches).

America is constantly sounding the sympathetic watchwords: “dignity of man” and “liberty of men and nations.” But the deepest meaning of these watchwords can be found in the sacred teaching of Him without Whom we can do nothing.

²⁴ Metropolitan Amfilohije Radovic, “The Theanthropic Ethos of Bishop Nikolai Velimirovich”, in *Treasures New and Old*, 128.

²⁵ See in *Treasures New and Old. Writings of St Nikolai of Ochrid and Zhicha*, 8.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

That meaning is found most explicitly in the threefold program of our Orthodox Church: spiritual vision, moral discipline, and competition in doing good.²⁷

However, people do not adopt a political viewpoint because such a thing is rational or moral. This problem is critical because the moral relativism and individualism that undergird the social education of our time have imposed upon us social and psychological conditions that tend to dissolve the integrity of our personal being into ontically separate individualities and personalities alienated from communion and relation, so that the human's irreplaceable and unique personhood, which only flowers in true communion and the call to relation, becomes lost. For this reason, Nikolai addresses a new prophetic call to a dialogical theology:

These are the fundamentals upon which you can build your individual and communal happiness. And you have received these fundamentals as a glorious heritage, never to part with. By practicing this spiritual heritage in your daily life, you will become an adornment to America. And through you all Americans will come to know and appreciate our ancient Church of the East and her spiritual heroes, whom we are praising today."²⁸

For Nikolai, everyone, ancients and moderns, in East and West, has need of the fullness of grace which is offered liturgically by the Orthodox Church. At the same time, Nikolai left his American counterparts with an impression of himself as an unbiased man, a man who was free of prejudice. According to the Canon N. West, prior to the arrival of Archimandrite Nikolai in 1915 the Anglican community had regarded the "exotic Orthodox faith" as something very remote. In his "Recollections of Bishop Nikolai", he writes that it was actually Bishop Nikolai who revealed Orthodoxy to the other branches of Christianity in both England and America.

As Dr. Zorka Milich from St. Sava Serbian Church in New York City described him, "...many parishioners of our generation remembered him as a saintly, gentle, kind, brilliant man whose words were measured and profound. He preached in our church, broke bread with his parishioners, and spoke in serene and tranquil tone."²⁹ This tone is reflected in the following line by Nikolai.

"Personally, I have a deep admiration for these old Orthodox generations in America, both for those who passed away in the Faith, and for those who are still living by their faith. They have been a spiritual and constructive component of the New World's humanity. I dare say that in their own way they have been heroic generations no less than other national groups, now blended into one

²⁷ Bishop Nicholai, "The Eastern Orthodox Church in America and Its Future," vol. XIII of *Sabrana dela* (Collected Works) (Himelstir 1986), 572.

²⁸ *Ibid.* 572.

²⁹ Cf. Natalie Mihajlov Ratzkovich, "St. Sava's Cathedral of New York," *Serb World*, Sept/Oct. 2014, p. 11.

great American nation. In their modesty these humble people never expected a poet to laud them or a historian to describe them.”³⁰

Nikolai’s “third and last American mission”, namely the last decade of his life (1946–1956), which he spent in the USA from January 9, 1946 until his death on March 18, 1956, was a very fruitful period of his life. The end of the Second World War failed to reward the sufferings of Nikolai and return him to his people; therefore, he came to the United States. Upon arriving in America, he was received as a guest by Bishop Dionisije in the Monastery of St. Sava at Libertyville, Illinois. The last years of his life he spent in St. Tikhon, the Russian Monastery at South Canaan, Pennsylvania, as a Professor of the Theological Seminary.

America was not a new context for him. He was familiar with it, especially after his first (in 1915) and second mission (1921–23). Nikolai was a key figure in establishing the first Serbian Diocese in the USA and Canada and played an instrumental role in making Mardarije the first bishop of this Diocese. The last decade of his life—the focus of this overview—began with his immigration to USA in 1946 (he arrived as a refugee after the tragic experience of the Second World War) and lasted until March 1956. Writing on a daily basis, Nikolai was also lecturing: at the temporary Seminary school of St. Sava in Libertyville, at Russian academies: The Holy Trinity in Jordanville and St. Tikhon in South Canaan in Pennsylvania, and several times at St. Vladimir Seminary. His earthly life ended in South Canaan.

In 1946, the confessor Nikolai moved to America for the last time. Having recuperated from an aching back and leg problems, the exiled Bishop began lecturing, as usual, in various educational institutions. In June 1946, he was awarded for his academic excellence his final Doctorate of Sacred Theology from Columbia University.

From 1946 to 1949, Nikolai, always loyal to his Serbian people, taught at the St. Sava Seminary in Libertyville, Illinois. Realizing the need for American-born Serbians to have an Orthodox catechism in English, he published *The Faith of the Saints* (1949). In 1950, he wrote an essay on Orthodox mysticism in English, *The Universe as Signs and Symbols*, and a book in Serbian entitled, *Zemlja Nedodjija* (The Unattainable Land). In 1951, his last book written while teaching at St. Sava’s was, aptly, *The Life of St. Sava*. According to the words of the distinguished professor Dr. Veselin Kesich,³¹ this book reveals something about [Bishop Nikolai] himself in his meditation on the end of St. Sava’s Life: Sava withdrew to his House of Silence in Studenica and offered a prayer to God to let him die in a foreign country Why did he pray for this? Bishop Nikolai considers several reasons: Sava’s protest against political disorder at home, his appeal

³⁰ Bishop Nicholai, “The Eastern Orthodox Church in America and Its Future,” 572.

³¹ Veselin Kesich, “Introduction” to St. Nikolai Velimirovich, *The Life of Saint Sava* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1989).

to the conscience of his people, and his conviction that he would work for their salvation from the outside. These three reasons probably influenced the Bishops' decision to come to America and not to return to Yugoslavia after the war.

Nikolai did not forget his Serbian flock, as he published, in 1952, *Žetve Gospodnje* (The Harvests of the Lord) and *Kasijana* (Cassiana), a story of a penitent. In 1953, he wrote *Divan* (Conversations), a book on the *Bogomoljci* and their miracles. His final book, *Jedini Čovekoljubac* (The Only Lover of Mankind) was published posthumously in 1958. Bishop Nikolai's final undertaking was the Serbian Bible Institute, which published a series of seven short tracts on various theological topics: *Christ Died for Us*, *Meditations on Seven Days*, *Angels Our Elder Brethren*, *Seven Petitions*, *Bible and Power*, *Missionary Letters*, and *The Mystery of Touch*.

In 1951, Bishop Nikolai moved to St. Tikhon's Russian Orthodox Monastery in South Canaan, Pennsylvania. There he spent the last five years of his earthly life as a professor, dean, and eventually rector of the Seminary. Being all things to all people, Nikolai published articles in Russian for the God-seekers at St. Tikhon's. His ease and facility with languages was amazing to all. Nikolai could read, write, and speak fluently seven different languages. Besides his activities at St. Tikhon's, Bishop Nikolai lectured at St. Vladimir's Seminary in Crestwood, New York, as well as at the Russian Orthodox Seminary and Monastery of the Holy Trinity in Jordanville, New York.

In 1951, Bishop Nikolai came to St. Tikhon's Seminary first as a professor and finally, with the death of the former Rector, Bishop Jonah, as Rector of the Seminary. There he lived out the last years of his life as an example of humility, as well as an elder to the monastics at St. Tikhon's Monastery. To the students of the Seminary, the old Bishop was a loving father figure whom they would never forget. To the laity and faithful of the monastery parish, as well as all who came in contact with the Bishop, he was a hierarch in whom they saw manifest the grace of God. And to all, he was an example of humility. During his years as an educator at St. Tikhon's Seminary Bishop Nikolai was seen to be a very unusual person in that his courses were profoundly simple, informal and very warm. His requirements were very basic: he taught, you learned, and he corrected.

Perhaps one of the most striking characteristics of his classes was that he taught solely in the English language, at a time when very few courses were taught in that language (and these usually by outside lecturers). This often caused friction with other faculty members, but Bishop Nikolai held fast to his position, for he knew the importance, for the seminarians, of hearing lectures in their native language. Indeed, without this use of English, much of the subtlety of his teachings would have been lost from memory. The use of English extended even to the monastery church, and on most occasions, he would preach in that language. Parishioners often complain about this, but his answer was: "You have learned and heard enough. It's time for [the seminarians] to learn something."

Bishop Nikolai's classes, sermons, and conversations were always geared to his audience, be they students, professors, theologians or simple parishioners, and his vocabulary never went beyond the comprehension of his hearers. For him, class could be any time. Anything said to him could be turned around and assigned a deeper meaning. He would always take examples from conversations in class, at the dinner table, or that which occurred as he walked about the grounds, and would always introduce examples from the Holy Scripture, relating them to life at hand.

Bishop Nikolai fell asleep in the Lord while in prayer during the night between the 17th and 18th of March 1956, in his humble cell at St. Tikhon Russian Orthodox Seminary. He was seventy-six years old. He was given an honorable Orthodox Christian burial service in St. Sava Serbian Orthodox Cathedral in New York City; as pious Christians from all parts of the world came to hear eulogies in honor of one of the greatest hierarchs of the entire Orthodox Church in the twentieth century. From New York City his body was transferred to Libertyville, Illinois, just north of Chicago, to St. Sava Serbian Orthodox Monastery. He was laid to rest on the south side of the monastery church, on March 27, 1956.

Conclusion: Carrying native land and new home in their hearts

In return for its hospitality, the Serbian Orthodox Church granted America not only material culture but also distinguished scientists, such as Pupin—and holy persons, such as Nikolai of Žiža.

We find the following aspects of Pupin's and Nikolai's lives impressive, as they were, a) deeply concerned with the fate of Serbia, they tried to help her as much as they could during and after the First World War (and Nikolai after the Second World War); b) they also played leading roles among the Serbs in the United States; c) a number of Serbian churches in America remember them as their benefactors; d) a number of Serbian students in science and theology benefited from their scholarship funds; e) both, doubtless, were faithful Serbs; f) they were, to a certain extent, representatives of the Serbian nation in the New World from the very beginning of their career in America; g) and yet their concern for Serbia and Serbs was in no way an impediment in their adjustment to their adopted country; they adjusted to it with such surprising speed and sincerity that everyone must admire them.

Both Pupin and Nikolai had a sense for history. "Not a single history of the American Serbs would be complete if it did not describe everything the Serbs in America have done for their first Homeland from the beginning, down until today," Bishop Nikolai wrote.³² Mihailo Pupin emphasized the need of

³² See Bishop Sava (Vuković) of Šumadija, *History of the Serbian Orthodox Church in America and Canada, 1891–1941* (Kragujevac: Kalenic Press, 1998), XIV.

adjusting to America with astounding promptness and earnestness. At the same time, Nikolai's awareness of the need for "inculturation"—that is, for witnessing and preaching the Gospel in ways which meet the cultural needs of people—led him to create highly exemplary and contemporary works, significant even in our postmodern era. His entire life struggle was a process of contextualizing the Evangelical message of Christ with an ardent desire for the whole world to recognize the Orthodox truth of Christ.

Today, Serbian Orthodoxy in America considers the dynamic pulse of its Eucharistic life as the measure of its maturity and achievements. Presently, it has over 140 parishes, 15 missions, and 15 monasteries, as well as a School of theology. This Church has achieved a significant ecclesiological-societal level that faithfully reflects an *ecclesial* consciousness. This awareness is maintained through indistinguishable ecclesial and ethnic components, which have important consequences in the unfolding history and life of the Church. The Church continues to fulfill Nikolai's (Velimirović) and Mihailo's (Pupin) vision of the need for the "inculturation".

The work of these two figures is a living proof that the Serbian Christian cultural heritage is far more than the remembrance of the past; it is key to understanding the present and a resource/prolegomenon for the future.

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Slobodan G. Markovich*

*Faculty of Political Science
University of Belgrade*

The Grand Lodge of Yugoslavia between France and Britain (1919–1940)[†]

Abstract: The paper deals with the orientation of the Yugoslav freemasonry during the existence of the Grand Lodge of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes “Jugoslavia” (GLJ), later the Grand Lodge of Yugoslavia (GLY). The state of freemasonry in Serbia on the eve of the Great War is briefly described and followed by an analysis of how the experience of the First World War influenced Serbian freemasons to establish strong ties with French freemasonry. During the 1920s the Grand Lodge “Jugoslavia” maintained very close relations with the Grand Orient of France and the Grand Lodge of France, and this was particularly obvious when GLJ got the opportunity to organise the Masonic congress for peace in Belgrade in 1926 through its links with French Freemasonry. Grand Master Georges Weifert (1919–34) also symbolised close links of French and Serbian freemasonry. However, his deputy and later Grand Master Douchan Militchevitch (1934–39) initiated in 1936 the policy of reorientation of Yugoslav freemasonry to the United Grand Lodge of England. Although there had already been such initiatives, they could not be materialised due to the fact that it was not until 1930 that the United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE) recognised several continental grand lodges, including GLJ. In a special section efforts of GLJ to be recognised by UGLE are analysed. Efforts for reorientation of GLY were conducted through several persons, including Douchan Militchevitch (1869–1939), Stanoje Mihajlović (1882–1946), Vladimir Ćorović (1885–1941) and Dragan Militchevitch (1895–1942). Special attention is given to the plans of GLY’s grand master to make the Duke of York (subsequently King George VI), who was a very dedicated freemason, an honorary past master of GLY. This plan failed, and the main idea behind it was to make GLY more resistant to internal clerical attacks and also to the external pressure of Italy. Mihajlović’s three official Masonic visits to Britain (1933–39) are analysed as well as a private visit of Ćorović and Dragan Militchevitch in March 1940. In the context of the visits made in 1939–40 plans to establish an Anglo-Yugoslav lodge are also analysed. Finally, the context of the de facto ban on Yugoslav freemasonry in August 1940 is given and the subsequent fates of its pro-British actors are also described.

Keywords: Grand Lodge of Yugoslavia, French Freemasonry, United Grand Lodge of England, Duke of York, Douchan Militchevitch, Stanoje Mihajlović, Vladimir Ćorović

* slobamarkovich@gmail.com

[†] I would like to thank academician Vasilije Dj. Krestić, director of the Archives of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, for his permission to consult the Papers of Prof. Viktor Novak, former grand secretary of the Grand Lodge of Yugoslavia. I would also like to thank Ms. Susan A. Snell, archivist of the Library and Museum of Freemasonry of UGLE in London, for permission to consult UGLE’s documents relating to the Grand Lodge of Yugoslavia.

On the eve of the Great War there were four Masonic lodges in the Kingdom of Serbia and all of them operated in Belgrade. The oldest was the lodge "Concord, Labour and Perseverance" ("Sloga rad i postojanstvo") established in 1883 under the protection of the Grand Orient of Italy, and the most influential was the lodge "Pobratim" consecrated in 1891 under the protection of the Symbolic Grand Lodge of Hungary. On 6 October 1908, Austria-Hungary annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina, which had been occupied by this power since 1878. This produced a storm of discontent against Austria-Hungary in Serbia. On 30 October, the lodge "Pobratim" unilaterally broke off its relations with Budapest and then proclaimed itself "Unabhängige Loge Serbiens" (Independent Lodge of Serbia). In 1910 another lodge, "Schumadija", was established in Belgrade under the protection of the Grand Lodge of Hamburg.

The need to establish a supreme Masonic body in Serbia arose. The lodges "Concord, Labour and Perseverance" and "Schumadija" submitted regular requests to be released from the protection of Rome and Hamburg and received permissions to do that. Since other grand lodges in Europe could be reluctant to recognise a grand lodge in Belgrade, another solution was found. It was to try to establish the Supreme Council of Serbia. With this in mind, in May 1912, the three Belgrade-based lodges ("Pobratim", "Concord", and "Schumadija"), with the assistance of the Supreme Council of Greece, established in Belgrade the Supreme Council of Serbia. Already on 8 October 1912, this Council was recognised by the Supreme Council of the Southern Jurisdiction ("the mother lodge of the world") in Washington and by twenty-four other Supreme Councils that were present in the American capital.² From 1912 to 1919 the three Belgrade lodges operated under the protection of the Supreme Council of Serbia for all 33 degrees.

In other words, there was no grand lodge in Serbia in that period that would normally have under its protection the first three degrees, or the so-called blue freemasonry. Under usual circumstances a grand lodge was supposed to be established first, and only then a supreme council for the degrees from the 4th to the 33rd (the so-called red freemasonry) would follow. The line taken by Serbian freemasons proved to be more efficient since the recognition by Washington was automatically valid globally, at least for the red freemasonry, while in the case of the establishment of a grand lodge Serbian freemasons would have had to wait for individual recognitions for it and that would have been more unpredictable.

In addition to the three lodges, one more operated in Belgrade. It was established in early 1909 under the name "L'Union" (*Ujedinjenje* in Serbian). It worked in Belgrade under the protection of the Grand Orient of France and

² M. D. [Militchevitch, Douchan], "Izveštaj s internacionalne konferencije u Vašingtonu", *Neimar* 1–3 (Jan.–Mar. 1914), 25–39. *Suprême Conseil pour la Serbie. Annuaire compte-rendu première année 1912–1913* (Belgrade: Imprimerie Sv. Sava, 1913), 17.

did not place itself under the protection of the Supreme Council of Serbia. It is not clear if a Masonic “triangle” in Skoplje named “Kosovo” was operative before the Great War or if it only existed on paper.³ There was also a lodge called “Terra e Sole” (Earth and Sun) established in 1909 in Monastir (subsequent Bitolj) in Vardar Macedonia under the protection of the Grand Orient of Italy.⁴ The number of freemasons in Serbia was quite modest. In May 1911, Jovan Aleksijević mentioned sixty members of the Craft.⁵ There was an increased Masonic activity in Belgrade in 1912–1914, but, on the eve of the Great War, their total number was still below 100.

The prevailing influence of France in 1915–1934

Serbia won important battles in the war against Austria-Hungary in the summer and autumn of 1914. However, in October 1915, after the attack of the Central Powers (Austria-Hungary and Germany joined by Bulgaria) on Serbia, large parts of the Serbian Army and some 20,000 civilians began their retreat through Albania to Corfu and then to mainland Greece. Many Serbs found refuge in France during the Great War. In January 1918, according to the French authorities there were 17,000 Serbs and 3,000 Montenegrins in France, and Serbian statistics from the same month listed 3,286 Serbs enrolled in French schools and universities (1,178 of them were students). There were also many more Serbs in French North Africa.⁶ Through the efforts of the London-based Serbian Relief Fund, established by British pro-Serbian activists, some 352 Serbian students were admitted to Britain to complete their secondary and higher education there. Through two other schemes the total number of Serbian students and orphans received in Britain reached 500.⁷ When seminarians and theology students are added the number was around 550.

³ A triangle is the nucleus of a lodge which is established as the first step in the process of establishment of a fully operative lodge. The triangle in Skoplje “Kosovo” is mentioned in contemporary publications of the Supreme Council of Serbia from 1913–1914. *Suprême Conseil pour la Serbie. Annuaire compte-rendu première année 1912–1913*, pp. xix, 10.

⁴ Fulvio Conti, “From Brotherhood to Rivalry. The Grand Orient of Italy and the Balkan and Danubian Europe Freemasonries”, in Matevž Košir, ed., *The Secret of the Lodge* (Ljubljana: National Museum of Slovenia and Archives of the Republic of Slovenia, 2018), 86.

⁵ Jov. Aleksijević to Brother Svetomir, 6 [19] May 1911, Arhiv Jugoslavije [Archives of Yugoslavia; hereafter AJ], Fonds 100, f. 11 – 363.

⁶ Ljubinka Trgovčević, “Les Serbes en France durant la Première Guerre mondiale”, in D. T. Bataković, ed., *La Serbie et la France: Une alliance atypique* (Belgrade: Institut des Etudes balkaniques, 2010), 364–365; Ljubinka Trgovčević, “Školovanje srpske omladine u emigraciji”, *Istorijski časopis* 42–43 (1995–1996), 161.

⁷ S. G. Markovich, “British-Serbian Cultural and Political Relations 1784–1918”, in S. G. Markovich, ed., *British-Serbian Relations from the 18th to the 21st Centuries* (Belgrade: FPS and Zepeter Book World, 2018), 95–96.

A list of Serbian freemasons with their temporary addresses, compiled probably in 1916 or 1917 for the Serbian Government, reveals that about 50 Serbian freemasons found themselves exiled in Allied and neutral countries. Seventeen of them were in Salonika, 15 in France, seven in Switzerland, two in Italy and Russia and only one in England.⁸ The seat of the Supreme Council of Serbia was temporarily moved to Marseilles. Georges Weifert, the Supreme Commander of the Supreme Council of Serbia, was also there. As the governor of the National Bank of Serbia he also made Marseilles the seat of the National Bank of Serbia and, on 1 March 1916, organised in this city the first session of this institution in exile.⁹ In terms of freemasonry, French brethren allowed their Serbian and also Croatian brethren to deliver lectures and addresses organised in Parisian and French lodges under the jurisdiction of the Grand Orient of France (GOF) and the Grand Lodge of France (GLF). In these lodges Serbian and two Croatian freemasons promoted Serbia and also Serbia's officially declared war aim – the creation of a common state of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. They were particularly active in the lodge "Fraternité des Peuples" that operated under GOF.

During the Great War the French lodges turned out to be places in which the conflicting war aims of Italy and Serbia in the Eastern Adriatic were discussed. Serbian and Croatian freemasons insisted that the principle of nationality should be implemented in the Eastern Adriatic after the war, while Italian freemasons focused on cultural continuity and the fact that Italy had entered the war on the side of the Entente in exchange for territorial gains. The most important Masonic event during the Great War for Serbian, Croatian and Italian freemasons took place in Paris on 28–30 June 1917: the Congress of the Allied and Neutral Masonries, which anticipated the formation of the League of Nations. The congress made evident the differences that existed between Serbian and Italian freemasons on what should happen with the Habsburg Empire after the war. In a bid to reconcile these differences, the French hosts from GOF and GLF made a joint seven-member committee that included one Italian and one Serbian member. In this committee the grand master of GLF, General Peigné, demonstrated sympathy for the Serbian position.¹⁰ The resolution accepted at the Congress included the following paragraph:

⁸ Slobodan G. Marković, *Jedan vek velike lože SHS "Jugoslavija"* (Belgrade: RGLS and Dosije Press, 2019), 55. The list of all Serbian freemasons in exile was compiled for the Serbian government, probably in 1916, with their whereabouts. Arhiv Republike Slovenije [Archives of Slovenia], Collection Dedijer.

⁹ Saša Ilić, Sonja Jerković and Vladimir Bulajić, *Georg Weifert. Visionary and Enthusiast* (Belgrade: National Bank of Serbia, 2010), 54.

¹⁰ For more on this see Dimitrije Dimo Vujović, *Francuski masoni i jugoslovensko pitanje 1914–1918* (Belgrade: Književne novine, 1994), 89–122.

The steadfast will of all Masonic Powers represented at the Congress... in order that the innumerable lives sacrificed to the altruistic ideal may bring to the peoples the right of reconstituting all the crushed and oppressed nationalities, all the elements which compose a national conscience being at the same time taken into consideration.¹¹

This resolution was not received well by the Italian public and, on 14 July 1917, the grand master of the Grand Orient of Italy, Ettore Ferrari, had to resign.¹² The importance that Serbian and Yugoslav freemasons attached to this resolution may be seen from the fact that they reproduced it in 1919, in a publication prepared with the aim of influencing the members of the delegations at the Paris Peace Conference.

There was a very strong pro-Serbian campaign in Britain and throughout the British Empire during the Great War. It reached the stage of pro-Serbian euphoria in April–July 1916, culminating in a very elaborate commemoration of the Kosovo Day in Britain in June–July 1916.¹³ Similar manifestations in France facilitated the activities of Serbian freemasons there. However, there are no available data that could confirm that this comprehensive pro-Serbian campaign in Britain had any particular influence on creating links between Serbian and British freemasons.

A letter of Jovan Aleksijević¹⁴ from 1921 reveals that there was no official correspondence between the grand secretary of the Supreme Council of Serbia and the grand secretary of the United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE) between May 1915, when he received a letter from UGLE's grand secretary, and January 1920, when the new grand lodge in Belgrade informed its English brethren on its foundation.¹⁵ In March 1915, during the peak of a typhus epidemic in Serbia, Serbian freemasons appealed to their English brethren and their "generous hearts... for quick and bountiful donations".¹⁶ Another appeal of the Su-

¹¹ "Resolution voted at the Congress of the allied and neutral Masonries held in Paris, the 28, 29th and 30th June 1917", published in *The National Claims of the Serbians, Croats and Slovenes presented to the Brothers of the Allied Countries by the Serbian Brothers* (Paris: L'Émancipatrice, 1919), 5–6.

¹² Fulvio Conti, *Storia della massoneria italiana dal Risorgimento al fascismo* (Bologna: Società editrice il Mulino, 2003), 252–253.

¹³ Markovich, "British-Serbian Cultural and Political Relations", 65–81.

¹⁴ In their correspondence with UGLE the Serbian freemasons used both phonetic transliterations of their names into Western languages and their Serbo-Croatian versions. In this text their names are given as they themselves spelled them. Some of them used both spellings, so a degree of confusion is impossible to avoid.

¹⁵ Jov. Aleksijević to Colville Smith, Belgrade, 19 May 1921, LMF UGLE, "Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia, Yugoslavia", file 1.

¹⁶ Jov. Aleksijević to "dear Sir and Brother", Leskovac, 22 March 1915, LMF UGLE, "Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia, Yugoslavia", file 1.

preme Council of Serbia in Marseilles was prepared in October 1918, and it was published in English.¹⁷

Only one letter sent by Serbian freemasons during the Great War has been preserved in the archives of UGLE. There is a striking difference between the substantial activities of Serbian freemasons in France and Switzerland during the First World War and the absence of their activities in the United Kingdom in the same period. This was in line with the wartime orientation of UGLE, which was focused on fostering freemasonic ties within the British Empire, or as Sir Edward Letchworth phrased it in September 1915: “there never was a time in the history of Freemasonry more fitting than the present for strengthening the ties by which the Masons of the British Empire are bound together.”¹⁸ Serbian freemasonry and its Supreme Council based in Marseilles seemed from UGLE’s point of view to be part of the Latin freemasonry gathered around GOF. The English Grand Lodge had severed its relations with this stream of Freemasonry after 1877, when GOF removed the belief in the Supreme Being as a precondition for being initiated into the Craft.¹⁹ At the end of 1913, a new grand lodge, the Independent Grand Lodge of France and the Colonies, was formed in France. GLNIR (Grande Loge Nationale Indépendante et Régulière pour la France et les Colonies), subsequently GLNF, was immediately recognized by UGLE.²⁰ That was the only grand lodge recognised by UGLE in France in the interwar period.

The impact of French Freemasonry on the GL SCS “Jougoslavia”

The extensive assistance that France offered to Serbia during the Great War, and the rather cordial reception of Serbian freemasons in France in the same period, made the Serbian and subsequent Yugoslav freemasonry particularly tied to the two grand lodges in Paris: GOF and GLF. In June 1919, the Grand Lodge of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes “Jugoslavia” (GL SCSJ or GLJ)²¹ was formed in Zagreb and its first grand master became Georges Weifert (grand master from

¹⁷ Circular no 41 of the Supreme Council of Serbia, Marseilles, October 1918, LMF UGLE, “Croatia, Serbia...”, file 1.

¹⁸ *English Freemasonry and the First World War* (London: The Library and Museum of Freemasonry, 2014), 31

¹⁹ *Ibid.* 12–13.

²⁰ *100 ans de spiritualité maçonnique. Le livre du centenaire* (Paris: GLNF, 2013), 27–28.

²¹ The name of the grand lodge in Belgrade contained the word Yugoslavia ten years before the state officially adopted that name in 1929. In the 1920s, in the documents of the Grand Lodge “Jugoslavia” in French and English the word was mostly spelled as “J(o)ugoslavia”. The lodge officially abbreviated its name in 1930 to the Grand Lodge of Y(o)ugoslavia and during the 1930s it was spelled mostly as “Y(o)ugoslavia”. Therefore in this text I have used the

1919 to 1934),²² a Serbian industrialist of German descent, and the governor of the National Bank of Serbia and later of the Kingdom of SCS (1890–1902 and 1912–1926). The grand master himself was the best link of Yugoslav freemasonry with the world of high capital, but also with the Yugoslav royal family and political élite.²³

What Dušan T. Bataković termed “an atypical alliance”²⁴ was a special military and cultural nexus formed between the Kingdom of Serbia and France during the Great War and then redesigned as a Franco-Yugoslav alliance in the interwar period. In 1919–20, this alliance was confirmed by the results of peace treaties of the Paris Peace Conference. In 1920–21, the Little Entente was established consisting of the victors from the Paris Conference: Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Romania. France itself signed alliances with all three countries: with Czechoslovakia in 1924, with Romania in 1926, and with Yugoslavia in 1927. In this way the countries of the Little Entente became a part of the French system of alliances. As L. Stavrianos put it, “this series of treaties marked the high point of French ascendancy in the Balkans and Eastern Europe.”²⁵ The treaty with Yugoslavia faced certain delays since France had very delicate relations with Italy, and Fascist Italy opposed any treaty between France and Yugoslavia.

GOF openly supported the Little Entente by a special resolution adopted on 30 May 1923, upon the presentation of Miroslav Spalaikovitch, chief delegate of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, to the first assembly of the League of Nations, and Yugoslav minister plenipotentiary in Paris. Spalaikovitch was not a member of the Craft but his lecture was organised through GLJ and through its member D. Tomitch, the delegate of Yugoslavia in Paris.²⁶

abbreviation GLJ for the Grand Lodge of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes “J(o)ugoslavia” (1919–1930), and the abbreviation GLY for the Grand Lodge of Yugoslavia (1930–1940).

²² He himself spelled his name in several different ways: in German as Georg Weifert, in French as Georges Wei(f)fert, in Serbian as Djordje Vajfert. One can also find a Croatian version of his name, as Djura Weifert.

²³ For more detail on Georges Weifert as a freemason see Stevan Nikolic, “George Weifert: Pillar of Serbian Freemasonry,” *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* 116 (2003), 201–211.

²⁴ Dušan T. Bataković, ed., *La Serbie et la France. Une alliance atypique. Relations politiques, économiques et culturelles 1870–1940* (Belgrade: Institut des Études balkaniques, 2010).

²⁵ L. S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans since 1453* (London: Hurst and Company 2000 [1st ed. 1958]), 734.

²⁶ Jov. Aleksijević to all the Craft lodges, Belgrade, 1 September 1923, AJ, Fonds 100, f. 4 – 79. Spalaikovich’s address was published by GOF: Spalaikovitch (Mr.), *The League of Nations and the Little Entente* (Paris 1923). Support for the Little Entente was repeated on later occasions by prominent Serbian and French freemasons: André Lebey, “La France at les Peuples de la Petite Entente”, D. Tomitch, “L’Œuvre libératrice de la Franc-Maçonnerie française dans l’Europe Centrale et les Balkans”, *Neimar* 46 (Dec. 1925), 642–656.

The Franco-Yugoslav alliance had a strong cultural aspect. In January 1920, a special section was established in the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs aimed at spreading French cultural influence in Central Europe. As far as the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was concerned, this policy was designed to maintain “Francophilia” among the Serbs and to limit German cultural influences among Yugoslav Catholics.²⁷ During the 1920s, this policy was successful, but primarily in Serbian and Christian Orthodox regions of Yugoslavia.

Since the newly-proclaimed Kingdom of SCS also found itself in the political sphere of influence of France, that fact made the pro-French orientation of the Yugoslav freemasonry even more natural. Through the French freemasonry the Yugoslav freemasons became active in the International Masonic Association (Association maçonnique internationale (AMI) established in Geneva in October 1921, and in 1922 GL SCS “Jougoslavia” joined AMI.²⁸

The emergence of Fascist Italy soon led to the ban on Freemasonry in this country. In November 1925, the Italian Senate adopted a law on secret associations that effectively banned freemasonry in Italy. On 22 November 1925, the Grand Master of the Grand Orient of Italy Domizio Torrigiani proclaimed the dissolution of all Italian lodges under GOI.²⁹ After the ban on GOI close links of Yugoslav freemasonry with France became crucially important, and GOF was seen as the most powerful actor in continental freemasonry. It is typical that regarding “Fascist barbarities” GLJ informed the lodges under its protection that the grand master of GLJ had undertaken necessary steps and that the whole action regarding events in Italy was in the hands of the Grand Orient of France, “the action of which will without doubt meet expectations”.³⁰

It was primarily thanks to GOF that in September 1926 GL SCS “Jugoslavia” got the opportunity to organise in Belgrade a big Masonic congress in favour of peace sponsored by AMI. The “Manifestation of Universal Freemasonry for Peace and Reconciliation among peoples” (*La Manifestation de la F. M. Universelle pour la Paix et le rapprochement des peuples*) was attended by I. Reverchon, grand chancellor of AMI, Arthur Groussier, president of the Council of GOF,³¹ five grand masters (G. Weifert of Yugoslavia, Dr. Brandenburg of Swiss “Alpina”, D. de Buen Lozano of Spain, Fikret Tahir Bey of Turkey and A.

²⁷ Stanislav Sretenović, “L’action culturelle française auprès des Serbes au sein du Royaume des Serbes, Croates et Slovènes (1918–1929)”, in Bataković, ed., *La Serbie et la France*, 416.

²⁸ “Iz anala svjetske masonerije. A. M. I., Šestar 5–6 (1939), 75.

²⁹ Conti, *Storia della massoneria italiana*, 318.

³⁰ Circular to the lodges and triangles, Belgrade, 20 November 1925, AJ 100, f. 4–146.

³¹ The Grand Orient of France did not have the position of grand master between 1871 and 1945 when it was

replaced by “presidency”. A. Groussier (1863–1957) was the president of the Council of GOF in 1925–26, 1927–30, 1931–34, 1936–39, and 1944–45. He had “a decisive role in the Inter-

Teodoroff-Ballan of Bulgaria), four sovereign grand commanders (Dr. Camille Savoie of GOF, Eugen Lennhoff of Austria, Alfonse Mucha of Czechoslovakia and Fikret Tahir Bey of Turkey).³² The most numerous delegations at the congress were from France and Czechoslovakia, which testified to special links that GLJ had with these two freemasonries.

The congress sent an effective message since Arthur Groussier hugged Dr. Leo Muffelmann, member of the lodge "Bluntschli" in Berlin, and later Muffelmann delivered lectures in Paris "in the spirit of reconciliation".³³ The conference was particularly relevant because its main part was open to the public and in this way it contributed to the media promotion of the Yugoslav grand lodge since all major media covered it in superlatives.³⁴ The main sessions were held in the Main Hall of the University Building and Belgraders attended it en masse. At the opening of the congress grand master of GLJ Georges Weifert expressed his admiration for French freemasonry: "Our people, an eternal legionnaire of liberty and justice, has always regarded with admiration and respect the great immortal France. It holds in the depth of its heart a deep gratitude for all the good she has done for it, for the fraternal love and generous help with which she has showered it at the most painful and the most dolorous moments."³⁵ In the 1920s, equally enthusiastic views on France and on French freemasonry were widely held by Yugoslav freemasons, and particularly by Serbian freemasons.

GL "Yugoslavia" closely cooperated with AMI and occasionally had its representatives in the Executive Committee of AMI. This honour was achieved through the links of the GL "Yugoslavia" with the French freemasonry. Relations were particularly cordial with GOF, but also with GLF, which even established a joint French-Yugoslav lodge "Le général Peigné". The French influence on Yugoslav freemasonry reached its climax in the late 1920s. In 1929–30, GLJ also signed special conventions with GOF and then with GLF, which regulated the

national Masonic Association". S. v. "Groussier, Arthur" and "France" in Daniel Ligou, *Dictionnaire de la franc-maçonnerie* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France), 1987.

³² *La Paix et la rapprochement des peuples. Compte rendu in extenso de la Manifestation organisée par la G. L. Yougoslavie* (Paris: La Paix, 1926), 9–11.

³³ Eugen Lennhoff, *Die Freimaurer* (Zurich-Leipzig-Berlin: Amalthea Verlag, 1929), 287.

³⁴ "Svečani ritualni rad slobodnih zidara" [Solemn Ritual Meeting of Freemasons], *Politika*, 14 Sept. 1926, p. 5; "Svetski značaj beogradskog kongresa nesumnjiv je" [World-wide Importance of the Belgrade Congress is unquestionable], *Vreme*, 15 Sept. 1926; "Kongres Masona" [Masonic Congress], *Pravda*, 12 Sept. 1926, p. 1; "Impozantan završetak masonskog kongresa" [Grand Closing of the Masonic Congress], *Pravda*, 15 Sept. 1926, p. 4.

³⁵ Weifert, T.: Ill.: F.: "Discours de bienvenue", *La Paix et le rapprochement des peuples*, 22. Cf. *Neimar* 65–66 (Oct. 1926), 555–572.

issues of French nationals who wanted to become freemasons in Yugoslavia, and Yugoslav nationals who wanted to be initiated in France.³⁶

In January 1929, due to interethnic tensions between Serbs and Croats, King Alexander proclaimed his personal rule and changed the name of his country from the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. In line with that the Grand Lodge of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes “Yugoslavia”, also changed its name to the Grand Lodge of Y(o)ugoslavia (GLY), but the change did not become effective until 1930.³⁷

Efforts to obtain recognition from UGLE

It is interesting to note that the first efforts of Serbian freemasons to be recognised by the United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE) were made already in 1909, after the Belgrade lodge “Pobratim” broke off relations with the Symbolic Grand Lodge of Hungary. In February that year “Pobratim” addressed UGLE with an appeal “to take us under your protection”.³⁸ In a repeated appeal written in June 1909 the officers of the lodge “Pobratim” expressed their wish “to place ourselves as younger brethren in entire obedience under you, who are our most respected elder brethren”. It was explained that such an act of recognition “would give a mighty impulse for Masonic work in our country”. Probably referring to the great admiration for Gladstone in Serbia, Montenegro, Bulgaria and Greece, the author of the letter wrote: “The great popularity which the British people rightly enjoy in the Balkans as friends of Justice, Liberty and Progress, would mightily forward the Masonic work as soon as it would be known that we were in connection with and under the protection of your influential grand lodge.” Since it was understood that the unilateral severance of relations with Hungary might pose a problem, another proposal was put forward at the end of the letter: that a new lodge could be formed in Belgrade and placed under the protection of UGLE. The letter was signed by the 12 officers of the lodge and by 19 other members on the reverse page of the letter.³⁹ It was accompanied by another letter of Jovan Aleksijević (Yovan Alekxiyevitch) to T. M. Hamm, in which he reminded him of the history of the Lodge “Pobratim”: “It is now almost twenty

³⁶ AJ, Fonds 100, f. 4 – 293.

³⁷ D. Miličević, deputy grand master, to all the lodges of the Craft, 26 March 1930, AJ, Fonds 100, f. 4– 257.

³⁸ I could not find the letter of February 1909 in the Archives of UGLE, but its content is repeated in a letter of 25 June 1909, LMF UGLE, “Croatia, Serbia...”, file 1.

³⁹ Twelve officers of the Lodge “Pobratim” signed the letter, including the master of the lodge *ad vitam* Georges Weifert, current master of the lodge, and deputy master of the lodge Yov. Alekxiyevitch [all are spelled as in the letter].

years since in our modest workshop the flame of love and charity is spread”, and asked that both letters be forwarded to Sir Edward Letchworth (grand secretary of UGLE, 1892–1917), and, on 5 July 1909, it was indeed forwarded. The first application of Serbian freemasons could not have possibly made a good impression in London since they explicitly quoted political rather than freemasonic reasons as the root of their decision to break off with Hungarian freemasonry.⁴⁰

No concrete actions are known to have come out of this initiative and, as a result, negotiations began with the Grand Lodge of Hamburg. A group of members of the Lodge “Pobratim” established the new lodge “Schumadija” in May 1910 under the protection of the Grand Lodge of Hamburg.

Upon the formation of the Grand Lodge of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes “Jugoslavia” in June 1919, a circular letter was sent to grand lodges all around the world. In January 1920, such a circular letter together with the list of grand officers was sent to UGLE. In the accompanying letter the grand master of GLJ, Georges Weifert, reiterated “our desire, and our prayer to you, to have the kindness to enter upon (or to open) a Brotherly correspondence with us.”⁴¹

In 1921, it was again Aleksijević who, as in 1909, appealed to UGLE for recognition, this time on behalf of the GL of SCS “Jugoslavia”. He wrote a letter to the grand secretary of UGLE Philip Colville Smith (grand secretary 1917–37) reminding him that the new grand lodge had sent information on its organisation in July 1919. He essentially appealed to UGLE to follow the foreign policy of the United Kingdom, which maintained good relations with the new Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and with some sorrow, added: “I was expecting that the United Grand Lodge of England would be one of the first to officially acknowledge the Grand Lodge of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.”⁴²

A report on the Yugoslav grand lodge, most likely from 1922, was prepared for UGLE. It explains the reasons that could have been behind UGLE’s reluctance to recognise the new grand lodge. It was noted that grand master Weifert and grand secretary Aleksijević occupied the same positions in the Supreme Council of Serbia. The Supreme Council was assessed “to have been intensely political in character”, and even the Sarajevo Assassination “is said to have been

⁴⁰ Aleksijević wrote in his letter to the UGLE: “In view of the deplorable fact that the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy annexed two Servian provinces, Bosnia and Herzegovina, disregarding and indeed violating the plain and binding international engagements, and grievously injuring the national, cultural and moral interests of our nation, our Servian Lodge could not continue the relations of obedience which up to that Annexation bound us to the Symbolic Grand Lodge of Hungary.” Alexiyevitch to UGLE, Belgrade, 25 May 1909, LMF UGLE, “Croatia, Serbia...”, file 1.

⁴¹ Grand Master to the United Grand Lodge of England, Belgrade, 31 January 1919, English translation, LMF UGLE, “Croatia, Serbia...”, file 1.

⁴² Jov. Aleksijević to Colville Smith, Belgrade, 19 May 1921, LMF UGLE, “Croatia, Serbia...”, file 1.

planned and carried out by Serbian Masons, though this statement has been denied by grand master himself.⁴³

The Yugoslav grand lodge also used diplomatic channels to support its initiative. In September 1922, J. Aleksijević sent a copy of the Constitution of GLJ to Colville Smith. He informed him that he had asked “our brother Dr. Michel Gavrilovitch, Minister of Yugoslavia at the British Court”,⁴⁴ to be at his disposal for all clarifications related to the paragraphs of the Constitution, so that he would get “absolute conviction that Freemasonry of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes is organized according to the rules and duly recognized”. He also mentioned that GLJ had already been recognized and was in regular fraternal relations with 68 great Masonic authorities.⁴⁵

In 1923 a favourable text in English appeared on Yugoslav freemasonry and was reproduced in several freemasonic journals. The article in *The Freemason* informs its readers that the Grand Lodge of SCS “Yugoslavia” was recently formed in Belgrade. Upon reading texts from the official organ of the Yugoslav freemasonry *Neimar*,⁴⁶ the author concludes about the new grand lodge: “This institution is doing splendid work.” He also assesses that after the downfall of Austria-Hungary the rise of freemasonry took place in former parts of the Monarchy and that the rise “means the decline of the power of Rome in those countries”.⁴⁷

In 1923, the GL SCS “Yugoslavia” was the principal actor in bringing light to a new grand lodge in Prague: “The National Grand Lodge of Czechoslovakia”. This lodge was to consist primarily of Slavs, since another grand lodge, “Lessing”, also operated in this country with meetings in German. Although this act raised the prominence of Yugoslav freemasonry in continental Europe it was closely followed by UGLE since this meant that an unrecognised European grand lodge, from the point of view of UGLE, had established yet another grand lodge.

⁴³ An undated document entitled “SERBIA (EUROPE)”, LMF UGLE, “Croatia, Serbia...”, file 1.

⁴⁴ Mihailo Gavrilovitch (1868–1924) was the Yugoslav minister in London from 1920 until his death in 1924. He was a capable diplomat of Serbia and Yugoslavia and the former Director of the Archives of Serbia. “Dr. Gavrilovitch’s Career”, *The Times*, 3 Nov. 1924, p. 13. In his Masonic obituary Jovan Aleksijević praised the fact that he was “exceptionally useful” for the Craft because he “maintained constant ties with Masonic circles in London.” J. A., “Brat Dr. Mih. Gavrilovič”, *Neimar* 29–31 (July–Sept. 1924), 382–383.

⁴⁵ Jovan Aleksijević to V. W. Bro. P. Colville Smith, Belgrade, 26 September 1922, LMF UGLE, “Croatia, Serbia...”, file 1.

⁴⁶ From September 1923 the official organ of the Grand Lodge “Yugoslavia” was *Šestar*, a Masonic journal published in Zagreb, while *Neimar* continued to be printed in Belgrade until the end of 1926 as a Masonic review.

⁴⁷ “Masonry in Yugoslavia”, *The Freemason*, 16 June 1923, 723. The article was reproduced in *Masonic Chronicles*, 29 September 1923.

In February 1924 the grand master and grand secretary of GLJ addressed once more the grand master of UGLE: "The Grand Lodge of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, 'Jugoslavia', at its last meeting had with great regret to state that still it has not had the happiness to be recognised by the United Grand Lodge of England." In the letter the officials of GLJ insisted that the Constitution of GLJ was "only a faithful copy of that of the Swiss Grand Lodge 'Alpina'" and its Masonic principles "have been taken from Anderson's 'Constitutions.'"⁴⁸ This appeal did not bring any results either.

A new situation arose in 1926 when divisions appeared within the Yugoslav freemasonry, and more specifically among the Zagreb lodges. In June 1926 GLJ brought light to a new lodge in Zagreb – "Prometheus". However, already in November the same year this lodge requested to be relieved of the protection of GLJ. GLJ instead suspended the lodge in January 1927, and then in March decided that the lodge would cease to exist. The Grand Lodge "Jugoslavia" informed all the grand lodges, including UGLE, of its decision.⁴⁹ Another lodge, "Fraternal love", was re-established in Zagreb without the protection of any grand lodge. On 25 September 1926 it asked UGLE to be placed under its protection. On 28 March 1927, the grand secretary of UGLE replied to barrister Bogdan Njemčić that "where there is already a Sovereign Grand Jurisdiction in a country, it is not the practice of the United Grand Lodge of England to extend its jurisdiction over any Lodge in that country, even though it may work in accordance with the landmarks of our Grand Lodge."⁵⁰

In May 1927, three lodges in Zagreb formed the Symbolic Grand Lodge "Libertas". This new lodge did not get recognition from any continental grand lodge. Since UGLE had already refused to take individual lodges under its protection, the Grand Lodge "Libertas", on 9 November 1928, simply informed UGLE that at St. John's meeting it had laid "the basis of our Grand Lodge definitively on the Anglo-Saxon Free-Masonic Principles."⁵¹

In September 1929, UGLE adopted its "basic principles for grand lodge recognition". The third point of the principles demands "that all Initiates shall take their Obligation on or in full view of the open Volume of the Sacred Law." In other words the initiates had to believe in God. The fourth point restricts

⁴⁸ Georges Weifert and Jov. Aleksijevic to the grand master of UGLE, Belgrade, 13 February 1924. The original letter in French has been preserved, and the quotes are taken from the English translation made for UGLE. LMF UGLE, "Croatia, Serbia..."; file 1.

⁴⁹ Letter of the GLJ no. 7415 "à toutes les ggr.: obédiences", Belgrade, 29 March 1927, LMF UGLE, "Croatia, Serbia..."; file 1.

⁵⁰ Grand Secretary [of UGLE] to Bogdan Njemcic, 28 March 1927, LMG UGLE, "Croatia, Serbia..."; file 1.

⁵¹ Veljko Tomić and Branko Domac to UGLE, Zagreb, 9 November 1928, LFM UGLE, "Croatia, Serbia..."; file 1.

membership exclusively to men, and the seventh point strictly prohibits discussions on religion and politics in lodges.⁵² These three points made fraternal relations of UGLE with GOF impossible. Since AMI was dominated by GOF, UGLE was automatically ill-disposed to this organisation. Cordial relations of GLJ and AMI were therefore another less than favourable fact regarding the grand lodge in Belgrade.

Following the adoption of basic principles, GLJ sent another letter on 22 October 1929, confirming that it worked in line with UGLE's principles.⁵³ The main points of that letter were integrated into a report on GLJ prepared by UGLE in January 1930. The report expressed reservations toward the following claim of GLJ: "No discussions of Religion or Politics are allowed within the lodge." UGLE, however, possessed a 1919 pamphlet on the national claims of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes which was seen as political. It was also mentioned that in 1926 a schism had taken place in Yugoslav freemasonry, and that the grand lodge "Libertas" had been formed in 1927, and all the three lodges under its protection had accepted "Anglo-Saxon Freemasonic Principles".⁵⁴

UGLE apparently demanded additional information in its letter to GLJ dated 18 January 1930, and, on 2 March, a reply from Belgrade was sent. In his reply Douchan Militchevitch⁵⁵ insisted that GLJ would exclude any member of the Craft who would in the capacity of mason "either approach or enter into any religious or political society as well as if the[y] would show the tendency to give such societies Masonic stamp." The rest of the letter offers a relatively unbiased summary of how the grand lodge "Libertas" was created. A declaration of the former grand master of "Libertas" was quoted⁵⁶ in which he advised his brethren "to capitulate before the Grand Lodge 'Jugoslavija'", and Militchevitch assessed that the GL "Libertas" could have 60 to 80 members.⁵⁷

The adoption of these basic principles prompted UGLE to consider recognising several foreign grand lodges. At the quarterly communication of

⁵² *Gould's History of Freemasonry*, vol. III, revised edition (London: The Caxton Publishing Company, 1951), 120. *Constitutions of the Ancient Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons under the United Grand Lodge of England* (London: Freemasons' Hall, 2009), vii–viii.

⁵³ Deputy GM and grand secretary of GLJ to Colville Smith, grand secretary of UGLE, Belgrade, 22 October 1929, LMF UGLE, "Croatia, Serbia...", file 1.

⁵⁴ LMF UGLE, "Croatia, Serbia...", file 1.

⁵⁵ Also spelled Dušan Miličević. He became the first grand warden of GLJ in 1919 and was re-elected to that position in 1925. In 1930, he became deputy grand master of the Grand Lodge of Yugoslavia, and in 1934 its grand master.

⁵⁶ This is a reference to Veljko Tomić, the first grand master of the GL "Libertas" from 1927 until 1930. AJ, Fonds 100, f. 14 – 3–4.

⁵⁷ Militchevitch to Colville Smith, Belgrade, 2 March 1930, LMF UGLE, "Croatia, Serbia...", file 1.

UGLE held on 4 June 1930, four resolutions on the recognition of four foreign grand lodges were proposed: one each in Yugoslavia and Romania and two in Czechoslovakia. UGLE decided to recognise both the Grand Lodge “Lessing zu den drei Ringen” and the National Grand Lodge of Czechoslovakia and its decision was facilitated by the fact that the two lodges mutually co-operated. It also recognised the National Grand Lodge of Romania in Bucharest, but refused to recognise the Grand Orient of Romania due to its close relations with GOF. Finally it recognised the Grand Lodge of Yugoslavia in Belgrade.⁵⁸ The decision on the recognition of GLJ was confirmed at the quarterly communication of UGLE held on 3 September 1930. After that UGLE notified GLJ of its decision and GLJ sent a circular to all the lodges under its protection.⁵⁹

The relative inactivity of UGLE in Europe in the inter-war period was a part of its general policy. It is characteristic for this period that UGLE made only three visits to other grand lodges in Europe: two to Sweden and one to Greece in 1938.⁶⁰

Reorientation to Britain

The Grand Lodge of Yugoslavia had around 600 members and 17 lodges in 1927, and its official Sreten Stojković claimed in 1931 that it had 900 members and 23 lodges under its protection.⁶¹ Its peak in terms of both its influence and membership was in the 1926–1934 period. With up to 1,000 members in the mid-1930s, it gathered prominent members of the upper and upper middle class of Yugoslavia. It was an elitist, essentially Serbo-Croat organisation, with a single lodge in Slovenia consecrated as late as 1940. In terms of occupational structure of its members it was the following: 10.4% doctors, 10.2% barristers, 9.2% merchants, 8.2% bank or insurance owners and top managers, 7.9% engineers, 6.9% university lecturers, 6.1% of high-ranking civil servants... Workers, craftsmen and students together accounted for less than 2% of its membership.⁶² Essentially, members of the Craft in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia were “men of good repute”, as freemasons have liked to call themselves.

⁵⁸ *Proceedings of the Quarterly Communication* holden on Wednesday, the 4th day of June 1930 (London: UGLE, 1930), 336–337.

⁵⁹ Deputy grand master Militchevitch to all the lodges of the Craft, Belgrade, 10 September 1930. AJ, Fonds 100, f. 4 – 271.

⁶⁰ *English Freemasonry and the First World War*, 90.

⁶¹ Marković, *Jedan vek velike lože*, 65. S[re]t[en]. J. St[ojković]., *Slobodno zidarstvo. Kratka obaveštenja za neposvećene* (Belgrade 1931), 106.

⁶² Slobodan G. Markovich, “Overview of the History of Freemasonry in Yugoslavia”, in Matevž Košir, ed., *Secret of the Lodge* (Ljubljana: National Museum of Slovenia, 2018), 212–215.

Soon after the recognition by UGLE the Grand Lodge “Yugoslavia” was also recognised by the Grand Lodge of Ireland, the second oldest grand lodge in the world established in 1725.⁶³ In spite of the occasional correspondence that existed between the GL SCS “J(o)ugoslavia” and UGLE, real relations could be developed only upon UGLE’s recognition of the Yugoslav lodge.

In January 1931 the first discussion appeared among Yugoslav freemasons on the issue of which model should be implemented in Yugoslavia: that of the French or that of the English freemasonry. Some months after recognition by UGLE, a speech by “Lj. T.” (Ljubomir Tomašić)⁶⁴ was published in *Šestar*, the official organ of GLY. Tomašić pointed out that the definition of what freemasonry was omitted in the Constitution of GLY: “Under our Constitution, as under the English, the definition and purpose of freemasonry is to be felt by every Br[other].” It was also emphasised that “men – idealists”, who were “the main foundation of the Craft” were those who established the first grand lodge in 1717. “Such people spread the Craft from England worldwide, such people are also today its centre.”⁶⁵ This means that for Tomašić there was no doubt which freemasonry should serve as a model to the GLY. It was the Anglo-Saxon freemasonry.

In Belgrade Damjan Branković (1866–1954), a prominent Belgrade industrialist, was for many years master of lodge No. 2 “Pobratim”. In January 1931, he reacted to Tomašić’s speech just after its publication, delivering his own speech on the French and English Freemasonries. He claimed: “England is the conqueror of the world, France is its educator.”⁶⁶ For him both French and English masonries were good examples for GLY.

We may congratulate the English, we may admire the French. French freemasonry is in geographical terms closer than English. We are in constant contact with it. We have on its territory a joint lodge “General Peigné”. We co-operate with it in the convention of A.M.I., and at every step we witness its sympathies for our institution and our country.⁶⁷

Branković’s speech was in full harmony with the foreign policy orientation of King Alexander Karageorgevich and of Yugoslav governments in the

⁶³ “Još jedno priznanje naše Velike lože”, *Šestar* 1–2 (Jan.–Feb. 1931), 45.

⁶⁴ Ljubomir Tomašić was the second grand warden of GLJ in 1925–30. He was a lawyer, an expert on maritime law, briefly the minister of agriculture in 1933, and a senator in the 1930s. *Who’s Who in Central and East-Europe 1935/36* (Zurich: The Central European Times, 1937), 1093. In 1940, Tomašić became the sovereign grand commander of the Supreme Council of Yugoslavia; in other words, he became the head of the red freemasonry in Yugoslavia.

⁶⁵ “Smotra u organizaciji Vel. Lože ‘Jugoslavija’”, *Šestar* 1–2 (Jan.–Feb. 1931), 3.

⁶⁶ “Engleska, Francuska Masonerija i mi”, in D[amjan]. J. B[ranković], *Govori starešine lože Pobratim* (Belgrade: Planeta, 1931?), 160.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* 163.

early 1930s. As long as the official policy of the Kingdom had a pro-French orientation, the same could be expected from the Grand of Lodge of Yugoslavia. Regardless, there was also an evident pro-British line in Yugoslav freemasonry.

It is indicative that the official organ of the Grand Lodge of Yugoslavia, *Šestar*, published an unusually lengthy pro-British report in 1933, one of the longest articles ever published in this journal. The illustrated report covers 18 pages, which is more than half of all pages of its issues 6-8. It was written by the retired Yugoslav diplomat Stanoje Mihajlović (1882–1946)⁶⁸ who, in July 1933, attended the ceremony of the opening of the Masonic Peace Memorial, the central temple of UGLE in London. The celebration was attended by representatives of only 9 grand lodges (“Lessing” from Czechoslovakia, Austria, France – GLN, Norway, Denmark, Switzerland, Sweden, the Netherlands and Yugoslavia).

Mihajlović wrote his article with the clear ambition of convincing the Yugoslav freemasons that English freemasonry was the central European freemasonry, emphasising its impact on the British society. As he pointed out: “We need to realise that an institution to which the flower of a great nation belongs and that has been headed for 150 years by members of the Royal House means a lot not only for its country but for the whole world.”⁶⁹

Plan to make the Duke of York an honorary grand officer of GLY

In October 1934, King Alexander of Yugoslavia was assassinated in Marseilles. His murder may be seen as the symbolic end of the special Franco-Yugoslav alliance.⁷⁰ As the King’s British biographer noticed: “France was considered to have done but little for Serbia after the war, but the King never wavered in his sentimental devotion to the country for whom his father had fought in 1870, to the France he had been brought up to admire. In a way, Alexander, always reading the French classics, lived with the French. He had become almost French.”⁷¹

Since Alexander’s son Peter was still a child in 1934, he was succeeded by a three-member regency presided by his first cousin Prince Regent Paul (Prince Regent from October 1934 until 27 March 1941). The prince was in close family relations with the British royal family. His wife Princess Olga of Greece was

⁶⁸ Stanoje Mihajlović was a former minister of Yugoslavia to Tirana (1928–1929), and had previously served as the counsellor in Yugoslav legations in Athens, Prague, Berlin and Warsaw. He was retired in 1931. AJ, Fonds 334 (Personal Files) – 175.

⁶⁹ Br.: Dr St[anoje]. M[ihajlović], “Izveštaj sa svečanosti prilikom otvaranja Masonskog Hrama Mira u Londonu”, *Šestar* 6–8 (1933), 95.

⁷⁰ Cf. Vojislav Pavlović, “L’Attentat de Marseille 1934. La fin symbolique d’une alliance atypique”, in Bataković, ed., *La Serbie et la France*, 575–595.

⁷¹ Stephen Graham, *Alexander of Yugoslavia. Strong Man of the Balkans*. London: Cassel and Co., 1938, 216.

the sister of Princess Marina. In 1934, the latter married the Duke of Kent, who thus became Prince Paul's brother-in-law. His best man at the wedding with Princess Olga in October 1923 was the Duke of York.⁷² Prince Paul studied at Oxford in 1913–14 and in 1918–20, and had numerous friends and acquaintances from the ranks of the British élite and aristocracy. If King Alexander “became almost French”, Prince Paul may be said to have been strongly influenced by British manners.

King Alexander had demonstrated affection and sympathies for the Grand Lodge of Yugoslavia, and the leadership of the grand lodge was very thankful to him for that support. When he was killed Masonic lodges in Paris, Zagreb and Belgrade organised special commemorative meetings usually reserved for deceased members of the Craft only.⁷³ His first cousin was, however, more inclined to Rotary Clubs and in May 1938 he became an honorary governor for life of Yugoslav Rotary clubs.⁷⁴ However, his royal relatives in Britain traditionally held the highest offices in UGLE, and in the recollections of his marshal of the court, Milan Antić, Prince Paul had “sympathies and a very good opinion on English freemasonry as a serious, constructive and influential organisation headed by the members of the English Royal House. But, he did not have a good opinion of the French system of freemasonry to which the Yugoslav freemasonry belonged.”⁷⁵ The two other members of the Regency were accused by Catholic officials of being freemasons. In May 1935, Archbishop of Zagreb Bauer accused co-regents I. Perović and R. Stankovich that they acted “in the interest of Freemasonry”, and even the London *Times* mentioned the allegation.⁷⁶

⁷² Neil Balfour and Sally Mackay, *Paul of Yugoslavia. Britain's Maligned Friend* (Winnipeg: Friesen Printers, 1996 [1st ed. 1980]), 34.

⁷³ The commemorative meetings of Yugoslav freemasons dedicated to the late King were held by the Zagreb lodges (12 Oct. 1934), and by the Grand Lodge in Belgrade (16 Oct.). At the meeting in Belgrade a special address of Vladimir Čorović was read. It was later published in Serbo-Croatian and French in *Šestar*. Fr.: Dr. V. Č., “Le Roi Alexandre”, *Šestar* 9–10 (1934), 177–178. _

⁷⁴ *Beogradske opštinske novine* 5–6 (1938), 406–407.

⁷⁵ Statement of Milan Antić given to the “Institute” on 18 April 1952. The “Institute” was a cover created by the Yugoslav Secret Police in order to facilitate the gathering of information from Serbian/Yugoslav pre-war élites. AJ, Fonds 100, f. 15 – 478.

⁷⁶ “The Skupština meets”, *The Times*, 4 June 1935, p. 15e. As far as the links of the Yugoslav regency with freemasonry are concerned, one can find Masonic sources that may confirm membership in the Craft for Radenko Stankovich only. He was grand officer of the Grand Lodge of Yugoslavia in 1919, when it was established, and performed the duty of “expert”. Georges Weifert à tout les G.:L.: & G.:O.: de l'univers, Belgrade, no. 101, 20 November 1919, LMF UGLE, “Croatia, Serbia...”, file 1. Some sources suggest that Stankovich was later excluded from the Craft. Testimony of Ljubica Anastasijević, former administrative secretary of GLY, to the “Institute”, Belgrade, 28 March 1952, AJ, Fonds 100, f. 15 – 475.

From 1935 a growing German influence was obvious in Yugoslavia. The government of Milan Stojadinović (1935–1939) promoted German economic penetration into Yugoslavia, underestimating German political influence that would result from it.⁷⁷ By 1938 both exports from the Kingdom of Yugoslavia to the so-called Greater Germany and imports from that area reached 50%.⁷⁸ This economic penetration was followed by German influence on Yugoslav society. Therefore in the late 1930s German and British cultural influence clashed in Yugoslavia, while the previously dominant French influence was in gradual decline.

In April 1934, the new leadership of GLY was elected. Douchan Militchevitch, a wealthy hotel owner from Belgrade, became the new grand master. Two Belgrade historians also became important persons in the grand lodge. Prof. Vladimir Ćorović became deputy grand master of GLY. In 1935/36 he was also the rector of the University of Belgrade. The other historian, Viktor Novak, was also professor at the University of Belgrade. He became grand secretary of GLY. Both of them performed these functions until GLY was forced to self-suspend its activities on 1 August 1940. Ćorović and Novak were the key advocates and founding fathers of Yugoslavism – the idea that Serbs, Croats and Slovenes were a single nation consisting of three tribes that would unite in a single Yugoslav nation, in a similar fashion as Italians had done. For the two of them, and for many other Yugoslav freemasons, the concept of Yugoslavism became a kind of civil religion.⁷⁹

Militchevitch had multiple ties with the Anglo-American world. He was in Washington in 1912 to ask for the recognition of the Southern Jurisdiction, and he sent a letter of thanks on behalf of the Yugoslav freemasons to the American President Woodrow Wilson for his support to the principle of national self-determination.⁸⁰ He also proved to be instrumental in efforts to make the reorientation of Yugoslav freemasonry.

The issues of *Šestar* reveal a growing interest in and an increased inclination to English freemasonry from about 1935. Thus issues 7–8 for 1935 open with greetings to the British monarch George V on the occasion of his silver

⁷⁷ John R. Lampe, *Yugoslavia. Twice there was a Country* (Cambridge: CUP, 2000), 184–186.

⁷⁸ Stavrianos, *The Balkans since 1453*, 600.

⁷⁹ Marković, *Jedan vek velike lože*, 91–98. Ćorović and Novak published or edited some key books promoting the concept of Yugoslavism: Viktor Novak, ed., *Antologija jugoslovenske misli i narodnog jedinstva (1390–1930)* (Belgrade 1930); Vladimir Ćorović, *Istorija Jugoslavije* (Belgrade: Narodno delo, 1933).

⁸⁰ President Wilson replied to this letter on 22 April 1919 and Militchevitch copied the letter and sent it to the former Serbian Prime Minister N. Pashitch (Pašić). D. Militchevitch to N. Pashitch, Paris, 25 April 1919, Arhiv Srpske akademija nauka i umetnosti [Archives of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts; hereafter ASANU] 11704. The letter has been reproduced in Marković, *Jedan vek velike lože*, 60.

anniversary, and issues 3–4 for 1936 open with pages dedicated to the death of the British king. On that occasion both the grand master of GLY, and his deputy Prof. Vladimir Ćorović sent their condolences via telegram to UGLE.⁸¹ Even the main Belgrade daily *Politika* published the telegram of GLY which was sent to UGLE, next to the official proclamation of mourning by the Yugoslav Court.⁸² The last issue in 1936 begins with the reply of King Edward VIII to the declaration of loyalty submitted to him by the English freemasons.

There was a growing anti-Masonic campaign in Yugoslavia, which was exacerbated by the personal animosity between the principal officers of GLY and Anton Korošec, the leader of the Slovene People's Party and a Catholic priest. His party was one of the pillars of Yugoslavism. Therefore in various combinations for ruling political coalitions in Yugoslavia his presence proved to be almost inevitable. He was the only non-Serb in the interwar period who briefly occupied the post of the Prime Minister of Yugoslavia (1928–29) and between June 1935 and August 1938 he served as the Minister of Interior Affairs. Korošec and GLY belonged to the same camp in terms of Yugoslavism; however, they completely disagreed on issues of clericalism. When Korošec became the interior minister he did whatever he could to disrupt the work of GLY, including banning its journals, and he even prevented the organisation of its annual assembly in 1936.⁸³

In addition to internal opponents, the Yugoslav freemasonry also always had in mind the fate of the Italian freemasonry, which had been banned since 1925. There was a fear that the same could happen to GLY as well. Since the Masonic congress in Belgrade in 1926, the Italian Fascist press viewed GLY as an enemy of Italy and encouraged anti-Masonic propaganda in Yugoslavia. To prevent being banned, and to make GLY more resistant to internal pressures, a group of grand officers of GLY, headed by its grand master Militchevitch, devised a plan to link GLY with UGLE.

Undoubtedly the French freemasonry was very popular and widely respected among Serbian freemasons. It was, however, clear since 1934/35 that it could not protect Yugoslav freemasons from clerical attacks. The English freemasonry had two special advantages. 1. it was traditionally religiously neutral and never undertook anti-religious actions, and 2. it was closely connected with the British royal house. Therefore, some leaders of GLY concluded that formal ties between the two freemasonries, supported by close family relations of the two dynasties, could facilitate the work of the Craft in Yugoslavia.

⁸¹ "Smrt engleskoga kralja", *Šestor* 3–4 (1936), 33–35.

⁸² *Politika*, 23 January 1936.

⁸³ See the new-year epistle of the grand master D. Militchevitch from January 1937, *Šestor* 7–10 (1939), 132–133.

An idea appeared in 1936 that Albert, the Duke of York, the best man of Prince Paul and godfather to young King Peter II, could become an honorary grand master or an honorary grand officer of GLY. At that time Albert was the brother of the British King Edward VIII (January–December 1936). In June 1922, the Prince of York was in Belgrade when he represented his father King George V as best man at the wedding of King Alexander of Yugoslavia and Princess Maria of Romania, the great-granddaughter of Queen Victoria. On October 21, 1923, he attended the christening of Prince Peter, subsequently King Peter II of Yugoslavia, representing as proxy King George V. The next day he attended another wedding in Belgrade, this time as the best man of Prince Paul.⁸⁴

From 1901 the grand master of UGLE was Prince Albert, Duke of Connaught and Streathern (1850–1942). The previous grand master of UGLE had been Albert, Prince of Wales (from 1874 to 1901). When Albert ascended the British throne in January 1901 as Edward VII he resigned his position of grand master, and was succeeded as grand master by his brother Prince Albert from 1901 until 1939. The deputy grand master of UGLE from 1926 until 1935 was Colonel F. S. W. Cornwallis.⁸⁵

The Yugoslav grand master Douchan Militchevitch was a regular visitor of the French resort town of Vichy. During his stay there, in May 1936, he wrote to his grand secretary Viktor Novak on the plans that he had previously discussed with another officer of GLY, barrister Savko Dukanac. He wrote “that matters should get straight in Belgrade as soon as possible”, and that an audience with Prince Paul should be requested for that purpose. He hoped that his deputy Prof. Vladimir Ćorović could have the audience with the Prince. However, Ćorović had previously submitted his resignation to the position of deputy grand master of GLY. Therefore, Militchevitch asked Novak to try to convince Ćorović to revoke his resignation and then to go and ask Prince Paul “that we may take a step in London to get consent for the election of an honorary grand master”. He clarified the motivation behind this action: “I believe that as a motivation for the whole matter one should present that, though we are well aware of the enormous value of the Prince’s family ties, we still hold that in the moment of danger coming from Italy, our relations with the English freemasonry through the Duke of York could also be of unquestionable importance.”⁸⁶ He also had in mind that the grand master of UGLE, the Duke of Connaught, was

⁸⁴ Dušan Babac, “The Houses of Windsor and Karageorgevich – From Foreigners to Relatives”, in Markovich, ed., *British-Serbian Relations*, 238; Dušan Babac, *Alexander I. The Knightly King* (Belgrade: Evro Book, 2018), 151; Balfour and Mackay, *Paul of Yugoslavia*, 54–56.

⁸⁵ *Gould’s History of Freemasonry*, vol. III, 118–119.

⁸⁶ Douchan [Militchevitch] to Viktor [Novak], Vichy, 20 May 1936, ASANU, Viktor Novak Papers, *Masonica*.

in his 80s, and that the Duke of York, as the brother of the British king, would one day become the grand master of UGLE. The Grand Lodge of Yugoslavia had received an invitation to send its representatives to attend the installation of the new grand master of the Grand Lodge of Scotland in November, and the new head of Scottish freemasons was to become the Duke of York. Since the celebrations were to go on for several days, the Yugoslav grand master thought that it would be “the most adequate that our envoys, on that occasion, officially notify him on our election and ask for the consent of the Duke of York.”⁸⁷

In April 1936, the first letter with some sort of initiative was sent to UGLE, since on April 10, 1936, the grand secretary of UGLE confirmed the receipt of Mihajlović's letter and replied: “I am sure you fully appreciate that the request is one upon which it is not possible for me to anticipate what the reply of H.R.H. the Duke of York will be.”⁸⁸

On June 29, 1936, Militchevitch cabled to Novak from Paris that Colville Smith would receive him on July 3.⁸⁹ On July 6, the grand master of GLY sent a special letter with additional explanations to Smith. He emphasised the fact that the Duke of York had acted as the first witness at the wedding of King Alexander and as godfather at the christening of Prince Peter, later King Peter II. He explained that in the traditions of the Serbian Orthodox Church a child's godfather was treated as a relative and a second father, and after the death of King Alexander the Duke of York had become the “natural protector and father of the young King” which explains the “enormous popularity” that he enjoys “throughout the whole of our country”. He clarified that GLY was “greatly attached to the principle of Monarchy in general and to the Royal House of Karageorgevitch in particular”, and finally, in line with all of that, he proposed that the Duke should be asked “to honour our Masonry by accepting the title of honorary Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Jugoslavia”. He asked UGLE to first ascertain if the Duke would be able to accept this proposal.⁹⁰

The next day he reported to Viktor Novak from London that C. Smith had “accepted to mediate.” He optimistically assessed: “It seems that only formal reasons regarding the royal house and its members could make this issue take less than a favourable course among those in charge in the government.”⁹¹ The

⁸⁷ Douchan [Militchevitch] to Viktor [Novak], Vichy, 31 May 1936, *ibid.*

⁸⁸ Grand Secretary of UGLE to St. Mihajlovic, 10 April 1936, *Letter Book X3* (19th May 1936 – 20th July 1936), LMF UGLE.

⁸⁹ Cable of D. Militchevitch to Viktor Novak sent from Paris on 29 June 1936, ASANU, Viktor Novak Papers, *Masonica*. On that occasion he demanded to be urgently informed on when Stanoje Mihajlović would come to London since he needed him as his translator.

⁹⁰ D. Militchevitch to Colville Smith, 6 July 1936, LMF UGLE, “Croatia, Serbia...”, file 1.

⁹¹ Douchan [Milichvitch] to Viktor [Novak], London, Hotel Russell, 7 July 1936, ASANU, Viktor Novak Papers, *Masonica*.

final answer came in September when the grand secretary of UGLE informed Militchevitch that the Duke of York had given “very careful consideration to the request”, but:

He desires that I should inform you that while he much appreciates the suggestion which you have made, he feels he must excuse himself from accepting the title of Honorary Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Yugoslavia, as it is not customary for members of the British Royal House to be connected with organisations in Foreign Countries in the manner indicated.⁹²

In this way the plan to approach the Duke of York in November in Edinburgh failed. GLY nonetheless sent its representative. It was one among only nine continental European masonries that had sent its representative to attend the bicentenary of the Grand Lodge of Scotland, and it once again sent Stanoje Mihajlović, who had also attended the celebrations in 1933. He was a grand officer of GLY, but not one of its top-ranking officers. Since the action had already failed there was no point in sending someone with a higher rank. His report was again published in *Šestar*, but not before 1938.

In 1937, the Grand Lodge of Yugoslavia openly opposed the ratification of the Concordat between the Holy See and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. That was the only political issue in the interwar period that united the Yugoslav freemasons into a single front. In the struggle against the Concordat GLY found itself in a heterogeneous group that included the Serbian Orthodox Church and some opposition political parties. The government had to yield and revoke the agreement. In that way GLY made a bitter enemy of the Catholic Church in Yugoslavia, although its members made up 37.5% of the country’s population.⁹³ Moreover, this activity of GLY was also viewed very unfavourably by the Regency and Prince Paul since they endorsed the Concordat agreement. GLY’s reasoning during the crises was deeply entrenched in the French traditions of anticlericalism, and it was rather different from the ideals of the English freemasonry that the Craft should not interfere in any religious issues.

The following year Mihajlović’s report from Scotland was published in *Šestar*. He was particularly impressed that the Scottish freemasonry had the blessing of the church, and that in St. Giles’ Cathedral in Edinburgh the service was attended “by brethren only, and those who officiated were only priests –

⁹² Grand Secretary of the UGLE to D. Militchevitch, 23 September 1936, *Letter Book Y3* (20th July 1936 – 30th September 1936), LMF UGLE.

⁹³ For more information on the position of GLY in this conflict see Marković, *Jedan vek Velike lože*, 126–130. According to the census of 1931, 48.7% of the Yugoslav population was Christian Orthodox, 37.45% was Roman Catholic, 11.2% was Muslim, 1.7 was Protestant, and 0.49% was Jewish.

masters".⁹⁴ On 29 November 1936, the Duke of York was installed as the grand master of Scotland, and Mihajlović attended the subsequent reception. The grand master spoke with a few delegates only, including him, and Mihajlović reported their conversation in the Yugoslav Masonic journal:

He addressed me with: "Oh, we already know each other from London (he was referring to 1933). I am glad to see you again." I thanked him for his token of appreciation and I congratulated him on behalf of one of the youngest Grand Lodges for the honour of having become the Grand Master of one of the oldest. "You are young, but active", the Duke replied. "Pass my regards to your grand master and all the brethren." It goes without saying that this attention was addressed to our Freemasonry irrespectively of my person.⁹⁵

Mihajlović, in his report, also expressed some of his more general political views concerning European Freemasonry: "Since it is no pure coincidence that the happiest and the most advanced countries are precisely those where Freemasonry is the most developed, and also that it is equally persecuted both by fascism and communism. Freemasonry fights both of these post-war psychoses."⁹⁶ Mihajlović explained: "We have been fighting both of these extremisms since it makes no difference to us if we are being pushed to break our neck by jumping into the abyss from the left or from the right." To a European liberal and freemason in the second half of the 1930s Britain indeed looked like the perfect model country in which neither left- nor right-wing totalitarianism was able to take hold, and freemasonry in the Isles seemed stronger than ever, particularly in comparison with continental freemasonries where grand lodges tended to be banned one by one.

On 12 January 1937, the honorary grand master *ad vitam* of GLY and the sovereign grand commander of the Supreme Councils of Serbia and Yugoslavia since 1912 Georges Weifert died. On that occasion GLY received condolences from various Masonic bodies. They reveal the limits of its efforts for reorientation. Although the list of telegrams starts with the one sent by UGLE, this cable of Colville Smith simply mentions a "very great loss".⁹⁷ The telegram of Arthur Groussier, in the capacity of grand master of the Supreme Council of GOF, was of a different kind. It insisted on the links between the two freemasonries that the deceased grand master had symbolised. "At this sorrowful moment which brings into mourning Universal Freemasonry, we are in our hearts with you,

⁹⁴ Br. Stanoje Mihaljević, "Izvjestaj o proslavi 200-godišnjice Škotske velike lože", *Šestar* 3–4 (1938), 50. Mihajlović's surname was misspelled in *Šestar* as "Mihaljević".

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* 51.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.* 52–53.

⁹⁷ Colville Smith to D. Militchevitch, London, 26 April 1937, *Šestar* 4–6 (1937), 71.

and we feel even more the power of the relations uniting our two Obediences.”⁹⁸ Finally, Louis Doignon, grand master of GLF, expressed special condolences at a session of AMI, and *Bulletin*, the organ of GLF, published Weifert’s obituary.⁹⁹ Obviously things had formally changed since the 1920s and UGLE was now seen as the most important grand lodge in terms of precedence. In symbolic terms, however, the fading spectacle of the Franco-Yugoslav alliance had not yet reached a symbolic level. “Immortal France” still inhabited the imagination of many Yugoslav freemasons and the elusive Franco-Yugoslav alliance was still on the minds of some influential French freemasons.

Efforts to establish an Anglo-Yugoslav lodge

The year of 1938 was one of the worst in the history of European freemasonry. Over the previous year one bright moment happened for the continental freemasonry: at a referendum held on 28 November 1937, the Swiss voters had rejected the proposal to ban freemasonry in their country with more than two thirds of votes. However, in 1938/39 four European grand lodges were banned one by one: the Grand Lodge of Austria following the Anschluss in March 1938; in November 1938, a presidential decree ordered that Masonic associations in Poland were to be dissolved: and, the two grand lodges in Czechoslovakia were banned following the dismemberment of that country. On St. John’s Day, 24 June 1939, GLY held a special meeting dedicated to “the brethren without a roof”, in other words to the brethren from Czechoslovakia, Germany, Italy and Poland. The address from the meeting was published in *Šestar* and was another clear sign of the anti-Nazi and anti-Fascist positions of GLY.¹⁰⁰

In April 1938 grand master Militchevitch sent an urgent appeal to UGLE. He was very worried that in the last few years “one Obedience after another disappeared”, and he insisted that many masons were convinced that this could have been avoided had there been in the very beginning “a reasonable and decided reaction from the part of other Obediences throughout the world”. He mentioned that GLY was under the strong pressure of the Catholic Church through its 70 periodicals in Yugoslavia, but that “for the moment” there was “no imminent danger for Masonry in Yugoslavia”. He also pointed out that the temporary armistice should not deceive anyone. At the end, he appealed to UGLE to take part “in the masonic conferences having for purpose to find out

⁹⁸ Arthur Groussier to the Grand Lodge of Yugoslavia, Paris, 1 April 1937, *Šestar* 4–6 (1937), 71–72.

⁹⁹ *Bulletin de la Grande Loge de France* 14 (15 March 1937). It was also published in *Šestar* 4–6 (1937), 86.

¹⁰⁰ Br.: Mo Br.: “Zdravica braći bez krova”, *Šestar* 5–6 (1939), 71–73.

the means and ways for the protection of masonic Obediences in danger”.¹⁰¹ In December he sent a rather more pessimistic letter to grand secretary White in which he warns: “the anti-masonic movement, encouraged with the last successes, (4 Grand Lodges were extinguished in the short period of one year) has suddenly increased here. The great anti-masonic wave of Central Europe is growing rapidly and it is now reaching even our shores.”¹⁰²

In Yugoslavia, the proponents of the reorientation to UGLE were still very active, even after their failure in 1936 to get the Duke of York to become the past grand master of GLY. It was precisely in the gloomy year of 1938 that Mihajlović’s report on the bicentenary celebrations of GLS was published. By that time the Duke of York had already become the king of Britain more than a year ago and therefore the fraternal regards that he had sent to the Yugoslav freemasonry turned out to be the regards of the British monarch. Therefore the publication of the report in *Šestar* with the personal messages of the Duke of York/the British King to Yugoslav freemasons had the clear political aim of fostering ties not only between GLY and UGLE, but also between Britain and Yugoslavia.

The last official visit of GLY to London was made in July 1939, during the installation of the new grand master of UGLE – the Duke of Kent. The Yugoslav envoy was again, for the third time, Stanoje Mihajlović. He was received on three occasions by Lord Harewood, pro grand master of UGLE (1935–42). Harewood married the daughter of George V, and was thus a brother-in-law to Edward VIII, George VI, and the Duke of Kent. Lord Harewood demonstrated a keen interest in the key persons of the Yugoslav Freemasonry, but was also interested in GLY’s relations with political parties and the church, in the reasons of GLY’s critical condition, and in relations of the grand lodge in Belgrade with the Yugoslav Crown. He wanted to know more about the relations of GLY with AMI, and also if there were any communists among the members of the Craft. Mihajlović himself raised the question of an English lodge in Yugoslavia and Harewood agreed to the idea. The Yugoslav envoy claims that his host expected that the Yugoslav Grand Lodge would become the leader of the three Balkan freemasonries (Bulgaria, Greece and Yugoslavia). Later, Mihajlović also discussed all of these issues with UGLE’s grand secretary Sidney White, who expressed hopes that GLY would redefine its relations with AMI. This last remark may have been a reference to the efforts made by AMI in which GLY, GL “Alpina”, and other continental grand lodges took part, and which aimed at persuading UGLE to regularise GLF, but also opening up communication between regular and other grand lodges in Europe in a situation of great upheavals.

On 19 July 1939, King George VI, in his capacity as past grand master, installed his brother the Duke of Kent to the position of grand master of UGLE.

¹⁰¹ Militevitch to Sidney White, 22 April 1938, LMF UGLE, “Croatia, Serbia...”, file 1.

¹⁰² Militevitch to Sidney White, 8 December 1938, *ibid.*

The ceremony was attended by more than 10,000 freemasons.¹⁰³ From that moment the grand master of UGLE was the brother-in-law of the Yugoslav Prince Regent. It was on the same day that King George VI awarded Prince Paul the highest British decoration and the Prince became Knight Companion of the Order of Garter.¹⁰⁴ The Duke of Kent as grand master of UGLE (1939–42) seems not to have been equally enthusiastic regarding freemasonry as his two elder brothers, King Edward VIII and King George VI, had been. The latter is considered “the most earnest and dedicated Royal Freemason of the first half of the century.”¹⁰⁵

Ten European delegations were invited, and from the Balkans there were representatives of two grand lodges: from Yugoslavia and Greece. Mihajlović even had the extraordinary opportunity of speaking with the British king. In the report published in *Šestar* he stated the following:

One of the greatest cares of our late grand master Douchan Militchevitch was to establish the closest possible relations with the United Grand Lodge of England. He faced many difficulties in that path, but his tireless work, especially after the visit that we made in 1936, bore unexpected fruit. Ever since 1933, the year when I established permanent contact with the Gr[and]. Lodge of England, I have noticed a substantially increasing interest in our Freemasonry. But this year's reception and conversations in London have gone beyond all my expectations. Even in minor details I was given such tokens of appreciation that everyone noticed it, and the way how H. H. the King and Lord Harewood acted had the character of a real distinction. It is clear that my personality played no role in that. I was for them only a representative of the Yugoslav Freemasonry which they have begun to appreciate very highly. Now, and perhaps only now, we may say that the doors of English Freemasonry are fully open to us and that we have entered their hearts.¹⁰⁶

Conspicuously enough, this whole report was published in the last issue of *Šestar*, printed in October 1939, and dedicated almost completely to the memory of the Yugoslav grand master Douchan Militchevitch who died on 30

¹⁰³ “Head of English Freemasonry. Duke of Kent as grand master”, *The Times*, 20 July 1939, p. 16b.

¹⁰⁴ Balfour and Mackay, *Paul of Yugoslavia*, 179. “Prince Paul a Knight of the Garter”, *The Times*, 20 July 1939, p. 15b. There are no preserved references in the documents of GLY that would indicate that Prince Paul was a freemason in GLY. UGLE confirmed to the Grand Lodge of Croatia that members of the Yugoslav royal dynasty (King Alexander, Prince Paul and King Peter II) were not initiated in UGLE. Reply of Diane Clements, director of LMF UGLE (no date, and based on an enquiry sent to UGLE by the Grand Lodge of Croatia in May 2009). LMF UGLE, folder, „Yugoslavia G. L.”

¹⁰⁵ Paul Calderwood, “The Royal Connection in the Twentieth Century”, in John S. Wade (ed.), *Reflections on 300 Years of Freemasonry*. London: Lewis Masonic, 2017, 429–430.

¹⁰⁶ Br. St[anoje]. M[ihajlović], “Instalacija Nj. V. Vojvode od Kenta...” [Installation of H. H. the Duke of Kent], *Šestar* 7–10 (1939), 140.

August 1939.¹⁰⁷ In that way good relations with UGLE were defined as the Masonic legacy of the second Yugoslav grand master to his Yugoslav brethren.

The report in *Šestar* may also have been slightly surprising for some members of the Craft in Yugoslavia. The whole action of reorientation was largely engineered by the grand master himself, and even some highly placed grand officers of GLY did not know enough about it. It is for this reason, that after Militchevitch's death, a prominent Croatian freemason Prof. Franjo Hanaman asked the grand secretary of GLY Viktor Novak if he could deliver speech at a commemorative meeting of Hanaman's lodge in Zagreb since "Bros. in Z[agreb] believe that Bro. Douchan has informed me on everything, but it is not like that, since in recent years I have not heard anything from him, and that includes steps that he has undertaken with G[rand] L[odge] in London in terms of the reorientation of our Freemasonry."¹⁰⁸

Mihajlović continued his correspondence about the Anglo-Yugoslav lodge with UGLE. He replied on December 10, 1939, to White in the capacity of the I grand warden of GLY that the members of GLY's Board of General Purposes had difficulties to meet due to grave international events, but they finally had a meeting and his proposal "for the creation of an English-speaking Lodge in Beograd was unanimously and enthusiastically accepted, and the hope was expressed on all hands that this step will contribute towards the strengthening of the existing relations between our Lodge and the cradle of the world's Masonry, the G[rand]. L[odge]. of England".¹⁰⁹

In March 1940, the deputy grand master of GLY Ćorović, accompanied by Dragan Militchevitch,¹¹⁰ editor of pro-British journals in Belgrade who had been one of 352 Serbian boys educated in Britain during the Great War, visited Paris and London. Ćorović's teaching assistant in the 1930s Jeremija Mitrović (1910–2011) claimed, half a century later, based on personal communication with him, that, on that occasion, Ćorović and Militchevitch paid visits to the French President Albert Lebrun and to Winston Churchill. He

¹⁰⁷ The cover page has the title in Serbian and French "A la memoire du † F. Douchan Militchevitch", *Šestar* 7–10 (1939), 79–150. This issue is undated but it was published in October 1939 since the last information it contains refers to the events of 3–4 October.

¹⁰⁸ Franjo Hanaman to Br. Viktor [Novak], Zagreb, 27 September, 1939, ASANU, Viktor Novak Papers, *Masonica*, no. 14474 (Viktor Novak himself delivered a speech at the commemorative meeting of Zagreb lodges held on 4 Oct. 1940), *Šestar* 7–10 (1939), 110.

¹⁰⁹ Mihajlović to White, Belgrade, 10 December 1939, LMF UGLE, "Croatia, Serbia...", file 2.

¹¹⁰ Also spelled Dragan Milićević. The archives of UGLE keep a personal card of "Dragan Militchévitch, BA Oxon.". Among the numerous affiliations listed in his card are: Secretary of the Belgrade Chamber of Industry, member of the Committee of the Yugoslav-British Chamber of Commerce, member of the Permanent Central Opium Board of the League of Nations in Geneva. LMF UGLE, "Croatia, Serbia...", file 2. Cf. *Who's Who in Central and East-Europe 1935/36*, 744.

also claimed that the visit was made “not without the knowledge of some politicians and the Prince Regent”, and that their visit also had to do with some Masonic issues.¹¹¹

From 30 August 1939, GLY had no grand master and Ćorović was considered as the most serious candidate. The lodges in Zagreb feared the potential reactions of clerical and nationalistic circles in Croatia if Ćorović was elected. He was known as a staunch advocate of Yugoslavism, and he opposed the way that the Serbo-Croatian Agreement of 1939 was made. In the end, grand secretary of GLY, Viktor Novak, himself a staunch Yugoslav as well as an ethnic Croat, mediated and convinced Ćorović to revoke his candidacy.¹¹² Instead a neutral candidate, Andreja (Andra) Dinić (1873–1951), was elected in April 1940. He was a retired judge of the Court of Cassation, and a former master of the Belgrade lodge “Schumadija.” It could be that the visit to London and UGLE was also connected with the issues of the new leadership of GLY. Whatever the case was, Ćorović continued to direct GLY’s major activities in 1940, even after the election of the new grand master.

In London two envoys from Belgrade were supposed to be received by Lord Harewood, pro-grand master of UGLE. Since he had to leave London he asked Sidney White, Grand Secretary of UGLE, to receive them.¹¹³ UGLE had a translation of news reports of January 13, 1940, from the German press stating: “The Yugoslav Press unanimously demands the extermination of Freemasonry because of an article published by the Grand Lodge of Yugoslavia on the occasion of the declaration of the Prime Minister of Yugoslavia.”¹¹⁴ Therefore the urgent situation of the Yugoslav freemasonry was certainly discussed. From Militchevitch’s letter to White one finds out that they also very much discussed the question of the Anglo-Yugoslav lodge. White announced that there would be a British visitor in Belgrade and supplied Militchevitch with Emulation rituals. What is exactly hidden behind the following words of Militchevitch one cannot positively know: “I wish, without the slightest desire to be indiscreet – to tell you that everybody (you know what I mean) is extremely satisfied with our visit.

¹¹¹ Jeremija Mitrović, “Vladimir Ćorović. Prilozi za biografiju”, *Spomenik* [SANU] 131 (Odeljenje istorijskih nauka no. 7, 1992), 256–257. Ćorović prepared a report on this visit. His house in Belgrade was searched by the Gestapo in April 1941, but the report was not found. His daughter burnt the report afterwards to prevent the Gestapo from finding it, and she was proven right since the German authorities searched Ćorović’s house on another ten occasions. *Ibid.* 257.

¹¹² Vladimir Žepić to Br.: Dr. Viktor Novak, Zagreb, 29 March 1940. ASANU, Viktor Novak Papers, *Masonica*.

¹¹³ Harewood to Grand Secretary, London, 7 March 1940, LMF UGLE, “Croatia, Serbia...”, file 2.

¹¹⁴ LMF UGLE, “Croatia, Serbia...”, file 2.

Our brotherhood expected with impatience our return to hear the news.”¹¹⁵ Was this impatience only about the new lodge, or about some other projects as well, one cannot positively conclude.

One could assume that the new lodge was supposed to be launched in the autumn of 1940.¹¹⁶ That proved impossible since the pro-governmental and pro-German daily *Vreme* started a virulent anti-Masonic campaign.¹¹⁷ The government of Dragiša Cvetković, when it was formed in 1939, had 4 freemasons in its ranks, and by the summer of 1940 two were still there. The prime minister was under the pressure of the Third Reich to ban freemasonic activities. On July 8, 1940, a pronounced freemason and a very dedicated member of the Craft Stanoje Mihaldžić was relieved of his duty as minister of interior affairs and the prime minister took that tenure as well. In early July Vladimir Ćorović participated in the preparation of a brochure in response to anti-Masonic attacks, and the grand secretary Prof. Viktor Novak even wanted to ask some 30 to 50 prominent members of GLY to give him permission to publicly disclose their membership and then to ask the public opinion “if our activity is subversive or has it been pure and patriotic to such an extent that it deserves only recognition and gratitude of the nation!”¹¹⁸

There was no time either for Ćorović’s pamphlet or Novak’s action. In late July, the British minister in Belgrade Campbell was informed by the Yugoslav Prime Minister Dragiša Cvetković that Germany had requested the ban of the Yugoslav freemasonry and that he had advised GLY to suspend its activities.¹¹⁹ In the end Vladimir Ćorović was informed that the Ministry of

¹¹⁵ D. Militchevitch to Brother White, Belgrade, 6 April 1940, LMF UGLE, “Croatia, Serbia...”, file 2. Militchevitch thanked White for his hospitality and also for having been “among the first of my countrymen to have been admitted to your Masonic community”. It is not clear if this indicates that he was also affiliated to some lodge of UGLE or that he simply attended several lodge meetings.

¹¹⁶ The prominent Belgrade freemason Djura Djurović left the following testimony about this lodge: “Before the war I was in a group that was making preparations, on the basis of the permission of the Grand Lodge, to establish an Anglo-Yugoslav lodge that would have meetings in English.” Djura Djurović, “Iskustva iz robijaškog života. Izveštaj Br. Luteru Smitu 33°” [Experiences from prison life. Report to Bro. Luther Smith 33°, 1967?], Arhiv Srbije [Archives of Serbia; hereafter AS], BIA, file of Djura Djurović no. 720-01-16556, p. 134.

¹¹⁷ See e.g. Dr. Danilo Gregorić, “Masoni” [Masons], *Vreme*, 22 July 1940. Gregorić, owner of the *Vreme*, demanded in this article that the freemasons should be removed: “If that is not possible in a peaceful way, then by force.”

¹¹⁸ Viktor [Novak] to Brother Andra [Dinić], Belgrade, 12 July 1940, ASANU, Viktor Novak Papers, *Masonica*.

¹¹⁹ Campbell to Halifax, Belgrade, 30 July 1940. Published in Serbian translation in Živko Avramovski, ed., *Britanci o kraljevini Jugoslaviji*, vol. 3: (1939–1941) (Belgrade: Arhiv Jugoslavije and Jugoslovenska knjiga, 1996), 504 [PRO FO 371/25030, R 7347/89/92]. Campbell was not particularly well-informed on Yugoslav freemasonry. He was aware of

the Interior had requested that the Grand Lodge of Yugoslavia terminate its activities, but that it would allow it to perform all activities connected with its own liquidation.¹²⁰ This was a way to avoid a formal ban. On August 1, 1940, the Administrative Council informed the Ministry of Interior Affairs of Yugoslavia that GLY had ceased all of its activities and that it would liquidate all of its lodges.¹²¹ In a message to all the brethren under GLY, the grand master and his deputy stated: "The Grand Lodge knows well that neither the freemasons of our fatherland nor it [the Grand Lodge] have done anything wrong in terms of their patriotic duties and that they have always been ready to endure any possible sacrifice for the King and fatherland. But, in the life or organisations, like in personal life, it happens, on many occasions, that circumstances impose difficult decisions."¹²²

From the correspondence of Militchevitch and Novak it appears that the issue of the re-orientation to UGLE was formulated within the Belgrade circle of GLY (Douchan Militchevitch, Vitkor Novak, Vladimir Ćorović, Savko Dukanać), which was mostly active in the Supreme Council of Yugoslavia as well. There are no available data on whether Ćorović and Dragan Militchevitch continued their action aimed at the re-orientation between the moment of the official termination of the activities of GLY (August 1, 1940) and the attack of Nazi Germany on Yugoslavia on 6 April 1941. It is, however, clear that Militchevitch continued with his pro-British activities since the last issue of his fortnightly *Danica* was published on 15 March 1941.¹²³

The self-suspension of the *de facto* ban of the Grand Lodge of Yugoslavia came during the twelve-month period between March 1940 and March 1941 when the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was making all possible efforts to remain neu-

its anti-Axis activities and pro-Allied orientation. He believed that Prince Regent Paul and the other two co-regents (Stankovich and Perović) were all freemasons, and that there were four freemasons in Cvetković's government. That was actually an outdated piece of information since two freemasons had already been excluded from the government, Jevrem Tomić and Stanoje Mihaldžić. Regarding the regents the British minister simply reiterated Belgrade gossips.

¹²⁰ Minutes from the meeting of the Administrative Council of GLY held on 1 August 1940, ASANU, Viktor Novak Papers, *Masonica*.

¹²¹ And. Dim. Dimić, grand master, and V. Ćorović, deputy grand master to the Ministry of Interior Affairs, Belgrade, 1 August 1940, AJ, Fonds 100, f. 14 – 415.

¹²² And. Dim. Dimić, grand master, and V. Ćorović, deputy grand master to all the craft lodges, Belgrade, 2 August 1940, AJ, Fonds 100, f. 14 – 126.

¹²³ *Danica* was published between 1 October 1940 and 15 March 1941. It was simply a continuation of two previous pro-British journals that were also edited by Militchevitch and eventually banned: *Britanija* (*Britannia*, only four issues were published) and *Čovečanstvo* (*Mankind*, only three issues were published). *Britanija* was banned in July 1940 during the climax of the German-sponsored anti-Masonic campaign in Yugoslavia.

tral. The fall of France produced “something approaching collective mourning” in Yugoslavia,¹²⁴ particularly in Serbia, and certainly the mood was the same among the Yugoslav freemasons. The Bulgarian accession to the Tripartite Pact on March 1, 1941, and the deployment of 350,000 strong German troops there “made it impossible for the regent and his regime to hold any longer.”¹²⁵ Yugoslavia formally joined the Tripartite Pact on 25 March, but for two days only. The Yugoslav accession to the Tripartite Pact produced “a sense of humiliation” in Serbia.¹²⁶ The anti-Axis and pro-British coup of 27 March deposed Prince Paul and made Peter II the reigning monarch of Yugoslavia. An attack of the Third Reich followed ten days later and the occupation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was completed in just twelve days.

In the early months of 1941 the leadership of GLY undoubtedly sympathised with the United Kingdom and also with the United States, whose envoy William Donovan may have had, in January 1941, a meeting with the ex-leadership of GLY in Belgrade.¹²⁷ When the coup took place, on 27 March, Ćorović was among those who staunchly supported it. Even on April 15 when the Axis occupation of Yugoslavia was almost complete he still thought that the coup “was necessary”.¹²⁸ In this orientation the leadership of GLY was along the same lines with the mainstream inclinations of the public opinion in Serbia, which was dominantly pro-Allied and anti-German.

Indicative are the closing sentences from Ćorović’s *History of the Serbs* completed at the end of 1940, or the beginning of 1941.¹²⁹ He quotes the verses of the Ragusan poet Ivan Gundulić that freedom is “a gift through which the Almighty God has given us all treasures.” In terms of Yugoslav relations with France Ćorović notes: “Our state has stayed out of the war conflict. Its relations with France after the Marseilles Assassination and after the proceedings that followed it have substantially cooled.”¹³⁰ Since by the end of 1940, freedom in terms of liberal democracy was preserved in Britain and the United States only, the words of Ćorović should be understood as a token of support for a foreign policy orientation to those countries.

¹²⁴ Stevan K. Pavlowitch, *Hitler’s New Disorder. The Second World War in Yugoslavia* (London: Hurst & Company, 2008), 9.

¹²⁵ Lampe, *Yugoslavia*, 199.

¹²⁶ Pavlowitch, *Hitler’s New Disorder*, 14.

¹²⁷ Testimony of Ljubica Anastasijević given to the “Institute” on 10 May 1952, AJ, Fonds 100, f. 15 – 472.

¹²⁸ Mitrović, “Vladimir Ćorović”, 257.

¹²⁹ This work was first published only in 1989, and had been submitted to the publisher “on the eve of his tragic death”. Rade Mihaljčić, s. v. “Ćorović, Vladimir”, in S. Ćirković and R. Mihaljčić, eds., *Enciklopedija srpske istoriografije* (Belgrade: Knowledge, 1997), 689.

¹³⁰ Vladimir Ćorović, *Istorija Srba*, vol. 3 (Belgrade: BIGZ, 1989), 259–260.

Out of the four major protagonists of Anglophile reorientation the most important was grand master Douchan Militchevitch. He died in August 1939. The remaining three all turned out to be victims of what one of them had called “post-war psychoses”.¹³¹ In their plans the reorientation to UGLE was a way to contribute to the fight against totalitarianism, particularly its Nazi and Fascist version, but to a certain degree the Soviet too. The first to lose his life was Ćorović who, on 16 April 1941, died in a plane crash while attempting to escape from advancing German armies from Montenegro to Greece. His daughter later claimed that when Gestapo entered his apartment, one day after the occupation of Belgrade, one of the soldiers exclaimed: “Where is that enemy number one of the Fuhrer?”¹³² Dragan Militchevitch (1895–1942), as the most prominent Belgrade Anglophile, was arrested upon the German occupation of Belgrade. He was shot in February 1942.¹³³ Finally, in October 1946, having survived the war, Stanoje Mihajlović was killed in Slovenia by the agents of the Yugoslav communist secret police Udba when he tried to escape from communist Yugoslavia via Italy to his beloved Britain.¹³⁴

¹³¹ Br. Stanoje Mihaljević [Mihajlović], “Izvjestaj”, *Šestar*, Nos. 3-4 (1938), 52-53.

¹³² Mitrović, “Vladimir Ćorović”, 257.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ Matevž Košir, “Razgibano diplomatsko in prostozidarsko življenje dr. Stanoja Mihajlovića ter njegov tragični konec leta 1946 na Kozjaku”, *SLO. Slovenski zgodovinski magazin* 7 (Sep. 2015), 56–59.

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Vojislav Pavlović*

*Institut des études balkaniques
Académie serbe des sciences et des arts
Belgrade*

L'ascension au pouvoir au temps des purges staliniennes La longue marche de Tito vers le sommet du parti communiste yougoslave (1937–1939)

Résumé : Tito vécut les purges staliniennes principalement en dehors de l'Union soviétique, ce qui lui permit de survivre, mais aussi d'en profiter pour devenir le principal dirigeant du parti. Les séjours à Moscou, en 1938 et 1939 furent des rudes épreuves pour lui, mais par un savant mélange d'opportunisme politique et de légoïsme personnel il sut se distancier de tous ses collègues qui ont péri dans les purges écartant ainsi les soupçons qui pesaient sur lui aussi. Le fait qu'il réussit à deux reprises de retourner de Moscou indemne en tant qu'au moins messenger, sinon, comme il se représentait lui-même, comme mandataire de Komintern, lui permit de s'établir définitivement au sommet de la hiérarchie communiste en Yougoslavie dont il avait commencé le renouveau dès 1936.

Les mots clés : Tito, les purges staliniennes, parti communiste yougoslave, Komintern

Josip Broz dit Tito, commença son activité politique au sein du parti communiste yougoslave (PCY) au retour de l'Union soviétique où d'abord il fut détenu comme prisonnier de guerre pour ensuite choisir de passer la révolution bolchévique au calme dans un village de la Sibérie. De retour au pays, en décembre 1920, il s'inscrit au parti, mais il ne devient véritablement militant que trois années plus tard en mars 1923, lorsqu'il intègre une cellule clandestine du parti à Bjelovar.¹ Sa carrière de révolutionnaire professionnel connaît deux moments décisifs, d'abord le procès de 1928 lors duquel il déclare ouvertement d'être communiste ce qui lui vaud une certaine reconnaissance au sein du parti et surtout l'invitation de se rendre à Moscou en février 1935 après avoir purgé sa peine de prison en Yougoslavie. Il quitte Moscou en automne 1936 avec l'ordre de se rendre au pays en tant que principal collaborateur du Milan Gorkić, le secrétaire général du parti communiste yougoslave qui ne pouvait pas s'y rendre

* voja.pavlovic@bi.sanu.ac.rs

¹ Brochure sur la permanence de Josip Broz à Veliko Trojstvo, Bjelovar 1963, Arhiv Jugoslavije [Archives de Yougoslavie ; par la suite AY], 838, boîte 43.

car il était activement recherché par la police yougoslave. Gorkić établit au début de 1937 le siège de Comité central à Paris.

Pour la troisième fois Tito se rend à Paris le 17 août 1937. Auparavant Tito séjourna à Paris en avril et en mai, mais que pour quelques semaines, le temps de faire son rapport à Gorkić. Tito s'attend à recevoir un satisfecit pour le travail accompli dans le pays. C'est alors qu'il apprend que Gorkić est parti pour Moscou. Son départ, qui s'avèrera par la suite définitif, ouvre une longue crise dans le parti touchant de plein fouet les communistes yougoslaves qui vivaient dans la clandestinité à Paris. Les précautions liées à la clandestinité sont de mise même dans la France du Front Populaire, et Tito avait l'habitude de rencontrer son secrétaire général surtout dans les cafés parisiens. Entourés par les touristes et les Parisiens sur fonds d'allées et venues des serveurs, ils discutent des activités du PCY. Ce luxe de précautions est censé préserver la sécurité de l'appareil du parti, et en conséquence Tito ne connaît qu'une partie des structures du parti à Paris. En règle générale les militants arrivant de Yougoslavie doivent se rendre à la Maison des syndicats au 33 rue de la Grange-aux-Belles dans le X^e arrondissement, ou à la librairie les Horizons, 12 rue de l'Echaudé St Germain dans le V^e arrondissement. De ces deux façades officielles des communistes yougoslaves, la première est mise à la disposition des camarades yougoslaves par le PCF, la deuxième a été fondée par le parti yougoslave. Les cadres et les militants sont ensuite dirigés vers les hôtels dont les gérants ou les réceptionnistes sont des hommes de confiance, souvent sympathisants voire membres du PCF. C'est ainsi qu'en mars Tito loge dans un hôtel situé au 42 rue des Bernardins, dans le V^e arrondissement. Les autres cadres du parti se trouvent à l'hôtel Selexior situé au 192 boulevard de la Villette. Aucun matériel compromettant ne doit se trouver dans leurs chambres, le parti disposant de véritables bureaux à Paris où le matériel de ce genre peut être entreposé. C'est ainsi que sous le couvert de la rédaction du journal *Les Voix européennes*, le parti loue des bureaux rue Richelieu, où se trouve le véritable siège du Comité central. Gorkić et son plus proche collaborateur Rodoljub Čolaković y travaillent tous les jours comme de véritables employés. En ce qui concerne les réunions du Comité central, elles ont lieu à Montparnasse dans l'appartement loué par la communiste hollandaise Mathilde Visser, épouse de Zdenko Reich, ancien élève de l'École Normale Supérieure, lui aussi communiste yougoslave.

Cette organisation complexe permet au parti de gérer à la fois les contacts avec le pays et avec le Komintern, d'éditer plusieurs journaux qui sont ensuite expédiés en Espagne et en Yougoslavie, et d'agir au sein des communautés yougoslaves dans le Nord de la France. Les autorités françaises se tiennent soigneusement au courant de tout, y compris des détails les plus infimes des agissements des communistes yougoslaves. Les archives de la Préfecture de Police témoignent d'une surveillance intense et d'une collaboration régulière avec les autorités yougoslaves. Les Renseignements généraux savent où se tiennent les réunions du

Comité central, quelles sont les vitrines du parti communiste yougoslave, qui en est le secrétaire général. Cette dernière information leur est transmise par Belgrade, qui leur fournit l'information obtenue lors de l'interrogatoire d'Adolf Munk.² Cependant, aucune référence à Tito n'apparaît dans les fiches des Renseignements généraux. N'ayant séjourné qu'occasionnellement à Paris, Tito échappe à la vigilance de la police française, ce qui lui permettra de réorganiser le parti en toute liberté après le choc provoqué par le départ de Gorkić.

Au début, son départ néveille aucune inquiétude autre que l'étonnement liée à la surprise de son départ précipité. Mais il s'avère par la suite qu'il s'agit de la disparition définitive de l'homme qui régnait en maître au parti yougoslave depuis 1932. Son successeur et homme de confiance dans le pays, Tito, aura besoin de plusieurs années avant de pouvoir officiellement prendre sa suite. Cette longue marche vers l'investiture du Komintern commence en août 1937, lorsqu'il prend connaissance des circonstances dans lesquelles Gorkić était parti. Convoqué par Dimitrov en personne, Gorkić quitte Paris le 21 juillet et arrive à Moscou le lendemain. Le rappel de Gorkić n'avait rien d'inhabituel : il était simplement invité à présenter le compte-rendu des activités du parti yougoslave au Komintern.³ Cependant, après une lettre envoyée début août, il ne donne plus de nouvelles. Les membres du Comité central présents à Paris (Tito, Čolaković et Sreten Žujović) n'arrivent pas non plus à avoir de nouvelles d'Ivan Gržetić, représentant du parti auprès du Komintern. Ils ignorent alors que les deux communistes yougoslaves les plus influents à Moscou ont déjà disparu dans une nouvelle vague de purges staliniennes.

Leur arrestation s'inscrit dans les des purges annoncées lors de la séance plénière du Comité central de parti soviétique en février–mars 1937. A la séance plénière Staline décide d'exclure du parti une des figures historiques du parti soviétique, Nikolai Boukharin, ancien membre du Politburo et président du Komintern dans les années vingt, et de le remettre aux mains du NKVD. L'arrestation de Boukharine et de son complice et allié Alexey Rykov, jadis président du gouvernement soviétique, en tant que chefs de file d'une supposée conspiration trotskyste provoque une nouvelle vague de purges dans les structures du parti soviétique au motif de faire preuve d'une vigilance accrue contre l'ennemi. La véritable raison de cette nouvelle vague de purges est la volonté de Staline de

² Voir le dossier sur les activités du PCY, Les Archives de la Préfecture de police, Paris, BA 2381. Adolf Munk, Monténégrin, est l'homme de confiance de Gorkić, qui le charge en décembre 1936 d'affréter un bateau en Corse pour se rendre en Adriatique et embarquer pour l'Espagne les mille recrues envoyées par les directions régionales du parti communiste yougoslave. L'opération échoue, Munk est pris par la police yougoslave et il passe aux aveux complets sur ses activités. Le rapport de Franović Antun, alias Genovese, membre de l'expédition, Marseille 27 mars 1937, RGASPI (Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'nopoliticheskoj istorii), le Dossier personnel de Tito, F. 495, op. 277, d. 21, p. 276–282.

³ R. Čolaković, *Kazivanje o jednom pokoljenju* (Belgrade : Nolit, 1989), vol. III, p. 275.

reprandre en main les organes de sécurité au moment où la menace d'une guerre sur deux fronts se profile après la signature, en novembre 1936, du pacte Anti-Komintern entre Berlin et Tokyo. La purge vise donc tout particulièrement les structures de sécurité intérieure, les services d'espionnage et de contre-espionnage, ainsi que l'armée soviétique. Nikolai Iejov, le nouveau chef du NKVD, devient l'instrument de Staline dans cette opération, son arme principale dans cette stratégie sécuritaire et même plutôt paranoïaque. Il se charge de recueillir des preuves par tous les moyens, y compris la torture, contre son prédécesseur Guenrikh Yagoda au NKVD, arrêté en avril 1937 et contre le maréchal Mikhaïl Toukhatchevski à l'Armée rouge, arrêté en mai 1937.

Les purges au sein du Komintern sont orchestrées par Dmitri Manouïlski, qui en tant que membre du Comité Central du parti soviétique avait assisté à la séance plénière. En tant que représentant officiel du parti soviétique et officieux de Staline au sein du Komintern, il s'efforce de mettre en pratique les conclusions qui sont adoptées. Il suit scrupuleusement la logique des purges établie par Staline et mises en œuvre dans le parti soviétique par Iejov. Les premiers visés sont des membres des Départements clés, celui des Communications et celui des Cadres. Le premier a la charge de tout le réseau clandestin du Komintern en dehors de l'Union soviétique. Ses membres sont en charge des communications avec les partis frères, des arrivées et départs des membres des partis frères, et leurs activités à l'étranger, des activités de renseignements. Le chef du Département, Boris Melnikov, est un ancien vice-responsable des renseignements militaires. Il est d'ailleurs le premier à être arrêté dès mai 1937. Anton Kraevskij, Gevork Alihanov, et Moiseï Tchernomordik, responsables du Département des cadres, le suivent fin mai, début juin. Pour des raisons de sécurité intérieure, et notamment pour renforcer le contrôle des frontières, la purge à l'intérieur du Komintern se concentre aussi sur les cadres du parti polonais, dont les membres se voient décimés à un point tel que le parti est finalement dissout en 1938.

Au-delà de ces cibles précises, la purge se concentre aussi sur des cadres des partis frères ayant rejoint les rangs du parti soviétique. Les membres des partis frères qui vivent depuis longtemps en URSS demandent souvent à rejoindre ses rangs. Ce sont donc ceux-là, installés depuis des années en Union soviétique qui sont perçus comme le principal danger. Comme la majorité d'entre eux avait acquis la citoyenneté soviétique, ils ne peuvent disposer d'aucune protection : ni de leur parti, ni de leur pays d'origine, aussi aléatoire que cette protection aurait pu être. L'objectif est de purger et le parti et le pays de ses étrangers qui y sont établis, afin de prévenir toute possibilité de trahison qui viendrait nécessairement de l'extérieur. Dans le cas des étrangers la paranoïa stalinienne se voit couplée avec la xénophobie latente dans une société isolée du monde extérieur.

Les cadres yougoslaves, et notamment ceux qui occupent des postes de responsabilité, tels Gržetić et Gorkić sont eux aussi depuis des années membres du parti soviétique. A l'époque c'était une marque de confiance de pouvoir re-

joindre le premier parti du communisme, avant de devenir une cause de soupçons. Gržetić, depuis Moscou, y voyant le climat de soupçons, la terreur, et les purges qui déciment les rangs du Komintern, tente vainement de mettre en garde son ami Gorkić à Paris. Il l'avise en juin qu'un certain nombre de cadres yougoslaves ont été arrêtés, et qu'il ne peut plus compter sur le soutien de Manouïlski.⁴ Malgré ces avertissements, le secrétaire général du parti yougoslave, imperturbable, prend l'avion pour Moscou : il ne peut imaginer l'ampleur de la purge en cours, et surtout pas que son nom est déjà apparu dans différentes confessions et accusations qui pullulent à l'époque à Moscou.

Gorkić, depuis son arrivée à Moscou en 1923 avait tissé toute sorte de relations, amitiés et contacts qui, dans le climat de délation généralisée, deviennent une source possible de compromission. Il est d'abord perçu comme très proche de Boukharine, ensuite on le soupçonne d'avoir collaboré activement avec les dirigeants des Départements des Communications et des Cadres qui étaient déjà arrêtés. Finalement son épouse se voit arrêtée elle aussi. Ce fond d'accusation se voit complété par des attaques personnelles de la part de cadres du parti yougoslave écartés de la direction par Gorkić.⁵ Il avait déjà été l'objet de ce type d'attaques plusieurs fois auparavant, mais il s'en était défait grâce au soutien de Manouïlski, désormais inexistant. Ces attaques proviennent d'hommes ayant appartenu autrefois à la fraction de gauche : ils estiment le moment propice pour prendre leur revanche sur Gorkić, et dans la foulée sur la direction du parti yougoslave.

Ils semblent obtenir satisfaction lorsque Gorkić, et Gržetić sont arrêtés le 14 août 1937, pour être jugés et exécutés dès novembre de la même année.⁶ Cependant, la purge au Komintern prend une telle ampleur que son activité est quasiment bloquée. Le Département des Communications est décimé, privant la Komintern des moyens de contact avec les partis frères. La purge est circonscrite à l'Union soviétique, et les partis frères sont laissés à eux-mêmes. Tito à Paris se voit privé à la fois d'informations et de ressources, mais il reste à l'abri de la tempête qui a emporté son secrétaire général. Pourtant, parmi les cadres yougoslaves à Paris, certains entretiennent des liens avec les services de renseignements soviétiques qui leur permettent de connaître le sort de Gorkić et Gržetić, alors que Tito l'ignore encore à l'époque. Cette information déclenche la même volonté de revanche qu'à Moscou. Toutes les « victimes » de l'ère Gorkić veulent

⁴ Pero Simić, *Kada kako i zašto je Tito postavljen za sekretara CK KPJ* [Quand, comment et pourquoi, Tito était nommé le secrétaire du Comité Central du CPY] (Belgrade : Akvarijus, 1989), 125.

⁵ Kosta Novaković et Kamilo Horvatin ont écrit des rapports au Département des Cadres en juin 1937 en accablant Gorkić. Ubavka Vujošević, « Poslednja autobiografija Milana Gorkića », *Istorija 20. veka* 1 (1997), 126, 127.

⁶ Vujošević, « Poslednja autobiografija Milana Gorkića », 110.

désormais tenter leur chance, et notamment Ivan Marić, communiste dalmate, ancien délégué au VII^e Congrès du Komintern et membre suppléant du Comité central du PCY. Par le truchement du couple Labud et Kristina Kusovac, communistes yougoslaves qui travaillent pour la GRU, Marić a connaissance du sort de Gorkić. Kristina était la secrétaire personnelle de Gorkić tout en tenant les services secrets soviétiques au courant de son activité.⁷ Ainsi Marić et les époux Kusovac formaient l'opposition, connue dans l'historiographie yougoslave comme le « centre alternatif du PCY » à Paris à la direction créée par Gorkić et désormais dirigée par Tito.

Le renouveau des luttes de fractions

La constitution du groupe de Marić inaugure une nouvelle période d'instabilité au sein du parti yougoslave, marquée par la réaction de tous ceux qui cherchent à se venger de Gorkić et des hommes qu'il avait nommés au Comité central. En août déjà, Marić dit à Tito qu'à son avis Gorkić ne reviendra jamais de Moscou : les époux Kusovac ont eu connaissance de son arrestation par l'intermédiaire du réseau du GRU. Labud Kusovac occupe aussi la fonction de représentant du parti yougoslave dans le Comité de l'aide internationale à l'Espagne, l'instance gérant l'aide envoyée à la République espagnole. Il y œuvre en étroite collaboration avec René Arrachar, membre du Comité central du PCF. Par l'intermédiaire de ce couple, Marić est en mesure d'envoyer et de recevoir des informations en provenance de Moscou, soit par le biais du GRU soit par le PCF. A partir du mois d'août, le Komintern commence donc à recevoir des rapports de Paris émanant des deux groupes concurrents de communistes yougoslaves, celui de Tito et celui de Marić.

La stratégie du groupe Marić consiste à prolonger le processus commencé à Moscou avec la purge du Comité central des hommes fidèles à l'ancien secrétaire général du parti. Les premiers visés sont Čolaković et Žujović : ce sont des hommes nouveaux sans expérience, propulsés au premier plan par Gorkić. Tito n'est pas la cible des attaques de Marić qui accepte de se plier à ses ordres l'enjoignant à travailler parmi les émigrés économiques yougoslaves en France. Au fil des semaines, sans nouvelles de Gorkić et du Komintern en général, la position de Tito s'affaiblit et celle de Marić devient de plus en plus importante.

Dès le mois d'août, Tito envoie ses rapports à tour de rôle à Gržetić et à Wilhelm Pieck, communiste allemand et le responsable du secrétariat balkanique au Komintern qui gérait les affaires yougoslaves, sans recevoir de réponse

⁷ Les aveux de Nina Kusovac aux Comité Central du PCY, Cetinje le 17 janvier 1945, AY, 537, fond Comité central de PCY, I/29.

ni d'instructions.⁸ En l'absence de contact avec le Komintern, le Comité central se trouve non seulement privé de financement mais aussi de sa légitimité, au même titre que toutes les directions régionales instaurées par Tito. Sans l'aval de Moscou, le renouveau du parti entamé par Tito par le biais dans le pays devient problématique. La confirmation que l'avenir du parti yougoslave est compromis arrive en octobre, lorsque Tito est invité à se rendre à Moscou. Ce que Tito ignore, c'est qu'à l'origine de cette invitation se trouve un rapport de Kamilo Horvatin, qui est analyste au secrétariat balkanique et autrefois membre de la fraction de gauche, qui cette fois-ci accable Tito. Il s'agit d'une accusation en règle où Tito est décrit comme le bras droit de Gorkić et le favori de Henrich Valecky, tous deux croupissant déjà dans les geôles stalinienne. Horvatin reproche également à Tito l'affaire du navire *La Corse*.⁹ Le 17 octobre, le Komintern demande aux autorités soviétiques qu'un visa soit accordé à Tito. Cette invitation est aussitôt retirée, alors que Pieck de son côté fait savoir à Tito que sa présence à Moscou serait malvenue.¹⁰ Tito faillit disparaître, à l'instar de son secrétaire général, dans la machine stalinienne qui broyait les cadres communistes par centaines. Finalement ce n'est qu'en novembre que Tito a la confirmation que Gorkić était arrêté. Tito se voit alors contraint de suivre une ligne de conduite des plus difficiles, car il lui faut à la fois se démarquer de Gorkić tout en démontrant la légitimité du travail accompli dans le pays.

Lorsque la nouvelle se répand parmi les communistes yougoslaves à Paris, le PCY retombe dans ses travers d'antan. En décembre, le groupe Marić coupe tout contact avec le Comité central, sous prétexte que les plus proches collaborateurs du traître Gorkić y siègent, c'est à dire Čolaković et Žujović.¹¹ Cependant cette opposition ne peut se développer sans un soutien réel dans le pays. Une solution est trouvée par Labud Kusovac, qui s'avère être le véritable cerveau de l'opération. Par l'intermédiaire de son frère, chirurgien-dentiste à Belgrade, il prend contact avec Petko Miletić, Monténégrin comme lui, son ami personnel et ancien membre du Comité central, mais surtout un homme pourvu d'un charisme personnel exceptionnel. Miletić se trouve à l'époque dans les prisons yougoslaves : il reçoit le message de Kusovac l'avisant du sort de Gorkić, tout en lui annonçant que Marić et lui feront partie de la nouvelle direction, grâce à leurs contacts avec le Komintern et avec Dimitrov en personne.

Miletić est un allié de choix pour le « centre alternatif du parti à Paris ». Il avait adhéré au parti communiste yougoslave en 1919, et au début des années trente il avait séjourné à Moscou d'où était revenu en tant que membre

⁸ Josip Broz Tito, *Sabrana dela* [Œuvres complètes ; par la suite JBT] (Belgrade : Prosveta, 1983), vol. III, 90, 91, 93–95.

⁹ Horvatin à Pieck, le 2 octobre 1937, RGASPI, F. 495, d. 11, p. 343, pp. 68–70.

¹⁰ JBT, vol. III, 124

¹¹ JBT, vol. IV, 4.

du Comité central de l'époque. A son retour au pays en 1932 il fait la connaissance de Kusovac, avant d'être arrêté par la police. Comme membre du Comité central, il a droit à un procès largement médiatisé et il se voit condamné à sept ans d'emprisonnement. Dès son arrivée au pénitencier de Mitrovica, il devient le chef de file des « gauchistes », des jeunes communistes prêts à toute occasion à en découdre avec l'administration pénitentiaire ou même avec les camarades communistes considérés comme trop tièdes. Ils étaient connus sous le nom de « wahhabites », en référence à cette secte musulmane de la péninsule arabe. L'attitude intransigeante et la forte personnalité de Miletic lui permettent de recruter ses fidèles dans ce vivier de cadres du parti qu'est le pénitencier. Une fois libérés, ses disciples continuent à suivre ses instructions, concurrençant ainsi les directions régionales mises en place par Tito. Ce réseau communiste alternatif apporte à Marić et à Kusovac un relais indispensable dans le pays, leur permettant de constituer une réelle alternative au Comité central géré par Tito.

Ils bénéficient aussi du soutien inconditionnel de tous ceux qui se sentent lésés par Gorkić. La fronde contre ce dernier couvait dans les rangs du parti depuis sa nomination par le Komintern. Dès qu'il est lâché par Moscou, tous les griefs accumulés contre lui depuis 1932 s'expriment librement. Parmi les communistes yougoslaves qui rentrent à Moscou après avoir combattu en Espagne, certains, lors de leur passage à Paris prennent contact avec Marić et Kusovac, épousant sans hésiter leur cause. Ce sera le cas de Stjepan Cvijić, jadis un des leaders de la fraction de gauche, écarté par Gorkić après la réunion de Vienne d'avril 1936. Dès son arrivée à Moscou en décembre 1937, sollicité par Pieck, il écrit un long rapport sur les affaires du parti yougoslave. Il fait sienne la stratégie de Marić et de Kusovac, exigeant que la purge du Comité central continue à Paris, notamment par l'expulsion de Čolaković et Žujović. Quant à Tito il estime qu'il est tombé sous l'influence de Gorkić, tandis qu'à son avis Marić ne mérite que des louanges.¹²

Dans le climat de terreur et de délation qui règne en maître dans les couloirs du Komintern, l'avis de Cvijić est plus que suffisant pour que la purge du parti yougoslave se poursuive, et Pieck exige que Čolaković et Žujović soient écartés de tout travail dans le parti.¹³ Au bout de cinq mois de silence, le Komintern prend clairement position en faveur de la stratégie du « centre alternatif du parti ». Cette tendance se voit confirmée en février 1938 lorsque Tito ainsi que Kusovac et Marić sont convoqués par Maurice Tréand, membre du Comité central du PCE, responsable de la Commission des cadres et homme de confiance du Komintern. Au nom de ce dernier, Tréand informe donc en même temps : d'une part Tito, seul membre restant du Comité central de Gorkić, et d'autre

¹² Stjepan Cvijić à Pieck, Moscou le 14 décembre 1937, RGASPI, F. 495, op. 11, d. 343, pp. 72-76.

¹³ Tito à Pieck, Paris le 11 janvier 1938, JBT, vol. IV, 12, 13.

part le « centre alternatif du parti », que toute activité du parti yougoslave est interrompue et que la direction du parti est suspendue suite à l'arrestation de son secrétaire général. Tous les cadres du parti doivent rester à Paris et attendre la décision du Komintern.¹⁴ Bref, l'existence même du parti yougoslave se voit désormais mise en cause.

En l'espace d'un mois les instructions en provenance de Moscou enlèvent complètement toute légitimité à la direction conduite par Tito. Après la mise à l'écart de Čolaković et de Žujović, Tréand annule aussi les prérogatives de Tito. De plus l'action de Miletić dans le pays menace d'y défaire tout le travail accompli par Tito auparavant. En janvier 1938, Tito est informé par Milovan Djilas que Miletić, instruit par Kusovac, entreprend depuis le pénitencier la création d'un réseau alternatif composé de ses partisans progressivement libérés.¹⁵ La situation de Tito devient critique. Le Comité central du parti n'existe plus, l'action des directions régionales se voit concurrencée par les hommes de Miletić, tandis que Tito se trouve alors isolé à Paris. C'est alors que Tito décide de démanteler toute l'organisation du parti à l'étranger afin de transférer complètement son action dans le pays. Il laisse seulement une antenne à Paris à la librairie les Horizons qui doit assurer la communication avec le Komintern. Avant de partir en Yougoslavie, Tito fait tout son possible pour bloquer l'activité de groupe de Marić. Il écrit au Comité central du PCF pour l'informer que Marić et ses collaborateurs ne jouissent plus de la confiance du parti yougoslave et qu'en conséquence Kusovac doit être écarté du Comité espagnol.¹⁶ Il envoie aussi des directives au pénitencier de Mitrovica exigeant que Miletić soit déchu de tout poste de direction dans l'organisation locale.¹⁷

La décision de quitter Paris et d'y démanteler toute l'organisation du parti est en partie motivée par le fait que cette structure était conçue et organisée à l'époque de Gorkić, lorsqu'il bénéficiait du soutien matériel du Komintern et de l'appui logistique du PCF. Après l'arrestation de Gorkić, le parti yougoslave se voit privé des fonds moscovites, et le PCF, comme on l'a vu, lui retire également son aide dès janvier. Les conditions pour une activité du parti en France n'étant plus réunies, Tito se voit contraint de chercher à se ressourcer au pays, aussi bien politiquement que financièrement, car il ne reçoit plus l'aide financière de Moscou. Confronté à la perspective d'une attente sans ressources et privé de tout moyen d'agir, Tito décide de faire un saut dans l'inconnu et de désobéir à l'ordre formel de Komintern en se rendant en Yougoslavie.

¹⁴ Simić, *Kad, kako i zašto*, 161.

¹⁵ Le rapport de Djilas, Belgrade janvier 1938, RGASPI, F. 495, op. 11, d. 342, p. 97.

¹⁶ Tito à Comité Central du PCF, Paris le 23 mars 1938, JBT, vol. IV, 35.

¹⁷ Tito à Comité local du PCY dans le pénitencier de Mitrovica, Paris le 2 février 1938, JBT, vol. IV, 24, 25.

Privé de légitimité formelle, Tito décide de la chercher dans l'action au pays. Décision hasardeuse d'autant qu'il entreprend une action qui va à l'encontre des instructions du Komintern. Il est pleinement conscient de la gravité de son geste puisqu'il écrit par deux fois à Dimitrov fin mars et début avril 1938 afin de s'expliquer, de se justifier. Pour la première fois Tito aborde la question épineuse de la concurrence du « centre alternatif », en accusant ouvertement Marić et Kusovac d'être en opposition au Comité central.¹⁸ Il se voit obligé de défendre le Comité central et sa propre action au vu des accusations portées par ces opposants. En termes choisis, il se déclare contre la purge du Comité central et du parti en général, affirmant que l'influence néfaste de Gorkić a été circonscrite à quelques intellectuels à l'étranger, et que le parti est toujours sain et capable de faire face aux dangers qui pèsent sur la Yougoslavie. Il mentionne notamment le danger que représente l'Anschluss de l'Autriche par l'Allemagne hitlérienne comme étant la raison principale de sa décision de partir pour la Yougoslavie.¹⁹

La véritable raison de son départ est tout autre. Non seulement l'action entreprise par Miletić et ses fidèles concurrence l'activité des directions régionales, mais encore elle enlève toute légitimité à celle du Comité central en répandant la nouvelle de l'arrestation de Gorkić. Depuis son retour à Paris, Tito entretient au nom du Comité central une communication régulière avec les directions régionales du parti. Il se garde bien d'y évoquer l'absence de contact avec Moscou et à plus forte raison le fait que son supérieur hiérarchique a été arrêté à Moscou comme traître à la cause communiste. Lorsque cette nouvelle est connue, il se doit de se rendre sur place pour affirmer son autorité et la légitimité du Comité central qu'il représente désormais à lui seul. Il s'y attelle dès son arrivée à Zagreb à la fin du mois de mars 1938, car déjà les hommes de Miletić, ainsi que les proches de Marić, notamment en Dalmatie dont il est originaire, exigent que l'on purge le parti des hommes de Gorkić. Cette chasse aux sorcières n'est en fait qu'un prétexte pour imposer leurs fidèles dans les postes clés du parti. Tito est donc obligé de faire une apparition personnelle à Ljubljana et à Belgrade pour démontrer que le Comité central contrôlait toujours le parti.²⁰ Comme d'habitude il établit son quartier général à Zagreb,

Le pays traverse une période très instable. C'est dans cette situation que les conflits intérieurs au parti communiste yougoslave se déroulent. L'Anschluss de l'Autriche a pour résultat que la Yougoslavie a maintenant une frontière commune avec le Troisième Reich. Une partie de l'opinion publique slovène verrait même favorablement une expansion de l'Allemagne vers le Sud. Tito, qui s'en est rendu compte, fait alors éditer une proclamation du parti en slovène pour combattre cette tendance. Sa présence en Slovénie était motivée aussi et avant

¹⁸ Tito à Dimitrov, Paris le 23 mars 1938, JBT, vol. IV, 36–38.

¹⁹ Tito à Dimitrov, Zagreb le premier avril 1938, V, vol. IV, 39–42.

²⁰ Tito à Prežihov Voranc, Zagreb le 13 et le 27 avril 1938, JBT, vol. IV, 42–46.

tout par sa participation à la conférence du parti slovène. C'est l'occasion pour lui de confirmer l'existence du Comité central, tout en luttant contre les hommes de Miletić, présents eux aussi à la conférence. Par contre il n'arrive pas à se rendre en Dalmatie ni à y influencer la direction du parti qui reste aux mains des hommes de Marić.

La division dans le parti ayant pris des proportions inquiétantes, Tito prend l'initiative de créer une direction nationale capable de remplacer le Comité central de Gorki, désormais inexistant et discrédité. C'est début mai que se tient en Slovénie une réunion des représentants des partis communistes de Slovénie et de Croatie, ainsi que des délégués de la direction régionale de Serbie. Tito y crée la direction temporaire du parti yougoslave dont font partie Edvard Kardelj et Martin Leskošek pour la Slovénie, Milovan Djilas et Aleksandar Ranković pour la Serbie, Josip Kraš et Andrija Žaja pour la Croatie, et Ivan Lola Ribar représentant de la jeunesse communiste. La mobilisation de toutes les forces dont il dispose doit assurer la légitimité de Tito aussi bien face à ses concurrents au sein du parti yougoslave qu'auprès du Komintern. D'un point de vue purement formel, cette nouvelle direction du parti n'a en fait aucune légitimité puisqu'elle n'a pas obtenu l'aval préalable de Moscou. La dernière fois que le parti yougoslave avait pris une initiative semblable, lors de la conférence d'avril 1936 à Vienne, l'expérience s'était terminée par la dissolution du Comité central de l'époque. Le soutien apporté à Tito par les directions régionales (à l'exception de la Dalmatie) n'a pas une importance décisive. Mais ses déplacements à travers le pays permettent à Tito d'écartier tout danger de voir se créer un éventuel « centre alternatif de parti dans le pays ». Tito se rend notamment à Belgrade pour la première fois depuis 1927. Il y séjourne en mai en essayant d'intensifier l'action du parti dans la partie orientale du pays pour contrecarrer l'influence des hommes de Miletić qui y est très forte. Cependant le sort du parti yougoslave, et de Tito personnellement, dépendront entièrement de la façon dont le Komintern jugera l'action des deux fractions au sein du parti, celle de Tito d'un côté et celle de Marić, Kusovac et Miletić de l'autre.

L'incertitude sur les intentions de Moscou semble prendre fin lorsque Tito reçoit fin mai une invitation à se rendre à Moscou. La nouvelle lui arrive par Paris lorsqu'il se trouve à Zagreb. Avant de quitter le pays, Tito décide de faire une dernière tentative de régler les affaires du parti en Dalmatie. Son voyage à Split n'ayant rien donné, il est contraint de revenir à Paris sans pouvoir se prévaloir d'avoir rétabli son autorité dans le pays entier. Arrivé à Paris le 13 juin, Tito est obligé d'y attendre plus de deux mois un visa pour l'URSS. Il ignore qu'au siège du Komintern les réunions sur la question yougoslave se succèdent depuis l'été 1937 sans qu'une solution puisse être trouvée. En mars 1938, après une série de comités tenus depuis janvier et réunissant Georgi Dimitrov, Manouïlski et Pieck, le secrétariat balkanique fait une analyse de la situation dans le parti yougoslave. C'est finalement le 26 avril 1938 que la proposition est faite à Dimitrov

de faire venir Tito à Moscou. C'est la conclusion du travail de la commission yougoslave signé par Pieck et par Vasil Kolarov, communiste bulgare et membre du Comité exécutif du Komintern.²¹ A la suite de cette conclusion Tito reçoit bien l'invitation de se rendre à Moscou, mais le visa tarde à venir : les organes de sécurité soviétiques ne font pas confiance à l'argumentation du Komintern car les purges y ont toujours cours.

Au fur et à mesure que les rapports arrivent de Paris et par la suite de Yougoslavie, la bureaucratie moscovite rédige ses commentaires ou sollicite les avis des communistes yougoslaves présents. L'appréciation de ces rapports n'est pas liée à leur contenu, mais plutôt au sort réservé à leurs auteurs. Les purges étant toujours en plein essor, les rapports peuvent être interprétés comme des accusations fondées sur les liens présumés ou avérés avec ceux qui étaient déjà condamnés et le plus souvent exécutés comme espions capitalistes, ou de manière plus générale comme ennemis de l'URSS. L'avenir plus qu'incertain des cadres du Komintern fait que les accusateurs d'hier peuvent devenir les accusés de demain. Les premières lettres de Marić sont très mal accueillies par Zigmas Angaretis, le redoutable secrétaire de la Commission du contrôle intérieur du Komintern. En novembre 1937 il aboutit à la conclusion que Marić avait probablement été autrefois un agent de l'Okhrana, la police secrète tsariste.²² Une telle accusation ne pouvait avoir qu'une seule conclusion. Pourtant, avant même que Marić ait pu être confronté à de telles accusations, c'est Angaretis lui-même qui disparaît après avoir été condamné comme « nationaliste lituanien ». Du coup, non seulement Marić se voit lavé de tout soupçon, mais il gagne même en estime. De la même façon, les accusations virulentes de Horvatin contre Tito aboutissent à un résultat opposé lorsque Horvatin est arrêté en février 1938. On trouve encore la même situation avec le soutien apporté par Cvijić au « centre alternatif du parti à Paris » lorsqu'il est arrêté en juillet 1938 par les services de sécurités soviétiques. En conséquence de tout cela, la décision sur le sort du parti yougoslave reste suspendue avant que l'on puisse distinguer le bon grain de l'ivraie dans le parti. En attendant, les étrangers sont soupçonnés et tenus à l'écart de l'URSS pour des raisons de sécurité. C'est pourquoi ni Tito ni Marić ne peuvent obtenir de visa pour l'URSS. Seuls les cadres yougoslaves qui avaient adhéré au parti soviétique, et à plus forte raison ceux qui avaient pris la nationalité soviétique, peuvent revenir à Moscou, souvent d'ailleurs pour y connaître un sort qui le plus souvent était des plus tragiques.

Pour sortir de l'impasse où il se trouve à Paris, Tito a cependant besoin d'un contact direct avec Moscou. Il parvient à l'établir à l'aide de Josip Kopinič,

²¹ Stanke Dimitrov à Georgi Dimitrov, Moscou le 26 avril 1938, RGASPI, le dossier personnel de Tito, F. 495, op. 277, d. 21, vol. II, p. 221.

²² Angaretis à Pieck et Manouilski, Moscou le 13 novembre 1937, RGASPI, F. 495, op. 11, d. 343, p. 71.

officier de marine, qui comme communiste yougoslave s'était réfugié à Moscou où il est devenu citoyen soviétique. Ce dernier, après avoir étudié à Moscou, avait été envoyé par le Département des Cadres en Espagne, où il se distingua comme commandant de sous-marin, ce qui lui valut même d'être décoré par les autorités soviétiques. Après une année et demie passées à bord d'un sous-marin il est à Paris en juillet 1938 en vacances. Ce héros de la révolution espagnole est le messager parfait pour Tito. En tant que chef officieux du parti yougoslave, Tito le charge de porter son rapport au Komintern. Avec son passeport soviétique, Kopinič se rend à Moscou sans problème en juillet. C'est après avoir déposé le rapport de Tito au secrétariat de Pieck, qu'il apprend au Département des Cadres (où il allait faire son propre rapport), que de graves accusations sont portées contre Tito. On soupçonne Tito et le parti yougoslave d'être à la solde de la police yougoslave, ce serait la seule explication possible de la survie du parti en absence de l'aide matérielle de Moscou. On reproche à Tito d'avoir nommé le fils d'un politicien bourgeois, c'est-à-dire Lola Ribar, principal dirigeant de la jeunesse communiste yougoslave.²³ En conséquence il se sent obligé d'écrire à son tour à Dimitrov pour demander que le visa soit accordé à Tito. L'intervention de Kopinič, héros de la guerre d'Espagne, s'avère fructueuse, notamment grâce à sa renommée acquise en Espagne. Tito reçoit finalement le visa et part le 23 août 1938 pour Moscou. Cela représente en fait une victoire pour Tito, car le Komintern l'avait convoqué lui, et non ses adversaires, pour qu'il puisse expliquer ses choix et justifier sa conduite. Néanmoins, le chemin sera encore long, car il doit faire face à des soupçons et des accusations dont celles communiqués à Kopinič n'étaient que les premières d'une longue série.

Tito arrive à Moscou en tant que dernier survivant de l'époque Gorkiç. Dans l'histoire du parti yougoslave, la période de 1932 à 1938 est marquée par l'ingérence décisive du Département des Cadres. Il est à remarquer que Gorkiç et Vladimir Ćopić avaient travaillé pour le compte du Département des Cadres (respectivement dans les partis anglais et tchécoslovaque) avant d'être nommés à la direction du parti yougoslave. Le parti se trouve sous l'étroite surveillance des hommes du Département, dont notamment Spiner (de son vrai nom Ivan Karaivanov, communiste bulgare), qui contrôle les cadres du parti à Moscou, et suit les activités du parti à l'étranger. Marić témoigne de sa présence à Prague et à Vienne en 1936.²⁴ Finalement le retour de Tito à Moscou est dû aussi au soutien d'un autre cadre du Département, Kopinič. Dans la Russie stalinienne, cette évolution du parti yougoslave correspond à un processus plus large de la prise en main des structures du parti soviétique et du Komintern par les services de sécurité. Les purges ne sont que la dernière conséquence de cette tendance sécu-

²³ Vjenceslav Cenčić, *Enigma Kopinič* [L'énigme Kopinič] (Belgrade : Rad, 1983), vol. I, 85–88.

²⁴ Ivo Marić, *Souvenirs*, AY, MG 2231/7, pp. 11, 17, 18.

ritaire, la plus néfaste et la plus destructrice. Le parti yougoslave ne peut y échapper à son tour, et on doit remarquer que ce sont précisément les hommes liés au Département qui sont les premières victimes, même ceux qui sont le mieux intégrés dans la société soviétique, membres du parti ou citoyens soviétiques.

La position de Tito est unique, car ses liens avec le Département restent confidentiels et ses multiples séjours en URSS sont toujours limités dans le temps. Il faut noter que les autres hommes forts du parti yougoslave liés au Département l'ont été officiellement. Dans leurs biographies, leur appartenance au Département est clairement précisée et de plus ils sont membres du parti soviétique. Dans le cas de Tito une telle mention est absente et il n'a jamais été membre du parti soviétique. Il reste toujours un homme de terrain, il n'a jamais obtenu, ni cherché à le faire, la prestigieuse qualité de membre du parti soviétique, et son travail pour le Département s'est accompli dans l'ombre. Néanmoins, sa position particulière ne le met pas à l'abri de l'obligation de justifier sa conduite et il s'y attelle dès son arrivée à Moscou.

Tito est de retour à Moscou le 24 août 1938 après presque deux années d'absence. Il y revient, seul rescapé de l'époque Gorkić dont il doit à tout prix se démarquer sous peine de connaître le même sort. Il sait pertinemment que toute incohérence, tout écart idéologique constatés dans sa conduite pendant ses deux années d'absence peuvent mettre en cause non seulement son avenir dans le parti, mais sa propre vie. Dans un premier temps, son rapport au Comité exécutif du Komintern présente ses explications sur son œuvre au pays et son activité à Paris. Il les présente une deuxième fois au Département des Cadres, lorsque cette instance du contrôle intérieur soumet à des vérifications poussées non seulement son travail, mais aussi toutes ses fréquentations, et notamment le choix des collaborateurs dont il s'était entouré.

Selon une procédure bien rodée, on lui laisse le temps de rédiger ses rapports. Il dispose d'un avantage certain, car il est capable de les rédiger directement en russe sans avoir à passer par des traductions susceptibles d'en influencer le cours. Début septembre il en remet sept en tout au Comité exécutif du Komintern : ce sont de longues pages traitant de l'activité du parti yougoslave et des syndicats, de la situation politique dans le pays. Il s'y efforce de démontrer avoir suivi les instructions du Komintern, notamment en créant une nouvelle direction du parti dans le pays.²⁵ La direction temporaire du parti est en dernière instance son principal atout, car elle témoigne du renouveau de l'activité communiste en Yougoslavie. Cette renaissance de parti yougoslave après des années de rafles et de purges, Tito la porte à son crédit tout en stigmatisant ses

²⁵ Les rapports de Tito du 9 septembre 1938 étaient consacrés à : l'organisation intérieure du PCY, le Parti d'unité ouvrière, le Front populaire, le front commun des forces de gauche, tandis que son rapport sur l'activité syndicale était écrit le 3 septembre 1938, JBT, vol. IV, 83–110.

concurrents du « centre alternatif du parti à Paris » comme fauteurs de troubles dont l'activité n'est motivée que par l'intérêt personnel et la volonté de s'assurer le contrôle du parti.

Ses rapports servent de base à des discussions avec le Comité exécutif lors de la réunion spéciale du 17 septembre consacré au parti yougoslave. Convie à la réunion il peut étayer ses écrits de commentaires et d'explications orales. A l'issue de la réunion, Tito se voit même nommé membre de la commission censée rédiger le programme politique du PCY : il y côtoie Manouïlski, Moskvin alias Meer Trissler et ancien chef du Département étranger de la Guépéou et membre du Comité exécutif du Komintern, et Otto Kussinen, fondateur du parti finnois et lui aussi membre du Comité exécutif. Siégeant à la commission avec l'homme de confiance de Staline et le chef officieux des services secrets du Komintern, Tito peut penser avoir reçu un satisfecit pour son action en Yougoslavie. N'est-il pas le seul homme de terrain et le seul cadre du parti yougoslave convié à participer au processus de décision dont dépend l'avenir du parti?²⁶ Cependant, si la Commission dont Tito fait désormais partie doit formuler les grandes lignes de la future action du parti yougoslave, le choix des hommes qui seront investis de la confiance du Komintern pour la réaliser est du ressort du Département des Cadres. Le système de contrôle intérieur travaillait sur le dossier yougoslave depuis l'arrivée de Tito, car il lui fallait vérifier sa conduite pendant ses deux années d'absence. En attente de son « jugement » si l'on peut dire, Tito est invité à intégrer la rédaction serbo-croate des Presses Internationales à Moscou où il participe avec Kopinič et Čopić à la traduction en serbo-croate de L'Histoire du Parti Communiste de l'Union soviétique – bolchevique de Staline.

Le Département des Cadres exige à son tour que Tito lui rende des comptes sur sa gestion du parti pendant les deux dernières années. Il n'est pas question cette fois de stratégie politique, mais d'un rapport détaillé sur son activité personnelle, si ce n'est jour par jour du moins étape par étape, aussi bien au pays qu'à l'étranger. Tito s'acquitte de cette obligation en en faisant une relation exhaustive adressée le 15 septembre au camarade Moskvin en personne. Il ne manque pas d'y proposer son explication des éléments cruciaux de son action tels que ses rapports avec Gorkić, l'affaire du navire la Corse, le conflit avec le « centre alternatif à Paris », et la création de la « direction temporaire ». Le point commun de tous ces moments et principal sujet de sa relation est la gestion des cadres, et les rapports au sein du Politburo Gorkić.²⁷ Le Département des cadres dispose, outre sa version des faits, des nombreuses dénonciations de la part du « centre alternatif du parti » le concernant. Marić et Kusovac accusent Tito de s'être entouré de collaborateurs issus de familles bourgeoises, tel Lola Ribar. Ils

²⁶ Simić, *Kad, kako i zašto*, 175.

²⁷ Le rapport de Tito à Moskvin, Moscou le 15 septembre 1938, RGASPI, le Dossier personnel de Tito, F. 495, op. 277, d. 21, pp. 249–261.

ne manquent pas d'évoquer sa responsabilité dans l'échec du projet de l'envoi de volontaires yougoslaves en Espagne par le navire « La Corse ».²⁸

La nécessité de confronter les accusations dont il fait l'objet avec ses explications occupent les supérieurs de Tito au Département des Cadres et amènent Dimitrov à repousser la décision sur le sort du parti yougoslave et de Tito. Celui-ci se méprend sur les raisons de cette attente qu'il attribue à la procédure bureaucratique, croyant avoir obtenu l'aval du Komintern pour le travail effectué au pays. A deux occasions, en octobre et novembre, il écrit à Dimitrov pour solliciter une entrevue avant son retour au pays.²⁹ Il désire retourner en Yougoslavie au plus vite afin de diriger l'action du parti en vue des élections législatives de novembre 1938. Les échéances électorales yougoslaves revêtent peu d'importance pour le Département des cadres, comparées au fait que les conflits intérieurs au sein de parti yougoslave perdurent et que la précédente direction (Gorkić et Gržetić) ainsi que leurs détracteurs (Horvatin et Cvijić) sont tous soit déjà morts soit internés dans les geôles staliniennes. Mais rien ne prouve que tous les ennemis et tous les traîtres ont été écartés du parti yougoslave. C'est pourquoi Tito doit rester à la portée de la justice communiste, étant un suspect possible et le prochain sur la liste. La vague déferlante des purges du parti yougoslave continue. Čopić, l'homme qui avait fait venir Tito à Moscou disparaît en novembre 1938 sans laisser de trace. Čopić sera condamné et exécuté l'année suivante sans que le parti yougoslave ait droit à une explication.³⁰ Les autorités soviétiques ne fournissent que des informations laconiques concluant qu'il s'agissait d'un espion. La disparition de son ancien mentor a un effet dévastateur sur Tito. Non seulement il est atterré, mais il se sent lui aussi en péril, ainsi d'ailleurs que tous les cadres étrangers logés comme lui à Hôtel Lux. Après deux années d'absence l'endroit et l'ambiance n'ont plus rien de familier pour lui. Tito observe ce climat de méfiance et de peur généralisée aussi bien à l'Hôtel Lux qu'au Komintern et les cadres des partis étrangers participent à l'épuration des rangs du Komintern aussi bien comme objets d'une xénophobie réelle que comme dénonciateurs s'accusant mutuellement.³¹ Il peut constater que presque toutes les nuits des personnes disparaissent de l'Hôtel Lux sans qu'on sache pourquoi (comme cela est arrivé à Čopić par exemple). L'expression courante « *oni vzjali* » (ils l'ont pris) est l'expression utilisée pour désigner complètement et définitivement le sort

²⁸ Andreev à Dimitrov, Moscou le 22 septembre 1938, RGASPI, le Dossier personnel de Tito, F. 495, op. 277, d. 21, pp. 352–353.

²⁹ Tito Dimitrov, Moscou le 17 octobre 1938, F. 495, op. 74. d. 589, p. 58; Moscou le 2 novembre 1938, F. 495, op. 74. d. 589, p. 59.

³⁰ Pero Simić, *Svetac i magle : Tito i njegovo vreme u novim dokumentima Moskve i Beograda* [Le Saint et le brouillard : Tito et son temps dans les nouveaux documents de Belgrade et Moscou] (Belgrade : Službeni list Srbije, 2005), 84.

³¹ Cenčić, *Enigma Kopinić*, vol. I, 89.

des personnes concernées. Demander « pourquoi » ou « comment » est alors fortement déconseillé. Dans ce climat oppressif et plein de dangers Tito se voit contraint de se conformer aux règles implicites du monde stalinien en s'efforçant de ne pas attirer l'attention sur lui. Il s'applique à bien peser ses propos, à faire attention à ses fréquentations, en un mot à éviter tout piège inhérent à la vie en Union soviétique au temps des purges. Il doit apprendre à maîtriser la peur au quotidien, tout en continuant à travailler pour recevoir l'approbation du Komintern pour son travail au pays afin d'éviter de suivre ses prédécesseurs sur le chemin qui mène inexorablement vers la tristement fameuse prison moscovite de « Lublianka » et le peloton d'exécution.

Même s'il cherche à se tenir à l'écart autant que possible de la purge, la vérification dont il est l'objet l'oblige à s'expliquer et à clarifier ses relations avec tous ceux qui ont été appréhendés par les organes de sécurité soviétiques. On lui demande donc de rédiger les caractéristiques de ses anciens collègues à la direction. Ce n'est pas la première fois qu'il se livre à cet exercice devenu en l'occurrence particulièrement périlleux. En rédigeant les caractéristiques des autres, Tito rédige en fait la sienne. Il lui faut se démarquer clairement de tous ceux dont le sort est déjà scellé, sous peine de les rejoindre dans les geôles staliniennes. Tito doit être particulièrement vigilant et circonspect car il n'ignore pas que de lourds soupçons pèsent déjà sur lui du fait de sa collaboration étroite avec Gorkić. Il choisira donc, même après avoir quitté l'URSS, de ne jamais douter de la véracité des accusations portées contre les victimes des purges staliniennes. Au printemps 1939 il confirme à Djilas que Gorkić était un espion.³² La preuve en était, selon Tito, le fait que Gorkić, lorsqu'il y séjournait en 1930 avait d'abord été pris par la police britannique qui l'avait libéré par la suite. Il est impossible de savoir s'il s'agissait d'une conviction profonde de Tito, de la discipline communiste, ou même de la satisfaction de voir disparaître définitivement son concurrent. Quoi qu'il en soit, la difficulté de rédaction des caractéristiques par Tito obéit plutôt à des considérations pratiques que morales. Il doit expliquer pourquoi il n'avait pas signalé plus tôt l'activité séditeuse de tous ces traîtres au sein de la direction. La liste est déjà longue et les noms de presque tous ses anciens collègues du Comité Central y figurent. Pour se justifier, Tito cherche à démontrer qu'il avait eu alors de sérieux différends avec eux et qu'il avait déjà signalé leur comportement néfaste au Komintern.³³

³² M. Djilas, *Memoir of a Revolutionary* (New York : Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983), 303, 304. Il faut souligner que toutes les victimes yougoslaves des purges staliniennes ont été progressivement réhabilitées par les autorités après le XX^e congrès du parti soviétique. Voir à ce propos Simić, *Svetac i magle*, 83–88. Leur réhabilitation dans le parti yougoslave fut bien plus tardive et certain ne l'ont jamais été réhabilités, comme ce fut le cas avec Gorkić.

³³ Il écrit le 23 septembre 1938 les caractéristiques de Kamilo Horvatin, Djuka Cvijić, ses anciens adversaires, membres de la fraction de gauche, mais aussi de Gorkić et Gržetić, avec

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Les caractéristiques de ses anciens collègues du Comité central du PCY écrites par Tito en septembre 1938 révèlent en creux l'image que Tito veut donner de lui-même. En écrivant des caractéristiques de Horvatin et de Djuro Cvijić il les présente comme les chefs de file de la fraction de gauche dont ses rapports étaient plus que froids car Tito combattait toutes les fractions au sein de PCY. De Horvatin il ajoute que son tendance de s'enivrer et son attitude peu sérieuse déshonora le PCY et qu'il avait attiré l'attention de Spiner, Parović et Čopić à la conduite inacceptable de Horvatin, pour conclure qu'il avait rédigé à ce propos une caractéristique au Département de cadres en 1936.³⁴ Tito pouvait se prévaloir de son vigilance et de zèle dans le combat contre les éléments négatifs au PCY dont le préuve fut la caractéristique de Horvatin en 1936. Parmi ceux à qui il a relaté la mauvaise conduite de Horvatin il ne cite pas Gorkić, ce qui aurait dû être normal car il fut le secrétaire général du PCY, mais seulement ceux dont le comportement ne fut encore mis en cause par les purges staliniennes. Lorsqu'il n'est pas à même de démontrer qu'il avait déjà signalé l'activité séditeuse de ces anciens collègues il s'empresse de dire qu'il avait peu sinon presque pas de contacts avec eux pour conclure qu'il ne leur faisait pas de confiance de tout car ils étaient membres de fractions de gauche Cvijić ou de droite Sima Marković. Lorsqu'il n'est pas à même démonter son vigilance au sujet d'un de ses collègues qui ont été jugés ennemis de la patrie de socialisme, tel Stjepan Cvijić, Tito ne rechigne pas à admettre sa faute.³⁵ Ce fut une attitude prisé dans la période stalinienne, à savoir la capacité d'admettre la faute et de donner des preuves de sa volonté de les corriger par la suite.

Ses liens avec Gržetić et Gorkić, respectivement le représentant de PCY auprès de Komintern et le secrétaire général du PCY lorsque Tito devint le numéro deux du parti nécessitaient les explications plus détaillées. De Gržetić il relate que leurs rapports étaient bons jusqu'à ce que Tito arrive à le connaître mieux lors de sa permanence à Moscou en 1935 et 1936, ce qu'il l'a poussé de demander à Pieck, en été 1936, que Gržetić soit relèvé de ses fonctions car Tito l'a considéré comme un saboteur. Or, Gorkić fut à même de sauver son ami. Ce dernier, entant le supérieur hiérarchique de Tito, eût droit à un portrait détaillé dans sa caractéristique. Le fait qu'il fut envoyé par Gorkić au pays plusieurs fois après sa sortie de prison, Tito décrit en 1938 comme la volonté de Gorkić de l'éliminer en l'envoyant aux bras de la police yougoslave et de nouveau en pri-

qui il a œuvré quotidiennement pendant des années, de son vieux ami Antun Mavrak, et des anciens secrétaires généraux du PCY, Filip Filipović et Sima Marković. RGASPI, le Dossier personnel de Tito, F. 495, op. 277, d. 21, vol. II, pp. 268–273.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

son. Néanmoins, Gorkić comme l'homme de Komintern au début fut une autorité indiscutable pour Tito jusqu'à ce qu'il ne fût utilisé exclusivement comme l'homme de terrain ce qu'il fit naître de soupçons :

La méfiance s'accrut lorsque Gorkić apporta un soutien sans faille à Gržetić et je me suis rendu compte que les militants de parti n'étaient que des pions pour lui. Je considérais cette politique comme erronée mais je ne voyais pas en lui un saboteur et un ennemi. Nous n'étions jamais proches, car je maintins toujours ma réserve. Le fait que je n'ai pas refusé de travailler avec lui, à partir de l'automne 1936 au sein de la nouvelle direction, s'explique par le refus du Comité exécutif d'accepter ma candidature, proposée et soutenue à l'unanimité par la délégation yougoslave au VII^{ème} Congrès du Komintern. ...

Déjà à l'automne 1937 j'étais très mécontent par la politique de sabotage de Gorkić. Nous avons eu des conflits dans notre correspondance à cause du traître Munk, que Gorkić s'efforça à chaque occasion de populariser, même lorsqu'il fut évident qu'il fut un grand traître. ... Je dois admettre, que j'ai sérieusement réfléchi en été 1937 de quitter le Politburo du Comité central de telle manière que j'aie le permis de la part de Comité central d'aller en Espagne, après que je termine les affaires importantes à l'étranger. Gorkić a dit qu'il a le droit de veto. Le fait que la direction est restée à Paris et elle n'est pas venue au pays comme ce fut décidé au Komintern ; le fait que je fus le seul à me rendre au pays ; le fait que Gorkić voulait savoir où est-ce que je logeais au pays, m'ont poussés à me méfier de lui et d'avoir des soupçons envers lui. L'idée que Gorkić veut me détruire en me délivrant à la police m'est parue terrible mais elle ne me quittait pas. Je ne pensais pas qu'il fut espion mais le carriériste qui ne rechigne devant rien pour détruire les camarades qui pouvaient être un obstacle pour lui.³⁶

La tentative de Tito de se justifier consistait en un savant mélange des craintes réelles et des interprétations *post festum* de sa collaboration avec Gorkić. Qu'il a pu nourrir des craintes au sujet des véritables motivations de Gorkić n'est pas exclu, mais qu'il a manifesté sa désapprobation de ses décisions au point de vouloir quitter le Politburo, est manifestement exclu, car les preuves d'un tel comportement manquent cruellement. Néanmoins, Tito voulait démontrer qu'il fut en désaccord permanent avec Gorkić, mais qu'il ignora sa véritable dangerosité, car dans ce dernier cas il aurait été tenu de le dénoncer immédiatement. Vu les circonstances les caractéristiques étaient rédigées dans la manière qui fut la seule à pouvoir le disculper.

Il faut bien comprendre l'atmosphère d'une époque où même le secrétaire général du Komintern, Georgi Dimitrov, n'est pas à même d'intercéder en faveur de ceux qui sont tombés aux mains des autorités soviétiques. Or, Tito ne montre même aucune intention de le faire. On peut remarquer que les caractéristiques de ses collègues, écrites à trois reprises en 1935, 1936 et en septembre 1938, font preuve d'une certaine cohérence. Tito s'y montre en règle générale à la fois

³⁶ Ibid.

très circonspect et très attentif à la ligne du Komintern. Seules les personnes qu'il connaît et avec lesquelles il a collaboré avant de venir à Moscou ont droit à des caractéristiques positives. Néanmoins, dès qu'elles se trouvent en opposition avec la ligne du Komintern, Tito ne manque jamais de prendre ses distances avec elles afin de s'aligner sur la position officielle. Dans un premier temps, c'est le cas de tous les membres des différentes fractions, de tous ceux qui se sont alors opposés à Gorkiċ. Lorsque ce dernier est pris, tous ses proches collaborateurs et plus généralement tous ceux qui ont été pris par le NKVD ont droit à une caractéristique négative de la part de Tito, et cela de manière inexorable et systématique. Il faut souligner à son crédit qu'il n'accable jamais le premier ses collègues. Mais il ne rechignera jamais à se joindre au chœur de ceux qui jugent sans états d'âme les victimes des purges stalinienne.

Comme on a déjà eu l'occasion de le constater, la rédaction des caractéristiques était une pratique courante faisant partie notamment des tâches des dirigeants du parti. A plusieurs reprises Gorkiċ, Ćopić et Parović ont eu l'occasion d'en faire pour présenter de nouvelles recrues au Komintern ou pour donner leur avis sur les cadres déjà à Moscou. Cependant, il faut faire la différence entre ce type de caractéristiques et les accusations en règle ayant pour objectif d'écartier un concurrent de la direction du parti, comme ce sera le cas des dénonciations du « centre alternatif » contre Tito, ou celles qui sont rédigées en 1937 par Horvatin et Cvijiċ contre Gorkiċ. Tito n'a pas porté d'accusations pouvant entraîner la peine de mort, exception faite de celles écrites contre ses concurrents du « centre alternatif ». Il faut préciser que ceux-là ne sont jamais retournés en URSS, mais après la guerre en Yougoslavie où ils seront marginalisés et même parfois poursuivis paradoxalement en 1948 comme partisans de Staline lors de la rupture entre la Yougoslavie et l'URSS.

En revanche les membres du « centre alternatif » continuaient avec leurs délations de Tito. En automne 1938 Tito a fort à faire pour se défaire de leurs accusations qui le touchent de très près lorsque le cas de son épouse est évoqué. En effet Joanna Koenig, alias Lucie Bauer, épouse de Tito, est arrêtée à Moscou en septembre 1937 comme espionne de la Gestapo. Les concurrents de Tito à Paris, Marić et Kusovac, ne manquent pas l'occasion d'en profiter pour déclarer qu'il n'est plus digne d'être le principal responsable du parti. Dès son arrivée à Moscou en août 1938, le Département des Cadres, reprenant son dossier, relève que son épouse a été arrêtée par le NKVD.³⁷ Son drame familial devient ainsi un problème politique pour Tito. La nature même des purges exige que l'on puisse démontrer sans l'ombre d'un doute qu'on a su se démarquer de tout « ennemi du communisme ». La nature des liens unissant Tito et Lucie est telle qu'il s'expose à des attaques. Son mariage n'est pas une simple affaire de circonstance dictée

³⁷ Belov à Dimitrov, Moscou le 17 octobre 1938, RGASPI, le Dossier personnel de Tito, F. 495, op. 277, d. 21, vol. II, pp. 240–243.

seulement par la nécessité de trouver un foyer pour son fils. Après son départ de Moscou, Tito rédige au printemps 1937, de Paris, de véritables lettres d'amour adressées à Lucie. Elles constituent un des rares témoignages de la vie privée de Tito. On y découvre un mari attentionné et amoureux. Tito s'y fait beaucoup de soucis pour la santé de son épouse, à l'époque épuisée et malade. En mars 1937 Tito écrit à Lucie :

Je tiens beaucoup à toi. Nina mi à dit que t'es assez faible. Est-ce que tu t'es effectivement un peu reposé. De ta lettre j'ai appris tout de ce qu'il t'est arrivé. ... Tu dois avant tout faire attention à ta santé.³⁸

Le moi suivant il répond à la lettre de Luci en disant :

J'ai reçu ce soir avec une joie immense tes deux lettres... Ma petite bien-aimée, je suis très content que tu te réjouisses de ton départ. Nina m'a raconté que t'étais très triste. Maintenant tu ne dois pas avoir des pensées noires. Tout ira bien de nouveau.³⁹

Il termine sa dernière lettre qui nous est parvenu en date du 29 mai 1937 avec le souhait suivant :

Maintenant ma petite bien-aimée, je souhaite que vienne le plus tôt possible chez ton mari, car tu lui manques beaucoup.⁴⁰

Après l'arrestation de Lucie, les sentiments et les attentions lui ayant été destinés deviennent des chefs d'accusation contre lui. Son souhait naturel de réunir son couple peut être interprété comme une tentative de soustraire une ennemie à la justice soviétique en la faisant venir à Paris.

Pour s'expliquer et clarifier la nature de sa relation avec Lucie, Tito est invité à écrire l'histoire de leur union afin de démontrer qu'il n'a pas manqué à son devoir de vigilance et pour réfuter les accusations de complicité avec une « traître ». En septembre 1938 il rédige un rapport sur sa brève histoire d'amour avec Lucie, dans lequel il s'efforce de faire preuve d'autocritique en confessant que son souhait de faire venir son épouse près de lui était une tare importante dans sa carrière. Il y dit :

Pour moi il fut très difficile lorsque j'étais seul avec le petit [son fils Zarko], car je travaillais au Komintern ; et il restait seul et très souvent il se comportait mal dans l'hôtel Lux. En conséquence arriveraient sans cesse des plaintes contre lui de la part de la direction de l'hôtel. Lorsque j'ai fait la connaissance d'une autre femme je lui ai proposé de venir s'installer chez moi, car j'espérais qu'elle m'aiderait à faire attention au petit. Lorsqu'elle est arrivée je me suis finalement rendu

³⁸ Tito à Anna Kenig, alias Lucie Bauer, Paris le 29 mars 1937, RGASPI, le Dossier personnel de Tito, F. 495, op. 277, d. 21, vol. III.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Tito à Anna Kenig, alias Lucie Bauer, Paris, le 29 mai 1937, RGASPI, le Dossier personnel de Tito, F. 495, op. 277, d. 21, vol. III.

compte qu'elle le traite bien et je fus d'accord qu'on se marie. Cela est arrivé en automne 1936 avant que je parte à l'étranger. Je l'ai fait car elle était d'accord de s'occuper du petit et de faire attention à lui comme une mère. ... Il est vrai que je l'ai considéré assez naïve et politiquement peu instruite. C'est pourquoi je l'ai prévenue de ne pas avoir aucun contact avec des émigrés allemands, car j'avais peur que certains d'eux pourraient avoir des objectifs hostiles vers l'URSS. Mes mises en gardes furent contenues dans mes lettres depuis l'étranger. Je lui ai dit que je vais rompre notre union si elle n'accepte pas mes mises en gardes. En automne 1937 je pensais l'amener chez moi à l'étranger. J'estime que je manquais de vigilance et que cela est une tâche dans ma vie de membre du parti.⁴¹

Implicitement, il est forcé d'admettre qu'il a manqué de vigilance lorsqu'il avait envisagé de faire sortir d'URSS la personne qui s'avère être une espionne. Son autocritique prouve sa capacité de se mettre en question, de corriger ses fautes, bref de s'aligner sur la ligne du parti et du Komintern. L'autocritique est un élément indispensable dans les rapports des cadres du Komintern : elle rend plus crédibles leurs explications. Le rapport de Tito est rédigé selon les règles du genre. Tout s'y trouve : l'autocritique, l'affirmation de sa bonne foi et surtout la preuve de sa vigilance face à l'ennemi.

Quel est donc cet homme capable d'écrire des lettres pleines d'amour à son épouse pour la répudier ensuite dans un rapport de type stalinien à peine un an après ? Une fois encore il n'y voit aucun problème d'ordre moral : la sincérité de ses sentiments d'hier pour son épouse n'est pas un obstacle pour prendre aujourd'hui ses distances, dans la plus pure tradition stalinienne. La peur, l'opportunisme, le sens pratique, l'ambition personnelle guident Tito qui se voit contraint de répudier Lucie et de l'abandonner à son sort. Sa décision se voit facilitée, car il s'est déjà lié d'affection avec Herta Has, la jeune courrière slovène, de vingt-quatre ans sa cadette. Son père étant un Allemand d'Autriche, Herta est détentrice d'un passeport s'avérant précieux dans ses activités de courrier. Dès la fin de l'année 1937 Tito a de fait déjà remplacé Lucie, avant même de connaître son arrestation qu'il ignore. Sa nouvelle compagne lui assure cette présence féminine dont il a tant besoin.⁴² Pour Tito qui vit dans la clandestinité, Herta est la compagne parfaite, et c'est cela qui compte pour lui. Grâce à son passeport autrichien elle assure la liaison entre Tito et la direction du à Paris, et les directions régionales du parti. Elle l'accompagne souvent dans ses déplacements dans le pays. Par ailleurs elle est efficace, digne de confiance, sachant s'effacer devant les impératifs de la lutte commune, elle est la compagne idéale pour un révolutionnaire professionnel. En automne 1938, après avoir rédigé la

⁴¹ Le rapport de Tito au Département des Cadres, le 27 Septembre 1938, RGASPI, le Dossier personnel de Tito, F. 495, op. 277, d. 21, pp. 223–225.

⁴² La pratique de trouver des compagnes dans le milieu du parti était courante, car Gorkic avait aussi délaissé son épouse Betty Glan au profit d'une camarade Polonaise qu'il a fait venir à Paris.

caractéristique de Lucie, Tito fait ses courses dans Moscou en quête de fourrure pour sa nouvelle compagne sans état d'âme particulier. Son ami Kopinič, nous a laissé un témoignage sur l'affection candide que Tito éprouve pour Herta. Avant de partir à l'étranger, Tito parcourut Moscou en quête d'une bague dont il voulait faire cadeau à Herta.⁴³

L'attitude envers ses compagnes témoigne d'un trait caractéristique de Tito. Tout état d'âme est singulièrement absent des écrits de Tito de l'époque comme de ses souvenirs à la fin de sa vie. Ses amis et collègues n'en relèvent pas non plus. Tito se montre absolument privé de tout doute et de tout remords, aussi bien au sujet de ses collègues disparus que de sa défunte épouse. Son parcours professionnel n'est jamais troublé par un questionnement intérieur, mais toujours par des conflits de pouvoir. C'est aussi le cas avec sa nouvelle histoire d'amour, car elle fournit une nouvelle occasion à ses ennemis de le dénoncer à Moscou. Le « centre alternatif du parti à Paris » accuse aussi Herta d'être une espionne de la Gestapo. Étant allemande, Herta aurait transmis aux services secrets hitlériens à Munich tous les messages qu'elle portait lors de ses aller et retour vers la Yougoslavie. Il incombera à son ami Kopinič de lever cette hypothèse pesant sur l'avenir de Tito.⁴⁴

C'est sur fond de toutes ces accusations et vérifications de l'activité de Tito que la question yougoslave continue d'être étudiée au sein de la Komintern sous ses deux aspects : rédaction du programme politique et choix d'une nouvelle direction. Les bases du programme politique sont posées en septembre par la commission dont Tito fait partie. La première mouture, celle de septembre, est rédigée principalement à partir des rapports de Tito. Elle porte clairement sa marque. La tâche prioritaire de la nouvelle direction doit être de préparer le pays à résister à l'agression germanique en luttant pour renverser le régime de Stojadinović, s'appuyant pour cela sur les efforts de l'opposition unie des partis bourgeois. Il faut ensuite nettoyer le parti des éléments trotskystes et des traîtres, partisans de l'ancienne direction, mais aussi de ceux qui de l'étranger (c'est-à-dire le « centre alternatif à Paris »), veulent introduire la lutte des fractions dans les rangs du parti au pays. Pour lutter contre les traîtres et les trotskystes, le parti yougoslave doit faire des efforts afin d'éduquer ses membres et sympathisants, notamment en traduisant et publiant les textes fondamentaux du marxisme-léninisme, comme par exemple L'Histoire du Parti Communiste de l'Union soviétique – bolchevique de Staline.⁴⁵ Ces principaux points sont repris dans la version finale du 3 janvier 1939 qui indique clairement que le parti yougoslave doit tout entreprendre pour défendre l'indépendance du pays en collaboration avec les partis de l'opposition, mais qu'il doit surtout purger ses rangs des parti-

⁴³ Cenčić, *Enigma Kopinič*, vol. I, 92.

⁴⁴ Ibid. 87.

⁴⁵ La Résolution sur le PCY, Moscou le 28 septembre 1938, RGASPI, F. 495, op. 20, d. 647.

sans de ceux qui ont été arrêtés et exécutés à Moscou.⁴⁶ Cette dernière version se trouve confirmée comme programme politique du parti yougoslave lors de la réunion du Comité exécutif du Komintern du 5 janvier 1939.

Le choix de la nouvelle direction va suivre un chemin beaucoup moins consensuel. Un pas décisif est franchi lorsque Vassile Kolarov, cadre bulgare, dirigeant du Département des Cadres et membre du Comité exécutif du Komintern, propose que la direction mise en place par Tito soit confirmée comme direction temporaire du parti yougoslave et qu'on lui accorde une aide matérielle. Tito n'est pas formellement mentionné pour y exercer une fonction autre que celle qu'il avait exercée jusque-là au sein de la direction temporaire. Kolarov le propose alors officiellement au poste clé de responsable des cadres. Désormais, tout correspondant des publications du Komintern devra au préalable obtenir son aval, tandis que lui seul pourra fournir la liste des camarades yougoslaves devant se rendre à Moscou. Ces cadres du parti yougoslave devaient être soumis à la « proverka » du Département des Cadres.⁴⁷ A l'instar de Gorkić autrefois, Tito peut contrôler effectivement le parti en surveillant les nominations et les mouvements des hommes. Mais Dimitrov s'empresse de lui expliquer que des doutes pèsent encore lourdement sur son avenir et celui du parti yougoslave.

Le secrétaire général reçoit finalement Tito le 30 décembre 1938. Leur entretien se déroule dans un climat bien plus tendu que Tito ne l'avait imaginé. Dimitrov conclut d'abord que l'activité du parti yougoslave est quasiment inexistante, et qu'il est en proie à de nombreuses fractions, dont Tito lui-même fait partie. Dans ces conditions il ne peut y avoir de solutions définitives, mais seulement temporaires. Tito ne doit pas se considérer comme investi de la confiance du Komintern, il n'en est que l'homme de liaison entre Moscou et le parti yougoslave. Sa fonction principale sera de transmettre les instructions du Komintern aux instances du parti, c'est-à-dire le programme politique. Ces instructions servent de feuille de route impérative que doivent suivre aussi bien Tito que les camarades dans le pays pour opérer le renouveau du parti. La preuve de la renaissance du parti yougoslave devra être apportée par l'organisation d'une conférence du parti ayant la légitimité de voter et entériner les instructions du Komintern. Une fois ce programme réalisé dans un délai de trois mois, Tito devra rentrer à Moscou pour faire son rapport. Entre-temps, la direction temporaire peut continuer à expédier les affaires courantes.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ La Résolution sur le PCY, Moscou le 3 janvier 1939, RGASPI, F. 495, op. 20, d. 640

⁴⁷ Kolarov à Dimitrov, Moscou le 26 décembre 1938, le Dossier personnel de Tito, F. 495, op. 277, d. 21, vol. II, p. 222.

⁴⁸ Le compte rendu de l'entretien de Dimitrov avec Tito, Moscou le 30 décembre 1938, Simić, *Svetac i magle*, 95–100 ; RGASPI, le Dossier personnel de Tito, F. 495, op. 277, d. 21, vol. II, pp. 214–220.

Le rappel à ordre de Dimitrov est plus que brutal. Au lieu d'être promu au poste de secrétaire général, comme il s'y attendait, Tito se voit traiter d'homme des fractions, accusation très grave, plus qu'il n'en faut à l'époque pour se retrouver derrière les barreaux de la « Liublianka ». Le prestige du parti yougoslave au Komintern est au plus bas du fait des querelles internes, des raffles au pays, et les purges de Moscou le placent pratiquement au dernier rang dans la famille communiste internationale. La responsabilité de cette déchéance du parti est aussi celle de Tito. C'est pourquoi, il ne peut espérer être l'architecte du son renouveau. Pour Dimitrov, cela devrait être l'œuvre de cadres nouveaux, au-delà de tout soupçon, travaillant dans le pays. Le nouveau souffle dans le parti yougoslave ne peut pas venir des rangs des émigrés (Tito inclus), divisés qu'ils sont par des luttes de fractions, mais par des hommes de terrain opérant dans la clandestinité ou sous le couvert des vitrines légales du parti. C'est ainsi que la direction temporaire, créée jadis par Tito à l'époque de Gorkić sans l'aval du Komintern, devient de manière paradoxale la seule autorité digne de confiance au sein du parti yougoslave.

La mise au point de Dimitrov se voit confirmée le 5 janvier par décision officielle de la commission yougoslave du Comité exécutif : elle est composée désormais de Manouïlski, Dimitrov, Kolarov, et Florin.⁴⁹ Elle entérine par ailleurs le choix de la direction proposée par Kolarov. C'est alors que tous les nuages semblent être dissipés au-dessus de Tito que tombe la conclusion du Département des Cadres sur l'affaire du navire « La Corse ». Tito (avec Gorkić) se voit désigné comme principal coupable de l'échec de ce projet extrêmement coûteux en hommes et en fonds.⁵⁰ Il n'en faut pas plus pour que Manouïlski conclue que Tito ne doit en aucun cas occuper un poste de direction au sein de parti yougoslave, il le considère à peine qualifié pour être un simple messenger.⁵¹

Ce rappel à l'ordre très sec retarde le départ de Tito de presque trois semaines mais ne l'empêche pas. Il quitte Moscou le 25 janvier 1939 en tant que simple messenger mais néanmoins fort de sa plus grande victoire, c'est-à-dire qu'il revient à Paris vivant, ayant franchi l'épreuve que représentent les vérifications du Komintern. Comment expliquer le fait qu'il soit le seul du groupe Gorkić à avoir survécu aux purges ? Tout d'abord par le seul fait qu'il ne se trouvait pas à Moscou lorsque la purge battait son plein. En avril 1938 Staline donne le signal que la période d'Iezhov et de ses méthodes du bourreau touchent à leur fin lorsqu'il dilue son pouvoir en ajoutant à ses responsabilités celle du transport flu-

⁴⁹ Florin Wilhelm, membre du Présidium et le chef de la commission du contrôle du Komintern, remplaça en novembre Moskvine, lorsque ce dernier fut arrêté.

⁵⁰ La conclusion fut signée par Belov et Stela Blagoeva, le 3 janvier 1939, RGASPI, le Dossier personnel de Tito, F. 495, op. 277, d. 21, vol. II, pp. 211-212.

⁵¹ Manouïlski à Dimitrov, le 7 janvier 1939, RGASPI, le Dossier personnel de Tito, F. 495, op. 277, d. 21, vol. II, p. 213.

vial et maritime. A partir d'août 1938 Beria, représentant personnel de Staline, remplace progressivement Iezhov, comme véritable chef de la sécurité soviétique pour le devenir officiellement en novembre 1938, mettant ainsi fin à la période des purges. Tito était donc hors de portée d'Iezhov au plus fort de la purge et de plus il n'en présentait pas le profil de la cible privilégiée. La folie meurtrière avait été provoquée par un sentiment d'insécurité souvent propre aux régimes totalitaires : dans le cas précis les cibles principales ont été surtout les étrangers intégrés dans la société soviétique et pouvant devenir ce qu'on appellera plus tard une « cinquième colonne ». Malgré son séjour, en total, de deux ans à Moscou, Tito ne devient jamais un émigré politique : il ne s'intègre jamais dans le monde soviétique et restera toujours, pour Gorkić et pour le Département des Cadres, un homme de terrain.

Son étonnante capacité de survivre aux purges malgré la multitude des accusations dont il fait l'objet s'explique aussi par son étroite collaboration avec Ivan Karaivanov, alias Spiner, l'homme du Département des Cadres, qui l'avait reçu à Moscou en février 1935 et qui ne l'abandonnera pas par la suite. On le retrouve dans l'entourage de Tito et du parti yougoslave à Moscou mais aussi à l'étranger, comme en 1936 à Vienne. Il est à Paris en 1939, lorsque Tito s'y rend après avoir quitté Moscou, et il travaille également avec Tito lorsqu'il y retourne en automne 1939. Tito mentionne aussi qu'après son départ de Moscou en 1936, c'est Karaivanov et le NKVD qui s'occupent de son fils Žarko, en l'envoyant dans des internats et des écoles.⁵² La nature exacte des liens de Tito avec le système de sécurité intérieure de l'Union soviétique au travers de Karaivanov restera malheureusement inconnue aussi longtemps que les archives resteront inaccessibles aux chercheurs. Il faut toutefois noter qu'à la fin de la guerre Karaivanov, après un bref séjour en Bulgarie, arrive en Yougoslavie où il est reçu avec les honneurs et où, désormais, le leader incontesté de la révolution et du parti yougoslaves lui assure une retraite confortable et bien méritée en l'intégrant dans les structures du parti yougoslave.

Tito a obtenu l'aval du Komintern grâce à son engagement sur le terrain, peut-être aussi grâce à ses liens avec le NKVD. Ce qui est indiscutable il est le seul capable d'assurer la pérennité de la présence communiste en Yougoslavie dont l'importance pour la sécurité de l'URSS, suite à l'Anschluss et après Munich, avait pris une importance considérable. Le choix des candidats susceptibles de remplir cette fonction n'était pas si étendu, car après la purge il n'y a plus à Moscou d'autres candidats possibles. On ne doit pas perdre de vue non plus qu'il en est réduit à n'être que le simple porte parole du Komintern qui doit encore se prononcer définitivement sur son sort et sur l'avenir du parti yougoslave.

⁵² Le récit à caractère autobiographique de Tito, Karadjordjevo, le 22 décembre 1979, AY, 837, IV, MG, TS, boîte 41.

La qualité dont il est pourvu par Moscou, aussi modeste soit-elle, paraît néanmoins décisive aussi bien aux yeux de ses concurrents à Paris que de ses collègues au pays. Il est à la fois le seul membre de l'ancien Comité central à être revenu de Moscou, et le seul membre de la direction temporaire dans le pays qui peut se prévaloir d'avoir côtoyé les plus hauts responsables de la III^e internationale. Cette double qualité lui accorde une autorité incontestable et incontestée, aussi bien au sein de l'émigration communiste yougoslave à Paris qu'au sein du parti dans le pays. La teneur précise des instructions reçues à Moscou s'efface devant le constat qu'il incarne l'autorité de la III^e internationale. C'est pourquoi Tito s'accommode parfaitement de sa modeste qualité d'homme de liaison sachant qu'elle lui assure l'essentiel, c'est-à-dire la possibilité de sortir d'URSS et le mandat de se rendre en Yougoslavie. C'est ainsi que ses concurrents du « centre alternatif du parti à Paris » sont définitivement écartés du parti et il peut continuer à personnifier l'autorité du Komintern en Yougoslavie. Finalement, sa véritable mission dépend de l'interprétation qu'il veut bien donner à ses collègues de la direction temporaire, des instructions qu'il avait reçu à Moscou. Tout en étant un simple messenger pour Dimitrov et Manouïlski, il est le principal dirigeant aux yeux des membres du parti yougoslave. En cette qualité officieuse mais néanmoins réelle, il s'emploie dès lors à façonner le parti selon ses propres vues tout en respectant le cadre général imposé par Dimitrov.

La purge du parti yougoslave

C'est avec un passeport suédois au nom de l'ingénieur Alexandre Carlsson que Tito arrive à Paris par avion le 27 janvier en provenance de Leningrad via la Finlande et Copenhague. La feuille de route qui lui a été signifiée est claire : d'abord purger le parti yougoslave des trotskystes, c'est-à-dire faire entériner par les instances du parti les purges effectuées à Moscou, et le cas échéant continuer la purge au pays. Dans un deuxième temps, il doit préparer le pays à résister à l'agression italo-allemande. Son statut personnel ainsi que celui de la direction temporaire dépendent de sa capacité à montrer de manière satisfaisante qu'il a accompli les deux impératifs dictés par Moscou. L'obligation de purger la mémoire du parti yougoslave de toute une génération de ses cadres lui donne aussi le pouvoir d'inclure ses concurrents à Paris dans ce processus de nettoyage. Le Komintern lui assure des lettres de créance : en janvier 1939 Dimitrov avertit Maurice Tréand de l'arrivée de Tito à Paris en tant que messenger en route pour la Yougoslavie. Dès lors, l'attitude du PCF à l'égard de Tito change radicalement. Informe par la voie officielle que Tito est mandaté par le Komintern, ne serait-ce que comme messenger, alors que ses concurrents ne sont même pas mentionnés par Dimitrov, le PCF leur retire immédiatement son soutien.

Tito peut donc résoudre le conflit qui l'oppose à Marić et Kusovac à sa guise : en son absence ses concurrents s'étaient emparés de la direction du parti

yougoslave en France. Avec le soutien du PCF, leur influence s'était même étendue parmi les émigrés économiques et les vétérans de la guerre d'Espagne qui se trouvaient en France. Doté désormais des pleins pouvoirs, Tito relève Kusovac de ses fonctions au comité espagnol du PCF et écarte définitivement Marić du parti. Une fois le « centre alternatif » définitivement mis hors d'état de nuire, Tito peut s'atteler à organiser son retour au pays.

La Yougoslavie connaît au début de 1939 un bouleversement sans précédent. Le 5 février, le Président du Conseil Milan Stojadinović est évincé suite à une habile manœuvre parlementaire orchestrée par le prince Paul. Occupé par le problème du « centre alternatif », Tito suit néanmoins de Paris l'évolution de la scène politique en Yougoslavie. Les événements nécessitent une réaction de sa part, le parti se doit de prendre position afin d'aider ses militants à comprendre l'évolution de la situation politique. Il lui faut aussi présenter à la base du parti la nouvelle stratégie politique du parti yougoslave définie à Moscou. Mais les moyens de communication à sa disposition sont fort limités, et il ne peut réagir que par une série d'articles publiés dans le *Rundschau*, organe de la III^e internationale publié en allemand et dont des exemplaires sont introduits clandestinement en Yougoslavie. Il y accuse Stojadinović d'être complice de l'Allemagne hitlérienne dans le processus de démantèlement du système de sécurité issu de la Grande guerre. En signant des accords avec la Bulgarie et l'Italie, alliés de Hitler, Stojadinović a porté un coup fatal aux alliances (la Petite entente, l'Entente balkanique), sur lesquelles repose la sécurité yougoslave et régionale. Tito termine le tableau dramatique de la situation yougoslave en évoquant les atteintes aux revendications légitimes des Croates, dont Stojadinović s'est rendu coupable en les ignorant complètement. Pour lui, la seule issue possible pour le pays et ses nations constitutives réside dans l'union de toutes les forces vives en défense contre le péril fasciste. L'annonce de l'essence de la nouvelle ligne du parti verra sa pleine expression en mars 1939 dans un tract imprimé à l'occasion de l'occupation nazie de la Tchécoslovaquie. Tito, au nom du parti yougoslave, en appelle dans ce tract à la création d'un gouvernement d'union nationale capable de satisfaire les revendications légitimes des nations yougoslaves et de renforcer ainsi la défense du pays. L'union sacrée et l'alliance avec l'Union soviétique sont pour le parti yougoslave les deux éléments cruciaux de la défense yougoslave contre l'agression de l'Italie fasciste et de l'Allemagne hitlérienne.⁵³ Les écrits de Tito sont la preuve de l'ouverture du parti et de sa volonté de proposer une plateforme politique suffisamment large, consensuelle et capable de servir de base à un Front populaire de défense de la patrie. La volonté des communistes yougoslaves d'intégrer pleinement la vie politique du pays est indiscutable, mais aussi leur désir de se présenter comme la force de cohésion d'une politique alternative à celle du gouvernement royal.

⁵³ Les articles de Tito de février et mars 1939, JBT, vol. IV, 158–167.

La direction temporaire, outil politique censé donner vie à cette plateforme, vivait depuis le départ de Tito au printemps 1938 sa propre vie, ignorant les dangers qui menaçaient le parti yougoslave et les obstacles rencontrés par Tito à Moscou. La communication entre Tito et la direction temporaire reste faible. En novembre et décembre 1938, Tito reçoit deux lettres de Lola Ribar par le biais de l'antenne du parti à Paris. Ribar l'informe de la participation du parti aux élections.⁵⁴ Tito apprend ainsi que la direction temporaire a décidé, sans le consulter, que la vitrine légale du parti, le Parti Ouvrier, doit prendre part aux élections de novembre 1938, en dehors de toute coalition. En l'absence de Tito, la direction temporaire est composée de trois groupes nationaux autonomes. De plus le groupe croate, à l'insu de ses collègues et de Tito, décide de ne pas présenter des candidats et d'appeler à voter pour les candidats du Parti paysan croate.⁵⁵ Tito, dans l'incapacité de réagir efficacement dans l'immédiat, répond à Lola Ribar par des instructions générales, gardant le silence absolu sur les difficultés qui étaient les siennes à Moscou. Il ne dispose que de peu d'informations sur la situation au pays, mais ses collègues n'en ont aucune sur ses actions. Il se garde bien de porter atteinte à l'image qu'il avait créée de lui-même, celle d'un dirigeant jouissant de l'entière confiance du Komintern. Mais les informations mêmes sommaires reçues du pays lui permettent de se rendre compte de toute la difficulté de la tâche qui l'attend lorsqu'à la mi-mars 1939 il arrive à Zagreb.

Il convoque immédiatement une réunion de la direction au lac de Bohinj en Slovénie pour faire entériner à la fois les résultats des purges de Moscou et de sa propre action à Paris. Se présentant d'entrée comme investi de l'autorité du Komintern, Tito promeut la direction temporaire en Comité Central du parti communiste yougoslave. Dès sa première réunion, la nouvelle instance suprême du parti décide d'exclure du parti tous ceux qui ont été victimes des purges stalinienne, confirme la mise à l'écart du parti de tous les concurrents de Tito à Paris, ainsi que de leurs amis en Yougoslavie. Une génération entière de communistes yougoslaves, presque tous les anciens dirigeants et membres des différentes fractions, disparaît pour la deuxième fois, après avoir été broyée par la répression stalinienne, faisant table rase dans le parti yougoslave. Gorkić, Marković, Čopić, Cvijić, Mavrak, parmi tant d'autres sont ainsi rayés de la mémoire du parti. Les membres du « centre alternatif » à Paris ainsi que leurs amis, tel Petko Miletić, et la direction régionale en Dalmatie proche de Marić, les rejoignent dans l'exil définitif du mouvement communiste yougoslave. Le simple messenger de Dimitrov et Manouïlski, tout en appliquant leurs ordres, devient le maître absolu du parti yougoslave, mais pas encore officiellement son secrétaire général. La consécration prendra encore du temps, mais déjà à l'époque, selon le témoignage de Djilas

⁵⁴ Tito à Lola Ribar, Moscou le 1 décembre 1938, JBT, vol. IV, 142–143 ; Lola Ribar à Tito, 10.12.1938, *ibid.* 222–223.

⁵⁵ Djilas, *Memoir*, 281.

rédigé bien après qu'il sera devenu le plus fameux dissident yougoslave, et donc dénué de toute complaisance à vocation hagiographique :

Tito était le seul homme pourvu de la confiance du Komintern, puisque cette instance avait confirmé son choix des hommes pour le Comité central. Il avait le droit de veto, mais ne l'utilisait que rarement. Non seulement il avait le dernier mot, mais il ne tolérait pas de longues discussions et arguments, même lorsque son point de vue était clairement sans fondement ou fruit de l'ignorance et du manque d'information. C'était le genre de relation qu'on a toujours eu avec lui. On acceptait cette relation par discipline communiste. La Komintern nous avait donné un homme investi de sa confiance, son pouvoir et son rôle étaient donc exceptionnels. S'opposer à lui signifiait aller contre la majorité, l'expulsion du parti, l'éloignement de toute activité révolutionnaire. Même si parfois on rouspétait contre ses décisions autoritaires, et l'occasionnel manque de compréhension, il ne nous est jamais venu à l'esprit de contester cet état de choses.⁵⁶

Tito se voit consacré par ses pairs comme l'homme fort du parti yougoslave, après que tous ses rivaux anciens et nouveaux se sont vus écartés du parti, mais il est toujours dénué d'un titre officiel, que seul le Komintern pourrait lui accorder. En l'absence d'une investiture formelle, il s'attelle à faire connaître par une lettre ouverte à la base du parti les décisions du Comité Central. La communication au moyen de tracts et de lettres ouvertes est dictée par le caractère clandestin du parti. Les quelques feuilles tirées à la main étaient faciles à imprimer et à distribuer clandestinement à toutes les directions régionales et locales et jusqu'à la dernière cellule du parti. Les instances du parti sont tenues d'organiser des réunions spéciales afin de discuter du contenu de cette lettre ouverte, à vrai dire il s'agit plutôt d'inculquer son contenu dans les esprits des militants. En occurrence, la lettre ouverte qu'il rédige fin mars 1939 au nom du Comité Central communique aux militants l'essentiel de la plate-forme politique établie à Moscou, c'est-à-dire la nécessité de la résistance face à l'agression fasciste et l'exclusion du parti de tout élément jugé trouble par Moscou.

Il lui faut alors assurer l'adhésion à ce programme de toutes les directions régionales. Il commence le tour du pays par la direction régionale récalcitrante de Croatie. Tito rappelle à l'ordre les cadres croates en leur rapprochant leur décision d'appeler à voter pour le Parti paysan croate. La direction régionale sera complètement remaniée. La situation en Dalmatie reste bien plus compliquée, car les amis de Marić y disposent d'une majorité stable. Il décide de se rendre en personne à Belgrade afin d'analyser sur place l'état des choses dans la partie orientale du pays. Il arrive à Belgrade pour faire connaissance personnellement avec la direction régionale pour la Serbie, mais aussi avec celles de la Bosnie et Herzégovine, et de la Vojvodine. Son tour des directions régionales a aussi pour objectif de se faire accepter comme détenteur de l'autorité suprême au sein du

⁵⁶ Ibid. 284.

parti yougoslave. Les décisions du Comité Central ne sont alors que la première étape, car sa position et son programme ont besoin de l'aval d'une instance représentative du parti. En effet, il cherche à organiser une réunion rassemblant les représentants de toutes les directions régionales, et son voyage est le moyen d'assurer la présence des représentants de la partie orientale à la réunion. La réunion se tient les 9 et 10 juin en Slovénie : elle consacre définitivement son emprise sur le parti, et entérine toutes les décisions prises par le Comité central en mars. Le parti yougoslave est en état de marche et sous son commandement, Tito peut estimer avoir rempli les conditions imposées par Moscou. Mais il a mis bien plus que les trois mois accordés par Dimitrov pour y arriver, et les sommations de Moscou pour qu'il rende compte de ses actions sont déjà nombreuses.

Tito, conscient d'avoir dépassé les délais impartis, avait anticipé les mises en demeure qu'il savait devoir recevoir et avait communiqué le 2 mai à Moscou la constitution et les décisions du Comité Central. Mais ce premier rapport est loin de rassurer Moscou et l'apparition soudaine à Paris de Karaïvanov auprès de la seule branche du parti à l'étranger semble le confirmer. Il faut se souvenir qu'il s'agit du contact de Tito auprès du NKVD. Les services de sécurité soviétiques suivent de près ses activités, à travers l'homme qui le connaît le mieux. Karaïvanov se met immédiatement en contact avec Tito, qui lui envoie son premier rapport se limitant en apparence à l'activité éditoriale du parti yougoslave.⁵⁷ Néanmoins, il est indiscutable que les agissements de Tito sont soumis à une étroite surveillance, et qu'il ne jouit en définitive que d'une confiance limitée de la part de ses supérieurs de Moscou.

Tito, en attente de la réunion du parti, décide de rester en Yougoslavie. Début juin, Karaïvanov le somme de venir à Paris pour se rendre ensuite à Moscou. Tito, au lieu de se plier à cet ordre, décide de contacter directement Moscou par le truchement de la branche du parti à Paris, afin de demander la prolongation de son visa d'entrée en URSS jusqu'à la fin de juillet. Le fait qu'il cherche à court-circuiter Karaïvanov en s'adressant à ses supérieurs à Moscou démontre l'assurance de Tito. Cette assurance trouve ses origines dans son implantation au pays, mais peut-être aussi dans la spécificité de son analyse politique. Tito ne sera jamais l'homme du sérail moscovite, il garde comme cadre de sa réflexion politique la situation au pays, et y trouve ses impératifs et le raisonnement définitif pour son action. Consolider le parti lui paraît plus important que de répondre aux sommations de l'homme responsable de lui au NKVD. Pourvu d'un courage indéniable, d'initiative, de flair politique, Tito agit en tant que prototype d'un *self-made man*, ou plutôt dans la tradition française d'un Rastignac de la politique yougoslave. Il ne sera jamais atteint de la maladie bureaucratique attachée au système soviétique. Faisant preuve de l'assurance propre à un homme d'action et d'une totale absence de ce doute caractérisant les intellectuels, il pourra

⁵⁷ Tito à Karaïvanov, le 18 mai 1939, JBT, vol. IV, 197.

toujours compter sur ces principaux atouts lors de sa longue ascension dans la hiérarchie du monde communiste.

Il doit néanmoins expliquer le contenu et les raisons de son action le 20 juin dans un rapport adressé à Dimitrov en personne. Il s'y félicite du travail accompli, notamment sur la consolidation du parti, précisant qu'il a dû remplacer la direction régionale en Croatie ainsi que celle de Dalmatie inféodée à Marić et ses amis, tandis que la direction pour la Macédoine est à construire.⁵⁸ Son rapport reste sans réponse car il n'avait pas obtenu l'accord préalable du Komintern pour sa décision de prolonger son séjour au pays. La bureaucratie communiste réagit comme jadis, le laissant sans nouvelles, et aussi sans ressources. Dans la hiérarchie staliniste toute initiative personnelle est malvenue et mal vue, et en conséquence Tito est obligé d'envoyer Vladimir Velebit (avocat de Zagreb) à Paris pour rétablir le contact avec Moscou. Le cas de Velebit est caractéristique d'un réseau de sympathisants du parti, auxquels Tito fait très souvent appel. Il s'agit d'hommes et de femmes souvent très bien intégrés dans la société yougoslave, occupant des positions de prestige à l'instar de Velebit, idéologiquement proches des communistes mais toujours restés en dehors du parti yougoslave. Ils ne sont pas très nombreux mais très précieux, au-dessus de tout soupçon et comme tels ils hébergent les cadres du parti y compris Tito, et même les réunions clandestines.

Tito est forcé d'attendre presque deux mois sur la côte croate à côté de Rijeka, avant que début août arrivent enfin les fonds et l'accord pour son voyage à Paris. Entre-temps il doit se confronter au seul foyer d'opposition encore actif en Yougoslavie, dont l'homme clé est Petko Miletić. Il mène son offensive d'abord par lettres, ensuite par une déclaration à l'issue d'une réunion du parti : il s'agit d'isoler et de stigmatiser Miletić comme fauteur de troubles et ennemi du parti. Mais Miletić continue d'avoir un nombre suffisant de partisans pour représenter un danger pour Tito, notamment lorsqu'en juin 1939 il sort de prison. De plus, avec l'aide de ses partisans il parvient à se rendre à Moscou par Sofia et Constantinople. Il y arrive à peu près en même temps que Tito qui avait emprunté la voie occidentale, par Paris d'abord puis en bateau du Havre à Leningrad. Parti du Havre fin août, Tito apprend pendant son voyage l'attaque allemande de la Pologne et le déclenchement de la Seconde guerre mondiale. Sur fond de conflit mondial se déroule dans les couloirs du Komintern la dernière phase de la bataille pour la direction du parti yougoslave, entre Tito d'une part et de l'autre son charismatique et dogmatique adversaire monténégrin.

Après un long voyage du Havre à Leningrad jusqu'à Moscou, Tito retrouve le 2 septembre ses quartiers à hôtel Lux. L'atmosphère y est fort différente de celle régnant lors de ses précédents séjours. La guerre impose de nouvelles priorités au Komintern et aux cadres des partis communistes qui se trouvent

⁵⁸ Tito à Dimitrov, 20 juin 1939, *ibid.* 198, 199.

à Moscou et à leurs hôtes soviétiques. L'Union Soviétique avait conclu, le 23 août 1939, le pacte de non-agression avec l'Allemagne hitlérienne. Ce pacte lui garantit des avantages territoriaux sur ses frontières occidentales (régions orientales de la Pologne et de la Finlande et la Bessarabie) en cas de victoire dans la guerre qui s'annonce. Staline explique en septembre cette volte-face de sa politique étrangère à Georgi Dimitrov, l'ancien accusé au procès de l'incendie de Reichstag en 1934, devenu l'année suivante secrétaire général du Komintern de la façon suivante :

Une guerre a lieu entre deux groupes de pays capitalistes (pauvres et riches au niveau des colonies, des matières premières, etc.) pour le partage du Monde, pour régner sur le Monde !

Nous n'avons rien contre le fait qu'ils se combattent un bon coup et qu'ils s'affaiblissent l'un l'autre. Cela ne serait pas mal si, grâce à l'Allemagne, la situation des pays capitalistes les plus riches était ébranlée (en particulier l'Angleterre). Hitler, sans le comprendre, ni le vouloir lui-même, ébranle, sape le système capitaliste.

Les communistes des pays capitalistes doivent, de façon définitive prendre position contre leur gouvernement, contre la guerre. Avant la guerre, il était totalement juste de contrer le fascisme avec /les régimes démocratiques. Au cours d'une guerre entre puissances impérialistes, cela ne l'est plus, La séparation entre États capitalistes fascistes et démocratiques a perdu le sens qu'elle avait. La guerre entraîne un changement radical. Le Front populaire uni d'hier avait pour but de soulager la situation des esclaves du régime capitaliste. Mais dans les conditions d'une guerre impérialiste, c'est de l'anéantissement de l'esclavage dont il est question ! Être aujourd'hui sur les positions d'hier (Front populaire uni, unité de la nation) cela signifie aller sur les positions de la bourgeoisie ». ⁵⁹

Pour conclure ensuite avec des ordres à caractère impératif :

Voilà ce qu'il faut dire à la classe ouvrière :

C'est une guerre pour la maîtrise du Monde.

Ce sont les maîtres des pays capitalistes qui combattent pour leurs intérêts impérialistes.

Cette guerre ne donnera rien aux ouvriers, aux travailleurs, sauf douleur et privatisations.

Intervenir de façon décidée contre la guerre et ceux qui en sont coupables.

Démasquer la neutralité, la neutralité des pays bourgeois qui, prônant chez eux la neutralité, soutiennent la guerre dans les autres pays dans un seul but de profit. ⁶⁰

Dimitrov est alors chargé de transmettre ces consignes de manière impérative aux partis frères. Il s'acquitte de cette mission avec une rapidité exem-

⁵⁹ Georgi Dimitrov, *Journal 1933-1949* (Paris : Belin, 2005), 339-341. Les soulignements existent dans le texte.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

plaire et dès le 9 septembre cette directive est adoptée par le Comité central du Komintern. On a là l'expression la plus fidèle possible de la nouvelle stratégie stalinienne, avec une précision de taille : les partis communistes y sont invités à passer résolument à l'offensive contre la politique traîtresse de la social-démocratie.⁶¹ Le véritable mobile de ce revirement de la politique étrangère stalinienne est démontré lorsque l'URSS déclare la guerre à la Pologne (17 septembre 1939) pour s'assurer les gains territoriaux qui lui ont été garantis par l'accord avec l'Hitler.

L'abandon de la stratégie soviétique basée sur l'idée de Front populaire et le renouveau du combat contre les sociaux-démocrates, signifie que la guerre a incité Moscou à retourner à sa politique traditionnelle, c'est-à-dire d'accorder la priorité absolue à la lutte contre le monde capitaliste. C'est Manouïlski qui se voit confier la tâche d'exposer la nouvelle stratégie aux cadres des partis frères se trouvant à l'époque à Moscou. Tito, en tant que principal dirigeant du parti yougoslave, est convié mi-septembre à la réunion organisée à cet effet. Il fallait trouver un moyen de présenter la volte-face stalinienne aux membres et aux militants des partis frères. Tito s'accommode parfaitement de cette nouvelle donne de la géopolitique soviétique. Il ne voit aucun inconvénient dans cette alliance avec l'ennemi juré d'hier. Les témoignages sur son analyse manquent, mais on sait qu'il s'empresse de déclarer, lors de cette réunion et en présence de Manouïlski, que l'existence du pacte de non-agression n'a besoin d'aucune explication. Selon lui, il faut simplement s'aligner sur la position stalinienne.⁶² Il ne manque pas de le faire dès la mi-novembre, dans les articles qu'il écrit dans le journal communiste *Die Welt*, édité en allemand à Moscou. Il s'y exprime sans équivoque en faveur du pacte de non-agression, affirmant que sa signature avait provoqué « l'enthousiasme » des nations yougoslaves, car il leur permettait de rester en dehors de la guerre.⁶³ Pensai-t-il que les décisions de Staline et du Komintern ne se discutaient pas, ou qu'il valait mieux ne pas chercher à trouver des explications à des questions aussi délicates, on ne peut pas le savoir. Ce qui est certain est que Manouïlski, à l'époque, fut enchanté de la solution proposée par Tito.

Quelles qu'aient été ses raisons, il est évident que Tito savait se positionner de façon à être toujours en accord avec la ligne du parti soviétique, et donc du Komintern. Certes, il est impensable qu'il en ait été autrement : mais on remarque que Tito excellait dans l'art d'être le premier à s'aligner sur la stratégie stalinienne. N'oublions pas non plus que sa situation personnelle de principal

⁶¹ Ibid. 341–342.

⁶² Tito à Tihomir Stanojević, Karadjordjevo, le 29 décembre 1979, AY, 838, IV-5-a, boîte 43. V. Dedijer, *Novi prilozci za biografiju Josipa Broza Tita* (Rijeka : Liburnija, 1981), vol. II, 360.

⁶³ Tito, « O situaciji u Jugoslaviji » [Sur la situation en Yougoslavie], *Die Welt* no. 13, le 30 novembre 1939 ; « Pokret protiv rata u Jugoslaviji » [Le mouvement contre la guerre], *Die Welt* no. 21, le 21 décembre 1939, dans JBT, vol. V, 34 et 35.

responsable du parti communiste yougoslave, mais toujours privé de l'agrément officiel du Moscou, l'incitait à la plus grande prudence. Or, la consécration tant attendue de la part de Komintern, restait tout sauf acquise. Il se souvenait qu'un jour, alors qu'il prenait le trolleybus pour rejoindre les bureaux de Komintern, il y remarqua un homme se tenant à une barre, apparemment insensible au fait que sa main saignait à grosses gouttes. Il apprit par la suite que cet intrépide et valeureux camarade était son adversaire et concurrent pour le poste de secrétaire général du Parti yougoslave, Petko Miletic.⁶⁴

Ce Monténégrin tenace et décidé fut le plus sérieux rival de Tito. Il pouvait se prévaloir à la fois d'un réseau de militants fidèles dans le pays et d'appuis influents à Moscou. Il appartenait à l'ancienne génération de révolutionnaires yougoslaves, ayant adhéré au parti yougoslave en 1919 et devenu membre du parti soviétique en 1927. Lors de son passage à Moscou de 1927 à 1930, il étudiait à l'Université des cadres des partis frères. Il rentra ensuite en Yougoslavie comme membre de la direction du parti. Au début de l'année 1932, il est pris par la police et condamné à une peine de sept ans d'emprisonnement. Depuis le pénitencier, il établit des contacts avec les adversaires et concurrents de Tito appartenant au « Centre alternatif de Paris », dont il joua le rôle de relais dans le pays. En tant que tel, Tito l'écarte officiellement du parti en mai 1939, avec ses amis parisiens. Lorsqu'il sort de prison en juin, la décision de la direction présidée par Tito lui est communiquée par ses membres en Serbie, dont notamment Ivo Ribar, dit Lola. Ce dernier incarnait l'ouverture du parti vers la jeunesse étudiante et intellectuelle, mais aussi vers les milieux plus aisés. Lola Ribar, vêtu à la dernière mode et assez nerveux à cause de la responsabilité qui lui incombait, notifie à Miletic son expulsion du parti, tout en écrasant des cigarettes à moitié fumées.⁶⁵ Pour un vieux révolutionnaire, le nouveau visage du parti communiste yougoslave, à l'instar de Lola Ribar (un petit jeune qui n'était jamais allé en prison et ne connaissait pas, entre autres, l'importance qu'un mégot pouvait avoir pour un détenu), ne devait pas être très convaincant. Il n'est donc pas surprenant que Lola Ribar n'ait pas pu convaincre Miletic de se plier aux décisions de la direction du Parti. Ce dernier décide de continuer son combat contre Tito et ses fidèles en portant l'affaire à la connaissance du Komintern, et en se rendant à Moscou pour y plaider sa cause. Il y arrive fin septembre grâce au soutien des cadres bulgares qui lui ont permis d'obtenir un visa soviétique à Istanbul.

Le conflit pour la direction du parti se déroule au Komintern, par l'intermédiaire des soutiens respectifs dont les deux prétendants disposent au sein de la Nomenklatura communiste internationale. Miletic peut se prévaloir du soutien de ses amis bulgares, dont le puissant dirigeant du Département des cadres, Kolarov. Tito en revanche dispose de l'appui de son ami Kopininič, bien

⁶⁴ Cenčić, *Enigma Kopinič*, vol. I, 112.

⁶⁵ Djilas, *Memoir*, 302.

introduit dans les services secrets soviétiques. Tito peut également porter à son crédit le travail effectué en Yougoslavie, si bien que l'opinion qu'il avait exprimée précédemment sur Miletić se voit prise en compte par le Département des cadres et intégrée au dossier personnel de ce dernier. C'était Tito, en tant que responsable des cadres, et donc *de facto* principal dirigeant du parti, qui avait écrit la « caractéristique » de Miletić. Le dossier personnel de ce dernier contenait aussi une accusation de trotskisme datant des années trente. Mais surtout, des interrogations se faisaient sur la manière dont un ancien détenu avait pu retrouver le chemin de Moscou, lorsque l'on savait à quel point les mouvements des anciens prisonniers politiques étaient surveillés par la police yougoslave. Kopinić prépara un véritable réquisitoire contre Miletić,⁶⁶ tandis que les collègues de Tito à la direction du parti, dont notamment Djilas, l'accusaient d'avoir accepté de collaborer avec les autorités yougoslaves lors de sa capture, en 1932.⁶⁷ Tito, à partir de tous ces éléments, rédige en octobre un véritable acte d'accusation en bonne et due forme contre son adversaire, l'accusant même d'avoir été un proche collaborateur du « traître » Gorkić. Ce fut la seule fois qu'il dénonça et accabla explicitement un adversaire auprès des autorités soviétiques avec l'objectif de le faire éliminer. Le désignant comme un proche du « traître » avéré, Tito cherchait, en effet, à envoyer Miletić, sinon à la potence, du moins dans un camp du travail forcé. L'importance des soutiens dont jouissait Tito au Komintern, les incohérences du dossier personnel de Miletić, mais surtout l'accusation d'avoir collaboré avec la police yougoslave eurent raison des ambitions de ce dernier. Il fut emprisonné et, en janvier 1940 condamné à 8 ans de travaux forcés, pour périr en mai 1943 dans un camp en Sibérie.⁶⁸

Pendant les deux années qui suivent la disparition de Gorkić, Tito peaufine son inébranlable quête de pouvoir au sein du parti yougoslave. Ses efforts ont été couronnés de succès par la déchéance de son dernier concurrent direct. Cependant l'investiture officielle de la part du Komintern tarde encore. Il continue d'être soumis à toutes sortes de vérifications et fait l'objet de diverses accusations et complots dont l'origine se trouve dans les luttes internes au sein du Komintern. L'atmosphère lourde de soupçons et de diffamations mutuelles parmi les cadres des partis frères à Moscou rattrapent encore une fois Tito, car il se voit accusé d'avoir introduit des concepts trotskistes dans la traduction en serbo-croate de l'histoire du parti soviétique écrite par Staline en personne. Une imputation sérieuse, lourde de conséquences, faite par un jeune cadre du parti yougoslave qui cherchait à se faire un nom, si ce n'est de bâtir sa carrière à Moscou par ce témoignage de vigilance communiste. Certes, lors de son séjour à Moscou en automne 1938, Tito avait été le responsable de la traduction des

⁶⁶ Cenčić, *Enigma Kopinić*, vol. I, 108–111.

⁶⁷ Djilas, *Memoir*, 302.

⁶⁸ Le Dossier personnel de Miletić, RGASPI, F. 495, op. 277, d. 364.

écrits de Staline. Le fait de travestir ses idées était synonyme de trahison de la cause communiste. L'affaire est portée devant la commission de contrôle du Komintern. La défense documentée est assurée par son ami Kopinič. Le président, le camarade Florin, lui réserve un accueil bienveillant. Tito se voit acquitté et toutes les charges qui pesaient sur lui sont levées.⁶⁹

En ce terrible automne 1939, le soutien de Kopinič fut d'une importance cruciale pour Tito. Mais le principal atout de Tito réside dans l'analyse des dirigeants du Komintern sur les structures du parti yougoslave mises en place sur le terrain en Yougoslavie après la chute de Gorkiç. En effet, aucune alternative viable et tangible au parti communiste yougoslave dirigé par Tito n'existait : les tentatives du « centre alternatif de Paris » et de Miletić, n'en étaient pas véritablement une. Tito semble alors incarner une solution crédible : celle apportée par le travail sur le terrain. Vu les problèmes sérieux de cette section du Komintern en difficulté, qui est le parti yougoslave, Tito fut seul à même de faire un rapport sur les membres des différentes directions régionales du parti en Yougoslavie, tout en faisant attention à faire la différence entre ceux qu'il connaissait personnellement et ceux dont les noms lui sont proposés par les comités régionaux. En effet, le sort réservé aux cadres yougoslaves témoigne de la confiance dont jouit Tito à Moscou, car c'est lui qui décide de leur emploi et de leur avenir, en rédigeant leurs « caractéristiques » et en proposant des solutions au Département des cadres. En septembre il fait un rapport sur les cadres yougoslaves de retour de la guerre d'Espagne et dont le parti voulait qu'ils retournent travailler sur le terrain. Par ailleurs, il prend des dispositions pour ceux qui devaient rester en URSS ou aller œuvrer au sein de l'émigration économique yougoslave aux États-Unis et au Canada. Enfin, il propose aussi au Département des cadres des candidats pour les nouveaux membres des directions régionales.⁷⁰

La prise en main du parti par Tito est incontestable après l'éviction de tous ses concurrents : le Département des cadres suit ses suggestions pour les nominations et l'emploi des camarades yougoslaves. Cependant, il ne peut pas encore se prévaloir officiellement de la charge suprême du parti, qui était celle de Gorkiç. Il sait que désormais, seule une conférence du parti organisée en Yougoslavie est habilitée à élire le nouveau secrétaire général. Le plus grand obstacle sur la voie de cette élection est écarté lorsque le Comité exécutif du Komintern, le 23 novembre, lui accorde officiellement son satisfecit en jugeant qu'il avait suivi à la lettre toutes les instructions qui lui ont été données lors de son dernier départ de Moscou en janvier 1939. La plus haute instance du mouvement communiste international estime que le parti yougoslave, a su :

⁶⁹ Cenčić, *Enigma Kopinič*, vol. I, 103–106. La conclusion de la Commission de contrôle, signé Florin, Moscou le 2 novembre 1939, RGASPI, F. 495, op. 277, d. 16, pp. 123–124.

⁷⁰ Dossier personnel de Tito, RGASPI, F. 495, op. 277, d. 21, vol. II, pp. 152–163.

Par son travail, gagner l'entière confiance des adhérents et que, en exécution de la résolution du secrétariat, en date du 5 janvier 1939, le Parti a sérieusement entrepris :

- a) La liquidation de l'état de confusion et de désorganisation dans le parti, provoqué par le sabotage de ses anciens dirigeants, la consolidation politique et d'organisation des rangs du parti et le renforcement de la vigilance bolchevique.
- b) L'amélioration du travail politique de masse, extension de l'influence du parti dans les masses laborieuses et consolidation des positions du parti dans les syndicats, dans les autres organisations de masse et dans les rangs du mouvement des jeunes.⁷¹

Tito reçoit enfin l'approbation officielle : il a écarté du parti, sans états d'âme, tous ceux qui ont péri dans les purges stalinienne, tout en redonnant une nouvelle crédibilité politique à son action politique. Le renouveau du parti yougoslave est donc incontestablement dû à l'action de Tito. L'ascension au pouvoir de Tito au temps des purges stalinienne se termine en automne 1939 lorsqu'il, comme le seul survivant de la direction du parti établi par Gorkiç, reçoit l'investiture *de facto* de Komintern. Cependant, la grande œuvre accomplie de Tito se résume à la survie personnelle et celle du parti yougoslave dont l'importance politique et la renommée au Moscou étaient au plus bas. Sa réussite est due d'abord au fait qu'il n'était pas à Moscou lors de la première vague des purges qui ont décimé les cadres yougoslaves en Union soviétique, et ensuite par ses liens et son utilité pour les instances soviétiques (Département des cadres, Comité exécutif de Komintern), car il fut le seul dirigeant communiste qui pouvait se prévaloir d'une organisation structurée du parti en Yougoslavie.

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⁷¹ Résolution du Secrétariat sur le rapport du camarade Walter concernant le travail du parti communiste yougoslave, Moscou le 20 novembre 1939, RGASPI, F. 495, op. 20, d. 640, pp. 185–190.

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Kosta Nikolić*

Institute for Contemporary History
Belgrade

Great Britain, the Soviet Union and the Resistance Movements in Yugoslavia, 1941¹

Abstract: During the Second World War a brutal and distinctly complex war was fought in Yugoslavia. It was a mixture of an anti-fascist struggle for liberation as well as an ideological, civil, inter-ethnic and religious war, which witnessed a holocaust and genocide against Jews and Serbs. At least a million Yugoslavs died in that war, most of them ethnic Serbs. In their policies towards Yugoslavia, each of the three Allied Powers (the United States of America, the Soviet Union and Great Britain) had their short-term and long-term goals. The short-term goals were victory over the Axis powers. The long-term goals were related to the post-war order in Europe (and the world). The Allies were unanimous about the short-term goals, but differed with respect to long-term goals. The relations between Great Britain and the Soviet Union were especially sensitive: both countries wanted to use a victory in the war as a means of increasing their political power and influence. Yugoslavia was a useful buffer zone between British and Soviet ambitions, as well as being the territory in which the resistance to the Axis was the strongest. The relations between London and Moscow grew even more complicated when the two local resistance movements clashed over their opposing ideologies: nationalism versus communism. The foremost objective of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY) was to effect a violent change to the pre-war legal and political order of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

Keywords: Allies, Yugoslavia, Resistance movements, military strategy, communist ideology

Introduction

The assassination of King Alexander I Karadjordjević on October 9, 1934 in France triggered a series of events that dragged the Kingdom of Yugoslavia into the Second World War. It was the one of the first step towards the destruc-

* kostasnikolic@yahoo.com

¹ I would like to thank Peter Radan, Macquarie University, Australia, and Dragan Bakić, Institute for Balkan Studies, Serbia, for their helpful comments and encouragement on earlier drafts of this article.

tion of the European order. Thereafter, Yugoslavia increasingly found herself at the mercy of the great European powers. The legitimacy of Yugoslavia was in question almost immediately after it came into existence, but Western democracies did not have the will or the capacity to respond to this problem.²

Prince Paul Karadjordjević³ was appointed regent for his 11-year-old nephew, Peter II. As regent, he felt constrained to undertake much needed far-reaching reforms towards resolving national differences, above all the Serb-Croat conflict over the constitutional structure of the country. Although Yugoslavia was politically oriented towards the western democracies and supported the League of Nations, it found itself increasingly economically tied to Germany and Italy. The collapse of the Little Entente (an alliance between Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Romania formed for the purpose of resisting a Habsburg restoration) had diminished Yugoslavia's regional influence. Paul was soon forced to submit to Hitler's demands and align his policy with the Axis powers. During his visit to Berlin in June 1939, Paul became convinced that the war in Europe was unavoidable and imminent. He therefore resolved to revive the talks with the Croats without delay in order to settle internal conflicts in his country.⁴

In July, the Regent visited London to shore up his relationship with the British. Immediately afterwards, he encouraged talks between his government and opposition leaders in Croatia, which led to the Agreement of August 26, 1939. This unexpected agreement, which granted the Croats an autonomous province (*Banovina Hrvatska*), was signed three days after the equally unexpected Nazi-Soviet Pact was signed in Moscow. However, rather than resolving the Serb-Croat conflict, the Agreement only served to exacerbate tensions between Serbs and Croats. For extreme Croat nationalists, the Agreement was, at best, a small step towards independence, while for many Serbs too much had been conceded to the Croats.

When war engulfed Europe, Yugoslavia proclaimed its official neutrality. However, even under such circumstances Paul's views remained decidedly pro-

² Vesna Drapac, *Constructing Yugoslavia. A Transnational History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 143.

³ Prince Paul Karadjordjević (1893–1976) was born in St. Petersburg, Russia. His mother was a Russian princess of the Demidov family, and his uncle was the Serbian King Peter I. He was educated in Geneva and Belgrade, and in 1910 he moved to Britain to attend the University of Oxford. His studies were interrupted by military service in the Balkan Wars and Great War. An intelligent individual, Paul moved easily within the upper echelons of British society, and, although he was a member of the Karadjordjević family, he was not burdened with political duties. In 1923, he married Princess Olga of Greece and Denmark; Prince Albert, Duke of York (later King George VI) served as his best man.

⁴ Srdja Trifković, "Prince Pavle Karadjordjević", in *The Serbs and their leaders in the Twentieth Century*, eds. Peter Radan and Aleksandar Pavković (Sidney: Ashgate, 1997), 179.

Allied. The fall of France was a severe psychological blow as Yugoslavia could not hope for support from either Great Britain or the Soviet Union.

Relations between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union were burdened by the slaughter of the Romanoffs with whom the Karadjordjević dynasty had kept close links since the nineteenth century. Prior to 1917, close relations prevailed between Serbia and Imperial Russia, with Russia serving as the protector of the small Balkan kingdom. Personal correspondence between Regent Alexander of Serbia and Russian Emperor Nicholas were of major importance in the weeks prior to the outbreak of the Great War. The Emperor's cable to the Regent sent in the most difficult moments on July 27, 1914 that declared that Russia would not abandon Serbia was of great encouragement for the Serbs. However, the October Revolution forced the Serbia to terminate all its diplomatic relations with Bolshevik Russia. This gesture of the Serbian Government coincided with the separate peace agreement of Brest–Litovsk between Russia and Germany signed on March 3, 1918.

The murder of the Russian imperial family and the arrival of more than 40,000 Russian refugees to the newly-founded Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (re-named Yugoslavia in 1929) had a considerable influence on King Alexander and his attitude towards the Soviet regime. The Soviet Union was perceived not just as posing an external threat, but also as having a disruptive influence within Yugoslavia due to the CPY's pursuit of a social revolution. In this respect, the traditional sympathies of the Serbian people for Russia were conducive to the success of communist propaganda. For many years the Soviet rulers feared that Baron Wrangel's exiled White Russian army, with the support from the royal Yugoslav army, might embark on "a counter-revolution" in Russia. The Yugoslav king appeared to them to be the most dangerous candidate for the vacant Russian throne. To allay such fears, on several occasions the Belgrade government officially stated that it would assist any action against the Bolshevik regime. Nevertheless, the Soviet Government sent a stream of agents to Yugoslavia until Hitler came to power and supported anyone who tried to destabilize that country. Aside from ideological reasons, King Alexander also doubted that the Soviet Union could become a defender of European peace and stability, having previously attempted to export the Bolshevik revolution across to the rest of the continent.⁵

The Yugoslav Government decided to come to an agreement with the Soviet Union in March 1940. Belgrade hoped that Moscow would oppose Italian "expansionist tendencies" targeted against Yugoslavia, and the Soviet Government was forthcoming. The negotiations between the two countries began in late May and diplomatic relations were established in Ankara on 24 June. Germany

⁵ Branislav Gligorijević, *Kralj Aleksandar Karađorđević*, vol. III (Belgrade: Zavod za udžbenike, 2002), 280–281.

was displeased with Yugoslavia's rapprochement with the Soviets, particularly with the choice of Milan Gavrilović as the first Yugoslav minister to Moscow.⁶

In the summer and autumn of 1940 the position of Yugoslavia became very complex. Romania and Hungary joined the Tripartite Pact in November, and Hitler called upon Paul to do the same, but the Regent knew that Serbs remained overwhelmingly anti-German and pro-British. In a quandary, Yugoslavia had no choice but to join the Tripartite Pact on March 25, 1941. Two days later Paul was deposed by a group of Serbian air force officers led by General Dušan Simović. The military coup was the ultimate expression of Serb nationalism. The coup leaders proclaimed internal factors as being the root cause for the coup, rather than dissatisfaction with Paul's foreign policy that had led to Yugoslavia's adherence to the Tripartite Pact. Motivation for the coup has long been a matter of historical controversy. However, it is indisputable that it was exclusively organized and supported by Serbs and it reflected deep Serbian nationalist sentiment.⁷

When the coup d'état was carried out on March 27 in Belgrade, the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill gave the oft-quoted statement: "I have great news for you and the whole country. Early this morning the Yugoslav nation found its soul. A revolution has taken place in Belgrade. This patriotic movement arises from the wrath of a valiant and warlike race at the betrayal of their country by the weakness of their rulers and the foul intrigues of the Axis Powers. [...] The British Empire and its Allies will make common cause with the Yugoslav nation, and we shall continue to march and strive together until complete victory is won."⁸

However, the consequences of the coup were immediate and devastating for Yugoslavia. On April 6, 1941, the Axis launched its attack. Germany treated the attack on Yugoslavia as a showdown with Serbia and the opportunity to settle the score from the time of the Great War. The official statement of the German Government was marked by xenophobia and racism against the Serbian

⁶ Kosta Nikolić, *Mit o partizanskom jugoslovenstvu* (Belgrade: Zavod za udžbenike, 2015), 252.

⁷ Peter Radan, "Constitutional Experimentation and the National Question in Interwar Yugoslavia", *Istorija 20. veka XXIX/3* (2011), 37–38.

⁸ Quoted in Winston S. Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, vol. III of *The Second World War* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1977), 148–149. About the British role in the coup see Hugh Dalton, *The Fateful Years: Memoirs, 1931–1945* (London: Frederick Muller, Ltd, 1957); Elizabeth Barker, *British Policy in South-East Europe in the Second World War* (London: Macmillan, 1976); Heather Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans. The Special Operations Executive and Yugoslavia, 1941–1945* (London: C Hurst & Co Publishers Ltd, 2003); Sebastian Ritchie, *Our man in Yugoslavia. The story of a Secret Service Operative* (London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2004); Sue Onslow, "Britain and the Belgrade Coup of 27 March 1941 revisited", *eJournal of International History* (March 2005).

nation: "They are the same conspirators whose atrocities did not cease to infect the Balkans, who did not even stop short of killing monarchs, and who caused a worldwide war in 1914 with the assassination in Sarajevo, thus unleashing unprecedented calamities on the mankind."⁹

On the same day Germany invaded Greece. Hitler accused "British imperialism and Jewish financiers" of making plans to conquer the world, so Germany had to achieve "a true consolidation" of Europe. The Belgrade government was dubbed "a band of ruffians", whereas Britain was said to be "the greatest war-monger" of all time: "Soldiers of the Southeast Front, in your duty you will not be less courageous than the men of those German divisions who in 1915, on the same Balkan soil, fought so victoriously."¹⁰

Yugoslavia was conquered and dismantled and some of its regions sided with the Nazis. On April 10, 1941 the fascist *Ustasha* organization, led by Ante Pavelić, proclaimed the Independent State of Croatia as German troops were pouring into Zagreb. Bosnia and Herzegovina was also included in this Nazi puppet state. The core of *Ustasha* ideology was fanatical Croatian nationalism and its regime was supported by the nationalist, anti-Communist Catholic Church in Croatia. Most Croats supported the idea of an independent Croatia after many centuries of foreign rule.¹¹ The Croatian Government immediately introduced racist measures against their Serb, Jewish, and Roma minorities. A violent anti-Serbian campaign and mass terror, which soon reached genocidal proportions, started after a meeting between Pavelić and Hitler on June 6, 1941.¹²

Serbs from Serbia proper constituted approximately 200,000 prisoners taken from the royal army and sent to forced-labour camps in Germany (out of some 340,000).¹³ Serbia was the only region of occupied Yugoslavia under the direct control of German military authorities. Her frontiers were reduced to those of pre-Balkan Wars Serbia (in 1912). Parts of southeast Serbia, as well as a part of eastern Kosovo, were annexed by Bulgaria. The eastern part of Srem was annexed by Croatia. Bačka was occupied and then annexed by Horthy's Hungary. Banat became a separate administrative territory under the administration of the Banat Germans, while the remaining parts of Kosovo and Metohija, along

⁹ Vojni Arhiv (VA), Belgrade [Military Archives], Fonds *The German occupying forces from 1941 to 1945*, 2-2-45; Declaration of the German Government.

¹⁰ VA, *The German occupying forces*, 2-2-46; Hitler's order of the day April 6, 1941.

¹¹ Ben Shepherd, *Terror in the Balkans: German Armies and Partisan Warfare* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012), 79.

¹² Kosta Nikolić, *Istorija Ravnogorskog pokreta*, vol. I (Belgrade: Zavod za udžbenike, 2014), 204-205.

¹³ John R. Lampe, *Balkans into Southeastern Europe, 1914-2014*, 2nd ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 158.

with a portion of Sandžak, was included in the Italian protectorate of "Greater Albania".¹⁴

The Supreme Command of the Wehrmacht introduced a strict occupation regime in Serbia as a way of punishing the Serbs for the 27 March putsch. The first military commander in Serbia was Air Force General Helmut Förster (General der Flieger). The German Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Cultural Development of Nations and Propaganda rejected any idea of fostering culture in Serbia because "Serbia has always been hostile to us. The only guideline in our attitude should be the protection of our own interests as an occupation force."¹⁵

After the surrender of the royal Yugoslav army, just nine days into the German invasion, King Peter¹⁶ and his government fled to Greece and continued their journey to Alexandria and then to Jerusalem where the Yugoslav Government-in-exile announced that Yugoslavia would continue the war against the Axis powers. On June 21, King Peter and his government arrived in London to take residence in the British capital. On June 26, Prime Minister Dušan Simović and Foreign Minister Momčilo Ninčić were received by Churchill.¹⁷ The British Government was reassuring: "We are renewing the comradeship that in the Great War carried us through tribulation to victory. We will conduct the war in common and make peace only when right has been vindicated and law and justice are again enthroned."¹⁸

However, as time went by the British were less and less inclined to consult with the Yugoslavs and simply informed them about preferred Allied policies, especially as they now had their own operatives out in the field.¹⁹

The Soviet Union's attitude towards the events in Yugoslavia leading to the German military attack had been rather reserved. The Soviets had not revealed their position neither at the time of Yugoslavia's adherence to the Tripar-

¹⁴ More Kosta Nikolić and Nebojša Stambolija, "Royalist Resistance Movement in Yugoslavia during the Second World War", *Istorija 20. veka XXXVI/2* (2018), 12–13.

¹⁵ Quoted in Walter Manoschek, "Serbien ist judenfrei". *Militärische Besatzungspolitik und Judenvernichtung in Serbien 1941/42* (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 1995), 34.

¹⁶ Peter II Karadjordjević (1923–1970), the last King of Yugoslavia. Peter was the eldest son of King Alexander and Queen Maria (born Princess of Romania); his godfather was King George V. After the Yugoslav monarchy had been abolished by Yugoslav communist regime on November 29, 1945, he settled in the United States and died in Los Angeles, California. In January 2013, Peter's remains were transported to Belgrade. He was reburied on May 26, 2013, with full state honors in the Mausoleum of the Karadjordjević Dynasty in Oplenac.

¹⁷ Walter R. Roberts, *Tito, Mihailović and the Allies, 1941–1945*, 2nd ed. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987), 20.

¹⁸ Quoted in Drapac, *Constructing Yugoslavia*, 155.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* 156.

tite Pact nor that of the 27 March coup. However, Moscow made a demagogic move on April 6. Almost simultaneously with the German onslaught against Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union signed the anodyne treaty of friendship and non-aggression with the Yugoslav minister in Moscow. For that reason, it was back-dated to April 5. The treaty's stipulation that in case of attack "from a third party" the Soviet Union would maintain a policy of friendly relations towards Belgrade meant nothing in terms of Yugoslavia's defense.²⁰

After Yugoslavia's capitulation, Nazi Germany pressured the Soviet Government to sever its relations with Yugoslavia and other occupied countries. The Soviets succumbed and announced on May 8 that Milan Gavrilović had "no legal basis" for further work in his mission in Moscow since the Yugoslav Government had left its country.²¹ Gavrilović left Moscow on May 19 and went to Ankara. This meant that the Soviet Government accepted the German claim that Yugoslavia ceased to exist as an independent state.

After having been attacked on June 22, the Soviets reconsidered their policy. In early July, Ivan Maisky, the Soviet Ambassador in London,²² presented British officials a proposal for the normalization of relations with Czechoslovakia, Poland and Yugoslavia. As these states had formally and legally lost their independence and sovereignty, the Soviet Government suggested the formation of national committees (Czech, Polish and Yugoslav), which would form their own military units. Moscow was prepared to equip and arm such units which would then fight against the Germans as part of the Red Army.²³

On July 8, 1941, Ambassador Maisky told Ivan Subotić, the Yugoslav Minister in London, that the Soviet Union was prepared to conclude an agreement on the renewal of diplomatic relations between the two countries. The Yugoslav Government then instructed Subotić to ask for not only the re-establishment of diplomatic relations but also for the restoration of the friendship treaty signed on the day of the German attack on Yugoslavia.²⁴ Maisky emphasized that the Soviet Union would fight for the restoration of Yugoslavia's independence, while the "internal regime [in Yugoslavia] was their own business."²⁵

²⁰ *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici SFRJ 1941–1945*, vol. I (Belgrade: Jugoslovenski pregled, 1984), 27.

²¹ *Ibid.* 47.

²² Ivan Maisky (Иван Михайлович Майский, 1884–1975) was a Soviet diplomat, historian and politician. After the German invasion of the Soviet Union, Maisky was in charge of the normalization of relations with the Western Allies.

²³ Nikola Popović, *Jugoslovensko–sovjetski odnosi u Drugom svetskom ratu 1941–1945* (Belgrade: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 1988), 60.

²⁴ Roberts, *Tito, Mihailović and the Allies*, 42.

²⁵ *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici SFRJ 1941–1945*, vol. I, 47.

The Yugoslav Government feared that the idea of a Yugoslav committee was just an attempt to establish some form of alternative government under the auspices of the Soviet Union. That is why Maisky told Simović, Ninčić and Subotić on 11 May that his government no longer insisted on the creation of such committee. Subotić and Maisky met again on July 23 when the latter claimed that diplomatic relations between their countries had not been formally terminated. "Our diplomatic relations were temporarily suspended and now they are fully restored," Maisky disingenuously explained.²⁶ On August 7, Maisky reiterated to Ninčić that the renewal of Yugoslavia's independence was one of the priorities of his government "and that the form of internal regime in Yugoslavia should be decided by the Yugoslav people."²⁷

However, diplomatic relations were not resumed without difficulties. When Moscow launched its policy of "Pan-Slavism" the Yugoslav Government perceived it as a new "leverage in the expansionist policy" of the Soviet Union. They were particularly perturbed to find out that the first Pan-Slavic meeting, held in Moscow on August 10 and 11, 1941, advocated the existence of the Montenegrin and Macedonian nations – pre-war Yugoslavia recognized only Serbs, Croats and Slovenes – which was seen as having been designed to break up Yugoslavia along national lines.²⁸ Milan Gavrilović felt, however, that the idea of Slavic solidarity should be supported and that, given the existing circumstances, the Yugoslav Government had to put aside the threat of "bolshevization of all Slavic peoples."²⁹

Resistance to Nazism

British policy in occupied Europe involved fostering resistance groups and insurgency in order to overstretch the Axis's military resources. Even before the outbreak of war in September 1939, steps had been taken to create special agencies which might organize and carry out subversions, sabotage and other forms of "ungentlemanly" activities. Britain's failure to predict and halt Germany's advance into Western Europe forced British leaders to consider alternative policies. For that reason, the organization known as the Special Operations Executive (SOE), an independent branch of the "special services" tasked with nourishing general resistance within the occupied Europe, was established. The SOE was formed on July 22, 1940, on Churchill's orders and it was placed under the direct control of Hugh Dalton, Minister of Economic Warfare. British strategic

²⁶ Ibid. 66, Maisky to Subotić.

²⁷ Arhiv Jugoslavije (AJ) [Archives of Yugoslavia], Belgrade, Fonds *The Royal Yugoslav Government in exile*, 103–61–281, Maisky to Ninčić.

²⁸ Popović, *Jugoslovensko-sovjetski odnosi*, 61–62.

²⁹ *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici SFRJ 1941–1945*, vol. I, 70.

thinking in the interwar years and during the initial phase of the war was still strongly influenced by the experience of the Great War. Britain's strength lay in its ability to cause economic disruption in Germany. In line with this idea, the creation of the SOE was intended to forge a liaison between Britain and European resistance movements. The SOE was designed to coordinate all subversive actions against the enemy overseas with the ultimate aim, as Churchill put it, of "setting Europe ablaze".³⁰

With the collapse of the Yugoslav army, the British services lost their foothold in the region. The SOE had to rely on refugees and messengers coming out of Yugoslavia for information on what was going on there in terms of resistance against the Germans. The news from Yugoslavia that reached London and Cairo painted a grim picture of large-scale atrocities in the dismembered country, particularly in Croatia where the Usthas massacred the Serb population.³¹ Later, news emerged about two guerrilla movements in Serbia and Montenegro, with opposed political agendas and different concepts of resistance. History knows these groups as "Chetniks" and "Partisans".

The Serb nation had a long history of fighting against foreign occupiers. Due to the rapid collapse of Yugoslavia and the ensuing operations in Greece and the Soviet Union, many Yugoslav army officers and soldiers were not captured. A group of officers led by General Staff Colonel Dragoljub Mihailović gathered at the plateau of Ravna Gora in Western Serbia on 11 May 1941.³² Mihailović and his men saw their action as a continuation of the royal Yugoslav army's resistance to the Axis. They used the old Yugoslav symbols and were

³⁰ W. J. M. Mackenzie, *The Secret History of SOE: the Special Operations Executive 1940–1945* (London: St. Ermin's Press, 2000), ii–xi; A. R. B. Linderman, *Rediscovering Irregular Warfare. Colin Gubbins and the Origins of Britain's Special Operations Executive* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2016), 102; Sibylle Scheipers, *Unlawful Combatants. A Genealogy of the Irregular Fighter* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 133.

³¹ Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots and Partisans*, 47.

³² Dragoljub Mihailović (1893–1946) had served with distinction in the Balkan Wars and on the Salonika front in the Great War. He was awarded the *Gold Medal for Courage* and the *Order of White Eagle*. In the interwar period he held a series of staff posts; in 1935, he was appointed Military Attaché in Sofia with the rank of Colonel. Soon after arriving he upset the Bulgarian Government by establishing contacts with an anti-fascist group of officers and intellectuals and, as a result, he was recalled and sent to Prague as Military Attaché; he was later the Professor of Tactics at the Higher School of the Military Academy in Belgrade (for more on Mihailović's career see Simon Trew, *Britain, Mihailović and the Chetniks, 1941–42* (London: Macmillan, 1998, 5–6)). After the Second World War, Mihailović went into hiding. He was captured by the communist authorities on March 13, 1946, and indicted with treason and collaboration with the Germans. Mihailović was sentenced to death and executed in July 1946. On May 15, 2015, he was rehabilitated by the Higher Court in Belgrade.

recognized by the Yugoslav Government-in-exile, as well as the Allies, as the legitimate Yugoslav armed force in the occupied Yugoslavia.³³

In the late 1930s, Mihailović appears to have developed a strong anti-Nazi attitude. During that time he was in contact with certain SOE agents in Belgrade such as Julian Amery³⁴ and Alexander Glen. He also maintained close relations with Colonel C.S. Clarke, the British military attaché in Belgrade. Mihailović went to see Clarke together with Žarko Popović (Chief of the Intelligence Department of the General Staff of the Yugoslav Army and later the Military Attaché in Moscow). They discussed the military and political situation in Europe, and Clarke provided them with British analyses of the German army. They also talked with Amery and Glen about the possibilities of defense against a possible German attack by means of guerilla warfare if Yugoslavia was defeated. Mihailović kept in contact with the British on his own. He did not inform his Head of Intelligence Department, Colonel Stjepan Kalečak about his connections because the latter was a Croatian officer who rejected any cooperation with the British.³⁵

Upon reaching Ravna Gora, Mihailović had very few men under arms and could not undertake substantial operations against the Germans. Therefore, he only intended to recruit, organize, and arm an underground organization throughout Yugoslavia. This organization would seek assistance from the British and prepare for a nationwide rebellion against the Germans at the right moment. This would be at the time of a British invasion or a German withdrawal. Meanwhile, efforts would be concentrated on intelligence gathering, sabotage, and propaganda against the Axis. Mihailović followed the policy laid down by the Yugoslav Government on July 22 which issued a declaration read over the BBC advising the Yugoslav people to avoid premature engagement with the enemy and wait for the signal from London.³⁶ Nevertheless, Chetnik units under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Veselin Misita liberated the town of

³³ Vjeran Pavlaković, "Yugoslavia", in *European Resistance in the Second World War*, eds. Philip Cooke and Ben H. Shepher, (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Praetorian Press, 2013), 219; Aleksandar Petrović, "The Transformation of Mihailović's Chetnik Movement: from Royalist Yugoslav Forces to Serb Nationalist Guerrillas", Ph.D. Thesis, Burnaby, British Columbia: Simon Fraser University, 2011, viii-ix.

³⁴ Harold Julian Amery (1919–1996) joined the RAF as a sergeant in 1940; later with the rank of Captain.

³⁵ Bojan Dimitrijević, *General Mihailović. Biografija* (Belgrade: "A.L.X", 1996), 144–145; Dalibor Denda, "Vojna obaveštajna služba u Kraljevini SHS/Jugoslaviji 1918–1941", *Vojnoistorijski glasnik LX/2* (2010), 29.

³⁶ Nikolić and Stambolija, "Royalist Resistance Movement in Yugoslavia during the Second World War", 15; W. Roberts, *Tito, Mihailović and the Allies*, 26.

Loznica on 31 August. More than ninety German soldiers were captured on that occasion, but Misita was killed.³⁷

On the other hand, the communist resistance in Yugoslavia was revolutionary and militant. For Yugoslav communists the Soviet Union was their political and spiritual centre. Lenin and, later, Stalin were not just “ingenious leaders”, but also the incarnation of the communist idea and the “dreamed new society”. Founded in 1919, the CPY had been a legitimate political party before its involvement in subversive and terrorist activities forced authorities to outlaw it in 1921.

The CPY carried on as an underground organization. Its activities were completely directed by the Comintern. From 1939 onwards, after a series of brutal internal purges in the Soviet Union, when approximately 800 Yugoslav communists were shot or died in concentration camps, Josip Broz Tito (1892–1980) became Secretary-General of the CPY. His major task was to “purge” the Party which he did by eliminating the most prominent leaders of the Yugoslav Communist movement.³⁸

The real nature of the Soviet regime was almost completely unknown in Yugoslavia, especially in Serbia, and all the news about the horrors of the Stalin’s rule were considered as mere anti-communist propaganda. Certain left-wing intellectuals and numerous students favoured communism because they saw the Leninist/Stalinist party as the model for the necessary transformation of their society. They had unreserved faith in communism and did not believe the news about the Stalinist terror in the Soviet Union. For them Russia was their “last hope”.³⁹ Some of them were easily recruited by the Soviet intelligence service, including prominent people such as Milan Gavrilović, the first Yugoslav minister in Moscow.⁴⁰

The political doctrine of the CPY was initially based on the belief that “English imperialists” were warmongers provoking Germany. This doctrine was formulated after the Soviet-Nazi agreement of August 23, 1939 which Soviet propaganda justified by proclaiming that the new war was entirely “imperialistic” and that England and France were responsible for its outbreak. Nothing was said about the smaller nations directly threatened by Germany. Communist parties were ordered to directly confront the social-democratic and democratic anti-fascist parties which refused to accept the Comintern’s interpretation of

³⁷ VA, *The German occupying forces*, 44H-1-6, The Report of the Staff of 718th German Infantry division.

³⁸ Kosta Nikolić and Ivana Dobrivojević, “Creating a Communist Yugoslavia in the Second World War”, *Balkanica XLVIII* (2017), 247.

³⁹ Jože Pirjevec, *Tito i drugovi*, vol. I (Belgrade: Laguna, 2013), 66.

⁴⁰ Aleksej Timofejev, *Rusi i Drugi svetski rat u Jugoslaviji* (Belgrade: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 2011), 244.

the on-going war. The CPY had advocated the abolition of the existing order of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia prior to the Second World War. Its regime had been considered “fascist” and until 1941 it had been accused of belonging to the circle of “imperialist countries that provoked the global conflict”. Also, the Yugoslav communists had always regarded the Ustasha as their allies in the revolutionary struggle against the pre-war Yugoslav regime.⁴¹

Following the 1939 Ribbentrop-Molotov pact the CPY loyally adhered to Soviet policy.⁴² In this respect, it should be noted that it did not cause trouble to the Germans even after they attacked and conquered Yugoslavia – a fact that would be conveniently struck out from the Party’s history after the war. More controversially, the Yugoslav communists remained hesitant in rising up against the occupiers even after the German invasion on the Soviet Union. It was not until a strict warning from Moscow on July 1 that the order for an immediate uprising was issued by the Partisan’s Supreme Staff. The armed actions in early July were directed against the local Serbian administration, especially the gendarmerie, rather than against the small German garrisons. Such behaviour reflected the fact that Yugoslav Communists embarked on a revolutionary war in accordance with their most central war goal of establishing a new social and political regime.⁴³

The “Russian Project”

When news about the emergence of resistance movements in Serbia reached Istanbul a number of diplomats and agents sprung into frantic activity. Stanislav Rapotec, a Yugoslav Reserve Lieutenant, and Dragomir Rakić, a Serbian industrialist, arrived separately to Istanbul in early summer. Rapotec, a Slovene, had studied in Zagreb in the 1930s and was politically active. At the end of the 1930s, he found a job in a bank in Split, Dalmatia. He was mobilized into the Yugoslav army. He was captured by the Germans, but soon escaped and

⁴¹ Nikolić and Dobrivojević, “Creating a Communist Yugoslavia in the Second World War”, 247.

⁴² In a secret additional protocol attached to the German-Soviet Non-Aggression Treaty of August 23, 1939, Poland was divided into German and Soviet spheres of influence and Finland, Estonia and Latvia allocated to a Soviet sphere of influence in the Baltic. Under the terms of the German-Soviet Boundary and Friendship Treaty of September 28, 1939, the German-Soviet demarcation line in Poland was adjusted and, in a further secret protocol, Lithuania was reallocated to the Soviet sphere of influence in the Baltic: Geoffrey Roberts, “Ideology, calculation, and improvisation: spheres of influence and Soviet foreign policy 1939–1945”, *Review of International Studies* 25 (1999), 657.

⁴³ Nikolić and Dobrivojević, “Creating a Communist Yugoslavia in the Second World War”, 248; see also Stanley G. Payne, *Civil War in Europe, 1905–1949* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 212.

returned to Split which had been annexed by the Italians. He became involved with an illegal organization of Yugoslav patriots, who persuaded him to go the Middle East to establish contact with the government-in-exile and the British. He left Split in June and reached Cairo in July 1941, having passed through Ljubljana, Zagreb and Belgrade, and heard from a friend that Colonel Mihailović had not surrendered and headed a resistance movement in Serbia.⁴⁴

Rakić brought news of two resistance groups, one led by Mihailović and a number of other officers in western Serbia, and the other led by communists. The latter's anti-Axis activities resulted in brutal German reprisals. Rapotec and Rakić contacted Jovan Djonović, the Yugoslav representative in Cairo. Djonović arrived in Istanbul in June to establish an intelligence centre on behalf of the Yugoslav Government. He was an SOE contact in Belgrade and he continued to work closely with that organization in Istanbul. Mihailović appealed through Rakić for funding to keep his organization going as he was compensating local peasants for the supplies needed for his men. Djonović immediately sent a million Yugoslav dinars but Mihailović received only 900,000 dinars.⁴⁵

Djonović also made contact with the British Colonel Stanley William Bailey, a former staff member in the British-owned Trepča mines in Serbia. He was fluent in the Serbian language and knew the persons involved in the 27 March coup. In 1941, he was in charge of the SOE's Balkan staff in the Middle East. Bailey would have one of the most important roles in the execution of British policy in wartime Yugoslavia. To begin with, Djonović and Bailey agreed on the urgent need to infiltrate someone into occupied Yugoslavia.

Djonović suggested enlisting Soviet help to get back into Yugoslavia as he already had some useful Russian contacts. Bailey endorsed this plan as he thought it essential to involve the Soviets at an early stage while they were still fighting for their lives rather than later when, if their situation improved, they might be more difficult to work with. In London, the SOE agreed with this policy. John Bennett, the Head of the SOE's Yugoslav Desk in Cairo and responsible for operations in the Middle East, left Jerusalem and met with Djonović in Istanbul on August 4 to discuss the plans.⁴⁶

It was decided to send a joint mission to Serbia – one that would include a Yugoslav, British and Soviet representative. Djonović believed that this was of vital importance in order to secure unity of action, given the existence of two organized resistance groups with different ideological outlooks.⁴⁷ This plan was

⁴⁴ For more on Rapotec's mission see Stevan Pavlowitch, *Unconventional Perceptions of Yugoslavia, 1940–1945* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 67–105.

⁴⁵ Jovan Djonović, *Moje veze sa Dražom Mihailovićem* (Belgrade: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 2004), 85.

⁴⁶ Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots, and Partisans*, 47–48.

⁴⁷ Djonović, *Moje veze sa Mihailovićem*, 86.

known as the Russian Project. Đonović entrusted the mission to Vasilije Trbić, a former commander of the Serbian irregulars fighting against the Ottomans in Macedonia prior to the First World War and Dušan Radović, a retired Royal Yugoslav Air Force Colonel.⁴⁸

Đjonović suggested, and Bennett agreed, that the Russians be approached for the purpose of obtaining an aircraft. Đjonović then made contact with a certain "Colonel Nikolaev", ostensibly the "Chief of Soviet Services" in Istanbul.⁴⁹ This individual was, in fact, Vasily Mikhailovich Zarubin, an elite Soviet intelligence officer.⁵⁰

The plan to send a joint mission to Yugoslavia was hatched at the moment when Britain wanted to establish cooperation with the Soviet Union in spreading and controlling the anti-Axis resistance in Europe. The first agreement to that effect was concluded on July 12, 1941 in Moscow between Richard Stafford Cripps, the British Ambassador to the Soviet Union, and Vyacheslav Molotov, a leading figure in the Soviet government from the 1920s and the Soviet Foreign Minister from 1939 to 1949. It envisaged the following: 1) the two governments agree to help and support each other in the ongoing war against Germany; 2) they would neither negotiate nor conclude a separate armistice or a peace treaty.⁵¹

Furthermore, the British wanted to mitigate the zeal of Stalin's demands for the opening up of the second front in Europe by encouraging sabotage and organizing uprisings behind the German lines. The problem of the second front

⁴⁸ Colonel Radović had been an SOE agent with the code-named "Cousin" from the beginning of 1941 onwards: Marko Pivac, "Rad britanske tajne službe u Jugoslaviji u predvečerje Aprilskog rata 1941. Izveštaj SOE operativca Džordža Tejlora", *Istorija 20. veka XXXIII/1* (2010), 203.

⁴⁹ Đjonović, *Moje veze sa Mihailovićem*, 86. Đjonović did not inform any of the Yugoslav officials in Cairo and London about his talks with Zarubin.

⁵⁰ From 1918 to 1920, Zarubin served in the Red Army during the Russian Civil War. In 1920, he joined the Soviet state security service; in 1923, he was appointed the Head of the OGPU (Объединённое государственное политическое управление) economic department in Vladivostok. From 1924 he worked in the Soviet intelligence service. His secret missions were undertaken in Denmark (1927), France (1930), Germany (1933) and the USA (1937). In February 1937, Zarubin became the Deputy Chief of the State Security – NKGB (Народный комиссариат государственной безопасности). In the spring of 1941, he renewed contact with the Soviet agent Walter Stennes in China. Later Zarubin became the Resident Chief of the NKVD (Народный комиссариат внутренних дел) in the USA working from early 1942 to August 1944 under the name of "Vassili Zubilin". There he recruited Savo Kosanović, the future Yugoslav Ambassador in Washington, and Ivan Šubašić, the last Prime Minister of the Yugoslav Government-in-exile, to work for the Soviet intelligence service: Timofejev, *Rusi i Drugi svetski rat u Jugoslaviji*, 264 and 274.

⁵¹ Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, 342.

continued to be a stumbling block in the relations among the Allies throughout the war. Moreover, this was the issue that would determine the fate of the resistance movements in Yugoslavia.

In late July of 1941, Ambassador Cripps presented the first official proposal for cooperation towards preventing a German breakthrough into Persia. Cripps reported that not only had Stalin “blessed personally” the idea of cooperation in Persia, but also proposed that the British and Soviet services for subversive warfare work together in Germany, the Balkans and other areas. London seems to have been taken aback by Stalin’s far-reaching and enthusiastic response. The officer selected to pursue the matter further, Lieutenant-Colonel D. R. Guinness, flew to Moscow in mid-August. During the negotiations conducted from 14-29 August, Guinness and Zarubin drafted a treaty providing for a worldwide common policy in strategic sabotage, subversion, and propaganda. It was supposed to be applicable everywhere outside the Soviet Union, the British Commonwealth, and the territories occupied militarily by either side. Western Europe and Greece were to fall into the British zone of influence, while Romania, Bulgaria, and Finland were allotted to the Soviet zone. The question of the existing or potential guerrilla forces in Czechoslovakia, Poland and Yugoslavia was left for subsequent discussions between the Soviets and their governments-in-exile which implied that those countries were also placed into the Soviet zone. The agreement was signed in Moscow on September 30, 1941.⁵²

This agreement was part of a larger arrangement on military aid to the Soviet Union by the United Kingdom and the United States concluded just a day earlier. That agreement set out that the Soviet Union would receive monthly supplies of the extensive amount of war material from either Britain or America.⁵³

Meanwhile, after having received Rapotec’s preliminary report from Istanbul, General Simović approached Churchill on 14 and 22 August asking for a British submarine to go to Split to establish contact with the people indicated in Rapotec’s report.⁵⁴ On August 28, the British Prime Minister asked Hugh Dalton to report to him on the ties with the resistance bands in Yugoslavia and the

⁵² Mark Wheeler, “Resistance from abroad: Anglo-Soviet efforts to coordinate Yugoslav resistance, 1941–1942”, in *Special Operations Executive. A new instrument of war*, ed. Mark Seaman (London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2006), 107. Wheeler identified Zarubin as Vladimir Nikolaev, the NKVD General in charge of subversive activities. However, the rank of general did not exist in the Soviet secret service. Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots, and Partisans*, 48, also wrote that Zarubin was actually Nikolaev.

⁵³ David Hal, “Shaping the Future: Eden, the Foreign Office and British Foreign Policy, 1941–1943” (Ph.D. Thesis, Norwich, University of East Anglia, 2015), 64.

⁵⁴ Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots, and Partisans*, 53.

possibilities of supporting them.⁵⁵ Two days later Dalton informed Churchill that the sum of £20,000 was being sent to Mihailović by a courier from Istanbul and that an intelligence-gathering mission was to be dispatched to study the situation on the ground.⁵⁶

With regard to Yugoslavia, Dalton formulated general British policy as follows: "The Yugoslavs, the War Office, and we are all agreed that the guerrilla and sabotage bands now active in Yugoslavia should show sufficient active resistance to cause constant embarrassment to the occupying forces, and prevent any reduction in their numbers. But they should keep their main organization underground and avoid any attempt at large scale risings or ambitious military operations, which could only result at present in severe repression and the loss of our key men."⁵⁷

The details of the forthcoming joint mission to Yugoslavia were discussed at a conference held in Istanbul on 5–7 September. In his memoirs Vasilije Trbić, one of the participants at this meeting, wrote that, besides Bailey and Bennett, those present included the "younger son"⁵⁸ of the British lord who was, at the time, the Minister of Colonies in the British Government,⁵⁹ and whose elder son was in Berlin and demanded, on a daily basis, reconciliation between Great Britain and Germany over Radio Berlin. A new face at the Conference was a Russian whose name was simply Nikolae.⁶⁰

Bailey was instructed by Churchill to make sure that financial aid be sent to Mihailović immediately as a mark of British recognition. In addition, a team consisting of three Serbs and one Englishman was to be prepared to run a radio station and then sent to Serbia after agreement was reached with Mihailović as to the exact place they were to be dropped. Another team consisting of at least six officers led by Colonel Radović was supposed to go to Russia. After all details were settled, both London and Moscow accepted the plan. However, the Russians wanted to have one of their representatives at Mihailović's headquarters. According to Trbić, the plan envisaged that two Serbs, one Briton and one Russian should be sent to Mihailović immediately, while five aviation officers with Radović were to leave for Russia. According to Trbić: "A few days passed by Churchill sent a cable [saying] that two Serbs and an English radio telegrapher

⁵⁵ Quoted in F. V. D. Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 126.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Quoted in Roberts, *Tito, Mihailović and the Allies*, 27.

⁵⁸ Julian Amery.

⁵⁹ Leopold Stennett Amery (1873–1955). His elder son Joh (1912–1945) was a Nazi sympathizer hanged for treason, having pleaded guilty.

⁶⁰ Vojvoda Vasilije Trbić, *Memoari*, vol. II (Belgrade: Narodna knjiga, 1996), 202.

should go to Mihailović, but not a single Russian should be in that team. As for the other team that is supposed to go to Russia, the English don't care."⁶¹

After the Istanbul conference Bailey reported to Cairo that the Russian Project was vital in order to secure the adherence of pro-Russian elements in Yugoslavia to the common Allied policy, to demonstrate Anglo-Russian cooperation, and as a form of monitoring Russian intentions.⁶² However, London did not want to see Soviet officers in Yugoslavia. Đonović had no doubt on this score. He was convinced that the British and the Yugoslav premier Simović sabotaged the mission at the last moment.⁶³

It was apparent that the Yugoslav Government intended to seek support from Great Britain rather than from "Red Russia". The Serbian cultural and political elite, which had supported the 27 March coup, was traditionally oriented towards Great Britain (and France). Their distaste for Bolshevism was compounded by the widespread conviction that the Soviet Union was unable to resist Germany's invasion. The military crisis of the USSR certainly diminished the will to insist on that country's co-operation.⁶⁴

A joint mission to Serbia would imply Moscow's support for the Serbian royalists. However, their goals and requests could hardly recommend them to Stalin, although the Soviet leader did understand that the national idea was a much more attractive motive for the fledgling European resistance movements than the cause of "proletarian solidarity".

Mark Wheeler asserts that Moscow had another and secret reason for the dispatch of a joint mission to Yugoslavia, namely, the punishment or squeezing out of the chief of the CPY from his leadership position. The dropping of the mission altogether meant the ultimate acceptance of Tito.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Wheeler, "Resistance from abroad", 110.

⁶³ Đjonović, *Moje veze sa Mihailovićem*, 87. Trbić, *Memoari*, vol. II, 206, writes that "Nikolaev" (Zarubin) just clenched his teeth and cursed something in Russian, "which I think was related to the entire Serbian-English coalition".

⁶⁴ Timofejev, *Rusi i Drugi svetski rat u Jugoslaviji*, 271–272.

⁶⁵ Wheeler, "Resistance from abroad", 106. In his explanation, Wheeler adhered to the traditional viewpoint in Anglo-Saxon historiography in Tito's lifetime. He tried to find signs of differences between Tito and Stalin in early days when there were none. Lack of criticism about Tito's communist resistance movement did not derive just from the fact that certain individuals had been personally involved in the execution of British wartime policy, but also from the support given to Yugoslavia after its 1948 conflict with the Soviet Union. That confrontation seemed to justify Allied policy during the war and even presented it as being capable of anticipating future events. When the single-party communist dictatorship was established in Yugoslavia at the end of the Second World War, many of those who had considerably contributed to this outcome realized that their expectations were not met. However, the conflict between Belgrade and Moscow soon followed and it revived the view that the

The Partisans or the Chetniks

The existence of two rival resistance movements intensified the contacts between Yugoslav and Soviet Government. On October 24, the Yugoslav Minister Branko Čubrilović met with Alexander Yefremovich Bogomolov, the Soviet Minister to the Yugoslav Government. According to the former, “Bogomolov advised me to save Yugoslavia by all means.”⁶⁶ On 25 and 28 October, Čubrilović met Maisky who spoke about the necessity of a united resistance front in Yugoslavia. The Soviet diplomat promised that Yugoslav suggestions would be presented to his government. Maisky again saw Čubrilović and Simović on 4 November. The Yugoslav Prime Minister asked Maisky to forward his personal plea to Stalin – he wanted the Soviet leader to influence the Partisans to join forces with the Chetniks and avoid further conflicts them.⁶⁷

On November 12, the Yugoslav Government asked the British to intervene with the Soviets. Foreign Secretary Eden, whose only direct information about the situation in Yugoslavia came from Hudson’s reports, received Simović early in November. The latter again pleaded with the British Government to urge Moscow to assist with placing the Partisans under Mihailović’s command. At the same time, Stanoje Simić, the new Yugoslav Minister to the Soviet Union, also pressed his hosts to instruct the Communists in Yugoslavia to help Mihailović and work with him against the Germans. A similar request was sent to Ambassador Maisky.⁶⁸

Sir Alexander Cadogan, the Permanent Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs, discussed the situation in Yugoslavia with Maisky on 15 November. Maisky promised he would ask Moscow to stop the Communists from fighting against Mihailović.⁶⁹ Simović also tried through Dragomir Bogić, the Yugoslav Chargé d’affaires in Moscow, to “influence” the Soviet Government to the same end.⁷⁰

Even Lord Glenconner, the head of the SOE Headquarters in Cairo from 1942 to 1943, contemplated the events in Yugoslavia. On November 15, 1941, he wrote to Pearson Dickinson, the Principal Private Secretary to the Foreign Secretary between 1943 and 1948, that direct support to the Partisans would mean the rejection of the legitimate Yugoslav Government and the acceptance of those “fighting for Russia”. Glenconner was in favor of giving British support

Anglo-American decision to support the Partisans had been well founded. Consequently, the wartime supporters of Tito were now in a position to whitewash the Yugoslav variant of communism.

⁶⁶ Branko Čubrilović, *Zapisi iz tuđine* (Sarajevo: Državna štamparija, 1946), 53.

⁶⁷ Krizman, *Jugoslavenske vlade*, 30.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* 241.

⁶⁹ Roberts, *Tito, Mihailović and the Allies*, 43.

⁷⁰ VA, The Royal Yugoslav Government in exile, 290–1–3, Simović to Bogić.

to Mihailović because he had a much better chance to build his movement into a respectable military force. Glenconner wrote that British backing for Mihailović could be best carried out “by letting the Yugoslav Government to appoint him the leader of the uprising against the Axis powers.” Furthermore, Moscow ought to call upon all the communists in Yugoslavia “to place themselves, without reserve”, at the disposal of Mihailović as the national leader.⁷¹

Mihailović learned that he had been appointed the leader of the national resistance in Yugoslavia on November 15, 1941. General Simović announced it on Radio London, but added the warning that the right moment for the “decisive” fight had not yet come. Simović called upon all people fond of freedom, “especially those brave sons who have risen to defend that freedom with the arms in their hands to unite in the common struggle against the occupiers and satraps by rallying under command of Draža Mihailović, the commander of all the Yugoslav armed forces in the country.”⁷² This policy was accepted by the Foreign Office – Mihailović was to be supported and Moscow was to be prodded to influence the Partisans to collaborate with him.⁷³ On November 16, Hudson received a message from London to that effect, declaring that in Britain’s view the struggle “should be ‘Yugoslavs for Yugoslavia’ and not a revolt led by Communists for Russia.”⁷⁴

Cadogan informed Simović that Eden wanted to have a discussion with him. He pointed out the questions of particular interest: 1) the British Government wanted to do everything in its power to reach an agreement between the royalists and the communists; they also already asked the Soviet Government to influence the communists to accept Colonel Mihailović’s command; 2) Mihailović needed to avoid retaliatory measures against the communists; 3) King Peter needed to send a telegraph to both Mihailović and the communists. Cadogan stated that he hoped such policy would be in accordance with that of the Soviet Government.⁷⁵

The attempts to influence Moscow to accept Mihailović continued. On November 16, the British Government informed Ambassador Cripps that the British policy toward the revolt in Yugoslavia was to do its utmost to provide Mihailović’s forces with the supplies necessary to maintain the movement. Cripps was instructed to take the matter up with the Soviet Government and urge it to force the communists to place themselves at Mihailović’s disposal.⁷⁶

⁷¹ VA, FO, 1-1-46, Simović to Bogić.

⁷² *Službene novine Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, 1 December 1941, 10.

⁷³ MA, FO, 1-1-46. Foreign Office to War Cabinet on November 16, 1941.

⁷⁴ Quoted in Deakin, *The Embattled Mountain*, 140.

⁷⁵ AJ, Royal Yugoslav Government in exile, 103-1676-593/2, Cadogan to Simović.

⁷⁶ Roberts, *Tito, Mihailović and the Allies*, 43.

On November 17, Bogić visited Andrey Vyshinsky, the Soviet Assistant Foreign Minister,⁷⁷ and implored him for an “urgent, swift and decisive” intervention. He argued that the whole liberation movement in Yugoslavia had to be united under Mihailović “who was a soldier best able to organize and lead the fight against the enemy”. He received an evasive answer: “I understand your request. I personally can’t give you an answer because the matter is decided by the Government, so I will inform Moscow about this conversation. Besides, I need to consult our military experts. I will try to get the answer from Moscow by the end of the week.”⁷⁸

On November 18, Vyshinsky assured Cripps that his Government had no communication with the Yugoslavs and no control over the Communists in that country.⁷⁹ Eden was sceptical that the Partisans would ever accept Mihailović as their leader because they were “organized and supported by Moscow and fought for Russia.”⁸⁰

However, this diplomatic initiative was not without results. It terminated the civil war and initiated negotiations for a ceasefire in Yugoslavia. After direct intervention from Moscow, Tito wrote to Mihailović on 19 November and proposed to stop hostilities between the two movements. The talks between Partisan and Chetnik delegates had already started a day earlier. The former refused to place their forces under Mihailović’s command as requested by Simović in his speech of November 15. The next meeting was held on November 20 and it ended with the conclusion of a ceasefire agreement in order to stop “the fratricidal struggle, stop the shedding of fraternal blood, and unite all the patriotic forces of the Serbian people and turn them against the occupiers and national traitors.”⁸¹

In London, Simović was making a determined effort to prevent a final rupture between the Partisans and Chetniks. On November 21, he cabled Mihailović asking him to contribute to reaching an agreement: “You must endeavour to smooth over disagreements and avoid any kind of retaliation.”⁸² Two

⁷⁷ Andrei Vyshinsky (Андрей Януарьевич Вышинский, 1883–1954) was a Soviet politician, jurist and diplomat. He was known as the State Prosecutor in Stalin’s Moscow trials and in the Nuremberg trials. He was Soviet Foreign Minister from 1949 to 1953, after having served as Deputy Foreign Minister under Molotov since 1940.

⁷⁸ VA, The Royal Yugoslav Government in exile, 290–1–3. – The answer came on January 6, 1942, after Bogić’s third intervention: “Vyshinsky told me that the Soviet Government does not consider it opportune to intervene in the uprising in Yugoslavia. No other explanation was given, because he did not have ‘authorization.’ This means that the Soviets did not have any serious intentions in the Balkans” (ibid).

⁷⁹ Roberts, *Tito, Mihailović and the Allies*, 43.

⁸⁰ VA, FO, 1–1–47, Eden to Cripps.

⁸¹ Quoted in Nikolić, *Istorija Ravnogorskog pokreta*, vol. I, 188.

⁸² VA, Royal Yugoslav Government in exile, 290–1–5, Simović to Mihailović.

days later Mihailović answered that he had done all in his power and succeeded in ending the fratricidal strife provoked by the other side: "In the fighting against the others [Germans] I have almost exhausted my ammunition. I have made every effort to unite all forces of the people and to complete the organization for the decisive action against the Germans."⁸³

On November 24, the British military mission in Moscow asked the Soviet Defence Ministry "to intervene promptly with the rebels in Yugoslavia". The British memorandum declared that HMG had encouraged the uprising in Yugoslavia at the specific request of the Soviet Government and it was thus in the Soviet's interest to help bring about the unity of the insurgents in that country. The Memorandum read: "The British Government regards Colonel Mihailović as the only possible leader and all parties should obey his orders or should at least work with him."⁸⁴

The British never received a reply to their written communication. Nevertheless, the Soviet Government seems to have responded to this British insistence and took an important and, from the Yugoslav Government's point of view, positive step. Mihailović was mentioned in a broadcast on Radio Moscow on November 24 as "the leader of the resistance forces in Yugoslavia". This angered Tito and he decided to react through Josip Kopinić: "Submit this telegram [to the Comintern] because Radio Moscow is voicing a horrible stupidity about Mihailović with whom we've been in a bloody fight for a month. He is the commander of Chetniks, gendarmes and the rest of the scum."⁸⁵ Tito emphasized that the Partisans had not liquidated Mihailović only because of their regard for London, "but it will be difficult to stop our Partisans from doing so if Moscow doesn't stop voicing the nonsense broadcast by BBC."⁸⁶

Simović informed Eden on November 26 about the content of the telegram he received from Mihailović. He stressed that Mihailović was taking measures to unite national forces and completing the organization of the army for the decisive battles and relayed his requests for a larger amount of war material – guns, ammunition, clothes, money, and food.⁸⁷

On November 28, Eden wrote to Simović reiterating the importance of forming a "united front of all patriots in Yugoslavia". He expressed his satisfaction with the news that Mihailović had settled his differences with the Partisans. Eden informed Simović that the British Government would resume the supplies

⁸³ Ibid. Mihailović to Simović.

⁸⁴ Quoted in Roberts, *Tito, Mihailović and the Allies*, 43.

⁸⁵ Quoted in *Izvori za istoriju SKJ. Dokumenti centralnih organa KPJ. NOR i revolucija (1941–1945)*, vol. II (Belgrade: Komunist, 1985), 156–157. – Josip Kopinić (1911–1997), a Yugoslav Communist and Soviet intelligence officer.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ VA, FO, 1–2–16, Simović to Eden.

of material and money to Mihailović, but that these deliveries would be dependent upon the maintenance of a united front under his leadership.⁸⁸ Eden urged Simović to send a message to that effect to Mihailović. He added: "We are asking the Soviet Government to send a similar request to the Partisans to maintain a united front under Mihailović."⁸⁹

At the end of 1941, Simović strove to attach particular importance to what was going on in Yugoslavia and he suggested to King Peter to promote Mihailović to the rank of general and include him in the government-in-exile. This maneuver was designed to confirm that, although the Yugoslav army capitulated in April 1941, part of that army never consented to surrender and continued to fight. Such an interpretation was important to the Yugoslavs because it allowed them to insist on the Allies' granting Mihailović's forces the status of a regular army which had certain rights under international law. On December 7, the Yugoslav Government promoted Mihailović to the rank of Brigadier General. On January 11, 1942 Mihailović was appointed the Minister of Army, Navy, and Air Force in the new government headed by Slobodan Jovanović, a well-known law professor and historian.⁹⁰

On January 19, Mihailović was promoted to the rank of Division General and he renamed his forces into the Yugoslav Army in the Homeland – the new official name would remain until the end of the war. It reflected the effort to maintain the continuity of pre-war Yugoslavia and the desire that Chetnik guerilla force would be transformed into a regular army.

Epilogue

The attitude of the British Government towards the armed resistance in Yugoslavia was contradictory from the beginning. On the one hand, the determination and capacity of the German forces to crush any resistance movement was underestimated and, on the other, the local people's will and capability to organize themselves for the fight against the German occupiers was overestimated. In such circumstances, Mihailović and the British misunderstood each other at an early stage. He expected an invasion of the Balkans by the Allies, whereas the British believed that his guerilla army could act as an efficient military force and an effective opponent for the German army.

When the civil war broke out in Serbia, it was only Mihailović who requested the termination of the conflict. Cadogan wrote to Simović on November 18 that the British Government, although it supported Mihailović as the leader of the resistance movement, did not support his "possible intentions" to

⁸⁸ The next British supply drop did not arrive until the end of March 1942.

⁸⁹ VA, FO, 1–2–20; see also Roberts, *Tito, Mihailović and the Allies*, 44–45.

⁹⁰ *Službene novine Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, 16 January 1942, 3.

fight against the communists: "Avenging actions should be avoided, if possible. That is crucial. Instructions to that effect have been sent to Mihailović."⁹¹

Such instructions were, however, never issued to the Partisans during the Second World War. Consequently, Mihailović became responsible for the actions of the other side without being able to influence them. Even the continued supplying of his forces was made dependent upon ceasing hostilities with the Partisans, something that he could not secure on his own. This was the beginning of the policy to pressurise Mihailović alone to maintain a united front which was, from the outset, equally impossible to achievement. The Soviet Government was expected to intercede with the Partisans, but they simply refused to interfere in Yugoslav internal affairs.

Another difficulty in facilitating a Serbian uprising concerned the horrific extent of German reprisals against the civilian population. The official British stance was that large-scale actions should not be undertaken for the time being. This approach was in accordance with Mihailović's decision to maintain a low-intensity resistance that would spare civilian casualties as much as possible. However, there were different opinions amongst British officials.

In discussions on the subject of sabotage and reprisals with Douglas Howard at the Foreign Office Southern Department Gladwyn Jebb, assistant Under-Secretary in the Ministry of Economic Warfare, refuted Simović's opinion that communist sabotage harmed the Serbs without hurting the Germans. Any sabotage, he wrote, disturbed the Axis and the reprisals were a double-edged sword: the more savage they were, the more recruits joined the resistance movement. Jebb concluded: "Only by stirring up the whole nation to murder Germans and Italians, that revolt has any prospect of maintaining itself at all."⁹²

Britain and the Soviet Union found it difficult to pursue a common policy towards the two resistance movements in Yugoslavia for the purpose of welding them into a single organization because both Great Powers had their own particular interests. The Soviet Government was clear in treating Yugoslavia as part of its sphere of interest. For the British, Mihailović was useful for propaganda purposes, not just in Britain, but also in the Nazi "European fortress". Mihailović was also viewed as a bastion of order and continuity as compared to the communist threat.

When Eden went to Moscow from December 16 to 28, 1941 to discuss political collaboration and eventual peace, Stalin raised the issue of Yugoslavia. He said that the Soviet Government had no influence on the reconciliation between the Chetniks and Partisans because it was an internal Yugoslav matter.

⁹¹ Note by Cadogan to Simović on November 18, 1941, quoted in Krizman, *Jugoslavenske vlade*, 247–248.

⁹² Note by Jebb to Howard on December 2, 1941, quoted in Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots, and Partisans*, 46.

On the basis of that statement Dragomir Bogić informed the Yugoslav Government on 29 December that Yugoslavia had “an excellent position with Stalin”.⁹³

Obviously, he was completely and utterly wrong. The first official Soviet attack on Mihailović occurred on August 3, 1942, when Solomon Lozovsky, the Deputy People’s Commissioner for Foreign Affairs and the Head of the Soviet Information Bureau, handed to Stanoje Simić a memorandum on Mihailović’s alleged collaboration with the Axis powers.⁹⁴ At the same time Moscow put into motion the communist propaganda machinery throughout the world. The conflict between the Partisans and Chetniks was made public with special emphasis on Chetnik “guilt” and “cooperation” with the enemy. On the other hand, the importance of the Partisan struggle and its contribution to the general Allied cause was widely publicized.

Eden also received a copy of the Soviet Memorandum from Maisky on August 7. Although he made clear to Maisky that this information did not fit in with that in his possession, the Foreign Secretary was concerned by the realization that the Soviets had changed their attitude towards Mihailović.⁹⁵

The change in the Soviet policy was brought about because the USA had raised the issue of the aid for Mihailović at the highest level during King Peter’s visit from June 19 to July 23, 1941. Accusing Mihailović of anti-Allied activity and collaborating with the Axis was designed to drag Washington into adopting the Soviet policy towards Yugoslavia.⁹⁶ From this moment onwards British and American policies towards the resistance movements in Yugoslavia were increasingly conditioned by Anglo-American relations with the Soviet Union. Postponing the opening of a second front in Western Europe left Britain and the USA exposed to constant Soviet accusations of not contributing their share of responsibility in the war against Germany. This produced a fear that the Soviet Union might conclude a separate peace with Germany.⁹⁷

As the Soviet propaganda campaign against Mihailović continued, the Foreign Office and the British Army became increasingly concerned about their differences with Moscow with regard to Yugoslavia. It was necessary to settle those differences and the issue centred on how to reconstruct Yugoslavia on completely new foundations. British diplomats discretely warned about this as soon as late 1941. The Foreign Office wanted a reconstructed Yugoslavia. In this connection, the crucial issue was whether Mihailović’s movement was pan-

⁹³ Quoted in Popović, *Jugoslovensko–sovjetski odnosi*, 82.

⁹⁴ VA, Royal Yugoslav Government in exile, 29–1–57.

⁹⁵ Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots, and Partisans*, 86.

⁹⁶ Valerii Teodorovich Yungblyd and Alexei Aleksandrovich Kostin, “Amerikanskoe vospriiatie Sovetskoi politiki v otnoshenii Yugoslavii v 1942–1945”, *Izvestiia Ural’skogo federal’nogo universiteta* 120/4 (2013), 74.

⁹⁷ Williams, *Parachutes, Patriots, and Partisans*, 246.

Yugoslav or exclusively Serbian since its nature and goals could have a decisive impact on the form in which Yugoslavia would emerge at the end of the war. The Partisans versus Chetniks dilemma was finally resolved in favour of the former because it was generally thought that the Serbian people had a hegemonistic attitude in Yugoslavia and that Mihailović was a “Serbian nationalist”, and that the new Yugoslavia would be more stable as a federal state.

From the summer of 1942 onwards Foreign Office officials started to formulate the principles of a new strategy for Yugoslavia. Those were: a) the Serbian pre-war “hegemony” had been a “chronic damnation” of Yugoslavia and, to a large extent, was responsible for the country’s collapse in April 1941; b) despite the past, most Yugoslavs desired a reconstruction of their country and British policy had to try to strengthen “the moderate forces” among the Yugoslavs prepared to fight against the enemy. Thus, it was necessary to find a formula that could resolve the old dispute between the Serbs and Croats in order to induce the latter to abandon Pavelić and support the idea of Yugoslavia’s reconstruction.⁹⁸

Another consideration was a conflict within the Yugoslav government-in-exile between the Serbs, the supporters of a unitary Yugoslavia, which was seen as a mere for an “expanded Serbia”, and the Croats, who favoured a federal state based on the principle of national equality. The British required the Yugoslav government-in-exile to dispel any suspicion that its “sympathies” were exclusively Serbian and that it intended to re-establish a “Serbian hegemony” after the war. For that reason, émigré Serbian politicians came to believe that the Western Allies supported the communist revolution in Yugoslavia and that it was “anti-Serbian”. This in turn reinforced the Foreign Office’s opinion that other political forces had to be promoted to reconstruct Yugoslavia along new principles. This was the starting point of a long and complex process that led to the destruction of the social and political order of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and the introduction of a communist dictatorship at the end of the war. Yugoslavia was an example of what it meant for a country to be drawn into the Soviet sphere of interest during the Second World War.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Nikolić and Stambolija, “Royalist Resistance Movement in Yugoslavia during the Second World War”, 25.

⁹⁹ For more see Vojislav Pavlović, *Od monarhije do republike. SAD i Jugoslavija 1941–1945* (Belgrade: Clio, and Banjaluka: Glas srpski, 1998), 524–525.

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Yannis Mourélos*

Université Aristote de Thessalonique

Les origines de la guerre civile en Grèce

Résumé : L'insurrection d'Athènes de décembre 1944 est le point d'aboutissement d'une crise de longue date. Crise politique, sociale, marquée de glissements spectaculaires au niveau de l'application et du respect des institutions, à quoi viendront se joindre l'expérience de l'occupation, puis, celle de la résistance. Dans la conjoncture, toute neuve, de la libération, cette accumulation de faits éclatera en un conflit d'une violence hors pair, dont les événements d'Athènes ne serviront, finalement, que de simple détonateur. Plutôt que de focaliser sur le déroulement, puis, sur les effets de la guerre civile grecque, notre tâche consiste à suivre en amont la trajectoire tourmentée de cette crise multidimensionnelle et à en dégager les différents points de repère.

Mots clés : Grèce, guerre civile, EAM, George II,

En décembre 1944, deux mois seulement après la libération, on se bat de nouveau dans les rues d'Athènes. Les avis sont unanimes pour y voir la genèse d'un conflit fratricide dont le point culminant seront de 1946 à 1949 les années de lutte armée. Le pays en sortira d'ailleurs profondément diminué. Il le sera d'autant plus sous les multiples effets de ce déchirement national que l'on voit se prolonger dans le temps. On en trouve, effectivement, des traces jusqu'à une date tardive, puisque ce n'est qu'en 1974 seulement, au lendemain de la chute du régime des colonels, que la gauche communiste finira par se voir réhabilitée au sein de la famille politique grecque.

Si elle déborde directement sur une guerre civile, l'insurrection d'Athènes de décembre 1944 est, aussi, le point d'aboutissement d'une crise de longue date. Crise politique, sociale, marquée de glissements spectaculaires au niveau de l'application et du respect des institutions, à quoi viendront se joindre l'expérience de l'occupation, puis, celle de la résistance. Dans la conjoncture, toute neuve, de la libération, cette accumulation de faits éclatera en un conflit d'une violence hors pair, dont les événements d'Athènes ne serviront, finalement, que de simple détonateur. Plutôt que de focaliser sur le déroulement, puis, sur les effets de la guerre civile grecque, notre tâche consiste à suivre en amont la trajectoire tour-

* ymourellos@yahoo.gr

mentée de cette crise multidimensionnelle et à en dégager les différents points de repère.

La Grèce de l'entre-deux-guerres en est incontestablement un. Un pays replié, déchiré par des discordes interminables, épuisé par des périodes étendues d'instabilité politique et sociale. Mais, surtout, un pays en quête de son identité. Plus question d'élan irrédentiste, la diplomatie hellénique faisant preuve, depuis l'issue infortunée de la guerre avec la Turquie, d'une prudence excessive. Certes, on ne signale plus de modifications frontalières. Il est vrai qu'un État des plus homogènes du point de vue ethnique surgira de l'échange forcé des populations décidé en 1923 à Lausanne. Seulement, ce repli s'avère particulièrement payant dans le domaine social. L'afflux impressionnant des réfugiés grecs d'Asie Mineure (1,5 sur un total de 5 millions d'habitants) met la Grèce aux prises avec une vitesse et avec des moyens de croissance inconnus jusqu' alors. Des multiples crises de l'entre-deux-guerres on voit émerger un mouvement ouvrier qui, exploitant à fond l'instabilité flagrante dont les forces politiques traditionnelles font preuve dans le domaine de la gestion des affaires, contestera de plus en plus le système des valeurs existant.

Dès son apparition, ce mouvement ouvrier est l'objet d'une politique de répression aux termes de la législation relative au banditisme et appliquée par analogie sur ses militants, puis, en vertu d'une législation d'une sévérité peu commune, il est vrai, votée et appliquée spécialement à cet effet. Dans cette escalade anticommuniste des années '20 et '30, beaucoup plus qu'un danger réel, on peut, de nos jours, entrevoir le reflet d'un sentiment anticipé d'inquiétude et d'insécurité, ce qui explique le recours à des méthodes et à des moyens de répression.

Plus révolutionnaire dans son discours que dans ses actes, scindé par des luttes internes sur des questions d'ordre doctrinal que les multiples interventions de l'Internationale finiront par aggraver, pris, enfin, dans l'engrenage de ses propres contradictions, le parti communiste grec ne sera, en aucun cas, en mesure de mettre sérieusement en cause les fondements de la société. La preuve la plus éclatante en est le nombre relativement restreint d'adhérents. A l'époque la plus faste, les années de crise économique, ceux-ci ne parviennent même pas de franchir le cap de 15 à 16 000. En revanche, personne ne conteste la popularité du parti au niveau de la classe ouvrière d'où celui-ci peut à tout temps puiser une clientèle plus ou moins stable, notamment auprès de la masse prolétarisée des réfugiés.

Ne reste pas moins que la vague anticommuniste apportera finalement des effets opposés au résultat convoité : la radicalisation de la classe ouvrière. Dans la conjoncture, toute différente, de la résistance et de la libération, ce phénomène conduira à des rebondissements spectaculaires.

Revenons un peu sur cette Grèce de l'entre-deux-guerres pour évoquer un paramètre qui, à son tour, pèsera lourd sur la suite des événements. Il s'agit

de la perception du pouvoir et de la façon dont celui-ci est exercé par ceux qui le détiennent.

Dans un contexte international marqué par la crise économique et par la montée au pouvoir de régimes autoritaires, la régression d'abord, l'abolition pure et simple, ensuite, du système parlementaire en Grèce ne devrait surprendre. C'est la conséquence directe d'une certaine conception des choses: faute de pouvoir répondre aux transformations profondes survenues entre-temps au niveau même des structures de la société par l'adoption de projets de réformes appropriés, les partis dirigeants optent en faveur de procédés extraconstitutionnels appliqués contre l'adversaire politique traditionnel dans un stade initial, mais très vite aux dépens de la menace commune: la gauche communiste. C'est ainsi que l'on voit surgir des méthodes de gouvernement perceptibles au niveau des prérogatives de l'exécutif allant à l'encontre des principes constitutionnels donnant, ainsi, lieu à un climat de fausseté et d'arbitraire. Climat à l'image de la disparité séparant une constitution calquée sur des principes révolus, des besoins urgents d'une situation économique et sociale en pleine mutation.

Ajoutons, enfin, pour compléter cet aperçu de la Grèce de l'entre-deux-guerres, le comportement insolite des militaires. Politisés en fonction des nombreuses controverses de l'époque, on les voit revendiquer, pendant toute la deuxième moitié des années trente, un rôle de plus en plus autonome, aspirant même à la conquête du pouvoir. Dans ce contexte bien triste, la restauration arbitraire de la monarchie en 1935, puis, l'année d'après, l'abolition du régime parlementaire par l'instauration d'un pouvoir autoritaire aux tendances fascistes ne seront, en fin de compte, que l'expression à peine plus poussée de cette crise de longue date.

Le courage dont les Hellènes firent preuve en 1940-1941 face à l'agression de l'Axe, atténua quelque peu ce climat de malaise. Trêve éphémère toutefois, les disparités et les discordes du passé faisant à nouveau surface dès les premières actions de résistance aux dépens de l'occupant.

Deux fils conducteurs se prêtent pour mieux saisir l'évolution de l'affaire grecque sous l'occupation : 1) l'examen des différentes formes de pouvoir que nous voyons surgir pendant ces années sombres et 2) le degré d'ingérence étrangère.

Des trois formes de pouvoir qui surgissent dans la conjoncture de l'occupation, les gouvernements dociles présentent, sans conteste, le moins d'intérêt. Leur survie dépend de l'appui largement prêté par l'occupant. Leurs membres seront, d'ailleurs, traduits en justice et accusés de haute trahison.

Contrairement au cas précédent, les circonstances font que le gouvernement grec en exil (deuxième forme de pouvoir) est le seul en mesure de revendiquer pour son compte une certaine notion de continuité. N'ayant reconnu aucun acte d'armistice, il poursuit le combat subissant le même sort que ses homologues norvégien, polonais, néerlandais, yougoslave et autres. C'est-à-dire, sa légitimité

est unanimement reconnue par les Alliés qui y voient déjà le vivier du futur état des choses en Grèce.

Seulement, ce gouvernement en exil est aux prises avec de nombreux problèmes de cohésion. Il rassemble républicains et royalistes à la fois, autrement dit, les représentants des forces politiques qui se sont farouchement opposées pendant l'entre-deux-guerres. Pis encore, on y repère des partisans d'un régime extra-parlementaire, un peu à l'image de celui qui précéda l'entrée en guerre du pays. Mais, par-dessus tout, on a affaire à un gouvernement qui n'arrive pas à se dégager de la tutelle encombrante d'un roi, Georges II, pour qui la question constitutionnelle au lendemain de la libération ne se pose point.

Éloigné du territoire national, avec lequel les voies de contact et de communication se préservent au prix de maintes difficultés, mal renseigné de ce qui s'y produit, espérant sans doute que l'on fasse appel à lui dans une conjoncture bien précise, celle de la libération, le gouvernement grec en exil ne fait rien, ou presque, pour s'élever à la hauteur de la situation.

Enfin, troisième forme de pouvoir, la plus complexe admettons-le, les forces de résistance. Et pour commencer, pourquoi et comment le mouvement de résistance se soumet-il au contrôle, presque exclusif, de la gauche ? La réponse n'est pas simple. En tout cas, faudrait-il tenir compte de deux phénomènes interdépendants : 1) l'abolition du système parlementaire pendant les années qui précèdent la guerre et, par extension, le manque de structures au niveau des partis traditionnels leur permettant de procéder à une mobilisation populaire à grande échelle et 2) le retranchement de la gauche communiste longtemps chassée, maltraitée, opprimée, donc ayant acquis une expérience lui permettant de survivre et, pourquoi pas, de se consolider dans des circonstances particulièrement désavantageuses.

C'est ainsi qu'en septembre 1941, on assiste à la création d'un Front National de Libération (EAM), officiellement une coalition de nombreux partis de gauche (dont le parti communiste). L'EAM sera bientôt doté d'une armée à lui.

Que l'EAM ait bien voulu s'assurer la prise du pouvoir au lendemain de la libération, il n'y a pas à en douter un seul instant. La question qui demeure encore insoluble et qui persiste à diviser les historiens se rapporte sur la façon dont cette ascension était perçue : par voie légale ou à travers l'instauration d'une république populaire ?

Ce qui importe pour l'instant c'est la diffusion spectaculaire de l'EAM, phénomène qui se produit au cours de l'année 1943. Pris à contretemps, Britanniques, gouvernement en exil et partis politiques traditionnels, feront front commun dans un effort de déjouer toute évolution intempestive. Ceci sera particulièrement ressenti au printemps 1944, à la suite de la formation, en Grèce même, d'un Comité Provisoire de Libération Nationale, chargé de l'administration des territoires libérés et passés sous contrôle de la résistance mais, également, chargé « du rétablissement, au lendemain de la libération de la vie politique normale

du pays, de sorte que les droits souverains du peuple grec soient garantis et que toute tentative visant à imposer des solutions contraires à la volonté de ce dernier soit exclue ».

Bientôt le phénomène fera tache d'huile. Plusieurs unités appartenant aux forces hellènes libres engagées militairement sur les théâtres moyen-oriental et nord-africain se soulèveront réclamant la formation d'un gouvernement d'union nationale. Mutinerie aussitôt avortée grâce à l'intervention des autorités britanniques locales. Une conférence nationale tenue à Beyrouth et groupant des représentants des partis politiques mais aussi des mandataires des différentes organisations de résistance succédera aux mutineries du printemps. Ses travaux aboutiront à un accord général sur la formation d'un gouvernement d'union nationale. Placé sous la présidence de Georges Papandhréou, celui-ci se voit chargé de veiller sur la liberté du peuple hellène de décider souverainement du régime politique et social ainsi que du gouvernement de son choix.

Enfin, pour la première fois le roi prend clairement position. Il s'engage à ne regagner le pays qu'au terme d'un verdict populaire, dans la mesure, bien entendu, où celui-ci le lui permettrait.

Le congrès du Liban un tournant ? Cela se pourrait à condition de bien vouloir nuancer. Pas mal d'aspects en demeurent encore obscurs. Est-ce un piège tendu à l'égard de l'EAM dans le but de le neutraliser ? On peut le supposer. Car, admettre au sein de ce schéma d'union nationale la principale organisation de résistance au même titre exactement que le reste de ses homologues équivaut à une tentative de mise sous contrôle. D'autre part, les gens de l'EAM seraient-ils aussi dupes au point de laisser faire ? Chercheraient-ils, plutôt, à gagner du temps, confiants en l'efficacité de leur structure, remarquable il faut avouer, pour se lancer le moment venu à la conquête du pouvoir ? Quel est le rôle joué par les Britanniques dans cette affaire ?

Nous voici, donc, aux prises avec un sujet multidimensionnel. A vrai dire, l'immixtion britannique est bien antérieure à la tenue du congrès du Liban. Tout simplement, elle manque de pragmatisme. La ligne conductrice en est, bien entendu, le rétablissement de l'influence économique et politique anglaise à travers la restauration d'un régime de monarchie constitutionnelle. A la tête de la hiérarchie, Churchill et Eden n'ont qu'une obsession : restituer son trône à Georges II. Du coup, sont-ils hostiles à tous ceux qui s'y opposent, peu importe leur ascendance politique. C'est aussi la ligne suivie par le *Foreign Office* qui ne s'intéresse qu'au sort du roi, du gouvernement en exil et à celui des forces hellènes libres. On mettra du temps à Londres et au Caire pour se rendre compte du degré d'influence de l'EAM. Ce ne sera fait qu'à partir du deuxième semestre de l'année 1943. Trop tard ! De nombreux scénarios dans le but de neutraliser l'EAM font alors leur apparition. Le congrès du Liban en est un.

En même temps on essaie de se prémunir contre d'éventuels fléchissements au niveau international. Au sommet de Téhéran, la Grèce est unanime-

ment considérée comme faisant partie de la zone d'influence britannique. Au cours de leur entrevue du Québec, en septembre 1944, Churchill et Roosevelt entrevoient l'utilité d'expédier des unités britanniques en Grèce pour maintenir l'ordre au lendemain de la libération. Mais c'est la rencontre Churchill-Staline, tenue à Moscou le mois d'après, qui est digne du plus haut intérêt. L'accord convenu à cette occasion sanctionne le partage des Balkans.

Le 18 octobre 1944, conformément aux stipulations de l'accord du Liban, le gouvernement d'union nationale s'installe dans Athènes libérée. Dans l'obligation d'assister une population accablée, trop impatiente de voir ses souffrances allégées, aux prises avec une économie où l'inflation galopante et le marché noir font des ravages, il sera vite dépassé par l'immensité de sa tâche. En réalité, il ne doit son autorité qu'à la présence des contingents britanniques débarqués en même temps que lui. En dehors des agglomérations principales il ne fait pas le poids. C'est ainsi que la joie du premier temps fera place à la déception, le soulagement à la méfiance.

L'EAM pourrait-il profiter de la situation pour s'emparer du pouvoir ? C'est du moins ce que l'on craint au niveau le plus élevé de la hiérarchie gouvernementale. On s'arrange ainsi pour transporter du Moyen-Orient une brigade constituée en hâte et considérée comme étant fidèle au gouvernement. Par l'entremise des Britanniques, on exige la dissolution de toutes les organisations de résistance. Le 2 décembre, les ministres délégués de l'EAM quittent le gouvernement en signe de protestation. La rupture est consommée. Le lendemain, une manifestation antigouvernementale dégénère en émeute. C'est l'étincelle qui fera sauter la poudrière. Pendant plusieurs semaines gouvernementaux et communistes se battent farouchement dans les rues de la capitale. Churchill lui-même s'y rendra à Noël. C'est d'ailleurs l'appui prêté par les Britanniques qui fera la différence en faveur des gouvernementaux. Athènes sera à jamais perdue pour les communistes. Ce n'est pas pour autant le cas pour le reste du pays, ce qui débouchera bientôt sur une nouvelle manche de confrontation armée.

L'insurrection d'Athènes fait-elle partie d'un complot organisé par la gauche dans le but de s'emparer du pouvoir ? A-t-on, inversement, affaire à un piège minutieusement tendu par ses adversaires Grecs gouvernementaux et Britanniques ? Ou bien, troisième version, ces journées sanglantes de décembre constituent-elles une erreur monumentale, aucun des partis ne désirant la rupture mais s'y laissant, tous deux, spontanément entraîner, trahis par l'effet d'un manque de confiance réciproque ? Réflexions qui déclenchent toute une série d'interrogations portant, cette fois-ci, sur la crise des années 1946-1949. Pourquoi la gauche persiste-t-elle au maintien de ses positions malgré le sort de la bataille d'Athènes qui lui est défavorable ? Est-ce tout simplement un mouvement d'autodéfense face à la montée de la terreur anticomuniste qui surgit en province ? Et si une guerre civile constitue l'ultime ressort, quel est le pourcentage de réussite ? Aussi possède-t-on les moyens appropriés pour se tirer d'affaire ?

Est-on disposé à se détacher de la tutelle encombrante de Moscou, à l'image de l'exemple yougoslave, ou bien est-on décidé à imposer un régime stalinien ? Enfin, la guerre civile était-elle vraiment incontournable ?

Que de questions qui tourmentent encore de nos jours les Grecs, dans l'attente (peut-être vaine) de la mise à la disposition de la recherche des archives du parti communiste. La guerre civile est encore loin de constituer un champ privilégié pour l'historien. Ainsi, le contenu de la présente contribution n'en est qu'un aperçu approximatif même si, des fois, ce que vous venez de lire suggère plus de questions qu'il n'apporte de conclusions.

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Andrey Edemskiy*

*Institute for Slavic Studies,
Russian Academy of Sciences*

Additional Evidence on the Final Break between Moscow and Tirana in 1960–1961

Abstract: Disagreement between Khrushchev and Enver Hoxha, leaders of the Soviet Union and Albania, had been ripening since the mid-1950s. Until the spring of 1960 the leadership of the small country did not show readiness to challenge the Soviets perceived as the great power at the head of Socialist bloc countries and the world Communist movement. But when the Chinese leadership indicated their disagreements with official Moscow in the spring of 1960, Albania joined them without fearing the inevitability of open confrontation with the Soviets. The article reveals the further course of events in chronological order during the deepening rift between the two leaders and their entourage, and analyses the Soviet decision-making process at the highest level consulting newly-declassified documents from the Russian State Archives of Contemporary History in Moscow. By the end of 1961, within less than two years, relations between the Soviet Union and Albania sank to their lowest. The Soviet leadership, presumably Khrushchev himself, failed in their attempts to stop another growing conflict in the Soviet bloc by discussing controversial issues face to face with the Albanian leadership. Researchers have already accumulated considerable knowledge about these processes, but substantial gaps are yet to be filled. Many relevant Soviet documents from Russian archives are not yet declassified. Nevertheless, the already available ones allow researchers to take a broader look on the developing Soviet-Albanian rift and to establish how, in parallel with the collapse of Soviet-Albanian connections in the early 1960s, Soviet-Yugoslav contacts intensified.

Keywords: nationalism, national interest, confrontation, Soviet-Albanian conflict, Enver Hoxha, Khrushchev, RGANI, failed Communist brotherhood

The huge complex of turbulent historical processes in the Balkans in the second half of the twentieth century undoubtedly is a promising scholarly topic now that much more archival documents are becoming accessible. The Soviet-Albanian conflict in the early 1960s in all of its aspects, ideological, political and economic, has attracted the attention of researchers since its inception.¹ A serious advance in investigating the problem has been made in the last few years

* and-edem@yandex.ru

¹ W. E. Griffith, *Albania and the Sino-Soviet Rift* (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1963); R. O. Freedman, *Economic Warfare in the Communist Bloc* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970); E. Biberaj, *Albania and China. A Study of an Unequal Alliance* (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1986).

owing to the use of rich documentary materials in Albanian from Albanian archives; researchers of that country have made their precious contribution to the study of these events.² Regrettably, the results of research using the relevant Soviet documentary materials are not so significant. Many important documents are still classified, but the already available documents from Russian archives make it possible us to shed more light on past events nonetheless. This article is the first attempt to make a further contribution in this direction, along with the task to identify the signs of an intensification of Soviet-Yugoslav contacts at the same time.

The Soviet-Albanian differences that arose in the mid-1950s, because of the Albanian leadership's disapproval of Khrushchev's move towards normalizing relations with Yugoslavia and the condemnation of the "personality cult" of Joseph Stalin, continued to accumulate negative potential. In 1959, the Soviet leader Khrushchev's ill-received remarks about further prospects for the development of Albania made during his visit to that country in May and Moscow's efforts to negotiate with Washington on a range of pressing global issues added even more difficulties to relations between Moscow and Tirana. However, until the summer of 1960, Soviet-Albanian relations continued their relatively conflict-free development within the framework of a fairly stable economic cooperation and, above all, of considerable and comprehensive Soviet assistance to Albania. The differences mentioned above remained latent until the spring-summer of 1960. As leaders of a small country, Enver Hoxha and his entourage did not consider it possible to challenge the Soviets, the great power at the head of the Soviet camp.

The situation changed in the spring of 1960. In late April several articles that appeared in the Chinese press (a little later they were collected in a brochure entitled *Long live Leninism!*) demonstrated that the Chinese leadership openly, albeit indirectly, expressed, even declared their disagreement with the Soviet position on the strategy of the Soviet bloc and the world communist movement in a set of issues concerning the approach to the state of international affairs and their prospects. Until June 1960, Moscow did not respond to these views in any way, believing that mutual ideological differences should not be discussed publicly, in the media, but rather in personal meetings.

An opportunity for criticizing the Chinese position presented itself, or so it seemed to Soviet leaders, in late June in Bucharest during the meetings of the delegations to the Congress of the Romanian Workers' Party (RWP). It had by now become necessary to stop dissension in the Soviet camp given that the

² E. Mëhilli, *From Stalin to Mao. Albania and the Socialist World* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2017); Y. Marku, "Communist Relations in Crisis: The End of Soviet-Albanian Relations, and the Sino-Soviet Split, 1960–1961", *International History Review* (May 2019), 1–20.

collapse of the Great Powers summit conference in Paris in mid-May over an American spy-flight over USSR territory on the 1st of May, a Soviet national holiday, seemed to confirm that Chinese warnings were more solid than they had appeared. The American plane was shot down, and its captured pilot's admission that he had been on a spy mission seemed to prove Khrushchev wrong in his course towards achieving *détente* with the United States and easing international tensions.

In early June Soviet leaders came up with the idea of holding a "meeting of fraternal communist and workers' parties" in Bucharest (decisions of the Presidium of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Central Committee/ CPSU CC/ of 2 and 7 June). Initially, their main goal was to discuss the crisis in the international situation, which became embarrassing after the disruption of the Paris summit.³ It was only later that, on Khrushchev's personal initiative, an information note was prepared in Moscow criticizing the theoretical views of Chinese leaders as false and harmful. On 22 June, the Soviet leadership decided to distribute this document to the leaders of the communist bloc countries. And then, in Bucharest, at improvised meetings of foreign delegations that had arrived at the RWP congress as guests, the Soviet leader Khrushchev criticized the Chinese leadership. The Albanian delegation was only headed by a "third player" in its party-state hierarchy, Hysni Kapo, member of the Political Bureau of the Party of Labour of Albania Central Committee (PLA CC). He coordinated his conduct with Enver Hoxha, who had remained in Tirana, and, unlike other participants, was not active in the improvised condemnation campaign against the Chinese leadership's views from the very beginning of the meeting, when he refrained from speaking first in alphabetic order.⁴ Even such a relatively passive conduct of Kapo annoyed Khrushchev.

The fact that the Albanian leadership had avoided supporting Khrushchev in his critique of the Chinese views in Bucharest did not prevent the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the People's Republic of Albania (PRA), Mehmed Shehu, from sending a letter to the Soviet government requesting 50 thousand tons of wheat to be shipped to Albania from August to December that year, needed as a result of unfavourable weather conditions and an unfulfilled crop plan. The letter was left unanswered. It was only in August, when the Albanian Minister of Trade sent the same request to the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Trade, but stressing the urgent need for at least 10–15 thousand tons of grain in September, that Moscow proceeded to meet the request. According to the decision of September 1, Albania was to be supplied with only 10 thousand tons

³ Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv noveishei istorii (RGANI) [Russian State Archives of Contemporary History], F 10, inv. 1, f. 62, pp. 1–9 [F - Fonds/*fond*; inv. - inventory or records group/*opis*; f. - file/*delo*; p. - page/*list*].

⁴ Ibid. p. 53.

during September–October 1960. It was stressed that, under the bilateral Trade Agreement, Tirana had to pay for them in Albanian goods next year. Since the Soviets had no stocks of free grain, it was decided to supply the requested amount from state reserves, taking into account that the specified 10 thousand tons would be delivered in excess of grain intended for export in 1960. The grain was to be shipped by Soviet Navy vessels from Soviet Black Sea ports.⁵

Another surge of controversy in Soviet-Albanian relations took place in November 1960 during the world meeting of Communist parties held in Moscow. As can be seen from archival documents, unlike in Bucharest in late June, this time the Albanian delegation came to Moscow intent to take the Chinese side on all issues that had arisen in the diverging positions of China and the USSR in recent months. Their stance had been decided at the ALP CC plenum on 1 November 1960. As the delegation was headed by Enver Hoxha himself, there was no need to waste time on consultations with Tirana, as Kapo had in Bucharest in late June. This change in the Albanian approach has been variously explained. According to a long tradition in Western historiography, it was the result of an intra-party struggle which had ended by the end of August 1960. The winners took a firm pro-Beijing line in its rising challenge to Soviet leadership of the Communist bloc and world movement.⁶ On the other hand, contemporary Albanian historiography has offered a fresh look at these events, according to which the rumours about a fierce intra-party struggle were false, since already after Khrushchev “secret speech” in February 1956 Hoxha had eliminated all potential opposition by purging many party members and high-ranking officials potentially willing to subscribe to the Soviet criticisms of the “cult of personality” in Albania that year.⁷

Several Soviet attempts to get the Albanians to agree to an open bilateral discussion in order to heal their widening rift had been in vain. Just upon Hoxha’s arrival in Moscow the Soviets distributed to the foreign delegations the Soviet response to the September letter of the Communist Party of China (CPC), describing Albania as a tyranny where being a friend of the Soviet Union was dangerous. With such a beginning, Hoxha was too furious to meet with Khrushchev. It was only through the mediation of French communists that the Albanians agreed to meet with Soviet representatives on 10 and 11 November. Hoxha finally met with Khrushchev a day later, on 12 November. According to Albanian accounts, the Soviet participants in the first meeting were Mikhail Suslov, Yuri Andropov, Frol Kozlov, Anastas Mikoyan, and Petr Pospelov. The discussion began as a quite open one. In reply to the Soviet question: “What do

⁵ RGANI, F 3, inv. 12, f. 420, p. 21.

⁶ L. M. Lüthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split. Cold War in the Communist World* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2008), 202.

⁷ Marku, “Communist Relations in Crisis”, 11.

you want in exchange for an improvement of your relations with us?"; Hoxha reminded them of all the incidents that had happened during the summer as the Soviet attempt to undermine the unity of the Albanian leadership, supporting political dissidents, and past incidents between Albanian and Soviet sailors and officials in the naval base at Vlora. Hoxha put forward a set of demands in order for such incidents to be prevented in the future, but the Soviet side rejected them, pointing to an anti-Soviet sentiment spreading across Albania. In the further course of discussion Hoxha argued that there had been disagreements between the two sides even before, such as those over Yugoslavia and other issues, and that all were coming from the Soviet side. Khrushchev seemed surprised: "that we have had different views on this issue is news to me. I hear it for the first time [...] The Yugoslav matter, which you consider as contentious between us, we may set aside for the moment. That is not a principal issue." But Hoxha insisted that the issue was indeed a principal one, which Khrushchev had neglected to understand for a long time. The Albanian leader blamed Khrushchev for the deterioration of their relations after the Bucharest meeting. But Khrushchev suspected that "it seems you have not been in agreement with us even before Bucharest". Then they exchanged heated accusations regarding possible Soviet support to the recently purged prominent Albanian leaders sympathetic to the USSR. Khrushchev attacked his interlocutors for "expelling a strong woman like Belishova in a Stalinist way". Then the already tense conversation switched to the issue of the naval base at Vlora over Albanian accusations of Soviet seamen and officers allegedly quarrelling with Albanians in their territory. In a polemic mood, Khrushchev mentioned the possibility of removing this military installation from Albania. The conversation finally came to end when Khrushchev compared Hoxha's manner of discussion to British Prime Minister Harold MacMillan, who "also wanted to talk to me this way", and when Mikoyan commented that Hoxha "speaks worse than MacMillan". The Albanian delegation stood up and left the room. Mehmet Shehu's last words to Khrushchev on his way out were "that Albania will always remain faithful to the Soviet Union and a member of the socialist camp".⁸

Obviously, what lay at the core of the failed attempt to repair the initial split were differences in mentality, exacerbated by the painful perception by the representatives of a small country of some liberties that their interlocutors as representatives of a great power took in their statements. On the other hand, the conversation ran as if the Albanian side had awaited a reason to cut it short. And this indeed happened as soon as such an opportunity was presented by the Soviets. Since researchers are now aware of the mood in which the Albanians arrived in Moscow after the PLA CC plenary session of 1 November, it is obvi-

⁸ Report on the meeting of the ALP delegation with leaders of the CPSU, 12 November 1960: <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/117494>

ous that the liberties taken by the Soviet side during the 12 November meeting played into the hands of the Albanians.

Already on 14 November, aware of their mistake and trying to put it right, the Soviet leadership sent a short letter to Albanian leaders, addressing it to the "PLA delegation" and calling them "comrades". The Soviet leaders proposed "resuming the meeting between representatives of our parties at a time convenient for your delegation". They also expressed their regret that the Albanian side had interrupted the meeting, trying to assure them that "none of us had or has any intention to offend any of the Albanian representatives". They regretted that the Albanians had left too early to hear the end of the interrupted sentence ("had they listened to the end of the sentence"), "misinterpreted and interrupted sentence", "despite the sincere desire of the CPSU delegation to continue" the talks. The Soviets proposed resuming the meeting either in the previous composition or between other "authorized representatives" of both Central Committees to discuss issues of interest to "both parties". The Soviet side demonstrated patience, promising to wait until "the Albanian comrades are ready to re-establish contacts" with CPSU representatives. At the same time, the Soviets expressed their readiness for a meeting at the heads of government level, drawing attention to "some issues concerning our two states that need to be discussed", in fact proposing to meet at any level "which Albanian comrades may find acceptable". Researchers have not yet clarified whether the Soviet hosts managed to deliver this letter to the LPA delegation the same day (14 November), as proposed by Yuri Andropov who was responsible for drawing it up.⁹

The Soviet 14 November message to the Albanians was ignored by Hoxha. He indirectly replied to Soviet proposals in his speech at the general session of the communist delegations on 16 November. He expressed his support for the theoretical part of Deng Xiaoping's report, reiterated Chinese arguments and expressed disagreement with the Soviet position on a number of issues, such as peaceful coexistence, paths of transition to socialism, and criticism of Stalin's personality cult. A substantial part of his speech was devoted to Yugoslavia. Hoxha dwelt on the Yugoslav problem at some length, noting the need to return to the definitions contained in the resolution on the Yugoslav question adopted at the 3rd Cominform meeting in 1949. He also argued on attempts of Yugoslav communist leaders to impose their revisionist ideas by force. He focused particularly on the activities of Aleksandar Ranković as coordinator of the Yugoslav state security services, who, as Hoxha alleged, led a campaign for the extermination of the Albanian population in Yugoslavia. The Albanian leader accused him of preparing a Yugoslav secret service operation for the escape from Albania to Yugoslavia of a group of high-ranking officials in order to use them to "lead an offensive against Albania". Hoxha also denounced the Yugoslav leader

⁹ RGANI, F 3, inv. 12, f. 809, p. 88.

Tito as organizer of counter-revolutionary activities in Hungary in 1956. According to him, Tito also plotted with Greece to divide Albania. In both cases, as Hoxha claimed, the Yugoslav leadership acted with Khrushchev's approval. A considerable part of the Albanian leader's speech criticized the Soviet Union's economic assistance to Albania, accusing the Soviet leadership of wishing to turn his country into an agrarian semi-colony. Thus, Hoxha sought to make it clear that the dispute between him and Khrushchev was not caused by individual disagreements, but by the Soviet government's great-power, chauvinistic policy. Soon after this speech, Hoxha left Moscow and returned to Albania, still ignoring the Soviet proposal for resuming the talks interrupted on 12 November.

Since Soviet leaders became convinced of Hoxha's unwillingness to resume the talks, they tried to use (unsuccessfully) economic leverage to coerce him into meeting them. On 13 December 1960, the Soviet side suspended the implementation of the Agreement on Material Assistance to the Albanian Army, temporarily blocking the shipping of military supplies and related products. As for future cooperation, the Soviet Defence Ministry informed the Albanian government that the extension of this Agreement for 1960–1961 should be decided at government level.¹⁰

Hoxha's 16 November speech with its firmly defined views was truly shocking for most participants. Nevertheless, it had no decisive effect on the formal outcomes of this meeting. The Chinese delegation demonstrated restraint as the meeting was drawing to its end. Only Deng Xiaoping participated in theoretical discussion, while Zhou Enlai, head of the delegation, remained in the shadow. On 1 December, he was the first to sign the final document of the meeting. Following him, the Albanian delegation signed it too. The restraint shown by the Chinese helped avoid an open scandal and maintain the image of the world communist movement's unity intact. The Soviet leadership also used the Chinese tactic of creating the impression that there were only secondary differences between Moscow and Beijing.

Summing up the results of the Moscow meeting, Soviet leaders maintained a pretence of optimism for a few weeks. They praised Khrushchev's 20 November speech and the activity of the Soviet delegation at the meeting. The minutes of the meeting of the topmost Soviet leadership of 16 December 1960, included the conclusion that "as a result of a friendly discussion, a unanimity of views was reached on the principled basis of Marxism-Leninism regarding the most important issues of international development and the communist movement, on which the CPC delegation, joined by the PLA delegation, initially held positions diverging from Marxist-Leninist."¹¹

¹⁰ RGANI, F 3, inv. 3, f. 463, p. 9.

¹¹ RGANI, F 3, inv. 14, f. 443, p. 2.

Nevertheless, two weeks later the Soviet leadership returned to Albanian themes. The rather dubious earlier statements about the success of the international meeting of communist parties in Moscow in November, recorded in the decision of the CPSU CC Presidium, were forgotten. Already at the end of December, the Soviets returned to the assessments that had prevailed in Moscow before the November meeting. The "Questions on Albania" was again an item on the agenda of the meeting of the CPSU CC Presidium on December 30. Its participants discussed the situation at the negotiations with the Albanian side about economic issues. As a result of the discussion, the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Kuznetsov) was instructed to "prepare a reply to the note of the Albanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding negotiations on economic issues". As is known from the declassified and published protocol of decision, the discussion went beyond purely economic matters. Khrushchev spoke "about the naval base and submarines". As a result, the Ministry of Defence (Malinovsky) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Kuznetsov) were instructed "to develop relevant documents", "taking into account the exchange of views".¹²

The reference materials that the Soviet leaders had received before the 30 December meeting are still inaccessible to researchers, but additional consulting of declassified documents has been useful to collecting further details concerning this discussion (item 12 of the CPSU CC Presidium meeting agenda of 30 December). It seems that the reference materials were prepared jointly by the Defence and Foreign ministers (Malinovsky and Gromyko, as well as the Commander-in-Chief of the Navy of the USSR, Admiral Gorshkov) as early as 11 November 1960 (no. 655 under the heading "top secret"). Only one new document for this 30 December meeting was added – "the telegram of comrade Novikov from Tirana" (no. 423 of 27 December 1960). It is also known that invited to participate in the December 30 discussion on this issue were Malinovsky and Gorshkov, as well as three deputies of Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko (Kuznetsov, Semenov, Firyubin). Given the lack of declassified sources, the content of Khrushchev's statements regarding the naval base and submarines in Vlora can only be guessed from what he said at a meeting with the Albanian delegation led by Enver Hoxha on 12 November: "Now we say that, if you want, we can remove the base. The submarines are ours."¹³

¹² *KPSS i formirovanie sovetskoi politiki na Balkanakh v 1950-kh – pervoi polovine 1960-kh* g.g. *Sbornik dokumentov* [CPSU and the formation Soviet Balkan policy in the 1950s and first half of the 1960s. Documents], eds. L. A. Velichanskaia et al. (Thessaloniki: Paratiritis, 2003), 298.

¹³ Report of the meeting of the Albanian Labor Party delegation with leaders of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, 12 November 1960: <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/117494> (last accessed 30 December 2019).

At the same time, the exchange of New Year's greetings between the Soviet and Albanian leaders these days did not reflect the divergence that continued to grow at the end of 1960. Khrushchev and Brezhnev sent their telegram to Tirana to all four Albanian leaders and received an almost identical text from Tirana. In both cases, greetings began with: "dear comrades".¹⁴ The festive mood was also marked by the Soviet decision of 4 January, when the Presidium endorsed the proposal of the USSR Ministry of Defence to transfer to the Albanian People's Army special materials for the 46th naval detachment OSNAZ (special forces unit). An order of the Council of Ministers of the USSR on this issue had been adopted on 27 July 1960, but at that point remained unendorsed by any decision of the CPSU CC Presidium, probably because of the unexpected outcome of the meetings in Bucharest in late June.

But already on 7 January 1961, the Foreign Ministry in Moscow instructed its Ambassador in Tirana to lodge protest against the discrimination of Soviet transport ships at the Albanian port of Durres. Soviet discontent was caused by the situation that "most Soviet ships transporting grain and other cargoes to Albania" were left waiting to be unloaded while other foreign ships had no such problems. Soviets thought that "Albanian authorities create more favourable conditions for ships of other countries in comparison with the Soviet ones". The Foreign Ministry called on the Albanian authorities to take measures to prevent such practice.¹⁵

As the Soviets came to the conclusion that Albanian leaders had not made any serious step to normalize relations with Moscow after more than five weeks of the signing of the Moscow Declaration, the previous positive assessments had to be changed. It was done by ideologist Mikhail Suslov in his report submitted at the CPSU CC session on 12 January 1961. It was exclusively devoted to the Moscow meeting and its results. This time he gave a rather bleak assessment of the prospects for further relations with the Albanian leadership. If the state of relations with the leadership of the CCP was presented as settled, Suslov described the actions of the Albanian leadership very sharply. He noted that the source of their "erroneous positions", "the reason for their departure from the Soviet positions is dogmatism in leadership, political immaturity, regime of personality cult and nationalist positions, especially in relations with Yugoslavia".¹⁶

Despite such a sharp shift in assessments, Moscow continued to exercise restraint in its approach to Albania. Albanian leaders invited a CPSU delegation to the upcoming LPA congress. It seemed to the Soviet leadership that this provided an opportunity to settle relations and relieve tensions. On 16 February 1961, the CPSU delegation (Petr Pospelov, Yuri Andropov and Yosif Shikin,

¹⁴ *Pravda*, 4 January 1961, p. 2.

¹⁵ RGANI, F 3, inv. 14, f. 448, p. 16; f. 450, p. 1.

¹⁶ RGANI, F 2, inv. 1, f. 535, p. 140.

Soviet Ambassador in Tirana) was instructed to “uphold the conclusions and assessments of the Moscow meeting in a firm and principled manner, while trying to avoid engaging in direct polemics with Albanian leaders”. They should also harmonize their “general line of conduct at the congress with the delegations of other communist and workers’ parties of the socialist countries”. Trying to predict future developments, the Soviet leadership did not rule out the possibility of Albanian leaders’ “open hostile attacks against the CPSU” at the congress, warning the delegation to be prepared. But Moscow did not rule out the possibility of Albanian leaders offering “to meet with the delegation of the CPSU” either. In that case, the delegation was supposed to “accept the offer” and use the conversation with Albanian leadership to reiterate the points of Khrushchev’s 23 November speech at the Moscow meeting. It was also stated that “we would not want to have a discussion with them at the PLA congress, but should such a discussion be forced upon us, the delegation will have to offer a strong rebuttal”. It was pointed out that “the delegation should not ignore possible attacks against other fraternal parties at the congress as it will be needed to give the necessary rebuttal to such attacks”. The directives stressed one more time that the delegation should not start a polemic with the Albanian leadership on its own. Bearing in mind earlier practice, Moscow believed it possible that the Soviet delegation might be invited to participate in mass rallies after the congress and recommended not to decline the invitation.¹⁷

The Soviet predictions about the Albanian side’s behaviour proved partly correct. As Hoxha and his entourage refrained from attacking the Soviet leadership, there was no need for Pospelov to launch a counterattack. He delivered a constructive speech. The Soviet press published abridged versions both of his text and of Hoxha’s report to the delegates to the forum. But Hoxha outplayed Khrushchev again. Contrary to the expectations of the authors of the instructions to the CPSU delegation, he received Pospelov and Andropov not before but on the last day of his party’s congress, on 20 February. He probably wanted to see their reaction, as it was clear that there was no opposition to him among the delegates and that the party was firmly under his control. As is clear from the Albanian memorandum of their conversation, the meeting was formal.¹⁸

The results of the CPSU delegation’s trip to Tirana were discussed at a meeting of the CPSU CC Presidium on 24 February. Pospelov’s report gave no reason for enthusiasm. An entry in the minutes indicates that an active discussion followed (Andropov, Mikoyan, Khrushchev, Kozlov, Suslov, Furtseva). Once again, it became evident that Enver Hoxha did not want another personal meeting with the Soviets. The activity of the delegation was approved of and its “tactic steps” described as “correct”. However, the discussion revealed some

¹⁷ RGANI, F 3, inv.14, f. 454, pp. 7–8.

¹⁸ Marku, “Communist Relations in Crisis”, 13.

divergence of opinion between Mikoyan and Khrushchev. A brief minutes entry indicates that Khrushchev “speaks from the positions of principle in economic and trade relations with Albania”, insisting that there was no need to sign a trade agreement at the moment. He saw a way out in resuming negotiations “at the highest level in Moscow”. In his turn, Mikoyan argued against steps that might give the Chinese an opportunity to say that “we are putting pressure on a small country.” Mikoyan also considered it important not to break off trade relations with Albania. And, should the Albanians refuse to correct their positions, he proposed not to invite the PLA delegation to attend the 22th CPSU congress in October. In the course of this discussion participants came to the conclusion that the Soviet stance in the growing dispute with Albania should be thoroughly substantiated, including by preparing broadcasts explaining the situation.¹⁹ It was decided, based on the results of the discussion, to prepare (Kozlov, Brezhnev, Mikoyan, Pospelov and Andropov) proposals concerning economic issues in relations between the USSR and Albania and a draft letter from the CPSU CC to the PLA CC on Albanian-Soviet relations in general.²⁰

At the end of the winter of 1961, it was obvious that the Soviet-Albanian conflict continued to deepen. A new phase was an intense exchange of letters in late winter and spring. This exchange has so far been studied only partially and selectively. It requires full use of the available documents and a more careful and objective study than before. It was in this period that letters between the Commander-in-Chief of the Joint Armed Forces of the Warsaw Pact, Soviet Marshal Andrey Grechko, and Albania’s Defence Minister, Colonel-General Beqir Baluku (25 February, 27 March, 28 March), were exchanged, as well as the Soviet memoranda of 22 March, then again between Grechko and Baluku on 24 and 27 March.²¹ At that time, a special factor in the further deterioration of relations was the controversy over the situation in and future of the naval base at Vlora, established by the Soviet naval forces in 1959 at the request of the Albanian side within the framework of the Warsaw Treaty Organization. The correspondence was later continued, including Mehmed Shehu’s letters of 5 April and 8 May.

A fairly significant indication of Khrushchev’s stance on the conflict was his speech at the meeting of the Warsaw Pact alliance leaders on 29 March 1961.

¹⁹ *Prezidium TsK KPSS 1954–1964: Chernovye protokol’nye zapisi zasedanii. Stenogrammy. Postanovleniia* [Presidium of the Central Committee of the CPSU Sessions 1954–1964: Stenographic Minutes. Decisions], ed. A. A. Fursenko (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2004), vol. 1, 493–494.

²⁰ RGANI, F 3, inv. 14, f. 456, pp. 1–2.

²¹ RGANI, F 3 inv. 3, f. 463, p. 2. For the Albanian response to this letter see V. Mastny and M. Byrne, eds., *A Cardboard Castle? An Inside History of the Warsaw Pact 1955–1991?* (Budapest – New York: Central European University Press, 2005), 110–111 (Albanian Minister of Defence Beqir Baluku’s letter to Marshal Grechko of 28 March 1961).

Before the meeting, the Soviet leader was still hopeful of the growing conflict being resolved in a personal meeting with Hoxha. He again invited him and Shehu to visit Moscow to attend the meeting of the Warsaw Pact Political Consultative Committee at the end of March. It is possible to assume with much certainty that the Soviet leadership's "On instructions to the Soviet Ambassador in Tirana" of 18 March 1961 (still inaccessible to researchers)²² was devoted to this matter. Hoxha and Shehu declined the invitation "for health reasons". Instead of them Defence Minister Baluku and Foreign Minister Behar Shtylla were appointed to take part as their delegates.²³

A considerable part of Khrushchev's 29 March speech was devoted to Albania. Wishing to "make some remarks regarding the actions of Albanian comrades, who have recently departed from the agreed foreign policy of the socialist camp countries", he set out a few points. As for the Albanian stance on developments in the Balkans, he was unhappy about their refusal to support "the concrete proposals of the socialist countries on the issue of intra-Balkan cooperation, on the creation of nuclear-free zones in the Balkans and the Adriatic", as it "even hinders the implementation of these proposals". The Soviet leader also made some clarifications about the situation with the naval base at Vlora. He emphasized that it "now is virtually unable to perform its tasks" and became "an additional source of friction". According to him, "the combat effectiveness of the base has been paralyzed", and "under current conditions there is no sense in maintaining" it. As the only condition for its preservation and "normalization of situation", Khrushchev stressed "the need" to accept the proposal contained in the letter of Marshal Grechko for "a single command at the military base, so that all ship crews may remain Soviet". In this case, Khrushchev made it clear that he would not even respond to any allegations against him from Albanian leaders.²⁴

There is no doubt that the Albanian representatives' obligation to consult with Enver Hoxha and their different political weight in comparison with the other participants in the meeting did not allow them to respond actively and sharply to various claims and accusations levelled primarily at the highest Albanian leaders. It is obvious that everything that happened at the meeting, including the criticism by the Bulgarian and Polish leaders, with whom Khrushchev concurred, of Enver Hoxha's claim at the recent PLA congress about a conspiracy against Albania by Greece and Yugoslavia with the participation of the US 6th Fleet was passed on by both ministers to Tirana word for word. According to Khrushchev's remark suspecting Enver Hoxha of intentionally "inflating

²² RGANI, F 3 inv. 14, f. 462, p. 58.

²³ Marku, "Communist Relations in Crisis", 13.

²⁴ RGANI, F 10, inv. 3, f. 6, pp. 63, 69.

military hysteria”, the Soviet leader even seemed to defend Yugoslav leaders in this particular case.²⁵

It is obvious that Khrushchev’s 29 March comments on relations with Albania were linked with Soviet further well-planned steps regarding Albania in both the economic and political spheres. Two days earlier Soviet leaders had approved economic policy recommendations concerning Albania to be implemented by the Soviet Foreign Ministry, the State Committee for Economic Cooperation and the Foreign Trade Ministry. The recommendations had been worked out within four weeks in accordance with the decision of the CPSU CC Presidium of late February.

These prepared “proposals” constituted a fundamental memorandum in which all issues concerning economic relations between the two countries were thoroughly worked out and the development of bilateral relations in recent years summarized. All elements of previous cooperation were presented in full detail, such as Soviet material, technical and financial assistance to Albania, including the exact sums of allocated and used loans, the state of facilities under construction, and the number of Soviet specialists with specification of their specialization in different sectors of the Albanian economy. The document also offered a political evaluation of the state of relations between Albania and the USSR. The authors believed that the “foundations of friendly fraternal relations between the Albanian and Soviet peoples, between the governments of both countries are undermined” in Albania. This state of affairs was, according to the authors, “the main reason for the abnormalities that have arisen in relations between Albania and the Soviet Union”. They considered it “necessary in the future, until the moment that PLA leaders have changed their nationalist and hostile policies towards the USSR and the CPSU”, to carry out a set of measures “in the field of economic relations between the Soviet Union and Albania”.²⁶ Among financial measures, it was advised to close the opportunities for Albania to get loans according to the Agreement of 3 July 1957. Proposals were put forward not to extend any new loans for agricultural development and not to provide incentives for previous loans. The use of previous loans to Albania was restricted to the payment for Soviet equipment or goods.²⁷

In a similar key, recommendations “on Soviet-Albanian trade relations” were developed. Experts pointed out the necessity of a balanced implementation of the bilateral Protocol on Trade in 1961. It was advised not to sign a long-term trade agreement for 1961–1965 with the same purpose of pressurizing the Albanian leadership into accepting to meet again with Soviet leaders (“if the Albanian side asks about it [...] reply that this issue can be discussed at the highest

²⁵ Ibid. pp. 72–73.

²⁶ RGANI, F 3, inv. 14, f. 463, p. 9.

²⁷ Ibid. pp. 10–11.

level"). Not even the final stage of the construction of the Palace of Culture in Tirana was overlooked. If the Albanian side inquired about it, it should be replied that it was a "matter subject to additional consideration at governmental level".²⁸ A special section of the recommendations concerned the Soviet experts in Albania, with a clear schedule of their withdrawal by the end of 1961. It was decided, "due to the inappropriate attitude of the Albanian side towards many Soviet specialists located in Albania, to refrain from sending new Soviet specialists and not to extend the term of stay for the specialists already located there". Some exceptions were envisaged for the specialists engaged in the design and construction of hydroelectric power plants and geological exploration. Given the possibility that "abnormal conditions may be created for the remaining Soviet specialists in Albania to continue working", in that case, "it is necessary" to arrange for their "being recalled to the Soviet Union ahead of time".

Separate recommendations envisaged the cessation of the supply of military-technical equipment, food and fodder for the Albanian Army, suspending the agreements of 28 September 1949, 24 March 1956, and 26 February 1959. The latter one regarding supply of missile technology was especially stressed. It was also decided to ignore the Albanian request for a loan of 125 million rubles for the needs of the Albanian Armed Forces in 1961–1965 under the Agreement of 26 July 1960.²⁹

An analysis of these recommendations shows that the main ones were aimed at coercing the Albanian leadership into resuming talks at the highest possible level. The elaborate programme devised to force Enver Hoxha and his associates to meet again in person was thwarted by Albania's intensifying cooperation with the People's Republic of China. In less than a month, on 23 April, a Sino-Albanian trade agreement was signed. As it follows from the recommendations approved by the CPSU CC Presidium in late April, Khrushchev and his entourage expected that the financial-economic pressure on Albania would result in Albanian leaders' consent to another bilateral summit meeting in order to try to relieve tensions. Even today, almost sixty years later, the whole set of documents in Russian archives related to the preparation of Kosygin's letter, as well as the text of the letter itself, remain unavailable to researchers. We can only assume that this unjustified secrecy is due to unwillingness to reveal what highly likely was a furious Soviet reaction to the Chinese leadership's really political decision to sign a trade agreement with Albania. Therefore, we are still forced to rely on what Western historiography claims about this problem since the early 1970s. According to it, Soviet First Deputy Premier Alexei Kosygin sent a letter within five days of the signing of the Chinese-Albanian trade agreement. His letter effectively signalled the end of the Soviet-Albanian trade and credit agree-

²⁸ RGANI, F 3, inv. 3, f. 463, p. 12

²⁹ RGANI, F 3, inv. 14, f. 463, pp. 11–14.

ments. Among other things, Kosygin stated that, "It is understandable that the Albanian leadership cannot expect that the USSR will help it in the future as it has in the past, with aid from which only true friends and brothers have a right to benefit."³⁰

Late April and early May marked a new phase in Soviet-Albanian relations. With the activation of Chinese-Albanian relations at the end of April, the Soviets realized it was necessary to clarify the current situation with the Vlora naval base to the Chinese leadership, justifying their decision to dismantle it. As a result, the Soviet Ambassador in Beijing was instructed on May 16 to meet with Zhou Enlai, who had raised the issue on his initiative a few days earlier. Moscow wanted to convince others (in this case, the Chinese) that "the Soviet government did not want to withdraw ships and equipment from Albania, and if this issue has now arisen, it is not at all our desire. Our steps to withdraw [...] are a forced move, since the Albanian side, pursuing a line unfriendly to the USSR, has created a completely intolerable situation at the base. As a result, the base has actually lost its combat capability and the continued presence of Soviet sailors there due to the direct provocation of the Albanian military authorities is fraught with undesirable incidents." The Soviet side provided several examples of such cases, noting that the Albanian government did not respond to Soviet appeals in any way. "No measures have been taken by the Albanian side to remedy this situation", on the contrary, "every time we address them, they try to justify the unruly and sometimes provocative actions of the Albanian military authorities, as a result of which the situation at the Vlora base continues to deteriorate." It was noted that "only thanks to the high political maturity, conscientiousness and endurance of Soviet officers, petty officers and sailors, it is still possible to avoid conflicts and clashes between our and Albanian sailors", reminding of the previous proposal to put all crews and ships under the command of the WTO commander-in-chief. The Albanian leadership's refusal to accept this proposal convinced Moscow to withdraw Soviet ships from Vlora.³¹

The final chord in this phase was the arrival in Tirana on 19 May of the Soviet delegation headed by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Nikolai Firyubin to negotiate about the withdrawal of Soviet naval forces from Vlora. At first, the Albanian side refused even to meet with Firyubin. Moreover, Tirana wanted to divide the fleet.³² The final Soviet decision was that Firyubin and his

³⁰ Freedman, *Economic Warfare*, 79.

³¹ RGANI, F 3, inv. 14, f. 475, pp. 11–12.

³² For somewhat more detail on the positions of the two sides on this controversial issue and the Albanian side's opposition to the plan for the withdrawal of Soviet ships see *KPSS i formirovanie sovetskoi politiki*, 302–307.

delegation could leave Tirana “after the withdrawal from Albania of eight submarines, floating base and personnel of the Soviet Navy”.³³

The final negotiations took place under the dark shadow of preparations for a trial of Teme Sejko, Rear-Admiral and Commander of the Albanian Navy, and several senior PLA officials. The trial was held in May 1961 and the accused were found guilty. Several of them, including Sejko himself, were sentenced to death. Officially, all of them were indicted for collaborating with the Greek and Yugoslav intelligence services and planning a coup d'état. However, there were unofficial rumours, well known even to the highest party-state bureaucracy, that all the involved were suspected of a pro-Soviet conspiracy to overthrow the current leadership.³⁴

Events surrounding the withdrawal of Soviet submarines, auxiliary ships and military equipment from the naval base at Vlora led to a reduced cooperation in other areas as well. In early June, the Soviet leadership decided on an “early withdrawal from Albania of the Soviet specialists who provide technical assistance in various sectors of the national economy of Albania”. In June, thirty-three of them were to return to the USSR, followed, in July, by two more specialists who provided technical assistance for the reconstruction and production capacity expansion of sugar and cement plants.³⁵

A remarkable testimony to the growing distrust in relations between Moscow and Tirana was the decision of the Soviet leadership of 14 June concerning the sharing of information about the meeting between Khrushchev and Kennedy in Vienna on 3–4 June 1961. If the leaderships of all socialist countries and the leader of Cuba, Fidel Castro, were given the full recording of the talks, the Soviet Ambassador in Tirana was instructed to inform Enver Hoxha about it only verbally. It was also decided to inform verbally, “in confidence”, the heads of state or government of Afghanistan, Burma, Brazil, Cambodia, Finland, Ghana, Guinea, India, Iraq, Morocco, Mali, Mexico, Nepal, UAR, Somalia, Ceylon, Ethiopia as well as Yugoslavia.³⁶ This decision was a clear sign that in the eyes of the Soviets the leadership of Albania was placed on the same level as the leadership of Yugoslavia, not so long ago described as revisionist and almost hostile.

The state of relations with Albania and the necessity to send a response to its Foreign Ministry was on the agenda again at the meetings of the Soviet leadership on 13 June. Khrushchev and his associates were informed “about the

³³ Ibid. 306.

³⁴ For more detail see A. A. Ulunian, “Gotovilsia li perevorot v Albanii? ‘Delo T. Seyko’: versii.” [Was a coup planned in Albania? “Case of T. Seyko”: versions], *Slavianovedenie* 1 (2012), 16–32.

³⁵ RGANI, F 3, inv. 14, f. 482, p. 51. Protocol no. 333 of CPSS CC Presidium session of 8 June 1961.

³⁶ RGANI, F 3, inv. 14, f. 485, p. 30.

facts of unworthy behaviour of Albanian military cadets studying at Soviet military schools". A note to that effect was to be sent to the government of Albania.³⁷ On 17 June, Khrushchev and Mikoyan were the main speakers in the discussion on Albanian issues, an important item on that day's agenda. It was decided "in view of the Albanian government's continuing unfriendly actions leading to the deterioration of Albanian-Soviet relations"; to send to Tirana an official note concerning the misconduct of the Albanian cadets. Copies of this document were also to be sent to the "leaders of the socialist camp countries".³⁸

During the summer of 1961 relations between Tirana and Moscow continued to slide down, becoming even more complicated. In early July Hoxha made an attempt to restore dwindling economic and military contacts with the Soviet bloc countries. His attempts ended in failure. Moreover, Albania was not invited to the meeting of the leaders of the communist and workers' parties of the Warsaw Pact countries, which took place in early August.

Having concluded that a break was inevitable, and ready for a tough confrontation with the Albanian leadership, Soviet leaders clearly wanted to minimize the damaging effect that mutual accusations would have on the image of the USSR among the population of Albania as a result of its leadership's anti-Soviet propaganda. This is evidenced, for example, by Moscow's instructions to the Soviet Ambassador in Tirana of August 31 concerning the upcoming month (*mesiachnik*) of Albanian-Soviet friendship in Albania. In previous years, Albanian authorities had marked this month throughout the country. This time, in the considerably changed circumstances, Moscow proceeded cautiously. On the one hand, it assessed that "unfriendly policies pursued by the Albanian leadership regarding the Soviet Union give reason to believe that they can use the opportunity presented by these weeks to deceive the Albanian people". As it had already become a tradition for Soviet senior diplomats or people from other Soviet organizations in Albania to take part, at the invitation of Albanian authorities, in various celebrations, rallies and meetings, it was recommended "to accept the invitation and take part in the events". Moscow's directives to Soviet representatives were not to refuse to give a speech if invited: "they can speak in the spirit of the speech of the head of the CPSU delegation to the PLA Congress". They also stressed as necessary "to use these speeches to acquaint the working people of Albania with the successes of communist construction in the USSR". Moscow still sought to avoid further deterioration, warning Soviet diplomats that "they should not touch upon Soviet-Albanian relations when covering foreign policy issues", but should instead put the main emphasis "on explaining the peaceful foreign policy of the Soviet Union and Khrushchev's activities [in that area]". The Soviet personnel in Albania were instructed to "immediately leave

³⁷ RGANI, F 3, inv. 14, f. 485, p. 29.

³⁸ RGANI, F 3, inv. 14, f. 486, p. 3.

meetings and further evade participation in the events of the month” should any anti-Soviet incidents be allowed.³⁹

The differences between Moscow and Tirana entered a new phase at the 22nd CPSU Congress (held 17–31 October 1961 in Moscow) as Khrushchev openly declared as unacceptable the political practice and ideological views of the ALP leadership. Apart from Khrushchev, several other congress participants spoke in a harsh anti-Albanian tone. Anti-Yugoslav rhetoric also sounded in a number of statements, and in the new Programme of the CPSU adopted by the Congress as well. This was an addition to the ideological dispute with Belgrade following the adoption of the new Programme of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia in April 1958 combined with the Soviet desire not to irritate the Chinese leadership with new accents in the Soviet approach to “Yugoslav revisionism”.

The Soviet side continued to intensify economic contacts with Yugoslavia, while economic relations with Albania continued to deteriorate. On 30 October, the Soviet leadership supported the proposal of the Polish government not to deliver to Albania a merchant ship built in Poland.⁴⁰

The changes in Moscow's relations with Tirana and Belgrade were clearly visible at the end of November in relevant decisions of the Soviet top decision-makers regarding the attitude to the state holidays of Albania and Yugoslavia. With regard to Albania, the Soviets' congratulatory telegrams were limited to a low level. Unlike in previous years, formal congratulations were sent only to the Presidium of the People's Assembly, the Council of Ministers and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Albania. The Soviets sent “heartfelt congratulations to the brotherly Albanian people on the occasion of the 17th anniversary of the liberation of Albania from the Nazi occupiers”, noting that “the decisive factor providing the opportunity for the Albanian people to throw off the foreign yoke and establish the people's power in the country was the defeat of Nazi hordes by the Soviet Army.” It was decided that the Soviet congratulatory texts only be read on the radio without being published in Soviet newspapers. As for the Soviet press, it was decided to publish articles containing congratulations to the Albanian people while condemning “the schismatic activities of the Albanian leadership”. Soviet leaders recommended preparation of several radio broadcasts to Albania in the same ideological spirit. Special attention was paid to the possible request by the Albanian side, usual on previous occasions, to give the Albanian Ambassador the opportunity to speak on the Soviet radio and television. It was decided to reject such a request on the grounds that “the Soviet ambassador in Albania was not given a similar opportunity”. In addition, it was decided not to hold

³⁹ RGANI, F 3, inv. 14, f. 503, p. 16.

⁴⁰ RGANI, F 3, inv. 18, f. 1, p. 30.

any public official celebrations by Soviet nongovernmental organizations, and to limit the level of presence at the reception at the Albanian Embassy in Moscow to Soviet officials engaged in foreign cultural exchange. At the same time, the Soviet ambassadors abroad were instructed to avoid participating in any celebrations organized by Albanian embassies, and to send instead "a counsellor or the first secretary to the reception at the Albanian Embassy". Special instructions were also sent to the Soviet Ambassador in Tirana: he was to refrain from participating in any celebratory events organized by Albanian authorities and to attend governmental receptions accompanied by no more than two other Soviet diplomats.

In the same period, Soviet authorities took further steps to warm relations with Yugoslavia. They demonstrated a considerably more attentive and friendly approach to the state holiday of Yugoslavia (FNRY) on 29 November both in comparison with their attitude to the Albanian state holiday on 29 November and to the Yugoslav central state holiday on 29 November in previous years. The Soviet plan for marking the Yugoslav holiday included a letter of congratulations of Khrushchev and Brezhnev to Tito expressing the wish "to strengthen and comprehensively develop friendly relations between our countries", with the publication of this text in the Soviet press after Tito's reply; attendance of Soviet senior state representatives at the reception hosted by the Embassy of the FNRY in Moscow; publication of articles relating to the FNRY national holiday in the major and most-widely distributed Soviet dailies *Pravda* and *Izvestiia*. The plan even envisaged a speech of the FNRY Ambassador in Moscow on the Soviet radio and television in case of the Yugoslav side's request.

This significant decline in the level of cordiality in Soviet-Albanian relations in connection with the celebration of the Albanian national holiday was overshadowed by other developments related to Albania's tightening control over the activity of Soviet diplomats in Tirana. On 25 November, after the demand of Albanian authorities to the Soviet Ambassador to reduce the embassy staff by nearly two-thirds, accusing them of carrying out hostile activities in Albania, the Soviet leadership decided "to recall the Soviet ambassador, comrade Shikin I. V., from Albania". Simultaneously the Soviets informed Tirana about the impossibility of the Albanian Ambassador further stay of the in the USSR. The Soviet note indicated that after the 22th Congress of the CPSU the Albanian authorities created an intolerable environment for the normal activities of Soviet diplomats in the People's Republic of Albania. It was concluded that the Soviet Embassy in Tirana was *de facto* in a position of isolation as a result of violation of all basic norms of international law related to its day-to-day activities. The statement noted that the Albanian authorities deliberately created conditions under which the Soviet Ambassador in Albania was unable to fulfil his duties

and carry out his assignments as instructed by the Soviet government.⁴¹ Further Soviet measures against Albania followed immediately. Already on 3 December, Moscow decided on cancelling customs privileges for the Albanian citizens granted by the Soviet Union to the citizens of socialist countries. Instead, they became subject to customs rules applied to citizens of capitalist states.⁴²

At the end of the year, Moscow found a solution to the problem of Soviet property in Albania which was in temporary use by local organizations, but was not legally registered. It was decided to credit local organizations in Albania for lease and temporary use of Soviet property (airfield, drilling and geophysical equipment, a floating pile driver, two scows, cars and other property), on account on the net debt of the Soviet Union under previous Soviet-Albanian agreements (22 November 1957 and 3 July 1959).⁴³

Even more striking was the change in Moscow's attitude towards Albania as reflected in New Year greeting telegrams on behalf of the Soviet leadership. On 28 December 1961, Soviet leaders approved lists of the states to which greeting telegrams should be sent. This time Albania was dropped out of the list of socialist countries. Moreover, it was not on the list of capitalist countries either. As if Soviet leaders had erased Albania from the globe. By contrast, on the list of eleven socialist countries appeared Yugoslavia (after Romania and Czechoslovakia).⁴⁴

At the beginning of 1962, the fabric of Soviet-Albanian relations, seemingly so strong until recently, was in shreds. At that time, diplomats of both countries were sounding the Balkan states about their diplomatic representation in Moscow and Tirana respectively. Still, a paradox remained. Amidst the controversy and growing deterioration of relations with Moscow and its allies, Albania did not announce its withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact military organization. On 15 December 1961, the Soviet leadership recommended that the representation of the joint armed forces of the socialist countries in Tirana be maintained.⁴⁵

By the end of 1961, within less than two years, relations between the Soviet Union and Albania had sunk to their lowest ebb. The Soviet leadership, presumably Khrushchev himself, failed in their effort to stop another growing conflict in the Soviet bloc by convincing Albanian leaders to discuss controversial issues

⁴¹ RGANI, F 3, inv. 18, f. 8, pp.73–77; 89–96; 111; 126.

⁴² RGANI, F 3, inv. 18, f. 10, p. 64.

⁴³ RGANI, F 3, inv. 18, f. 14, p. 9.

⁴⁴ RGANI, F 3, inv. 18, f. 16, pp. 3–5.

⁴⁵ RGANI, F 3, inv. 18, f. 10, p. 5.

face-to-face. Researchers have already accumulated considerable knowledge of these processes, but considerable gaps are yet to be filled. The bulk of relevant Soviet documents in Russian archives remain classified, but the use of the available ones makes it possible for researchers to take a more comprehensive look at the progression of the Soviet-Albanian rift and to identify how, along with the collapse of Soviet-Albanian contacts in the early 1960s, a Soviet-Yugoslav rapprochement began to take place. At the moment, the urgent need for a comparative study of Soviet, Albanian, as well as Chinese and Yugoslav archival documentary materials is obvious and inevitable.

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Ljubodrag Dimić*

*Faculty of Philosophy
University of Belgrade*

Yugoslav Diplomacy and the Greek Coup d'État of 1967

Abstract: Intensive conversations with members of political parties, closely reading the press, talks with other foreign diplomats, analytical evaluations of many individual events and their contextualization in the wider picture of the situation in Greece allowed Yugoslav diplomats to accurately assess the situation in the country, identify the potential of the military junta and the centers of putschist support in Greece and abroad, follow their show-down with left-wing and democratic options, recognize the ambitions of the putschist regime and the nature of their dictatorship, have insight into the situation of the opposition, make out the contours of a possible state-political system, monitor relations with neighboring countries, closely follow the regime's position to the Macedonian minority, follow the moves of the monarch, assess the permanence of compromises, observe the pressure of the international public and the controversial behavior of the Great Powers, and offer prognoses of the course of events in the near future. Yugoslav diplomats collected some of the relevant information on the situation in Greece in other capitals (London, Ankara, Nicosia, Paris...). This information contributed to a wider evaluation of the existing circumstances and a sharper picture of the developments in Greece. The general opinion was that the Yugoslav diplomats were much better informed and more agile than their counterparts from other Eastern European countries, who were seen as "slow", "unsure", "confused", "contradictory" and so on. In the days and months following the coup, the Yugoslav diplomatic mission in Athens was a center where many came to be informed, consult with their peers, verify their assessments and hear Belgrade's views. Besides the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, collected information was sent to Josip Broz Tito, Edvard Kardelj, Koča Popović, Mijalko Todorović, Marko Nikezić, Ivan Gošnjak, Petar Stambolić and Ivan Mišković.

Keywords: Yugoslavia, Greece, Diplomacy, Coup d'Etat, 1967, Josip Broz Tito, Edvard Kardelj, Koča Popović

In mid-January 1968 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Belgrade was informed that the unstable political situation in Greece was "impeding" and "limiting" the activities of the Yugoslav diplomatic mission in Athens, but that the embassy was nonetheless working well. The removal of the provision imposed by the Greek right-wing faction that the Yugoslav diplomats were to cooperate with only one Greek political party – the Center Union (Enosis Kentrou, EK) led by Georgios Papandreou – was seen as a valuable result achieved in the previous period. It was assessed that the embassy in Athens had established "wider

* ljubodrag_dimic@yahoo.com

cooperation" with all Greek political actors and had particularly improved its contacts with the United Democratic Left (Eniëa Dimokratikí Aristerá, EDA), which included the communists. Other contributing factors to this overall positive assessment were the beginning of cooperation with local-level authorities, established contacts with social and academic organizations, strengthening economic ties, communication with the key actors in the political, social and public life of Greece, "opening" a dialogue on the relevant questions of Greco-Yugoslav relations in the present and future. As highlighted in the report of the Yugoslav diplomatic mission in Athens, all of this was achieved in a rather difficult and "constrained" working environment characterized by the instability of Greek governments and the "abnormal and unstable" internal situation in which "right-wing political forces had a decisive influence on the country's policies".¹ In view of this situation, the diplomatic mission in Athens was judged to be working well; the information forwarded to Belgrade was accurate and the assessments of Yugoslav diplomats correct and reliable; there was apparent continuity in the following and assessing of the political situation and the general environment in Greece; the harvested information bore direct evidence that the representatives of the embassy "knew people", "had friends" and were making "professional contacts".²

The moment when these assessments of the activities of the diplomatic mission in Athens were made coincided with the systemic crisis that shook the Greek state and society. The crisis was deep, both political and state-level; it was also confounded by the collapse of the government of Stefanos Stefanopoulos formed in December 1966.³ 1967 was to bring parliamentary elections and the provisional government that was to call and organize these elections was facing a plethora of domestic and international problems that needed to be solved.

In this situation the Yugoslav diplomatic mission in Athens was instructed to carefully follow the processes and activities which were seen as potentially having far-reaching importance both at the level of internal policy and the international level. Another important task was evaluating the activities of political leaders. The most interesting among them was certainly Andreas Papandreou,

¹ Diplomatski arhiv Ministarstva Spoljnih poslova Republike Srbije [Diplomatic Archives (DA) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia (MSP RS)], Politički arhiv [Political Archive (PA)], file 40, dossier 3, no. 42890, Proceedings from the extended staff meeting of the Embassy held on 11–13 January 1967, Athens, 7 February 1967. Ambassador Javorski and his associates M. Gabričević, B. Komatina, D. Vujanović, T. Vilović, N. Grubišić, Lj. Vujović, S. Nastić and M. Stepanović took part in the analysis of the situation in Greece.

² DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 3, no. 42890, Proceedings from the extended staff meeting of the Embassy held on 11–13 January 1967 [hereafter: Proceedings], Athens, 7 February 1967, pp. 4–5.

³ The Stefanopoulos government fell on 22 December 1966.

the young leader of the liberal wing of the Center Union (EK), who was seen as a person of “strong political ambition and views that did not fit into the classic Greek type of parlor-and-party politics”. Based on his public appearances, he was seen as trying to “bring his political image out of his father’s shadow”, but also “not to harm” the interests of the Center Union. Yugoslav diplomats in Athens and the headquarters in Belgrade saw Andreas Papandreou as a “man with a future in politics” and a proponent of the general modernization of Greece, of leaving “the suzerainty of NATO” and of pursuing an “independent national policy”. In the opinion of Yugoslav diplomats, the political views of Andreas Papandreou had “revolutionary significance” and were considered a key factor in the bilateral relations of the two countries and the situation in the Balkans in the future.⁴

Besides Andreas Papandreou and his political supporters (around 40 MPs), another important task was following all forms of “potential differentiation” in the Center Union (EK), especially because reshufflings and shifts in political positions were to be expected, along with “new political alliances and coalitions” with former political opponents. In this context, close attention was also paid to the liberal group led by Georgios Mavros, the politicians gathered around *To Vima* daily, and left-wing politicians who refused to join Papandreou.⁵

Analyses of Yugoslav diplomats claimed that the social and political progress of Western Europe, particularly France, was increasingly encouraging the formulation of independent national politics in accordance with national interests. According to their assessment, Greece was lagging behind in this process. The Greek political life, which unfolded in the framework of “parlor-and-politics struggles” was seen as an “anachronism”. It was noted that on important questions that the country was facing, such as communism and socialism, major political parties had identical views to those promoted by NATO. The prognosis was that “modern progress” would quickly engulf Greece, inevitably shaping different views on foreign policy and its internal situation. Predicting that the political emergence of Andreas Papandreou represented an early sign of new social trends, Yugoslav diplomats strove to use their long-term monitoring of his activities to gauge future socio-political processes, the potential development of the situation in the Balkans, and any changes that might occur in Greco-Yugoslav relations.⁶

Another influential political figure of interest for Yugoslav diplomats was Konstantinos Karamanlis, the politician who was, despite having emigrated to Paris in 1963, “active and present” in the developments in Greece. His frequent meetings with Charles de Gaulle were well known and there were reports that

⁴ DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 3, cat. no. 42890, Proceedings, pp. 4–5.

⁵ Ibid. pp. 14–15.

⁶ Ibid. p. 6.

he had undergone a “serious political metamorphosis” toward Gaullism. It was evident that Karamanlis no longer propounded a far-right political line and extra-parliamentary and non-constitutional means of political struggle. These changes in his political views indicated that he had learned some lessons and “revised” his former policy. It was assessed that the course of events would eventually “impose the need” for his return home. In this case, it was assumed that Karamanlis would demand a revision of the Greek constitution; insist on a precise determination of the monarch’s powers; strive to transform the National Radical Union (Ethnikī Rizospastikī Énōsis, ERE) into a modern political party; eliminate the existing leadership; and pursue a much more independent policy in internal and foreign affairs.⁷ The unknown direction of Karamanlis’s policy in this situation meant that the Yugoslav diplomats needed to accurately identify all political forces rooting for his return. To preempt any surprises, the Yugoslav diplomatic representatives were asked to activate their old contacts and thoroughly assess earlier experiences in “relations with him and his circle”.⁸

At the same time Yugoslav diplomats in Athens had to continually follow the activities of the National Radical Union (ERE), seen by Belgrade as a political party that was there to stay for the foreseeable future, particularly because this party, created owing to the efforts of state actors, had not fallen apart or even lost much of its strength during the years spent in opposition and without its leader, who had been forced to leave the country. The National Radical Union had been the decisive factor during the government of Stefanos Stefanopoulos as well as one of the actors in its downfall. According to Yugoslav diplomats, this party had begun to show some changes, primarily its “distancing” from far-right, extra-parliamentary and non-constitutional means of political struggle. Hence the Yugoslav diplomatic representatives in Athens were tasked with establishing contacts with the forces of change in this party.⁹ Following the activities of the National Radical Union (ERE), Yugoslav diplomats noted the high political potential of its leader in the country (since 1963 and the departure of Karamanlis) Panagiotis Kanellopoulos. Kanellopoulos was seen as the most responsible for the fall of the previous government and as a person close to the Crown who was capable of finding a common ground even with his political opponents.¹⁰

The Yugoslav diplomatic mission in Athens was also interested in the United Democratic Left (EDA), a party made up of communists, and the political activities of its prominent members – Ilias Iliou, Leonidas Kyrkos, and Manolis Glezos. It was seen as a “serious progressive force” with a growing reputation and influence among the people and well-respected in the ranks of civic parties and groups in the Parliament. It was believed that the party’s prestige would

⁷ Ibid. pp. 5–6.

⁸ Ibid. p. 15.

⁹ Ibid. p. 15.

¹⁰ Ibid. p. 5–6.

increase over the following months and that the Yugoslav diplomats' existing good contacts with its leadership needed to be improved and developed "as much as possible" and "as much as local circumstances allow". The diplomats were also asked to continue collecting information on intra-party relations, views of some political groups, the influence and tasks coming from abroad, and the political course of the Communist Party of Greece (Kommunistikó Kómma Elládas, KKE). At the same time it was noted that the interest of the representatives of the United Democratic Left (EDA) for Yugoslavia was in a state of "evident positive growth" and that everything needed to be done to further advance its cooperation with the Socialist Alliance of Yugoslavia.¹¹

As regards the Crown – which included the ruling dynasty as well as royalist forces at home and abroad – it was thought that the Yugoslav diplomacy did not need to change anything in the "currently implemented assessments and approach". Of course, it was clear that the Crown played a very important role in the Greek domestic and foreign policy. And while some concessions to democratic forces were noted, there were no reliable indications to tell if this was only a "short-term policy" that would end in a new deterioration of relations or a more permanent political course. The general view of Yugoslav diplomats was that contacts with the Crown should be improved.¹²

* * *

Yugoslav diplomats in Athens were very cautious in their "prognoses" about the chances of particular political parties to win the majority of votes at the forthcoming parliamentary elections. The existing pre-election situation meant that the diplomatic representatives needed to "establish contacts at all sides" and that the efforts of the diplomatic mission were to be "as wide as possible", while focusing on the political parties most likely to come to power.¹³

When it came to the internal situation, Yugoslav diplomats believed that Greece was not experiencing only a deep crisis of government, but also a long-term process of internal instability, a crisis of socio-economic structures, the presence of international strategic and political interests pressurizing all spheres of life. The position of the provisional government was seen as very delicate. Among the issues that could potentially trouble its members, the following were particularly underlined: "maintaining order" in the pre-electoral period; implementation of measures to secure economic and monetary stability; stimulating economic development; disbanding militarist organizations (National Guard Defence Battalions, TEA); intensification of the Cyprus problem; the successful

¹¹ Ibid. p. 16.

¹² Ibid. p. 16.

¹³ DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 42424; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 3, cat. no. 42890, Proceedings, p. 7; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 44962, Conversation with A. Papandreou, coded telegram of 4 February 1967.

resolution of the question of international economic aid and securing international aid. The prognosis was that the conflicting parties would see the provisional government's activities solely through the prism of their own partisan interests and that there would not be enough goodwill and understanding for the forced moves taken by the government. These conclusions were the result of close monitoring of a large number of "political actors" (the Crown, government, parliament, bureaucracy, political parties, army, social elites...) and of an analytical assessment of the synergy of their influences. Conversations with important persons in political life were also an important element of these assessments.¹⁴

In early 1967 the dominant view in the diplomatic mission of Yugoslavia in Athens was that the "Greek bourgeoisie... puts a premium on the stabilization of the internal political situation in the country". It was assumed that there had been a secret pact between Panagiotis Kanellopoulos and Georgios Papandreou to topple the government of Stefanos Stefanopoulos.¹⁵ Their cooperation in the future (post-election), which was speculated about in the left-wing press, was seen as possible by the Yugoslav diplomats. At the same time they hypothesized that this could have been one of the reasons behind the divisions in the Center Union and the political and conceptual conflict between Georgios Papandreou and his son Andreas, who proposed a more "independent" and "modern concept of capitalist Greece". As for Panagiotis Kanellopoulos, the leader of the National Radical Union (ERE), the Yugoslav diplomatic mission in Athens was convinced that his primary objective was to consolidate his position at the helm of the party and thereby minimize the political influence of Konstantinos Karamanlis, gather the old bourgeoisie of a moderate-right persuasion and strengthen the party. Yugoslav diplomats speculated that the toppling of the government of Stefanos Stefanopoulos had been done with the consent - if not on the demand - of the Allies (US, United Kingdom...). The motivation for such a move was seen in fears of a potential rise of the left which could have profited from the general instability in the country as well as in the need of international capital to have a stable political situation, and the profit secured due to Greece's economic lagging behind other Balkan countries.¹⁶

¹⁴ DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 3, cat. no. 42890, Proceedings, pp. 13–14; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 42424, Coded telegram by Ambassador Javorski about his conversation with Pipinelis of 20 January 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 4243, Coded telegram from Athens on the interior situation in Greece dated 20 January 1967.

¹⁵ DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 42424, Coded telegram from Athens about the conversation with Pipinelis of 20 January 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 42423, The internal situation after the fall of the Stefanopoulos government, 20 January 1967.

¹⁶ According to available data, Greece's NNP was growing at a rate of 8%; its industrial production at a rate of 13% and its agriculture had a 3.5% growth per annum. Investments

Based on collected information, Yugoslav diplomats assumed that at the forthcoming elections none of the major parties would manage to win the absolute majority of votes, and that the party that achieved the best result would be forced to form a post-election coalition and eventually call a new election. However, the Yugoslav diplomats were not able to tell who could be part of this hypothetical coalition. It was noted that the temporary cooperation between the National Radical Union (ERE) and Center Union (EK) had ceased and that each of these parties was taking its own positions in preparation for the electoral struggle. It was assumed that the Center Union, in which they took a particular interest, would run in the elections as a whole, but that the disagreements between the conservatives (G. Papandreou), the liberals (Mavros and the group around the *To Vima* daily) and the center-left faction whose members saw themselves as the “interpreters” of the party program (A. Papandreou) would not be resolved. In addition, based on information provided by A. Papandreou, the general pre-election situation was seen as “optimistic” and “very favorable” for the Center Union. A. Papandreou’s own view that the Center Union was still “an old-fashioned party” limited its possible electoral success, although it was believed that a part of the younger generation would nonetheless vote for them. The conspiratory methods of the “junta”, used by the far right, threatened to delay the elections and made left-wing politicians uneasy. However, A. Papandreou was certain of the electoral victory of the Center Union. Just a few days before the introduction of the dictatorship, A. Papandreou believed that the “path to the elections [had been] secured” and that it was “too late... for any extraordinary measures”.¹⁷

The Yugoslav diplomatic mission in Athens had information that the National Radical Union (ERE) would also retain its unity and come together around Panagiotis Kanellopoulos, who would also attract the support of the right-wing faction led by Panagiotis Pipinelis. In party circles there was concern about the situation in the country, the possibility that the elections would be delayed and a “firm-hand” government formed. Another reason for dissatisfaction was the activity of some Western embassies “whose advisors and secretaries believe that they know enough about Greek political life to have the right to influence its course”. In a bid to avoid this denouement, in late March 1967

had a 17% growth. Immigration was reduced by 25% compared to the previous year. Prices went up by 5% per annum. The country’s debt was larger than its foreign currency reserves. DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 3, no. 42890, Proceedings, pp. 10–11.

¹⁷ DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 3, cat. no. 42890, Proceedings, p. 7; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 4243, Coded telegram from Athens on the interior situation in Greece dated 20 January 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 44962, Conversation with A. Papandreou, coded telegram of 4 February 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 411539, Coded telegram sent by Ambassador Javorski about his conversation with A. Papandreou of 29 March 1967.

the National Radical Union initiated the collapse of the existing government, intending to form its own cabinet and hold elections. According to Yugoslav diplomats, the formation of a government led by P. Kanellopoulos was the “last stage” in the plan of the political right and the Crown to bolster their position on the eve of the elections, use public funds for their pre-electoral propaganda, and employ the official apparatus (primarily the army and police forces) to exert pressure on the voters. This was interpreted by Yugoslav diplomats as a possible sign that after the elections, if they were won by left-wing parties, the King could refuse to cede power to the victorious side in the elections.¹⁸

As far as the United Democratic Left (EDA) was concerned, it was noted that it pursued an “independent” line that separated it from the Center Union and made its program recognizable to voters. The communist leaders were worried about the elections. The system of proportional representation did not work in their favor and they were afraid that some of their party’s supporters would, amidst intense uncertainty, choose to vote for the Center Union instead. Before the dictatorship was introduced, the party leadership had “unreservedly discarded” the possibility of such a development.¹⁹

The fact that the Yugoslav diplomats had registered some US activity but that the role of the US had not been “fully and thoroughly” known to them meant that this question was to be given special attention. The activities of the Soviet Union were monitored no less closely. The Cyprus question and the relations with the Turks were another important topic that the Yugoslav diplomats tried to assess in the general context of the relations between the Great Powers – their intentions to come to a “solution” and the evident efforts of Greek political parties to clear themselves of any responsibility if the Greek side were forced to accept some concessions and abandon its maximalist objectives. The Cyprus

¹⁸ Some of their information about the situation in the National Radical Union was provided to Yugoslav diplomats by Panagiotis Kanellopoulos, DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, cat. no. 42424, Coded telegram by Ambassador Javorski about his conversation with Pipinelis of 20 January 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 4243, Coded telegram by Ambassador Javorski on the interior situation in Greece dated 20 January 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 411538; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 411614, Coded telegram by Ambassador Javorski from Athens, 31 March 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, cat. no. 412111, Coded telegram by Ambassador Javorski on the formation of the Kanellopoulos government, 4 April 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 412141, Coded telegram by Ambassador Javorski from Athens on the talks with Kanellopoulos, 11 April 1967.

¹⁹ DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 42424; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 3, cat. no. 42890, Proceedings, p. 7; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 4243, Coded telegram by Ambassador Javorski on the interior situation in Greece dated 20 January 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 414587, Coded telegram by Ambassador Javorski from Athens dated 21 April 1967.

question grew increasingly important in the months leading up to the elections, since its resolution was directly reflected in the internal situation in Greece and also involved the country's relationship with the West. Even the "tiniest piece of information" that the Yugoslav diplomats in Athens could learn about the possible transfer of NATO bases from France and the strengthening of this organization in Greece was of key importance for the security of the Yugoslav state.²⁰

In view of the earlier attempts of the Crown to "test the waters for the introduction of dictatorship", indications that a dictatorship would not be able to "maintain the status quo" and the internal and international responses to these attempts, it was assessed that the proponents of a "firm" course would "turn the page" and abandon this compromising policy (for their own "political or self-serving reasons"). In addition, it was concluded that the dictatorship option was not realistic and that it represented an "unfathomable threat" not only to the Greek society but also to the forces that would potentially become its implementers. This was used to explain the intention of the Crown and the US to wash their hands of any stunts the far right might decide to pull and try to find a solution for the systemic crisis at parliamentary elections, thereby at least partially salvaging their jeopardized position and reputation. However, in the assessment of the overall situation, it was underlined that the dictatorship threat had not been "permanently removed" and that the Crown, US and the far right (uniforms and civilians alike) could revert to this option if the developments started to "endanger the very foundations of the order" or if "reasons of foreign policy" lead them to make such a move. Regardless of the final outcome, there was little doubt that the Crown would continue to work on the further "fragmentation" and "de-layering" of political parties, zeroing in on the left, particularly the Center Union. This was also supported by the unconcealed ambitions of the monarch and his supporters to "expand" their influence "as much as possible" and the existence of real conditions for him to become the "absolute overlord" of all political developments. The king's decision of early April 1957 to form a government headed by P. Kanellopoulos was also consistent with this scenario.²¹

The Yugoslav communists saw position of the communists (United Democratic Left) in the election year as being not at all easy, noting that they were forced to fight alone and registering their "clear line" and "sharp statements", as well as the "current burning topics" that the party leadership commented on in public (Cyprus problem, economic hardship, relations with Balkan countries, the government's political course and its tasks...). The diplomats also noted that young university students were becoming an increasingly firm pillar of support

²⁰ DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 3, no. 42890, Proceedings, p. 7.

²¹ DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 3, no. 42890, Proceedings, pp. 13–14; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 412111, Coded telegram by Ambassador Javorski on the formation of the Kanellopoulos government, 4 April 1967.

to the democratic forces and that the growing success of the struggle for university autonomy was a contributing factor to this.²²

Yugoslav diplomats believed that the “external factor” was particularly important for understanding the general situation in Greece. In all developments in the country they saw a behind-the-scenes American policy and the implementation of NATO’s policies. In their opinion, it was realistic to expect that the US would try to install political forces that suited their interests. It made sense to them that the Americans were interested in stabilizing the situation in the southeastern part of NATO and that for this end they were encouraging an improvement in Greco-Turkish relations. The fact that the government of Stefanos Stefanopoulos had proven unable to deliver a positive resolution of this issue was seen as one of the reasons for its downfall. Another reason was the fact that Stefanopoulos himself was not a man willing to entirely disregard “legality, constitutionality and parliamentarism”. The Yugoslav embassy in Athens had information that the CIA and the American embassy had different evaluations of the situation in Greece, particularly in regard to the need for the Crown to “rely” on “moderate-right” or “far-right” political forces. This divergence indirectly suggested the existence of several lines of American presence in Greece. The Yugoslav diplomats, however, were unable to tell if the Americans would choose to lend their support to some changes and a modernized form of “the bourgeois regime in Greece” or back the existing model and the political forces behind it.²³

As for the United Kingdom, no one doubted that its influence was highly important, its methods more subtle and its policy always more effective and very relevant. It was speculated that the influence of the United Kingdom was even stronger than it seemed and it was believed to have been a long time in the making, branched-out and well-positioned both in Greece and in Cyprus. Yugoslav diplomats believed that the United Kingdom’s policy and interests were behind the moves of the United States.²⁴

Based on analyses of their previous work, the Yugoslav diplomats in Athens knew they needed to pay more attention to any divergences or conflicts of American and British interests, as well as to the political presence of France and the Federal Republic of Germany in Greece. Their alert monitoring of Greco-

²² DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 3, no. 42890, Proceedings, pp. 9. and 14; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 48293, Telegram from Athens of 4 March 1967.

²³ DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 3, no. 42890, Proceedings, pp. 11–12; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, cat. no. 44962, Coded telegram by Ambassador Javorski on talks with A. Papandreou dated 4 February 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 48293, Coded telegram by Ambassador Javorski from Athens of 4 March 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 411539, Coded telegram by Ambassador Javorski on talks with A. Papandreou dated 29 March 1967.

²⁴ DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 3, no. 42890, Proceedings, p. 16.

Turkish and Greco-Bulgarian relations was seen as positive. Caution was advised in assessing the situation in Cyprus and evaluating the importance of this question in Greek political life at home. Another task that needed to be given more attention was Greece's Balkan and European policy.²⁵

The Yugoslav diplomatic mission in Athens took a special interest in the situation in the Greek army. Regardless of the economic, ideological and political influence they wielded in army ranks, Yugoslav diplomats had information that suggested some reservations of a part of the officer corps towards the Americans and the American influence on staff decisions in the army. They also believed that the Crown had the heaviest influence on army leadership. The group in question included a "clique" of around thirty generals and high-ranking officers of a far-right persuasion, with another 200 officers under their influence. According to the same information, this core of the army leadership could, in certain circumstances, become the "base" for introducing a dictatorship regime, although such an outcome was not seen as likely by Yugoslav diplomats in early January 1967. According to information seen as realistic, the majority of high-ranking officers in the Greek army supported the National Radical Union (ERE); over 50% of lower ranking officers had democratic inclinations; and many were undecided. In addition, estimates suggested that over 60% of active and reserve troops held democratic views.²⁶ As for Yugoslavia, it was assessed that the top ranks of the Greek army dominantly believed that Yugoslavia pursued "a neutral policy and posed no threat to Greece". Some generals were convinced that if the name of SR Macedonia were to be changed, there would be "no problems left to resolve". Nevertheless, Yugoslav diplomats believed that the "Macedonian question" could always be used to intensify negative feelings for Yugoslavia.²⁷

As for bilateral relations between the two countries, Yugoslav diplomats noted that the Greek side, relying on tradition, persistently tried to maintain relations with Yugoslavia "as it once was" and "as they want to see it now". This "inertia" in bilateral relations was to be approached with caution. Hence it was of paramount importance for Yugoslav diplomats in Athens to be well aware "what is Greece like now and what it [was] becoming", as well as to familiarize Greece with "present-day" Yugoslavia. This approach involved not only collecting information and being in the know, but also making their own assessments

²⁵ Ibid. pp. 16–17; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 411539, Coded telegram by Ambassador Javorski on talks with A. Papandreou dated 29 March 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, cat. no. 411538, Coded telegram by Ambassador Javorski on talks with Kanellopoulos dated 30 March 1967.

²⁶ DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 3, no. 42890, Proceedings, p. 12.

²⁷ Ibid. p. 28; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 411597, Coded telegram by Ambassador Javorski on changes in the army dated 30 March 1967.

of the situation in Greece and using them to formulate a more realistic political and diplomatic approach.²⁸

The Yugoslav diplomats noted an improvement in the relations between Yugoslavia and Greece and were satisfied with mutual contacts that had clarified the “existence of minorities and the absence of territorial pretensions”.²⁹ They stated that trade had been significantly improved.³⁰ The new trade agreement between the two countries was based on the guidelines stipulated in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Industrial cooperation was another reason for satisfaction.³¹ Another element in good bilateral relations was freedom of movement. Visas were no longer required for citizens, which could contribute to improving relations in the new year (1967), but this was also met with some apprehension among security services.³² There had been some growth in the field of cultural cooperation. A very important project was a program of cultural cooperation which, among other things, included involving expert institutions to perform restoration works on the Hilandar Monastery.³³

²⁸ DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 3, no. 42890, Proceedings, pp. 13–14.

²⁹ In 1966 Greece was visited by B. Pešić, Popov and P. Stambolić, while Plitas, Averoff and Kostas returned the favour by visiting Yugoslavia. In addition to economic questions, political issues were also discussed (including the Macedonian question). DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 3, no. 42890, Proceedings, pp. 17–19; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 6, no. 410611, Note on the talks of State Secretary M. Nikezić with the former Prime Minister of Greece and member of the directorat of ERE, P. Pipinelis, 24 March 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 411539, Coded telegram by Ambassador Javorski on talks with A. Papandreou dated 29 March 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 411538, Coded telegram by Ambassador Javorski on talks with Kanellopoulos dated 30 March 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 413141, Coded telegram by Ambassador Javorski on talks with Kanellopoulos dated 11 April 1967.

³⁰ Trade between the two countries was worth 24.5 million dinars in 1964; 35 million in 1965; and 54 million in 1966. In the following period objectives included: removal of the ban on importing some Yugoslav products; increasing import contingents; encouraging interest in the Yugoslav market; opening business branch offices; participation at fairs; formulating a trade and economic policy.

³¹ Involving the following companies: OHIS Skopje, INA, Industrija motora i traktora, Elektrosrbija etc.

³² Greek security services saw Belgrade as a center where Greek nationals came into contact with other socialist countries and Greek emigration. In 1966 the embassy in Athens and the consulate in Thessaloniki issued 160.222 visas to Greek nationals, while 62.946 Yugoslav nationals visited Greece (a 25% increase compared to the year before).

³³ DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 7, no. 415070, Report of the Yugoslav delegation from the negotiations about the Program of Cultural Cooperation between SFRY and the Kingdom of Greece for 1967/68; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 3, no. 42890, Proceedings, pp. 25–27; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 7, no. 415070, Report of the Yugoslav delegation from the negotiations about the Program of Cultural Cooperation between SFRY

"The Macedonian question" was one of the problems that constantly hampered Greco-Yugoslav relations. There was an evident campaign of denying the existence of the Macedonian nation and efforts in the press to exaggerate all unresolved issues.³⁴ On the eve of the electoral campaign, limitations to the movement of the population and more stringent controls by National Guard Defence Battalions and the army were noted in border areas.

Yugoslav diplomats thought that the occasional generating of "tensions" was the result of the need of some politically influential forces (army, far right, CIA, NATO) to make the public believe that Yugoslav "unclear intentions" and pretensions could pose a threat. There was also some apprehension among the Western countries, which had more complicated, deeper and more sensitive relations with Yugoslavia as a non-aligned country than with the members of the rival bloc. Yugoslav diplomats believed that this was being done in order to "block the path" of the Yugoslav model of socialism, and that the "national question" was being used to protect class- and bloc-related interests. Based on this assessment, the Yugoslav side left the "Macedonian complex" to be resolved at a more peaceful time, hoping that the course of events would bring about a change in Greek views. This position was enhanced by the fact that the incumbent Greek government was only provisional and had limited capacity, inadequate to tackle complex problems such as the "Macedonian question". For these reasons they tried to put more emphasis on the questions that the Greek side was more interested in. At the same time, in an effort to launch a more assertive policy towards Greece that would not have to answer to unfounded claims of the far right, there were thoughts of issuing a "public statement about the border" and "absence of any territorial claims" to counter any doubts about Yugoslavia's friendly policy. There were assessments that this would reduce the "Macedonian question" in the eyes of the Greek public to "its real meaning", improve the position of the Macedonian minority, debunk all insinuations of Yugoslavia's territorial aspirations, defeat all forces that were keeping Greek relations with Yugoslavia under an "embargo" of sorts, placate the fears of a "Yugoslav threat from the north"

and the Kingdom of Greece for 1967/68. Cultural cooperation was based on a cultural plan signed in 1965. Although not included in the plan, there were multiple visits by folk dance ensembles ("Ivo Lola Ribar" of Belgrade; "Proleter" of Sarajevo; "Sonja Marinković" of Novi Sad, ensembles from Skopje, etc.); musicians (opera singers M. Sabljčić, R. Rakočević, Z. Krnetić, violinist Marjanović, conductors S. Hubad and V. Čavdarski); painters (M. Protić); scholars (G. Ostrogorsky, S. Radonjić, I. Djurić, B. Gavela.).

³⁴ These included the treaty on the waterways of the Vardar which Yugoslavia had not ratified, collecting "material" on enemy activities in SR Macedonia, unresolved issues of minor border checkpoints, trade zones in Thessaloniki, the construction of a library, the position of the Monastery of Hilandar etc. DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 3, no. 42890, Proceedings, pp. 25-27; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 48293, Telegram from Athens dated 4 March 1967.

among ruling structures, and create a “constructive climate” conducive to resolving issues, establishing contacts, and enhancing Yugoslav political, economic and cultural influence.³⁵

* * *

The coup d'état of 21 April 1967 took everyone by surprise and changed many plans. Already the first reports dispatched from Athens to Belgrade stated that the coup had caught unprepared the members of the United Democratic Left (EDA) who had been arrested in the night of 20/21 April (Iliou, Kyrkos, Glezos). The first targets were party members, MPs, the youth, progressive individuals, both in Athens and in the interior of the country. The police demolished the headquarters of the party and newspaper offices, and confiscated archival material. The headquarters of other political parties and newspaper offices were sealed. In some diplomatic circles in Athens the arrests of some progressive politicians (Kanellopoulos, Stefanopoulos, Mitsotakis, Papaligouras) were interpreted as “camouflage”. However, the majority of diplomats inferred from this development that the political parties had not taken part in plotting the coup. The arrest of Georgios and Andreas Papandreou was a cause of concern for diplomats. The army proceeded to take intimidation measures towards the citizens. In the absence of reliable information, rumors were rampant. Information was scarce, chaotic and often unreliable, but the number of 11,000 arrests was mentioned. The arrests and treatment in prison was believed to be brutal. Foreign correspondents were blocked from “reporting anything” and were treated brutally too. According to information that had reached Yugoslav diplomats, during the night some of the prisoners had been taken on special airplanes to “an unknown location”, presumably the islands. According to the early findings of diplomatic sources (the diplomatic missions of France, Turkey, Italy, Czechoslovakia, USA, Switzerland, Denmark, Mexico, USSR, with which the Yugoslav diplomats cooperated) the coup had been orchestrated by the General Staff, and the putschists were led by General Grigorios Spandidakis, Chief of the Hellenic Army General Staff. However, it was not entirely clear if General Spandidakis fully agreed with the putschists. The coup was done by triggering a previously-drafted action plan to suppress communists (liquidation of the “communist” left) and it was implemented by a group of colonels. Belgrade believed that the coup in Athens had all the markings of “cold-war politics”. And although it was motivated by local, internal reasons, it was believed to dovetail with “some external interests”, above all those of the US and NATO. According to Belgrade’s information, some units had tried to resist the coup (in the north of Greece, Corfu, Crete), but after the king’s intervention they became loyal to the

³⁵ DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 3, cat. no. 42890, Proceedings, pp. 19–23 and 30–32.

putschist regime. The king himself, according to the available information, had been presented with a "fait accompli" and did not oppose them as the putschists would not have hesitated to make him abdicate. All sources reported that the monarch had not had any previous ties with the organizers of the coup and that his support to the putschists, given only after the fact, had been an attempt to "avoid bloodshed". In these circumstances, the West saw the Crown as the "only factor of stability" in Greece. The British did not exclude the possibility that the putschists enjoyed the support of the Church. The Prime Minister of the new regime, Konstantinos Kollias, formerly Attorney General of the Supreme Court, was seen as an "obscure figure" with no political experience. Some foreign diplomats thought that the coup could not have happened "without the consent of some US circles", while others highlighted that, for all its influence, the US embassy had been taken by surprise, and that the coup had not suited its plans. The Soviets also admitted that, despite analyses that had indicated the possible implementation of extraordinary measures, they had been "completely blindsided" by the introduction of military dictatorship. It was believed that the Greek army would not make any risky moves in Cyprus. According to early reports, the direct impetus for the coup had been the announced general strike and fears that the forthcoming elections would be used as "a referendum against the monarchy". The dominant opinion at the Yugoslav diplomatic mission was that the restoration of "normal and elementary human and democratic freedoms" in Greece depended on the king and the US.³⁶

From the very first moment the Yugoslav diplomacy did not see the coup as an isolated event but rather as part of a long political process that involved a succession of civilian conservative parties and forces that had emerged victorious from the civil war replace one another at the helm of Greece. It was in this political milieu, in constant showdowns with the democrats and the left, that the political and military forces which had executed the coup had emerged. The fact that the "progressive forces" (the left) had not been destroyed in the civil war and that they had gained prominence in the post-war years had led the radical right to seek a solution for the existing crisis in introducing a dictatorship. In this con-

³⁶ DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 414587, Coded telegram from Athens of 21 April 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 414590, Coded telegram from Athens of 21 April 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 414561, Coded telegram from Athens of 21 April 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 414668, Coded telegram from Athens of 22 April 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 414673, Coded telegram from Athens of 22 April 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 414781, Coded telegram from Athens of 24 April 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 414612, Coded telegram from Athens of 21 April 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 414679, Coded telegram from Athens of 22 April 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 414680, Coded telegram from Athens of 22 April 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 1, no. 416010, Coded telegram from Athens of 29 April 1967.

text, it was believed in Belgrade, the military coup was hardly surprising in view of the fact that local anti-communism and the “threat” of communist aggression on the external level represented the ideological basis of Greek governments, preventing any major changes and giving the army a special place in the “defense of order”. The “dictatorship ideology” was particularly widespread among some segments of the army, police, bureaucracy and right-wing ideologues. Its presence on the political stage, according to Yugoslav diplomats, was advocated equally by internal and external actors with a vested interest in keeping the status quo and the existing positions and order. The fact that the anti-communist action plan also targeted some civic politicians directly led some political groups and individuals, otherwise opposed to any democratic solution for the political crisis in Greece, to distance themselves from the putschists. Yugoslav diplomats concluded that the coup d'état had been easy to carry out, but that its future “remains unclear”. The coup brought several unknown outcomes with it: it made the “fate of the Crown” uncertain; since the government was not able to protect the monarchy, it was unclear if the putschists would delegate power to important civilian figures; and it opened the question of the further moves of the political right, which was inclined to accept the existing situation.³⁷

The Yugoslav diplomats collected their information about the army coup – described in Belgrade as “fascist” from the outset – primarily in Athens.³⁸ This information was often contradictory in terms content, but in some assessments, usually very cautious, the views of the East, West and well-informed Greek sources were almost identical. The coup had taken everyone by surprise, regardless of signals coming from the army that suggested that the growing “chaos” warranted the introduction of a dictatorship. The different sides were also in agreement that the coup was the “work of a small circle of colonels” almost unknown to foreign embassies. It was generally thought that the putschists were royalists, but that the monarch had been presented with a “fait accompli” and that he did not have the freedom to voice his own will; that he initially resisted, but was essentially forced to cooperate. In the opinion of diplomats in Athens, no “return to the old [state of things]” could be expected. Another shared position was readiness to protest with the putschists against the arrests and the brutal treatment of interned politicians. They were convinced that a protest could prevent any executions of communist leaders (Manolis Glezos) and the leaders of the civic left (A. Papandreou). Diplomatic representatives in Athens knew that the situation was worrying and that it was still too early to fully assess the

³⁷ DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 414669, Coded telegram from Athens of 22 April 1967.

³⁸ DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 15, no. 414781, Coded telegram from Athens of 24 April 1967.

“seriousness” of it all. Also, all of them were faced with the same question – how to establish cooperation with the new regime.³⁹

The views of Belgrade were to a large extent burdened by the non-aligned foreign policy concept pursued by Yugoslavia. Based on received information, it was thought that the “military-fascist” coup in Greece had all the hallmarks of the cold-war policy. It was noted that the coup coincided with the foreign policy interests of the US, because the escalation of the conflict in Vietnam and the increasingly evident presence of the USSR in the Near East had made Greece a sensitive geo-political location that allowed “more direct control of developments in the Mediterranean” and “exerting pressure on the Middle and Near Eastern countries”. Belgrade believed that an electoral victory of the left would have made uncertain this strategic-political concept of the US, and Washington could not allow it. The State Secretariat for Foreign Affairs of SFRY believed that the coup was a clear message to other dithering NATO members that no “breaking of bloc constraints” would be tolerated and no “internal evolution” allowed if it could lead to a change in the foreign policy course and result in a shift in the balance of power in Europe. A particular cause for concern was the assumption that the practice of military coups could spill over into the rest of the European continent. It was believed that the implementation of such extreme solutions did not suit European countries which, in line with their own interests, sought cooperation and security in Europe as well as increased political and military emancipation from the US. The response of the USSR was judged as “cautious” and “measured” – as tacit acceptance of the fact that Greece was in the American sphere of interest. It was noted that the Soviets were happy to see American policy being compromised in Europe. The alignment of the US with the monarch was seen in Belgrade as a result of concern for the future of Greece and an attempt to “channel events” in the direction preferred by the US. Belgrade estimated that the military coup in Greece would stall the process of cooperation and security in Europe and therefore the development was seen as an anti-European move.⁴⁰

Yugoslav diplomats paid particular attention to the putschist regime’s face-off with the representatives of democratic and liberal camps, especially the

³⁹ DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 16, no. 415152, Coded telegram from Athens of 25 April 1967 on Ambassador Javorski’s conversation with US Ambassador Talbot; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 16, no. 415202, Coded telegram from Athens of 25 April 1967 on Ambassador Javorski’s conversations with the ambassadors of USSR, Bulgaria and Poland; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 16, no. 415203, Coded telegram from Athens of 25 April 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 16, no. 415321, Coded telegram from Athens of 28 April 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 16, no. 415410, Coded telegram from Athens of 28 April 1967.

⁴⁰ DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 1, no. 416358, Memo to all diplomatic missions of SFRY dated 18 May 1967.

United Democratic Left (EDA). They noted the disbandment of all organizations where the EDA had wielded influence. Their insights into the regime's propaganda revealed that this party had been labeled as an "instrument of international communism in Greece". Pressures on party members and their families, efforts to make its members renounce their beliefs and membership in the party, ultimatums to officials to publicly declare loyalty to the new regime and become "good Greeks", mass arrests, internments and tortures of party members and sympathizers, denying medical assistance to ill EDA representatives in an attempt to remove them by "death from natural causes" – all of this contributed to assessments that the putschist regime was reactionary and fascist.⁴¹ In this context, a noteworthy detail was the request of representatives of socialist countries to the Yugoslavian ambassador Javorski to intercede with the American ambassador, Phillips Talbot, to save the life of M. Glezos.⁴²

The collected reports were contradictory to a large extent, but what they all had in common was a concern for the fate of Greece. British analyses indicated that the social upheavals in Greece had "launched" a group of younger and radical officers, mostly from underprivileged backgrounds, who were unhappy with the "politicians' uselessness and corruption" and willing to implement a "firm-hand policy" in order to secure economic progress. The representatives of France and Sweden condemned the new putschist regime for suspending the parliamentary system and its oppression of democratic and liberal figures. Paris was willing to offer asylum to some Greek politicians. France condemned the putschist regime's dissolution of the parliament and targeting of democratic and liberal foci. Paris was concerned that the military coup had instigated wider instability that could potentially spill over into neighboring countries. For these reasons the French government intended to take a reserved stand towards the new regime. Egyptian and Syrian envoys saw the developments in Greece as the introduction of "Vietnam methods" in Europe and US attempts to find a "surrogate" for NATO. In their opinion, Greece was to be followed by Italy, where the putschist rebellion, with the help of the CIA, could eliminate democratic institutions. For Cairo, the coup and all of its accompanying developments were an attempt to target the United Arab Republic (UAR) and non-aligned countries. Damascus was convinced that the Athens coup was just one in a series of similar

⁴¹ DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 1, no. 416389, Coded telegram from Athens of 5 May 1967.

⁴² DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, F. 40, doss. 16, no. 415322, Coded telegram from the Second Command of the State Secretariat for Foreign Affairs to all Yugoslav diplomatic missions dated 4 May 1967. The US Ambassador accepted the appeal of Ambassador Javorski about the life threat to M. Glezos and pacifying the tensions in Greece. Information received from the highest representatives of the putschist government indicated that Glezos would not be executed. In a later conversation with members of the US Embassy Javorski learned of Talbot's intervention to save the life of Andreas Papandreou.

American and Western actions in Asia, Africa and the Near East. Turkish diplomats implicitly intimated that their country was ready to take military action in Cyprus if the putschist regime in Athens decided to make a move in the island. In Ankara, developments in Greece were seen as a “Naser-esque” event, with Turkey pursuing its own propaganda in this context. The government of Cyprus tried to avoid making any public assessments in order to prevent “Greek internal dilemmas and divisions from spilling over to the island”. In Nicosia, it was believed that the Greek position regarding Cyprus would remain unchanged. Based on their talks with Makarios III, the Yugoslav diplomats concluded that he had been surprised by the coup in Athens and showed some uneasiness in regard to the actions of Turkey. Romanians and Hungarians condemned the coup and its oppressive measures. Rome believed that the coup was temporary and that it would not change the Greek foreign policy.⁴³

In April and May 1967 Yugoslav diplomats actively collaborated with other foreign envoys in Athens, supplying the US embassy with information about the positions and roles of politicians such as Glezos in the Communist Party of Greece. They underlined that the United Democratic Left (EDA), which included the Greek communists, had chosen to work towards its political objectives “by peaceful means” and that it had advocated preserving constitutionality and parliamentarism. Contacts with American representatives in Athens allowed Yugoslav diplomats to discern the position of the US towards the putschists. Another information of note was that the putschists, lieutenants and captains during the war, were staunch anti-communists and unsympathetic towards Yugoslavia, which had supported Markos Vafiadis during the Greek Civil War. According to available reports, this group of officers believed that Greece was facing a “Slavic threat” and “a danger from the north”, and that in areas along the Greco-Yugoslavian border a process of intense Hellenization needed to be implemented. Equal attention was paid to the reactions of Soviet and Eastern European diplomats. Belgrade was informed of the prognoses of Eastern European embassies that the putschist regime would evolve in time and that power would ultimately end up in the hands of the far right. Analyses of the new situation en-passant included statements of Greek diplomats that the coup was the result of the “degeneration and corruption of parliamentarism”; that it was a pro-

⁴³ DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 1, no. 416010, Coded telegram from Athens of 29 April 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 1, no. 416473, Coded telegram from Athens; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 1, nos. 416612, 415453, 415950, 415475, Coded telegrams from Athens; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 16, no. 415371, Coded telegram from Nicosia of 26 May 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 2, no. 416102, Coded telegram from Athens of 4 May 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 1, no. 416478, Coded telegram from Nicosia of 8 May 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 1, no. 416612, Coded telegram from Paris of 8 May 1967.

cess of the “internal cleansing” of radical elements in the political life of Greece; and that the situation would quickly change and normalize.⁴⁴

There was no doubt about Belgrade’s concern about the developments in Greece. The events in Athens were discussed at the session of the Foreign Policy Committee of the Federal Assembly of Yugoslavia held on 27 April 1967. In an interview in the *Večernje novosti* daily the State Secretary for Foreign Affairs underlined that Yugoslavia was closely monitoring the developments in Greece and making efforts to develop its relations with its southern neighbor based on “equality and non-intervention”, provided that Greece was willing and “stable enough” to work on establishing such international relations. The Yugoslav diplomacy saw the fascist nature of the putschist regime in its frequent references to the “purity of the Greek tribe”, mentioning the threat from an “enemy race” (the Slavs) and “Slavo-communism”. Belgrade was afraid of a possible de-stabilization of the general situation in the Balkans and the Mediterranean, the strengthening of bloc divisions, and undermining security in Europe. Therefore, Yugoslav diplomats in Cairo were asked to, together with their Egyptian colleagues, consider all options for influencing a more favorable course of events. Diplomatic representatives in Nicosia were instructed to work with Makarios III to assess the repercussions that the Athens coup could potentially have in Cyprus and in the Mediterranean. Yugoslav envoys in Sofia, Paris, Bucharest, Damascus and Ankara were told to make a detailed evaluation of the positions of their respective host countries about the situation in Greece. There were constant contacts and exchanges of opinions with the representatives of the Great Powers.⁴⁵

Reports arriving from Soviet circles in Athens indicated that the new regime was replacing incompetent staff in the bureaucracy with even worse alter-

⁴⁴ DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 16, no. 415410, Coded telegram from Athens of 28 April 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 16, no. 415448, Coded telegram from Athens of 27 April 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 16, no. 415449, Coded telegram from Athens of 27 April 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 16, no. 415450, Coded telegram from Athens of 27 April 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 16, no. 415471, Coded telegram from Athens of 29 April 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 16, nos. 415950 and 415984, Coded telegrams from Athens of 3 May 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 13, no. 438038, Coded telegram from Athens of 26 August 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 10, no. 435921, Coded telegram from Athens of 14 October 1967; DA, MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 40, doss. 4, no. 436962, Coded telegram from Athens of 26 October 1967.

⁴⁵ MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 1, no. 414456, Coded telegram from Belgrade to diplomatic missions of SFRY of 28 April 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 1, no. 414456, Note on the measures undertaken by the State Secretariat for Foreign Affairs concerning the coup in Greece dated 3 May 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 1, no. 416992, Coded telegram from Athens of 8 May 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 2, no. 417851, Coded telegram from Athens of 17 May 1967.

natives. It was noted that the putschists had no economic program and that efforts to “quickly conjure one up” were proving futile. The economic situation was seen as very difficult. The absence of loans, according to the reports of Yugoslav diplomats, “had frozen” all relevant economic activities. The collected information suggested that there were growing feelings of “internal dissent”, “ambition”, “envy” and “uncertainty and nerves” among the putschists. The base used to execute the coup and establish the new regime was seen as “too narrow”. The newly established regime, according to reports, was struggling with a lack of staff options. Dissatisfaction was also registered in the army. According to Soviet analyses, there were two options: the regime could quickly resort to “large-scale measures of terror and physical elimination of prisoners and all that is progressive and stands in their way”, or there would be a “positive turnaround and shift in the putschists’ internal and foreign policy”. The Soviet diplomats believed that the “putschist coterie” would never willingly renounce power.⁴⁶

In Belgrade there were fears that the countries of the Eastern “contingent” were trying to “push [Yugoslavia] to be at the frontline” of criticism of the Greek situation and thereby isolate it from the West. For this reason the diplomatic representatives of Yugoslavia shied away from any form of “joint action” with the Soviet Union and the countries of the socialist bloc. Reacting to the views of Eastern European diplomats that reports of the conflicting interests of the US and the putschists were to be regarded with utmost suspicion, that the developments in Greece were to be assessed in the wider context of the Vietnam War and the intensifying conflict in the Near East, and that the efforts of the new regime to present itself as affably as possible were to be received with caution, Yugoslav diplomats – even when they agreed with these views – expressed evident reservations. Like their Eastern European colleagues, they also saw the putschist regime in Greece as fascist (“revival of fascism”). They were convinced that the dictatorship in Greece was “encouraging” the emergence of a “fascist climate” in other European countries (Italy, West Germany) and saw the new Greek regime as a threat to European security. They read the response of other European countries as their being aware that the events in Greece were “a dangerous phenomenon” that needed to be opposed.⁴⁷

Western diplomats expressed concern for the future of Greece. The French and the British openly strove to safeguard the monarchy and the Crown. The British believed that the current situation defied the monarch’s abilities and experience. They saw the putschist regime as a dictatorship of the police rather

⁴⁶ MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 1, no. 416992, Coded telegram from Athens of 8 May 1967.

⁴⁷ MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 2, no. 418498, Coded telegram from Athens of 19 May 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 1, no. 418498/ 2 , Coded telegram from Belgrade to the embassy in Athens dated 26 May.

than the army, and considered it strongly anti-communist in nature. They feared a “sudden explosion of the people’s dissatisfaction”, but did not believe that the putschists would resort to “killing prisoners or any wider measures of open terror”. The British underlined that there had been no imminent reason for the coup. According to London’s information, the putschist regime first attracted supporters in circles that believed that the coup had “put an end to a period of fruitless political friction that contributed little to the country’s progress”. As for relations with Yugoslavia, London underlined that the putschists had “warped views” and that “they had slept through twenty years of Yugoslav internal development”. Belgrade was advised to accept contacts with Athens and contribute to the “evolution” of the existing regime. At the same time the British influenced the members of the putschist regime to stop proliferating tensions with Yugoslavia and bring their relations with the northern neighbor within “a framework of normalcy”.

Envoys of the non-aligned countries were convinced that the US had actively taken part in the coup (via proxy) and that the monarch had also been involved in the recent events. The coup was seen as “well-executed”. The objective and nature of the coup was judged as fascist and anti-communist. It was believed that the putschists had been raised to believe in a “junta” ideology, whose pillars were the Crown, circles in the army and police, and the far-right. The diplomats of non-aligned countries did not expect that the putschists would stand down or that there would be a swift turnaround in Greece. The envoys of Egypt were particularly interested in the policy of the West in the Near East. In their opinion, the toppling of the dynasty – which the putschists had not done – would have given the developments in Greece a “more positive direction”. From this perspective, Cairo believed that the putschists had “squandered their opportunity” and that this had brought them even closer to radical anti-communism and persecuting the left.⁴⁸

Yugoslav diplomats in Athens were actively working on alarming the global public about the issue of political prisoners that the putschist regime held interned in camps, usually in the islands. They actively advocated saving Iliou, the leader of EDA’s caucus in the parliament, who was critically ill. They were among the most agile diplomats in pressuring the regime to release some aged, exhausted or ailing political opponents. The Yugoslav diplomats publicized the information they received from the prisoners’ families, reporting indescribable tortures suffered by communists and members of the United Democratic Left (EDA). The action to get them released “involved” many organizations such as the Jurist Association, Inter-Parliamentary Union, Socialist Alliance and the

⁴⁸ MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 1, no. 417115, Coded telegram from Athens of 13 May 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 2, no. 418838, Coded telegram from Athens of 24 May 1967.

Red Cross. Frequent contacts were made with the diplomatic missions of the USSR and other socialist countries, Mexico, UAR, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, US, France, Denmark, etc. The putschist regime was asked to allow diplomatic envoys and reporters to visit the camps and prisons where the regime's opponents were being kept.⁴⁹

Immigration from Greece and the regime's terror against the Macedonian minority in the northern parts of the country were monitored with no less attention. The figure of 8,247 immigrants in the first six months of 1967 (4,250 from northern Greece) was several times smaller than in previous years (in 1966 29,500 had left Greece, with 9,300 of those leaving northern Greece), but this was the result of implemented political measures that decided who would be allowed to leave and who would not. At the same time it was noted that the regime and the Greek Orthodox Church were campaigning to ban the Macedonian minority from using their own language. Many arrests of people who had been caught speaking Macedonian in public were registered. The leading role in the reforming of the local population was entrusted to the clergy. An additional contingent of 120 Greek priests was dispatched to Macedonian-populated areas with the task of doing their duty for "faith and country". Another means of intense pressure were school managements, which changed the teaching staff in schools, appointing younger and more agile teachers tasked with "spiritually reforming rural children in Macedonian villages". Children were banned from using the Macedonian language and penalized if they did so. The process of Hellenization was also implemented among immigrants of Macedonian nationality.⁵⁰

Analyses of the statements issued by the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs were read by Yugoslav diplomats as the regime's efforts to justify its existence by citing a threat of "communist regimes". Shifting responsibility to other neighboring countries had its "utilitarian value" in a cold-war world and was meant to, ideologically and politically, secure the understanding of the US and West Europe for the dictatorship in Athens. The fact that Belgrade and other capitals of socialist countries had condemned the putschist regime was seen in Athens as a sign of "anxiety" that their political "friends" (Communist Party of

⁴⁹ MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 4I, doss. I, no. 4I6927, Coded telegram from Athens of 10 May 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 4I, doss. I, no. 4I7158, Coded telegram from Athens of 13 May 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 4I, doss. 2, no. 4I7707, Coded telegram from Athens of 17 May 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 4I, doss. 2, no. 4I785I, Coded telegram from Athens of 17 May 1967. The Red Cross mission that visited the camp on the island of Gyaros included an ICRC delegate who had given a positive report on the situation in Auschwitz and other Nazi camps during the Second World War.

⁵⁰ MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 4I, doss. 7, no. 428978, Coded telegram from Athens of 4 August 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 4I, doss. 7, no. 428979, Coded telegram from Athens of 4 August 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 4I, doss. 7, no. 442712, Report of the Consul General in Thessaloniki dated 8 November 1967.

Greece, Center Union, United Democratic Left) had been eliminated from political life. In this way the putschist regime tried to paint itself as the victim and the West's most consistent ally in the struggle against communism and to make its neighbors (Yugoslavia, Bulgaria...) appear as a "threat" to Greece. Official Belgrade had information that the putschists, especially one of the regime's chief ideologues Colonel Papadopoulos, underlined that "Yugoslavia was more of a threat to the new regime than the USSR and other countries of the Warsaw Pact". In line with this notion, military exercises of various purposes were being done on the Yugoslav border. The treaty of border exchange was suspended; Yugoslav nationals were exiled or arrested; Yugoslav nationals had difficulties in obtaining Greek visas; anti-Yugoslav propaganda was intensified; the existence of the Macedonian nation was denied... Protests coming from Belgrade and other socialist countries against the suspension of parliamentary institutions were seen by the putschist regime as meddling in the internal affairs of Greece and the "threat of pan-Slavism". Yugoslavia was accused of aspirations to reach Thessaloniki and was described as the "main enemy of the current regime" in Athens. All of this contributed to the "slowing down" and "narrowing" of existing cooperation between Yugoslavia and Greece. However, regardless of the Greek regime's negative assessments, in mid-1967 the Yugoslav diplomacy proceeded to establish "limited contacts".⁵¹

Reports from Athens indicated that the putschist regime was systematically and rapidly working on establishing its control over state institutions. This was particularly true of staff decisions in the army, police, means of propaganda, and key ministries. Yugoslav diplomats saw the regime's fascist nature in its disbandment of democratic and progressive associations, dissolution of over 160 central and regional associations of workers and public servants, confiscating their property and blocking their funds in banks, arresting many officials, banning strike rights, and oppression of national minorities. The absence of any significant changes in the Bank of Greece and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was seen as the regime's intention to avoid additional doubts of the country's economic and foreign-policy course. The formation of a "well-organized and disciplined" regime party and a "liberal party" that would pretend to be its opposition was also meant to contribute to the stabilization of the existing situation.

⁵¹ MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 42, doss. 2, no. 418586, Coded telegram from Athens of 22 May 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 42, doss. 2, no. 420432, Note on the conversation of Deputy State Secretary D. Belovski with the Greek Ambassador in Belgrade, N. Kamboularis, of 16 June 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 42, doss. 3, no. 427297, Coded telegram to all Yugoslav diplomatic missions of 16 August 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 42, doss. 2, no. 422354, Greco-Yugoslav relations after the coup in Greece of 1 July 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 13, no. 438902, Interior political situation in Greece and Greco-Yugoslav relations after the coup of 21 April, 11 November; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 13, no. 442798, Some questions concerning bilateral relations of Greece and SFRY, 18 December 1967.

There were indications that, with the passage of time, disagreements between the monarch and the putschists were beginning to “surface”, as well as reports that the king enjoyed the support of former politicians. It was assessed that the putschists were trying to “re-root” the entire political life in Greece and portray it as “national democracy”. After the liquidation of the left, the main threat to the regime came from the far right. The idea was to weaken its position by implementing personnel changes in state institutions, preventing old political parties and their leaders from getting involved in the country’s political life, strong anti-communism, destroying and demoralizing. This regime policy, according to Yugoslav diplomats, coincided with the “general interests” of the US and the West. The social base of the regime was made up of “middle and petty classes”, as well as the rural population which believed that the putschists would improve its social standing and thereby “rectify the injustices” of the previous regimes. Collected information also indicated that large capitalists (shipping magnates, industrialists...) had still not joined the new regime and were hesitant about returning their evacuated funds to the country. Information coming from the regime’s opponents, foreign diplomats and well-informed journalists suggested that the political situation in Greece was “thickening” and that the responsible political actors were striving to engineer a “peaceful evolution” of political life.⁵²

In the last months of 1967 Yugoslav diplomats in Athens thought that the key actors in Greece (the Crown, the far right, the Americans etc.) were primarily concerned about the extraordinary measures that had resulted from the coup being overcome peacefully (“evolution of political life”). They noted a fear of internal conflicts, growing dissatisfaction and hiccups in the country’s economy. It was concluded that the putschists were working in favor of future right-wing rule, both domestic and foreign, and implementing a “useful cleansing” of democratic forces, which was the reason that they were still being offered compromises. Like the members of the Center Union (Mavros), they did not believe the promises of political changes. According to Yugoslav diplomats, the final outcome was expected to be a “form of parliamentarism” that would incorporate the putschist government. In this way, with the help of right-wing circles in the US and the West, the initiated process of reforming the “revolution” of the coup would be completed. This process would secure the legacies of the

⁵² MSP RS, PA, 1967, doss. 2, f. 41, no. 418678, Coded telegram from Athens of 20 May 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 2, no. 418795, Coded telegram from Athens of 8 May 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 2, no. 420689, Coded telegram from Athens of 5 June 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 3, no. 421819, Coded telegram from Athens of 15 June 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 3, no. 423212, Coded telegram from Athens of 23 June 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 3, no. 423480, Coded telegram from Athens of 27 June 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 3, no. 424510, Coded telegram from Athens of 5 July 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 42, doss. 3, no. 427297, Coded telegram from Belgrade to all diplomatic missions abroad, dated 16 August 1967.

coup and establish a sort of “quasi-parliamentarism”, which would at the same time pacify the democratic public opinion in the West. The regime’s tendency to implement “radical measures” had disillusioned the analysts of political developments in Greece that the political opposition (both right-wing and left-wing) could affect the course of events in a more meaningful way.⁵³

Under the military junta, the Communist Party of Greece and the United Democratic Left (EDA) suffered huge losses. Party members who had managed to escape arrest were hiding in very difficult circumstances. Former sympathizers, intimidated by the regime’s threats that anyone who assisted communists in hiding would be tried at a military court, refused to offer them refuge. The police, although initially reserved toward the putschists, had completely identified with the regime after some personnel changes. Artists were being blacklisted, which meant that their work could not be shown or played (composer Mikis Theodorakis, director and art director of the National Theater Alexis Minotis, ethno-musicologist Dora Stratou, prominent actresses Melina Mercouri and Irene Pappas). The anti-communist campaign reached its peak in December 1967, at the time of open dissatisfaction with the situation in the country, the monarchists’ military involvement and the capitulation in Cyprus. In contrast to the general public in the West, which silently watched the wanted-fugitive lists, enormous prizes offered to anyone who would help the regime apprehend communist “assassins” and “criminals”, military courts, the emergence of kangaroo courts, dissemination of false propaganda about a “communist conspiracy”, and the climate of terror, the Yugoslav diplomacy actively worked to assist the “progressive forces” in Greece.⁵⁴

In early December 1967 there were reports from Athens that Konstantinos Karamanlis had decided to become politically active and asked the putschists to stand down. Since his supporters made up a significant chunk of

⁵³ MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 4, no. 434660, Coded telegram from Athens of 6 October 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 4, no. 439432, Coded telegram from Athens of 17 November 1967.

⁵⁴ MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 3, no. 424669, Coded telegram from Athens of 6 July 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 3, no. 424982, Coded telegram from Athens of 6 July 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 5, no. 442444, Coded telegram from Athens of 13 December 1967. Due to the oppression it suffered, at the 12th Party Plenum of 1968 the Communist Party of Greece split into two factions. From this moment on, according to Yugoslav diplomats who carefully followed the events within the Greek Communist Party, the conflicting party camps, their ideological orientations, possibilities of future cooperation, fundamental views on the internal development of the country, foreign policy and membership were “irreconcilably at odds”. Aware of the harmfulness of their conflict, the two leaderships were ready to accept responsibility for the new situation. The Yugoslav diplomats reported that this was a “deep rift” rooted in different starting points and divergent views on key ideological questions and internal and foreign policy.

the regime's "political base", this move was seen as a "diversion within their own ranks". For these reasons some high-ranking putschists in power demanded that Karamanlis be brought to a military court and tried for high treason. In this new situation the Yugoslav diplomats in Athens predicted a rapid differentiation within the National Radical Union (ERE). Their information suggested that the leadership of the Center Union (Mavros, G. Papandreou), previously inclined to pursue a tactic of waiting and speculating, had positively received Karamanlis's move. At the same time it was concluded that Karamanlis's statement did not indicate any changes in his position towards the left camp and that he still saw them as "responsible for the political chaos that had facilitated the military coup". For watchful analysts, the political "activation" of K. Karamanlis was a sign that something big was about to happen. Some of the information that had reached Yugoslav diplomats suggested that the monarch could take responsibility for the situation in the country.⁵⁵

December 1967 was no less turbulent in Greece than the whole year. In the first days of December, King Constantine II, with the help of the military (Third Army and parts of the Navy and Air Force), tried to make the colonels who had organized the coup to surrender power to civilians. Since he relied on units full of infiltrated junta members, as it turned out, his move could not meaningfully threaten the Regime of the Colonels. Any hopes that constitutionality and parliamentarism would be "restored" fell through and the monarch left the country. Unlike the king, who did not want to see bloodshed and offered amnesty to all participants in the coup of 21 April 1967, some putschists were ready to take to arms against those who "in pursuit of fame had persuaded the king to go against the national government and nation". The regime's intense propaganda insisted on the view that the monarch had been "seduced" by the "enemies of the revolution". Tanks and mechanized infantry were sent out to the streets of Athens. Yugoslav diplomats reported that the army had taken all key public buildings and institutions. Movements of troops were registered in the north of the country. This behavior of the putschists suggested that there would be no compromise and that conflict was "unavoidable". The monarch's failed initiative was seen by diplomats as "immature" and the new situation as "qualitatively novel". The position of the king, who after his attempt to overthrow the putschist regime had gone to Italy, was seen as very difficult and even more reliant on the West. The Yugoslav diplomats closely followed the response of London and Washington to the new events and expected the king and the regime to reach a compromise as a result of their interventions and pressures. The failure of the monarch's counter-coup led the key Western powers to reevaluate the role of the Greek monarchy in the country's power structure and the king's capacity to

⁵⁵ MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 4, no. 441558, Coded telegram from Athens of 4 December 1967.

play a vital role in the “process of restoring constitutional order”. In the opinion of Yugoslav diplomats, this was a way for Western countries, primarily the US, to recognize the putschist regime and replace “technical contacts” with full diplomatic relations, while citing an agreement with them and the king (a “façade monarchy” of sorts). In this possible scenario, the role of the monarch would be completely marginalized and merely formal, but the political right-wing camp would be left “some space” to work with after the transition to “constitutional order” promised by the regime. This outcome, which would result in a blend of “putschist dictatorship” and “court conservatism”, would improve the regime’s international position, bolster internal unity (within the junta) and consolidate its position in the army. The only option unacceptable to the US and the West in Greece was allowing the “moderate left” to come to power and inaugurate a process of “turning left”. Yugoslav diplomats noted a “complete indifference of the people” to the political events in the country and based on this concluded that neither the putschist regime nor the monarch and civic politicians had a strong reputation or influence in the country. According to their estimates, the new Papadopoulos regime, with which the Western countries hesitated to establish immediate contacts, could potentially build its popularity in the future on a referendum about declaring Greece a republic. The call of the Communist Party of Greece to the people to mount a rebellion was seen as a risky escapade. Like representatives of other embassies in Athens (US, USSR, United Kingdom), the Yugoslav diplomats also thought that Greece – with or without the king – had “entered a period of permanent instability, with a high probability of more internal upheavals and different possible epilogues”.⁵⁶

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Intensive conversations with members of political parties, closely reading the press, talks with other foreign diplomats, analytical evaluations of many individual events and their contextualization in the wider picture of the situation in Greece allowed Yugoslav diplomats to accurately assess the situation in the country, identify the potential of the military junta and the centers of putschist

⁵⁶ MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 5, no. 442332, Coded telegram from Athens of 13 December 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 5, no. 442538, Coded telegram from Athens of 15 December 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 5, no. 442611, Coded telegram from Athens of 16 December 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 5, no. 443215, Coded telegram from Athens of 15 December 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 5, no. 443561, Coded telegram from Athens of 21 December 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 5, no. 443670, Coded telegram from Athens of 23 December 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 5, no. 443780, Coded telegram from Athens of 26 December 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 6, no. 443902, Coded telegram from Athens of 28 December 1967; MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 41, doss. 6, no. 444334, Coded telegram from Athens of 28 December 1967.

support in Greece and abroad, follow their showdown with left-wing and democratic options, recognize the ambitions of the putschist regime and the nature of their dictatorship, have insight into the situation of the opposition, make out the contours of a possible state-political system, monitor relations with neighboring countries, closely follow the regime's position on the Macedonian minority, follow the moves of the monarch, assess the permanence of compromises, observe the pressure of the international public and the controversial behavior of the Great Powers, and offer prognoses of the course of events in the near future.⁵⁷ Yugoslav diplomats collected some of the relevant information on the situation in Greece in other capitals (London, Ankara, Nicosia, Paris...). This information contributed to a wider evaluation of the existing circumstances and a sharper picture of the developments in Greece. The general opinion was that the Yugoslav diplomats were much better informed and more agile than their counterparts from other Eastern European countries, who were seen as "slow", "unsure", "confused", "contradictory" and so on. In the days and months following the coup, the Yugoslav diplomatic mission in Athens was a center where many came to get information, consult with their peers, verify their assessments and learn Belgrade's views. Besides the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, collected information was sent to Josip Broz Tito, Edvard Kardelj, Koča Popović, Mijalko Todorović, Marko Nikezić, Ivan Gošnjak, Petar Stambolić and Ivan Mišković.

Sources

Diplomatski arhiv Ministarstva spoljnih poslova Republike Srbije [Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia], Belgrade – Politički arhiv [Political archive], 1967

⁵⁷ Information sent by Yugoslav diplomats from Athens to Belgrade were used and seen as highly valuable. MSP RS, PA, 1967, f. 42, doss. 2, no. 417113/2U, Coded telegram from Athens of 17 May 1967.

Konstantin V. Nikiforov*

*Institute of Slavic Studies
Russian Academy of Sciences*

The Distinctive Characteristics of Transformation in Eastern Europe A Combination of Democracy and Nationalism

Abstract: Transformation in the eastern part of Europe began following the “velvet” revolution and continued after the “colour” revolutions. These two types of transformative revolution have many things in common, first of all a form of mass protest combining democracy and nationalism at its roots. However, nationalism did not begin to appear immediately after the fall of communism but rather after the first halting and unsuccessful democratic changes. In other words, nationalists did not take over from communists, but from democrats.

Keywords: nationalism, democracy, transformative revolutions

The prominent Polish dissident and later influential public figure Adam Michnik described nationalism as the final stage of communism. These famous words are usually interpreted in the sense that communist regimes in the former socialist countries are first replaced by nationalism, an ideology that is cruder and easier to understand by the masses, and then by democracy, a much more complex system to comprehend and implement. Admittedly, the opposite is also known to happen. Authoritarian communist leaders employ nationalism as the last means of staying in power and preventing major changes. The most striking example of this is Milošević’s Serbia. In both cases, however, nationalism is an obstacle to democratic change.

Unlike these widespread conclusions, some researchers see a positive aspect in the rise of nationalism during the collapse of communist regimes. They believe that nationalism acted as a sort of catalyst of change in Eastern European countries and as the only force capable of uniting and mobilizing the masses in the struggle against institutions of totalitarianism. Having resolved this problem, a nationalist coalition inevitably crumbles and its factions appear as political rivals, leading to a functional pluralistic society.¹

* nikiforov@inslav.ru

¹ R. Tomas, *Srbija pod Miloševićem. Politika devedesetih* (Belgrade: Samizdat, 2002), 27.

Let me attempt a more in-depth exploration of these problems. As we know, the process of abandoning the socialist path in Eastern European countries took the form of so-called “velvet revolutions” of 1989.

The forms of these “revolutions” could be very different – peaceful protests as well as revolts that included violence or round tables of the leading political forces or the organization of the first multiparty elections after a longer hiatus.² The period of “velvet revolutions” in Eastern Europe lasted ten years and essentially came to its end with the “October” or “Bulldozer” revolution in Serbia in 2000.

This revolution was of a twofold nature. On the one hand, it was the last in the series of “velvet revolutions” that had begun in 1989; on the other hand, it opened a series of new revolutions known as “colour revolutions”. This was in fact a re-edition of “velvet revolutions” in countries where the implemented changes proved insufficient and incomplete, failing to achieve the objectives of previous revolutions. The aim of these new “colour revolutions” is to put an end to the corruption and bureaucratic arbitrariness of the new regime, as well as to social insecurity, gaping stratification, and the astronomical profits of ruling clans often built on familial relations.³

A characteristic of the “coloured revolutions” of the early twenty-first century is that they usually took place in periods of election – hence they are also known as “electoral revolutions”. At the end of the twentieth century, multiparty elections were the main device of the opposition’s struggle for their electoral win and the mechanism of regime change in many Eastern European countries. An attempt to challenge or even neutralize these electoral victories has often proved the last straw.

In other words, “colour revolutions” of the early twenty-first century were meant to finish what the “velvet revolutions” had left unfinished. This is precisely the reason that new revolutions tend to occur in relatively underdeveloped countries – in the Balkans and in the former USSR. Secondly, “colour revolutions” are focused on resolving the contrasts that emerged already during the post-socialist transformation; they “achieved a stable character and began to exert moderate influence on further development”.⁴

² See, e.g., *Istoriia antikomunisticheskikh revoliutsii kontsa XX veka. Tsentral'nia i Iugo-Vostochnaia Evropa* (Moscow: Nauka, 2007); *Revoliutsii i reform v stranah Tsentral'noi i Iugo-Vostochnoi Evropy: 20 let spustia* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2011); *Konets epokhi. SSSR i revoliutsii v stranah Vostochnoi Evropy 1989–1991 gg. Dokumenty* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2015).

³ V. Inozemtsev, “Trudnyi vozrast elity. Novye ‘narodnyye revoliutsii’ kardinal'no otlichaiusia ot sobytii, imevshikh mesto shestnadtsat' let nazad”, *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 6 April 2005.

⁴ A. Riabov, “Moskva prinimaet vyzov ‘tsvetnykh’ revoliutsii”, *Pro et contra* (July–August 2005), 19–20.

Hence, in my view, both the first and the second revolution are phenomena of the same type and should be regarded as a single process. They can collectively be termed “transformative revolutions”.⁵

One revolutionary shift, it should be understood, is often insufficient to achieve a full transition to a new democratic system, particularly in underdeveloped countries. And although one revolutionary impulse was enough for Central European states such as Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary, for Serbia and some post-Soviet countries new revolutionary upsurges proved necessary.

For example, in Russia, to facilitate the beginning of real transformation two revolutionary shifts were needed: firstly, the August Coup of 1991, the suppression of which put an end to the Communist monopoly on power; and secondly the events of October 1993, which ended the Soviet organization of power. In Ukraine, the “velvet revolution” did not make much of an impact, but it was immediately followed by two “colour” uprisings: the Orange Revolution of 2004 and the so-called Euromaidan of 2013–2014.

Again, this is hardly unusual. Let us remember that in many Western European countries a whole series of revolutions was needed to fully establish the bourgeois system. The most illustrative, textbook example is provided by French history.

Let me note once again that the two types of transformative revolutions highlighted here – “velvet” and “colour” – have a lot in common: above all mass protests with a combination of democracy and nationalism at their roots. We need to understand how this works.

Firstly, nationalism does not seem to emerge immediately after the demise of communism, as might perhaps be understood from Michnik’s above-quoted formula; rather, it seems to appear after the first – uncertain and unsuccessful – democratic changes. More specifically, the nationalists did not take over from the communists, but from the democrats. Secondly, shifts such as these occurred not only during the most recent transformative turnarounds or immediately after them, but also a long time before any “velvet” or “colour” revolutions.

Let me mention just two examples from the history of Yugoslavia, beginning with the events in Croatia in the early 1970s. During a discussion on constitutional amendments, there emerged in Croatia the so-called MASPOK (an abbreviation of *masovni pokret* [mass movement]), also known as the Croatian Spring to analogize the Prague Spring.

⁵ There is still no established name for these revolutions. The terms “velvet” and “colour” have little actual meaning. They are sometimes defined by negation, for example as “anti-communist”. But where these revolutions lead and what their purpose is remains unclear from these terms.

Protests and rallies took place throughout the republic. It all began with the question of the Croatian language and culture and ended in the glorification of the fascist Independent State of Croatia and accusations of unitarism against the federation and of “Great Serbdom” against the Serbs. There were demands to immediately re-evaluate foreign trade and the monetary and banking system of Yugoslavia in favour of Croatia. Serbs living in Croatia began to be discriminated against in daily life, employment etc.

The nationalist forces rallied around Matica Hrvatska (Matrix Croatia) – the leading cultural and educational republic-level institution, as well as around the University of Zagreb. The movement was headed by the leadership of the League of Communists of Croatia: S. Dabčević-Kučar, M. Tripalo, and P. Pirker. F. Tuđman, who would go on to become the first president of independent Croatia, actively participated in MASPOK. Tito took his time, made no moves for a while, and then finally came out and said that he had been deceived. The Croatian nationalists had indeed glorified him in the press as a “Croat” and organized opulent receptions for him. However, as MASPOK began to acquire increasingly nationalist overtones and get out of hand, Tito intervened in December 1971, arresting the movement’s leaders and removing the Croatian leadership.⁶

All of this is well known. But here it is important to underline that the initial democratism of the Croatian movement rather quickly took on a nationalist and anti-state character.⁷

Another example is provided by Serbia, which after Tito’s death underwent processes that were in many respects reminiscent of the Soviet Perestroika. The catalyst for the activities of Serbian opposition intellectuals was the regime’s ban of Gojko Djogo’s poetry book *Vunena vremena* [Woollen Times] in April 1981. The poet had targeted Tito himself in his poems. Djogo’s subsequent arrest led to a wave of protests of the Serbian intelligentsia; group letters were written and “solidarity evenings” organized in his defence. These initiatives grew

⁶ For more detail see B. Petranović, *Istorija Jugoslavije 1918–1978* (Belgrade: Nolit, 1981), 580–582; *Tsentral’no-Vostochnaia Evropa vo vtoroi polovine XX veka*, in 3 vols. (Moscow: Nauka, 2002), vol. 2, 495–496; I. Goldstein, *Hrvatska 1918–2000* (Zagreb: Znanje, 2008), 532–552. See also I. V. Rudneva, *Khorvatskoe nacional’noe dvidzenie: konets 1960/kh – nachalo 1970/kx gg.* (Moscow: Institut slavianovedeniia RAN; St. Petersburg: Nestor, 2014).

⁷ Goldstein, *Hrvatska*, 538, writes that “two main ideas were dominant in the movement – the national and the liberal-democratic idea. In some participants and in some circumstances one or the other was more prominent, but usually it was an amalgamation of both with a dominant national component”. However, it should be noted that democratization in Croatia primarily meant the expansion of the autonomous rights of the Croatian people. This was another difference between Croatia and Serbia, where it primarily meant the democratization of political life, see Z. Radelić, *Hrvatska u Jugoslaviji 1945–1991: Od zajedništva do razlaza* (Zagreb; Školska knjiga; Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2006), 379–380.

into a protest against the economic situation, political and constitutional system, the lack of political freedoms and freedom of the press etc. In May 1982 the Association of Writers of Serbia formed the Committee for the Protection of Artistic Production, which quickly became the symbol of the democratic protest against the regime.⁸

Many scholars of a range of humanities, primarily those who had previously worked with the famous Yugoslav magazine *Praxis* (in publication 1964–1975), took part in the criticism of the regime and the entire communist past and present. Serbs were once again the most active: philosophers Ljubomir Tadić and Mihailo Marković; economist Kosta Mihajlović; legal scholars Vojislav Koštunica and Kosta Čavoški. The last two co-wrote the book *Partijski pluralizam ili monizam* [Party Pluralism or Monism], which denied the legitimacy of the communists' rise to power in Yugoslavia and their implementation of a one-party system. In this period a special role was played by the book *Saveznici i jugoslovenska ratna drama* [The Allies and the Yugoslav War Drama] by the Serbian historian Veselin Djuretić, which portrayed the Četnik movement as an anti-fascist force for the first time in academic literature.⁹

The main myths of socialist Yugoslavia gradually began to crumble. The Partisans were no longer seen as the only anti-fascist movement of the war years and Yugoslavia itself was no longer seen as a country that had built a very different and more progressive type of socialism. It was revealed that the revolution in Yugoslavia had been carried out following the Bolshevik model and that even after 1948 local Stalinists – genuine or alleged – had been treated by Stalinist methods. A little while later, the author A. Isaković demanded a re-evaluation of Tito's personal cult, just as it had been done after Stalin's or Mao's death; Lj. Tadić argued that, denying the dogma of the infallibility of Stalin as their former supreme authority, the League of Communists of Yugoslavia had not rejected these dogmas but had merely nationalized them.¹⁰

The regime cannot be said to have been completely inactive. It tried to stop these emerging processes using its usual methods. In April 1982, twenty-eight Serbian intellectuals were arrested, with six of them later tried in court. However, like Djogo, almost all were soon released.

The Belgrade intelligentsia advocated human rights, not only in Serbia but throughout Yugoslavia. The centre of these activities was the Committee for the Defence of Freedom of Thought and Expression led by the eminent author Dobrica Ćosić. Representatives of the Slovene and Croatian intelligentsia

⁸ D. Jović, *Jugoslavija: država koja je odumrla. Uspon, kriza i pad Kardeljeve Jugoslavije (1974–1990)* (Zagreb: Prometej, 2003), 336–337.

⁹ D. Bilandžić, *Hrvatska moderna povijest* (Zagreb: Golden marketing, 1999), 698–700; Tomas, *Srbija pod Miloševićem*, 56–57.

¹⁰ Bilandžić, *Hrvatska moderna povijest*, 698–699.

refused to join the Committee despite being expressly invited. Regardless of this, the Committee voiced its protest against the arrest of Alija Izetbegović and other Bosnian Muslims in Sarajevo and demanded the release of Vlado Gotovac and other MASPOK members incarcerated in Croatia. The Committee also defended the Kosovo Albanians convicted after the developments of 1981. In the period 1984–1989 the Committee sent out over a hundred letters protesting against the violation of basic democratic rights in Yugoslavia.¹¹

Immediately following the events that unfolded in Kosovo, the Serbian authorities once again tried to broach the question of constitutional changes.¹² However, Serbia's opponents in the Yugoslav leadership from other republics saw every such attempt as a return to etatism, centralism and aspirations to a "Great Serbia". Any constitutional changes were blocked. However, it was precisely the "political system established by the Constitution of 1974 that deepened the ongoing crisis and made it more serious and hopeless".¹³

The lack of a legal mechanism to resolve the problem of the Constitution of 1974 could not but result in the gradual radicalization of the mood among the Serbs. The old conflict in the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Serbia between the "liberals" spearheaded by I. Stambolić and the proponents of a radical solution for existing quarrels also intensified.

Then, in 1984, Slobodan Milošević – the main protagonist of Serbian history in the 1990s – appeared on the political scene of Serbia. The "liberals" in the ranks of the Serbian communists were defeated and a few years later the "radicals" made Milošević the leader of the party. The Serbian historian Lj. Dimić believes that at the time when the totalitarian model – including ideological utopianism and unlimited power of the party elite with its charismatic leaders – began to lose momentum in Europe, it began to solidify in Serbia, previously the most liberal among the Yugoslav republics.¹⁴

It could be said that the regime in Serbia – after already having collapsed in Eastern Europe – underwent a revival and was fundamentally re-established with Slobodan Milošević's rise to power. Interestingly, the "party that had ruled for 40 years, now governed through a new, 'purified' (to borrow the term used at the time) leadership, becoming both the government and the opposition at

¹¹ Ibid. 698–699.

¹² Ibid. 339.

¹³ Attempts to reconsider the Constitution were launched by Serbia in 1975, 1981, 1984 and 1985. See, e.g., Lj. Dimić, "Srbija 1804–2004 (suočavanje sa prošlošću)", in Lj. Dimić, D. Stojanović and M. Jovanović, *Srbija 1804–2004: tri vidjenja ili poziv na dijalog* (Belgrade: Udruženje za društvenu istoriju, 2005), 102.

¹⁴ Ibid. 100.

once".¹⁵ It was precisely the fact that Milošević managed to "ride" this wave of nationalism that lent such stability to the regime.¹⁶

In late 1988, with the help of protests against the local bureaucracy which he had considerably inspired, Milošević managed to replace the leadership of Vojvodina and Montenegro with his own protégés. Similar attempts were made in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but with little success. These shifts were called "anti-bureaucratic revolutions". Of course, they had little to do with the "velvet revolutions" that swept Eastern Europe in 1989. As communism counted its last days throughout Eastern Europe, the old regime in Serbia, under the slogan of an "anti-bureaucratic revolution", managed to consolidate its power.

The boom of nationalism in Serbia, spearheaded by Milošević, was also boosted by the concurrent rise of nationalism in Yugoslavia's north-western republics – Slovenia¹⁷ and Croatia. This was followed by the rapid deterioration of the Yugoslav economy and, even more importantly, by the events in Kosovo, where the position of the local Serbian population was becoming increasingly difficult. In order to attract attention, the Serbs of Kosovo began sending collective petitions to the higher government organs and organizing protest marches to Belgrade.

In the context of this topic, it is important to note that the developments in Kosovo had a decisive impact on the fact that the Yugoslav democratism of the Serbian opposition intelligentsia increasingly gave way to nationalist ideas. While many pro-opposition figures, including Dobrica Ćosić, had previously believed that the Yugoslav federation was the best solution for the Serbian question, they now began to see it as a suppression mechanism directed at all things Serbian.¹⁸ The pattern observed above came to the fore – the replacement of initially democratic tendencies by national or even nationalist ones.

A similar pattern can be observed in the territory of the former USSR. For example, in many Soviet republics, particularly in the Baltic states, popular

¹⁵ D. Stoianovich, "Porochnyi krug serbskoi oppozitsii", in *Serbiia o sebe* (Moscow: Evropa, 2005), 117. For more detail see Jović, *Jugoslavija, država koja je odumrla*, 423, 430, 449.

¹⁶ The words of Slobodan Jovanović used to describe an earlier period in Serbian history come to mind and seem as current as ever: "Serbia did not create an intellectual and political elite with a modern understanding of nation. The semi-intellectual became prevalent, leeching on nationalism as the only tradition, even when it was no longer so." Quoted in L. Perović, "Iskustvo sa drugim narodima", in *Jugoslavija u istorijskoj perspektivi* (Belgrade: Helsinški odbor za ljudska prava u Srbiji, 2017), 207.

¹⁷ According to Jović, *Jugoslavija, država koja je odumrla*, 423, 430, 449, Slovene nationalism was no weaker than Serbian. Like in Serbia, the Slovene leadership was becoming increasingly tolerant towards its opposition and in the end a pan-Slovene bloc of sorts emerged in this republic. Like in Serbia, the Slovene communists could become both the government and the opposition.

¹⁸ S. K. Pavlović, *Srbija: istorija iza imena* (Belgrade: Clio, 2004), 218, 227.

fronts were organized as informal coalitions of very diverse forces opposed to the monopolist position of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). Generally speaking, they were led by democratic convictions and enjoyed the support of both the titular and the Russian-speaking population. However, in time, and particularly after coming to power, these organizations or political parties and the coalitions that had emerged from them took up extremely national or even nationalist positions. For example, it is well known that many Russians and native speakers of Russian in Latvia and Estonia, even those born in these states, did not receive Latvian or Estonian citizenship.

At a very different time, in the period 2011–2013, very different events took place at Bolotnaya Square in Moscow. Mass protests were held against the alleged falsification of the results of parliamentary and then presidential elections. For the purposes of this paper it is important to note that nationalist forces gradually began to emerge and become prominent in the joint democratic movement of protesting citizens. Although certainly in the minority, these forces were far more united and better organized than the others. It can be assumed that they could have completely taken over the initiative if the government had not quelled the protests.

Finally, another example is the abovementioned Ukrainian Euromaidan – the political crisis that erupted in the country in 2013–2014. The protests began with democratic demands and were aimed against social injustice, the low standard of living, rampant corruption etc. only to quickly radicalize, with the leading role taken over by nationalist and even extreme nationalist forces that glorified Nazi fascist collaborators in the Second World War.

Let me underline once again: nationalism, as we have seen, tends to enter the stage in times of democratic changes, while democratic ideas are clearing their path but still remain underdeveloped and have yet to win the final victory and become deeply embedded. In this case nationalism makes use of new possibilities that have emerged, among other things, owing to democratization processes. I am of the opinion that this is one of the obvious patterns of democratic transformations, which always bring a very real danger of the rise of nationalism. Encouraging nationalism in the name of the struggle against totalitarian or authoritarian regimes always means playing with fire. Nationalism will not necessarily yield the positions it has won to democracy.

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Bogoljub Šijaković*

*Faculty of Orthodox Theology
University of Belgrade*

Riddle and Secret: Laza Kostić and Branko Miljković around Heraclitus' Fire

In memory of Dušan Bataković (1957–2017)

εἰς ἑξήμιόμυριοι, ἐάν ᾖριστος ᾦ

“One is ten thousand to me, if he be the best.”

Heraclitus, fragment 49

Abstract: The culture of ancient Greece, and particularly its philosophy, contains paradigms that are predetermining, binding and eternally valid for the entire body of European culture. European culture and, in its distinctive way, Serbian culture, as an important dynamic motif has the need to constantly revisit Hellenic culture. This is in fact a productive (re) interpretation as a way of acquiring cultural self-awareness and self-knowledge. The entire cosmos and human fate in it are revealed in Hellenic thought as both a *riddle* and a *secret*. Both of these relationships to reality, in the model form found already in the work of Heraclitus, still characterize human thought and creation. The world seen as a riddle to be solved is the subject of many a discipline, and the secret that reveals itself to us provides the basis of faith and all arts. Two Serbian poets (although there are more) acquired their creative self-awareness around Heraclitus' concept of fire. In his scholarly and philosophical treatises Laza Kostić (1841–1910) turned to Heraclitus in a bid to solve the riddle of reality. In his contemplative-poetic works Branko Miljković (1934–1961) turned to Heraclitus seeking to uncover the secret of nothingness in the latter's fire and to learn from the Ephesian's foretoking that poetry is hermetic and loves to hide. Is there a deeper logic linking riddle and secret? Do science, philosophy, art and faith have a deeper unity? The answers are to be sought in Laza's and Branko's understanding of Heraclitus' fire.

Keywords: Heraclitus, Laza Kostić, Branko Miljković, riddle, secret, poetry

The model role and importance of Hellenic culture

The Hellenic culture still remains formative for all European nations and a determining paradigm of their own respective cultures. Thus, when revisiting Hellenic sources, we are also returning to ourselves. This return to the Hellenes keeps reoccurring in the cultural history of European nations. The European culture, and in its distinctive way the Serbian culture, as an important dy-

* bsijakov@gmail.com

dynamic motif has the need to constantly revisit the Hellenic culture. This is in fact a productive (re)interpretation as a way of acquiring cultural self-awareness and self-knowledge. Thus we have Renaissance humanism; neo-humanism (Johann Joachim Winckelmann, Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller, Johann Christian Friedrich Hölderlin, Karl Wilhelm Friedrich Schlegel, Wilhelm von Humboldt); and the third humanism of Werner Jaeger, rooted in classical and Christian antiquity. Characterized by ahistoricism, classicism formed our perception of antiquity as a timeless ideal. Drawing on this, the complacent classical scholar sees the Hellenic culture as self-contained. In contrast, seeing everything through the prism of the endlessness and aimlessness of historical developments, *historicism* has distanced us from this ideal. Neither the absolutization nor the relativization of ancient Greek values could help a lost wanderer find the path in the world of life. These values need to be allowed to participate in the dynamics of life. And today? Jacob Burckhardt said that we would never rid ourselves of classical antiquity unless we became barbarians again.¹ And indeed, nowadays humankind seems to be headed straight into barbarity.

However, we have become Christians! The meeting of Greek philosophy and Christian faith does not have just the single meaning of an unrepeatable and edifying historical event, but rather an eternally binding sense for European culture, because it was precisely *this* meeting that led to the emergence of *this* culture. The Christian “reception” of the Hellenic world is the reason behind our fundamental interest in the culture of ancient Greece, which is understood as “our own” and still authoritative. Christianity did not reject either Socrates or the Truth. More specifically, the Christian faith in itself involves the activity of the mind, an arduous quest to discover the truth, to understand the world and humankind in it, to expand the field of knowledge and broaden the mind (which is nowadays dangerously limited to instrumental rationality). The Socratic wondering mind and the *érōs* of seeking the truth, as the founding moments of academic and philosophical knowledge and exploration, are by no means alien to Christianity. And indeed, what would be our perception of Socrates without Christ, whose sacrifice imbued the sacrifice of Socrates with a new meaning in later culture.

The meeting of Christianity and the Hellenic world is also illustrated by the great idea of *logos* (λόγος), with which the Greeks laid the foundation of philosophical and scientific rationality. In *theoretical philosophy* it is the *logical mind* that accepts the existence and validity only of that for which proof can be provided (λόγον διδόναι). And the *logos* is present not only in our epistemological capacities (with epistemology drawing on this), but also in the very structure of reality (ontology aims to demonstrate this), and thus the agent of learning

¹ J. Burckhardt, *Historische Fragmente*, Aus dem Nachlass (Basel: Schwabe, 1942).

and the subject of learning are seen in unity (already in Heraclitus). In *practical philosophy* it is the *logos mind* that is capable of *differentiating between good and evil*. And not only is the *logos* an individual feature (ζῶον λόγον ἔχον) owing to which we have a sense of morality (which is the basis of ethics), but it is also a requisite for the emergence of the polis (in itself necessary for the emergence of politics) – the precondition for a community based on moral and legal norms, as admirably elaborated by Aristotle.² Christianity accepts both key aspects of the Hellenic idea of *logos* – the theoretical and the practical. However, *Logos* is Christ who “became flesh” (ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο, John 1:14). Christianity brings an unprecedented, completely fresh and ennobling meaning: the *logos of love and sacrifice* for another – in contrast to instrumental rationality as the *logos of violence*, which threatens to plunge us back into barbarity, where the only universal language is force.

Hellenic antiquity in Serbian culture

Hellenic antiquity as an educational and cultural ideal has always been a paradigmatic requisite for the emergence and existence of the Serbian culture, either due to its direct formative influence or through its indirect Christian reception. Among many examples, primarily from the field of literature, the following are particularly noteworthy: St. Sava (1174–1235), Constantine of Kostenets (1380?–1439?), Zaharije Orfelin (1726–1785), Dositej Obradović (1739–1811), Jovan Sterija Popović (1806–1856), Petar II Petrović Njegoš (1813–1851), Laza Kostić (1841–1910), Vojislav Ilić (1862–1894), Dimitrije Mitrinović (1887–1953), Miodrag Pavlović (1928–2014), Borislav Pekić (1930–1992), Ivan V. Lalić (1931–1996), Jovan Hristić (1933–2002), Branko Miljković (1934–1961). This is by no means an exhaustive list of all notable Serbian Hellenists who had a deep impact on the Serbian culture. The Serbian self-awareness and self-comprehension include Hellenic antiquity as a constitutive element.

The entire cosmos and human fate in it are revealed in Hellenic thought as both a riddle and a secret. Both of these types of relationships towards reality, in a model form found already in the work of Heraclitus, still characterize human thought and creation. The world seen as a riddle to be solved is the subject of many a discipline, and the secret that reveals itself to us provides the basis of faith and all arts. Two Serbian poets (there are more) acquired their creative self-awareness around Heraclitus' concept of fire. In his scholarly and philosophical treatises *Laza Kostić* (1841–1910) turned to Heraclitus in a bid to solve the riddle of reality. In his contemplative-poetic works *Branko Miljković* (1934–1961) turned to Heraclitus hoping that his fire might reveal the secret of poetry.

² *Politica* I 2. 1252^b–1253^a.

Convergence loves to hide: Laza Kostić and Heraclitus before the riddle of reality

Both the poetry of Laza Kostić and the scholarly oeuvre of this remarkably learned jurist, politician and prisoner, poet and literary critic, philosopher and essayist, professor and academician, journalist and translator, actor and bon vivant – can be seen as a fertile refuge of Hellenic antiquity.³ Here I will focus on two of his academic studies (he signed them with his academic title of “Dr.” to indicate his scholarly aspirations): *The Fundamentals of Beauty in the World, with Particular Regard to Serbian Folk Poetry* (1880)⁴ and *The Basic Principle: A Critical Introduction to General Philosophy* (1884).⁵

At the very beginning of *The Fundamentals of Beauty* Laza Kostić expressly defines his task as a quest for the fundamental law of everything in existence, a task that had already been taken up by early Greek philosophers (as interpreted by Aristotle): “Ever since the dawn of time, thinkers have always tried to discern the way of the emergence and survival of this world, to find and learn the laws that cause, generate, develop and destroy all various phenomena. In this struggle, in its proudest endeavor, the human spirit will never falter until it discovers the very last and first law that was the source of everything, everything in the world; until it uncovers the last secret of creation” (121:1). The sought “fundamental line of the first law of all life and all creatures” (121:2) was grasped already by Empedocles, Anaxagoras and Heraclitus:⁶

“But that same principle of the world, which is recognized by Empedocles and Anaxagoras, is most decisively, most powerfully and most clearly propagated by the youngest member of this trio of Hellenic sages – Heraclitus, who could only be seen as obscure (dark, cryptic) by the obscure, supposedly because his daring had clouded their spiritual eye.

³ This has been thoroughly explored by Miron Flašar, “Helenstvo Laze Kostića”, in *Zbornik istorije književnosti. историје књижевности*, Odeljenje literature i jezika, vol. 6: Laza Kostić (Belgrade: SANU, 1968), 169–231; see also Miodrag Radović, “Heleni”, *Laza Kostić i svetska književnost* (Belgrade: Delta Press, 1983), 27–51.

⁴ Dr. Laza Kostić, “Osnova lepote u svetu s osobitim obzirom na srpske narodne pesme” [The Fundamentals of Beauty in the World, with Particular Regard to Serbian Folk Poetry], *Letopis matice srpske* (Novi Sad 1880), Ch. 121, 1–40; Ch. 122, 1–40; Ch. 123, 1–24; Ch. 124, 1–44 (published as a separate publication in Novi Sad by Srpska narodna zadružna štamparija, 1880), 144 p. – This text quotes the first edition.

⁵ Dr. Laza Kostić, “Osnovno načelo. Kritički uvod u opštu filosofiju” [The Basic Principle: A Critical Introduction to General Philosophy], *Letopis Matice srpske* (Novi Sad 1884), Ch. 138, 1–39; Ch. 139, 1–53 (published separately in Novi Sad by Srpska štamparija dra Svetozara Miletića, 1884, 91 p.) – This text quotes the first edition. An English translation (by Predrag Čičovački) has been published recently: *The Basic Principle: A Critical Introduction to General Philosophy* (Sombor: City Library “Karlo Bjelicki”, 2016).

⁶ On this see Siniša Jelušić, “Laza Kostić i predsokratovci”, in *Antičke studije kod Srba*, ed. M. Stojanović and R. Samardžić (Belgrade: Bakanološki institut SANU, 1989), 207–218.

In the fragments that are left of Heraclitus' thought, the sage says in the 30th: Διαφερόμενον γὰρ αἰεὶ ξυμφέρεται, and in the 37th: καὶ Ἡράκλειτος τὸ ἀντίξουν συμφέρον, καὶ ἐκ τῶν διαφερόντων καλλίστην ἁρμονίαν, καὶ πάντα κατ' ἔριν γίνεσθαι.

(And Heraclitus says that the opposite is useful, and that the diverse produces the most beautiful harmony, and that everything comes from strife. The Parisian publisher Mullachius translates the last phrase as: et eo Discordia nasci omnia statuit. But the Latin word *discordia* has none of the liveliness, the scintillating freshness, the true Hellenic drama that comes with the word ἔρις, fury, grudge, strife).⁷ (I21:3-4)

At this point Laza Kostić introduces the key term of his interpretation – “convergence”, which here suggests a harmonic and symmetrical relationship between opposing forces as the fundamental cosmic law; however, for Kostić the term has a complex and comprehensive meaning, as the methodological convergence of deduction and induction⁸ and, much more importantly, as the epistemological and creative convergence of imagination and reason, heart and mind, poetry and philosophy.⁹ He defines the principle of convergence as follows:

The word convergence warns us that it is time to decipher what was the truth that the three Hellenic sages discerned, learned and intimated. They were the first to discover that the principle of duality, the principle of opposition, more specifically in the proportion, in antithesis, the principle in the physical world, is most clearly manifested in the parallelogram of power and in organic life in the law of symmetry and convergence. All of this is one single principle. This is best illustrated by comparing those manifestations of this principle that are seemingly so divergent that they do not seem alike at all. That is the law of symmetry and the law of proportion and convergence. (I21:5-6)

Symmetry is the realization of the principle of “proportion” and “convergence”, two halves of a whole or two phenomena, whether in the body, image, thought, in a force, in space or in time. (I21:8)

Symmetry is the appearance of the same fundamental law of the world which Empedocles found in “the separation of unity” and “the unity of duality”, Anaxagoras in cosmic “opposition”, and which Heraclitus most succinctly formulated

⁷ The accent in the word ἔρις was originally incorrectly printed as ἐρις.

⁸ On the convergence of induction and deduction he says (I21:5): “The only hope for success, in life as well as in scholarship, is the harmony (concord) of these two great foreign scientific methods, more specifically the convergence of these two directions.”

⁹ Cf. Anica Savic Rebac, “O jednoj pesmi Laze Kostića: Povodom četrdesete godišnjice njegove smrti”, *Univerzitetski glasnik* III/40–41 (1950), 5 = A. Savic Rebac, *Duh helenstva*, eds. M. Lompar and I. Deretić (Belgrade: Službeni glasnik, 2015), 720–724, 724: “The philosophical essays of Laza Kostić in themselves place him among the relevant representatives of the concept of the convergence of diverging forces; but his full stature is achieved in the convergence and harmony of his philosophical concept with his works of poetry.”

as follows: “Out of discord comes the fairest harmony and struggle is the father of all things.” (121:9)

Symmetry is really nothing but contrast in harmony, in Greek ἀρμονία τῶν διαφερόντων, in a word: “dis-cord”. (121:9)

Laza Kostić proceeds to explain that in ancient times the word ἀρμονία used to mean “rift, groove, joint” (121:9) and points out: “The joint is the simplest, most graphic embodiment of the principle of convergence” (121:10). The Hellenic people suspected and Heraclitus formulated that “everything comes from assembling the disjointed and dismantling the joined, or from the concord of discord or discord of concord, in a word – from convergence” (121:10). Then he goes on to universalize the concept of convergence and thematize the convergence of space and time and the convergence in anorganic nature, specifically in crystals, and in organic nature (flora and fauna), and particularly in humankind.¹⁰

These ideas are elaborated in *The Basic Principle*, a text documenting his knowledge of natural science, particularly physiology, as well as of classical authors and modern philosophers (e.g. Leibniz, Kant, Schopenhauer, Mill).¹¹ It is wrong, he argues, to seek the basic principle of organic life in matter, because such a principle could not be applied to spiritual life; rather, the answer to this problem can be revealed by the theory of movement (waves) in the phenomena of light and heat:

And when this theory, the theory of movement – confirmed with mathematical precision by almost every physical phenomenon from the simplest movement of bodies and molecules to the phenomenon of electromagnetism – when this theory is applied to the question of life, we must strictly logically come to the conclusion that the primordial cause of all things, both physical and spiritual, cannot be found in any kind of matter but rather needs to be sought in a principle of proportion that governs matter and movement, older and superior to both matter and movement.

We believe that this is the principle of convergence. (138:12)

Convergence, proportion,¹² harmony, symmetry – these are all modalities of a single principle and Laza Kostić sees the discovery of this principle in the works of early Greek philosophers: “Proclaiming a concept of proportion, a law of relation, a principle of ratio, as the only foundation of all phenomena in the world, I do not for a moment believe that I have discovered anything original or

¹⁰ E.g.: “Human bones are arranged not only in the most perfect symmetry, but also in total harmony. Every bone is joined to another” (123:1).

¹¹ For more detail see Dusan Nedeljković, “Srpski dijalektički pankalizam u XIX veku” [1960], in Zoran Glušević, ed., *Epoha romantizma* (Belgrade: Nolit, 1966), 388–402; Siniša Jelušić, “Uvod u značenje filozofskih rasprava Laze Kostića”, *Književna istorija XVIII/69–70* (1985), 65–106.

¹² In the Serbian original Laza Kostić uses a neologism derived from the word “bridge, to bridge” (Sr. premost, премоост) as a synonym for proportion, ratio, ἀνὰ λόγον (e.g. 138:13).

that God has not revealed the secret of his creation of humankind and the world to anyone but me. This is an ancient concept and is found as early as Pythagoras” (138:13). To clarify his basic principle, Kostić offers some more specific terminological and conceptual explanations: “Symmetry is the joining or melding of opposites of two parts” (138:20/21). “Symmetry is a composite of convergences, direct or indirect” (138:22). In addition, he points out that symmetry is a *manifestation* rather than an idea, as well as harmony: “Harmony is a very distinctive manifestation of the basic principle of convergence or convergence in a specific centripetal form, an assembled cross” (138:35). “This proves that harmony is nothing but inverted or rather assembled symmetry; the reverse is also true: symmetry is inverted or rather disassembled harmony. (...) Harmony is the synthesis of symmetry. Symmetry is the analysis of harmony” (138:36). Of course, the basic principle has a universal meaning:

But there is one form of the principle of convergence that has ruled the world ever since the creation of crystals to all organic phenomena to the workings of the loftiest capacities of the mind and its creations. That is symmetry. (138:14)

From the creation of some crystals to the noblest products of the human mind to the exemplary works of art and poetry, always and everywhere there is symmetry and harmony in fruitful, blessed fellowship. (138:37)

Symmetry, harmony and convergence make humans the most perfect organism (139:1), and the basic principle brings us to the question of the internal limitations of knowing the human mind (139:9).

Laza Kostić seeks to solve the riddle that he has asked himself (cf. 138:38). He approaches Heraclitus driven by his aspiration to uncover the nature of things, the basic principle of everything in existence – more specifically the principle of convergence, first understood by the ancient Greeks, originally by Empedocles and most perfectly by Heraclitus (139:13, 17), who formulated it as Διαφερόμενον γὰρ αἰὲν ξυμφέρεται (the detached is always united, translates Kostić – 139:17). “After Heraclitus it is all over, the end comes to everything in antiquity. In classical antiquity he was both the apex and the conclusion in the history of our fundamental thought” (139:18). This return to the Presocratics was neither isolated nor unusual. It had been done, in the interest of their own thought, by Hegel, Nietzsche, and Heidegger. Even Karl Popper, who was concerned with logic, methodology and philosophy of science rather than with metaphysics, argues that we need to revisit the Presocratics and their “simple straightforward rationality” which lies in the “simplicity” and “boldness” of their primarily cosmological and epistemological questions; in other words, Popper believes that philosophy must return to cosmology and a simple theory of knowledge.¹³

¹³ Karl R. Popper, “Back to the Presocratics”, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* n. s. 59 (1958–59), 1–24; also published in Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Sci-*

A particular interpretative challenge would be to explore the reverse course of influence, i.e. how could Heraclitus' fragments on harmony, logos and fire be reinterpreted from Kostić's point of view and, of course, what would the riddle and the secret be for Heraclitus. Well-educated, competent and driven by a passion for research, Kostić read Heraclitus' fragments in Greek in the then-authoritative collection of Pre-Socratic texts in the first volume (*Poeseos philosophicæ cæterorumque ante Socratem philosophorum quæ supersunt*, 1860) of Greek fragments (*Fragmenta philosophorum græcorum*) edited by the German classical scholar and Hellenist Friedrich Wilhelm August Mullach, (1807–1882),¹⁴ who included his own Latin translations of 96 Greek fragments by Heraclitus (pp. 315–329). Mullach's translations are critically viewed by Kostić.

Kostić did not focus on Heraclitus' concept of eternal and ever-living (ἀείζωον) fire as the only cosmic force untouched by creation and decline (22 B 30, 31, 90 Diels/Kranz), because he believed that the basic principle is to be sought not in the material but in the spiritual – in *harmony*. And for Heraclitus harmony is in the unity of opposites: “What opposes unites, and the finest attunement stems from things bearing in opposite directions, and all things come about by strife” (τὸ ἀντίξουν συμφέρον καὶ ἐκ τῶν διαφερόντων καλλίστην ἁρμονίαν καὶ πάντα κατ' ἔριν γίνεσθαι – B 8 D/K).¹⁵ In fact, Heraclitus offers variations of this thought in several fragments: “things whole and not whole, what is drawn together and what is drawn asunder, the harmonious and the discordant. The one is made up of all things, and all things issue from the one” (συλλάψεις· ὄλα

entific Knowledge (1963), 4th ed. (revised) (London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), 136–153: 136. (Serbian translation by D. Lakićević, Novi Sad 2002, 212–235: 212).

¹⁴ *Fragmenta philosophorum græcorum*, collegit, recensuit, vertit, annotationibus et prolegomenis illustravit, indicibus instruxit Fr. Guil. Aug. Mullachius, in III voluminibus, I: *Poeseos philosophicæ cæterorumque ante Socratem philosophorum quæ supersunt*, II: *Pythagoreos, Sophistas, Cynicos et Chalcidii in Priorem Timæi platonici partem commentarios continens*, III: *Platonicos et Peripateticos continens*, Parisiis: Editore Ambrosio Firmin Didot, I 1860, II 1867, III 1881 (reprinted in Aalen: Scientia-Verlag, 1968). Comprehensive and easily readable, Mullach's seminal work remained in use for a long time. The first volume on the Presocratics did not become obsolete until 1903, which saw the publication of the first edition of the authoritative collection by Hermann Diels (1848–1922): H. Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker, griechisch und deutsch* (Berlin: Weidmann 1903) [Heraclitus is quoted here according to the last, sixth edition (I–III, 1951–1952), edited by Walther Kranz (1884–1960)]. Kostić did not use the latest available edition by the Oxford classical scholar Ingram Bywater (1840–1914) *Heracliti Ephesii Reliquiæ*, recensuit I. Bywater, *Appendicis loco additæ sunt Diogenis Laertii vita Heracliti, particulae Hippocratei de diaeta libri primi, epistolæ Heracliteæ cum indice duplici scriptorum et verborum* (Oxonii: e typographeo Clarendoniano, 1877; reprint: Amsterdam 1969, London: Argonaut/Zeno 1970).

¹⁵ Cf. B 80 D/K: “We must know that war is common to all and strife is justice, and that all things come into being and pass away through strife” (εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἔοντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεών).

καὶ οὐχ ὅλα, συμφερόμενον διαφερόμενον, συνᾶδον διᾶδον καὶ ἐκ πάντων ἓν καὶ ἐξ ἑνὸς πάντα – B 10 D/K); “The way up and the way down is one and the same” (ὁδὸς ἄνω κάτω μία καὶ ὡντή – B 60 D/K); “Concerning the circumference of a circle the beginning and end are common” (ξυὸν γὰρ ἀρχὴ καὶ πέρασ ἐπὶ κύκλου περιφερείας – B 103 D/K). For the purposes of this text, however, the following fragment is particularly significant: “The *hidden harmony* is better than the obvious” (ἁρμονίη ἀφανῆς φανερῆς κρείττων – B 54 D/K) – the essence of things as their invisible composition of being is superior to anything visible in terms of fundamentality. Heraclitus was the first to expressly suggest the invisible as the subject of philosophy, a point later cogently formulated by Anaxagoras: “Appearances are a glimpse of the unseen” (ὄψις τῶν ἀδήλων τὰ φαινόμενα – 59 B 21A D/K); even Herodotus (II 33) discusses the methodological principle, which allows us to infer the unknown from the visible (τοῖς ἐμφανέσι τὰ μὴ γιγνωσκόμενα τεκμαιρόμενος). The visible reflects the invisible, and the invisible (which is hidden and therefore invisible) is revealed through the visible as the true subject of our understanding of reality. This brings us to Heraclitus’ famous statement that “nature” (fundamental conception, the workings of reality) “loves to hide” (φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ – B 123 D/K). The fundamental structure of reality is not hidden in the sense that it is unintelligible; it “loves to hide” in the sense that we uncover it as a *riddle* to be solved. The riddle allows finding a solution as a discovery of meaning. The riddle of the world (*Welträtsel*) allows us to uncover the meaning of the world (which is not readily given to us) through the effort of learning and interpretation by deciphering it, and to thereby understand the world. The requisite for solving the riddle of reality is *logos*, the rationality of both reality and our knowledge: “all things come to be in accordance with this *logos*” (γινομένων γὰρ πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε), but “humans always prove unable to ever understand it, both before hearing it and when they have first heard it” (τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῦδ’ ἐόντος αἰεὶ ἀξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι καὶ πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον – B 1 D/K); however: “To the soul, belongs the self-multiplying *Logos*” (ψυχῆς ἐστὶ λόγος ἑαυτὸν αὖξων – B 115 D/K). Hence for Heraclitus *logos* means both the principle of the defining structure of the cosmos (as such it is omnipresent in manifest diversity) and the ability of the soul to discover the *logos* structure of things (as such it is universally valid for understanding things as well as self-multiplying). Hence, it is that mysteriously hidden harmony that as the guarantee of rationality lies in both the structure of reality and the logic of discovering reality, and together with Heraclitus Laza Kostić seeks to uncover the basic principle of everything – of objectivity and subjectivity.

Every riddle has an answer. According to Ludwig Wittgenstein, “the world is the totality of facts, not of things” (1.1: Die Welt ist die Gesamtheit der Tatsachen, nicht der Dinge), and “the facts in logical space are the world” (1.13: Die Tatsachen im logischen Raum sind die Welt), and therefore it follows that there

is no riddle without an answer: "For an answer which cannot be expressed, the question too cannot be expressed. The *riddle* does not exist. If a question can be put at all, then it can also be answered" (6.5: Zu einer Antwort, die man nicht aussprechen kann, kann man auch die Frage nicht aussprechen. Das Rätsel gibt es nicht. Wenn sich eine Frage überhaupt stellen lässt, so kann sie auch beantwortet werden).¹⁶ Unlike myth, which offers absolute and unequivocal answers about the holy reality of beginnings, the riddle insists on questioning: the riddle is used by one who knows the answer to put a question to the one who does not in order to stimulate learning and knowledge; and thus the riddle-giver tests the deservedness and worthiness of the one who needs to solve the riddle and to whom finding the answer will allow access into the circle of the learned, those initiated into wisdom.¹⁷ The riddle both encourages and obscures knowledge, using ambiguity to make the true meaning difficult to discern; therefore, it is like Heraclitus' "nature" which "loves to hide" and it is revealed to the logos in the omens of harmony.

Poetry loves to hide: Branko Miljković and Heraclitus before the Secret of Fire

Branko Miljković – for whom the symbolization of language is an expression of neo-symbolist poetics and the symbol is an intimation of the secret hidden and revealed by poetry, which is hermetical in nature – wrote a short essay on Laza Kostić, who "still carries the fate of our modern poetry on his back" and hence continues to "to live on our debt of gratitude to him", above all his "verbal fearlessness, the breaking of the wall between dream and reality": "his true power lies in the fact that he boldly drank from the spring of language."¹⁸ The literary critic Jovan Hristić also describes Kostić as a "poet of unusual language and verse, whimsical and fragmentary, incomplete and in many aspects only partially communicated": "Laza wanted his words to sound like their meaning and to convey meaning in their sound."¹⁹ Miljković and Hristić could have as well been describing Heraclitus. This is apparent in Kostić's original wording, his tendency to etymologize (explicitly present in his philosophical treatises: 124:1, 13-32; and particularly in the word ἀρμυρία – 121:9 and 138:26), but above all in his blending of philosophy and poetry: "Generally every poet should have a bit of philosophy, just as every philosopher... should be a bit of a poet" (139:40). Laza

¹⁶ L. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (London 1922).

¹⁷ Cf. André Jolles, "Rätsel", *Einfache Formen* (Tubingen: Max Niemeyer, 41968 [1930]), 126–149.

¹⁸ B. Miljković, "Laza Kostić i mi", *Branko Miljković*, vol. 91 of *Deset vekova srpske kniževnosti*, ed. P. Mikić (Novi Sad: Izdavački centar Matice srpske, 2016), 150–151.

¹⁹ Jovan Hristić, "Skica o Lazi Kostiću" *Letopis Matice srpske* (Nov. 1962), also in Zoran Gluščević, ed., *Epoha romantizma* (Belgrade: Nolit, 1966), 365–387: 366 and 379.

Kostić took great care to highlight that he himself practiced a “convergence of poetry and philosophy”, a “weave of reason and imagination”, the reciprocity of the senses and reason, mind and heart, which he finds in various opuses, particularly those of the ancient Greeks (139:40-41). Heraclitus was the role model for all of this: he uses strange wordings, symbols and etymologies; employs polyphony and multiple meanings; his philosophical and poetical style is embodied in aphorisms and apophthegms as units of thought in fragments; his thought both reveals and obscures; it is the riddle and the secret. For all of these reasons, poets have their own Heraclitus.²⁰

Convinced, not unlike Kostić, that the ancient Greeks at the very least intimated everything that we know today,²¹ Miljković discovered Heraclitus as a philosophy student, attending the lectures of Miloš Djurić and Bogdan Šešić²² and reading the available translations of Heraclitus’ fragments²³. The presence of Heraclitus in Miljković’s poetry and poetics is very apparent and underlying. Although it was not the poet’s intention to offer his own interpretation of Heraclitus, Miljković’s verses on fire could be used to interpret Heraclitus’ concept of fire, while the poet’s view of poetry as the revelation of the incomprehensible could be read as the Ephesian’s intimation of the secret.

²⁰ See Branko Aleksić, “Saobraćanje poezije i filozofije: Heraklit i moderna poezija”, *Filozofska istraživanja* 23 (1987), 1211–1222 = “L’alliance poésie-philosophie: Héraclite et la poésie moderne”, *Synthesis Philosophica* 3/6 (1988), 603–617 (T. S. Eliot, J. L. Borges, M. Dedinač, M. Ristić, René Char, O. Paz, Nranko Miljković); previously published in serialized form: V. Aleksić in the journal *Gradina* XVI, vols. 4–7 (1981). – The poem Heraclitus by J. L. Borges (1968) was published in translation in the journal *Gradac* 6 (1975) 7; Char’s short essay “Heraclitus of Ephesus” (published as the foreword in: Yves Battistini, *Héraclite d’Éphèse*, traduction nouvelle et intégrale avec une introduction et des notes, Avant-propos de René Char, Paris: Cahiers d’art, 1948) was translated and published in the journal *Gradina* XVI/5 (1981), 109–110; cf. Y. Battistini, “René Char et l’aurore de la pensée grecque”, *Liberte* 10 (1968) 81–85; M. Séguin, „René Char poète héraclitéen”, *Bulletin de l’Association Guillaume Budé* 28 (1969) 327–341; B. Tomašević, “Šarovo pismo Heraklitu”, *Odjek* XLI/19 (1–15. Oct. 1988), 8–9.

²¹ Cf. B. Miljković, “Poezija i oblik”, in *Branko Miljković*, ed. R. Mikić, 164–165; 165.

²² Cf. Bogdan Šešić, “Filozofski smisao poezije Branka Miljkovića”, *Gradina* 4 (1981), 7–27; 9. Miljković discussed Djurić’s book *Iz helenskih riznica: Studije i ogledi* [From Hellenic Treasures: Studies and Essays] (Belgrade: Prosveta, 1959) in his review “The Essays of Miloš Djurić” (*Branko Miljković*, ed. R. Mikić, 145–147).

²³ Along with the author’s study *The Philosophy of Heraclitus* (pp. 39–86), Dušan Nedeljković’s brochure *Heraklit* (Belgrade: Geca Kon, 1924) included a Serbian translation of Heraclitus’ fragments “On Nature” from Greek. The translation was the work of Adrienne Maurion Marquesi, a Frenchwoman who went on to become Nedeljković’s wife. This was followed by two other editions: Heraklit, *Svjedočanstva i fragmenti*, tr. Niko Majnarić (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1951; Heraklit, *O prirodi*, tr. Miroslav Marković (Belgrade: Kultura, 1954).

Asked which word he would choose to keep if he had to relinquish all other words, Branko Miljković replied: *fire*. In his collection of poetry titled *Vatra i ništa* (*Fire and Nothing*, originally published in Serbian in 1960),²⁴ he uses a Heraclitean understanding of fire as the dynamic foundation of everything, the being of everything, that which encompasses all things, either in actuality or as potential. His poem *An Ode to Fire* (1957) reads:

*Nothing is lost in fire
It is only condensed.*

Condensed – this means that fire consumes and condenses everything, just like Heraclitus says: “All things are an exchange for Fire, and Fire for all things, even as wares for gold and gold for wares” (πυρός τε ἀνταμοιβή τὰ πάντα καὶ πῦρ πάντων ὄκωσπερ χρυσοῦ χρήματα καὶ χρημάτων χρυσός – B 90 D/K). All cosmic elements are “transformations of Fire” (πυρός τροπαί – B 31 D/K) and the entire cosmos (or world) “was ever” (ἦνᾶει) and “is now” (ἔστιν) and “ever shall be” (ἔσται) an “ever-living Fire” (πῦρ ἀείζων) (B 30 D/K). In terms of its ontological rank fire is superior not only to all existing things but also to all other elements (air, water, earth) which are involved in the cosmic process of creation and decline; unlike them, fire is eternal (αἰώνιον) and ever-living (ἀείζων), and as such possesses the divine fullness of being. Therefore fire endures in all existing as well as destroyed (annihilated) things (*An Ode to Fire*):

*Take a handful of ashes
or anything that has passed
and you'll see that it still is fire
or that it could be*

(Translated by Aleksandra Milanović)

“Words have their own nature which the poet must know”²⁵ and “in a poem words must reach their own reality”,²⁶ Miljković says. The words of a poet are characterized by their ontic power of validity and therefore poetical language wields true power, which is in its distinctive, life-giving way present in the word *fire* (*Consciousness of the Poem*):

*The word fire! I have thanked this word for being alive
This word whose power I harness to utter it.*

²⁴ The Serbian original of this text uses the following edition: Branko Miljković, *Pesme I*, ed. M. Aleksić, vol. I of his *Collected Works* (Niš: Niški kulturni centar, 2015), 217–290: *Vatra i ništa* [Fire and Nothing]. An English translation of the collection *Fire and Nothing* has recently been published as a bilingual edition, including three essays on the art of poetry, tr. by Milo Yelesiyevich (The Serbian Classics Press, 2010).

²⁵ B. Miljković, “Pesnik i reč”, in B. Miljković, ed. R. Mikić, 121–123: 123.

²⁶ B. Miljković, “Poezija i ontologija”, *ibid.* 168.

The power of the poetic usage of words, which in a divine way transforms words into things and the verbal into the real, is the revelation of the secret of language, which resides in the power of naming and in irreducible ambiguity.²⁷ If the “word is robbed of the multiplicity of its meanings and its right to reasonable fluctuation, it no longer means anything at all. A poem is either incomprehensible or bereft of all meaning and content.”²⁸ The poetic word must be semantically rich, secretive and ancient: “precise words are always inadequate and it is not from them that poetry is made.”²⁹ The poet’s world is made up of vague foreboding:³⁰

*And clarity has nothing more to say
The world is indecipherable*

In his essay “The Incomprehensibility of Poetry” Miljković concludes in true Heraclitean fashion: “Poetry loves to hide, and it would do so even if it were free of linguistic conditionality, which is of course impossible.”³¹ His Ephesian role model said that “nature loves to hide” (φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ – B 123 D/K), and therefore we sense the essence of things before we uncover it. Poetry is the sensing of a secret and the poem is a hermetical creation: “It knows the secret but never says it.”³² And this is precisely the nature of the secret: a secret remains a secret even when it is revealed. This is character of the holy, the mysterious, the poetic. Poetics comes from the prophetic. Poetry transforms the meaning of words into signs suggesting a secret, just like Heraclitus’ Apollo: “The lord whose is the oracle at Delphoi neither utters nor hides his meaning, but shows it by a sign” (ὁ ἀναξ οὗ τὸ μαντεῖόν ἐστι τὸ ἐν Δελφοῖς οὔτε λέγει οὔτε κρύπτει ἀλλὰ σημαίνει – B 93 D/K). The purpose of oracles and of poetry is in divinely inspired signs or omens (for Plato, poets are those who are inspired by god – ἐνθουσιάζοντες),³³ whose meaning echoes through all time: according to Heraclitus, “the Sibyl, with raving lips uttering things mirthless, unbedizened, and unperfumed, reaches over a thousand years with her voice, thanks to the god in her” (Σίβυλλα δὲ μαινομένῳ στόματι καθ’ Ἡράκλειτον ἀγέλαστα καὶ ἀκαλλώπιστα καὶ ἀμύριστα φθεγγομένη χιλίων ἐτῶν ἐξικνεῖται τῇ φωνῇ διὰ τὸν θεόν – B 92 D/K).

Poetical sensing and hiding paradoxically wants to free itself in language from the limitations of that very language, to express the inexpressible and to

²⁷ Cf. my essay “Paradigmatičnost i tautegoričnost pjesništva”, *Prisutnost transcencije: helenstvo, hrišćanstvo, filozofija istorije* (Belgrade: Službeni glasnik, PBF, 2013), 248–253.

²⁸ B. Miljković, “Pesma i smrt”, in *Brano Miljković*, ed. R. Mikić, 148–149: 149.

²⁹ B. Miljković, “Pesnik i reč”, *ibid.* 122.

³⁰ B. Miljković, “Zajednička pesma”, *ibid.* 118.

³¹ *Ibid.* 171–174: 173.

³² B. Miljković, “Hermetička pesma”, *ibid.* 166–167: 166.

³³ Plato, *Apologia Sokratous* 22b/c.

show signs. Wittgenstein said in his *Tractatus*: “There is to be sure the unspeakable [unutterable, ineffable]. This shows itself, it is the mystical” (6.522: Es gibt allerdings Unaussprechliches. Dies zeigt sich, es ist das Mystische). And although all that can be verbalized is determined by logically structured language, we should know that “Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent” (7: Wovon man nicht sprechen kann, darüber muss man schweigen.). It is in silence that Miljković’s poetry and his life came to an end (“To sing and to die is one and the same” – tr. by Gavriilo Stanojević).³⁴ His radical renunciation of his own poetry is a poetical stand in its own right: poetry springs from silence and flows into silence. Of course, the poet knows that “we must know what it is that we are silent about. Silence must be said”.³⁵

Outcome

Searching for the basic principle of everything, Laza Kostić – following in the footsteps of Heraclitus – finds it in *harmony*. When we seek to decipher the world as a riddle in various disciplines in a bid to explain the fundamental structure, the deepest hidden structure of reality (φύσις), then through the effort of interpretation and comprehension we uncover the purpose and the very assumption of reason (λόγος), knowledge and verbalization. Harmony allows us to use the logos within us to decipher rationality (logos-ity) of all existing things, which loves to hide. In Heraclitean fashion Branko Miljković in the word *fire* finds his fundamental poetic word which condenses everything and which gives the poet the power of verbalization, of poetry, which is essentially hermetical. Poetry suggests a secret which remains a secret even when it is revealed. These two Serbian poets find in Heraclitus’ fire two approaches to reality and two types of purpose: deciphering the riddle of reality in various disciplines and the revelation of the secret in art and religious devotion.

The riddle and the secret suggest that we need to expand the concept of rationality, which the concept of logos already entails. Logos is rationality which includes all forms of knowledge and experience and cannot be reduced to narrow scientific reasoning. The idea of logos (which expresses the complex rationality contained in language, thought and reality) is a sublimated meeting of philosophical and scholarly rationality (which contains the assumption of immanent logos-ity, i.e. the meaningfulness of the entire creation and the complementary logos-ity of human knowledge, artistic production and moral action) and the Christian faith in the transcendent Logos of love and sacrifice, a meeting that continues to offer – beyond the limitations of the utilitarian and instrumental mind – the possibility of a responsible rationality (logos-ity) dedicated

³⁴ Brano Miljković, *Pesme I*, 288 (“Balada”).

³⁵ B. Miljković, “Pesma i smrt”, in B. Miljković, ed. R. Mikić, 149.

to goodness and justice. What we need is rationality which would not only be point-zero but a deepened instinct of self-preservation, which would not only be interested in usefulness but also in goodness, not only lawfulness but also justice. The problem of modern culture is that it is forgetting both Socrates and Christ. It is forgetting that truth and knowledge are tied to virtue (and therefore have a shared ethical element and not just a utilitarian one) and that the only community that can endure is the one that has holiness at its roots. This does not mean that a civilization which has supposedly not forgotten Socrates (albeit reduced to scientific knowledge) can use this to justify the fact that it is forgetting Christ (salvation as the purpose of knowledge).

Drinking from Hellenic springs and warming their hands on Heraclitus' fire, Laza Kostić and Branko Miljković could remind us of this over-arching nature of the logos and the need to rehabilitate all aspects of the logos and reject its reduction to reason (*ratio*). They also suggest that our academic topics discussed at the conference 'Serbia and Greece in the 19th and 20th Century: History, Politics, Culture' represent solving riddles faced in our research and that the Serbo-Greek friendship is a secret which, as its initiates, we must reveal to posterity.

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Institute for Balkan Studies
Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts
Serbia, Belgrade, Knez Mihailova 35/IV
www.balkaninstitut.com
e-mail: balkinst@bi.sanu.ac.rs
www.balcanica.rs

Editorial assistant
Marina Adamović-Kulenović

Layout
Kranislav Vranić

Cover design
Aleksandar Palavestra

Printed by
Službeni glasnik, Beograd

CIP – Каталогизacija у публикацији
Народна библиотека Србије, Београд

930.85:94

BALCANICA : annuaire de l'Institut des études balkaniques = annual of the
Institute for Balkan Studies / editor-in-chief Vojislav G. Pavlović. - 1970, knj. 1.-
- Beograd : Institute for Balkan Studies Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts
Serbia, 1970- (Beograd : Službeni glasnik). - 24 cm

Godišnje.

Drugo izdanje na drugom medijumu: Balcanica (Online) = ISSN 2406-0801

ISSN 0350-7653 = Balcanica (Beograd)

COBISS.SR-ID 6289154