

## The Birth of Modern Serbia (1804–2004)

### *Integration, concepts, ideas, and great powers*

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#### ABSTRACT

This chapter follows the origin and development of the modern Serbian state in the last two centuries. At the crossroads of great empires, the Serbian state ascended in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The national program formed in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as the basis of its foreign policy meant gathering the Serbian national corps into one state. It was gradually realized by maneuvering between the great powers, but also through conflict with them. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Serbian politics was most often correlated or in conflict with the interests of Austria, Russia, and Turkey. During Yugoslavia's time in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, France, Britain, and Germany took over, while in Socialist Yugoslavia during the Cold War, relations with the US, the USSR, and some non-aligned countries prevailed. In the post-communist era, the main problems in Serbia's foreign policy were its relationships with the US and NATO and with the EU and Germany. Geostrategic interests and Serbia's position meant that it was exposed to severe exclusions and numerous wars with both its neighbors and the great powers.

#### KEYWORDS

Serbia, great powers, national program, state, foreign policy

### 1. Birth of Serbian modern national ideology

Throughout their history, the Serbs as a people have experienced two great rises. One of these took place in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, while the other occurred in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. At one point in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, through great military successes and conquests, the Serbian state under the Nemanjićs spread to most of the Balkan Peninsula. Although Dušan's empire lasted only a very short time and quickly disintegrated under the onslaught of the Ottoman Turks, this memory of the state's greatness and the idea of its renewal remained alive through mythology and epic oral and church tradition.

The historical myth of greatness was therefore an important foundation and precondition for building a modern Serbian state. A spark that ignited the flame of

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national pride and social transformation enabled the creation of a modern Serbian state during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Almost five centuries after the Battle of Kosovo, the Serbian people reentered the historical scene. However, the road to a nation-state was not easy; it was fraught with many sacrifices, dilemmas, and divisions. The journey can be regarded in stages. While the birth of the modern state collided and conflicted with the neighboring Balkan nations, its struggles with the Great Powers were even greater. Among the European nations, the Serbian people have certainly made some of the greatest sacrifices in their struggle for independence.<sup>1</sup>

In the first stage, the newly awakened national consciousness initiated the liberation struggle. The struggle was embodied in two Serbian uprisings against the Turks (1804–1815); during this time, the Serbs were among the first peoples in the Balkans to embark on a path of liberation and the creation of a nation-state. Although unsuccessful in the beginning, the First Serbian Uprising awakened national pride and energy. This uprising formed a good foundation and inspiration for the Second Serbian Uprising, after which Serbia was among the first in the Balkans to gain some independence. Through their great sacrifices, they managed to gain a certain autonomy; thus, along with the Greeks, they were among the first nations in this part of Europe to acquire certain attributes of statehood. Their awareness of belonging to one national group, an Orthodox faith, language, common history, and the idea of territory—no matter how vague when it came to ethnic borders—were certainly important sources and support for the struggle for national liberation. This phase of the struggle was completed in 1835 with the Sretenje Constitution, the seed of Serbian statehood.<sup>2</sup>

In the second stage, a broader national program was established. In the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the image of the Serbian people and their borders, territory, characteristics, religion, customs, language, and most importantly, independent state structure, was gradually rounded and sharpened. Following the general trend of nationalism in Europe at that time, numerous ideas and plans were considered to complete the territory and create a state of all Serbs in the Balkans.

In the last phase, complete independence was realized. The Serbs, as a people with a reestablished independent state that was finally recognized among other peoples, appeared on the historical stage in 1878, finding their place in the community of the European peoples and the world. They incorporated themselves into the framework of world history and culture in a real and spiritual sense, gaining the basis for further development of their national being and cultural model. However, the newly created Serbian state's development was interrupted to some extent by the First World War and then again by its drowning in the wider Yugoslav community in 1918.<sup>3</sup>

The resurrection of the Serbian state after centuries of Turkish slavery was based primarily on two pillars of tradition. One important guardian of the collective national consciousness was the Serbian Orthodox Church as the bearer of Serbianness in the

1 Jelavich and Jelavich, 1986; Ljušić, 2001b; Ljušić, 1986.

2 Ćorović, 2003a; Radoš, 2005; Radoš, 2001.

3 Ćorović, 2003b, p. 11.

spiritual and organizational sense. The other epic tradition was folk singing, which expressed the memory of the Serbs' once glorious medieval history.

From the very beginning and acquisition of autocephaly (1219), the Serbian Church had a double character; spiritual-religious but also national. Orthodoxy and sainthood as a special expression of the Serbian understanding of Orthodoxy were important elements of Serbian existence and survival under the Turks. The feeling of unity in constant temptations and struggles helped the Serbs build a sense of uniqueness and common spirituality. The Serbian Orthodox Church played a significant role in protecting the Serb population under the Turks. Despite all the problems, the church organization, whose strength varied, was the only mechanism that operated under the Turks, gathering the Serbian people around churches and monasteries and Serbian institutions.<sup>4</sup>

Historical myths, legends, epic songs and plays, and overall oral traditions were other important traditional elements of integration and national cohesion. Over the centuries, a whole world of national heroes has emerged, such as Kraljević Marko (Prince Marko) and the legend of Miloš Obilić. The myth of betrayal in Kosovo as the cause of defeat, although largely historically controversial, fueled and maintained the Serbs' national feeling. There are also the legends and songs about the *hajduks*, who were a kind of Balkan Robin Hood fighters for national and social justice. Among other things, this embellished and idealized but strong and convincing image of the past was a good basis and motive for fanning the uprising and gaining independence. Passing these myths and largely idealized views of the past from generation to generation, the Serbs encouraged themselves, and, at the same time, found solace in a life in Turkish slavery otherwise filled with misery, misfortune, and fear. According to many historians, these are the most important elements that enabled the survival of the Serbian national consciousness during almost five centuries of Turkish occupation.<sup>5</sup>

## 2. What is Serbia? National programs and territorial self-determination

The cultural centers from which the idea of uniting Serbs and restoring statehood were born during the 19<sup>th</sup> century were diverse and changeable, following time and the process of liberation. Before the First Serbian Uprising, they were university centers, primarily in the Habsbourg Monarchy (Novi Sad, Vienna, Pančevo, etc.). The intelligentsia and cultural life at that time were mostly related to Serbs from across the river Drina, the so-called Prečani, who were educated in cultural centers and universities in Central Europe (such as Vienna and Budapest). Only with the process of gradual liberation and Serbia's rise did new and increasingly important cultural centers in Belgrade, Kragujevac, and others emerge.<sup>6</sup>

4 Ljušić, 2001a.

5 Ljušić, 2001a, p. 11.

6 Gavrilović, 1981, p. 463.

Therefore, the first circles of learned people in the newly liberated Serbia grew up first around church seats (like the circle around Metropolitan Stevan Stratimirović) or came from the ranks of Serbs in Austria (like the educator Dositej Obradović). Ideas about what Serbianness is, where her borders are, and her place in the family of European nations were first defined among these circles.<sup>7</sup> The visions about the territory where the Serbs lived and where the Serbian state should be renewed were quite vague. On the eve of the First Serbian Uprising, the Serbs had vague national programs, plans, and awareness of belonging to the nation, as well as a vague awareness of territory.

The idea of uniting all Serbs into one state was formed at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a program of national integration and creation of a nation-state within maximum limits. This phenomenon of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century was common among European nations that had experienced national awakenings during and after the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars. During the national revival in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and after centuries of life without a state, Serbian scholars sought historical models to restore Serbian statehood. This ‘sacred historical right’ was mainly based on Dušan’s short-lived Serbian empire from the 14<sup>th</sup> century, which was territorially the most extensive Serbian medieval state.<sup>8</sup>

At first, the insurgents placed their highest hopes in ‘brotherly Russia.’ In 1807, various Serbian high church dignitaries (Arsenije Gagović, Stevan Stratimirović) traveled to Russia and proposed plans to the Russian Tsar to renew the ‘Slavic-Serbian Empire.’ In 1807, Montenegrin Bishop Petar I Petrović Njegoš sent a plan to the Russian Tsar for the renewal of the Slavic-Serbian Empire, with the expansion of Montenegro to Herzegovina, Dalmatia, and Dubrovnik, which would become the capital.<sup>9</sup> After the expulsion of the Turks from the Belgrade *pashaluq* (*Tur. District*), the basic idea was to create a Serbian state. The national program was more clearly expressed after the Smederevo Assembly in 1805, especially after the battle of Deligrad and Mišar in 1806 and the final occupation of Belgrade. Under the influence of more educated Serbs from Srem, Banat, Bačka, and the ‘Military Border,’ the idea of a new Serbian state especially sought to include the Serbian people who lived under Austrian rule. The uprising thus became a struggle for the freedom of all people and Serbs outside the Belgrade *pashaluq*. Because it also became a struggle for national and social freedom due to its promise to abolish feudal relations, historians often call it the ‘Serbian revolution.’ Vague legends about the uprising and territorial aspirations spread from Bosnian Krajina to Dubrovnik and the Bay of Kotor, to Kosovo and Metohija, Southern Macedonia, Krajište and Zagorje, in the east behind Stara Planina and Timok, and south to Thessaly and Epirus. In some insurgent hopes, they even reached the Peloponnese. Ideas of liberating Serbia and the Balkans—‘a free citizen in his country and

7 Among them are Gavrilović, 1983, p. 464.

8 Lampe, 2000, p. 52.

9 Plan Petra I Petrovića o formiranju slaveno-serbskoga carstva, <http://www.njegos.org/petrovics/slavserb.htm>

Pavlowitch, 2003, pp. 26–41.

a free peasant on his property’—were two achievements that were extremely attractive to both the broad masses of people and their neighbors.<sup>10</sup>

National unification, a modern idea that was in full swing at the time and flooding the entire continent, flooded the Balkans as well. As the century of nationalism, the 19<sup>th</sup> century led to the inevitable disintegration of multinational states. The great empires shook under the onslaught of national energy, and legitimist and national ideas and movements collided, as did the conflicting national ideas themselves. More powerful nations oppressed those weaker, which often tied the ship of their national policy to a great power.

### 3. Prince Miloš's national program

The first Serbian national program in renewed Serbia was conceived in 1832 at the court of Prince Miloš in Kragujevac. It was, in fact, a plan for the propaganda and general uprising of Christians in European Turkey, presented by Prince Miloš at his court in Kragujevac to the British diplomat David Urquhart. This ‘writing’ would later serve as the basis for ‘Načertanija’ by Ilija Garašanin. Prince Miloš’s ideas were further drawn and systematized by Urquhart. The concept of Miloš’s plan, which can be expressed as Serbia’s desire to escape from the Russian protectorate with the support of England and France, would serve the Polish political emigration’s study of Serbian politics at the time. When the Serbian government began drafting a plan, František (Franjo) Zach, a member of the Polish political emigration who was of Czech descent, conveyed basic ideas from Urquhart’s concept. Combining other sources, he offered the first national program to Interior Minister Ilija Garašanin, who would shape it into the ‘Načertanija’ of 1844.

According to Miloš’s original program, the Serbian state should extend from Bihać in Bosnia to Dobrudja and Bitola and Shkodra in the south and to eastern Rumelia in the east. The Christian regions of European Turkey, together with Serbia and Montenegro, were to become part of that Serbian state. Propaganda, headed by the leaders, was to be spread in that territory, which was divided into eastern and western parts. The leaders had agents who would appoint chiefs in the *nahiyes*, which were the smallest administrative districts in the Ottoman Empire. These chiefs appointed serfs in the villages, who acted as one of the most important levers in the feudal social system. This secret organization’s plan was arranged in such a way that no one was allowed to know anyone except their immediate superior. The entire organization was to be headed by the Supreme Administration, and Ilija Garašanin was intended to be the Supreme Head of the entire secret organization.<sup>11</sup>

Miloš the Great’s policy toward Porta was determined primarily by the Great Powers’ attitude toward Turkey and the treatment of the so-called ‘Eastern Question,’

10 The Tican revolt in Srem and the Kruščica revolt in Banat broke out under the influence of these ideas and currents, Gavrilović, 1981, p. 92.

11 Stojančević, 1969; Pavlović, 2009, pp. 26–41.

with Turkey often considered ‘a sick man on the Bosphorus.’ From the Treaty of Edirne until the Paris Congress in 1856, the European powers’ attitude toward Turkey was the *status quo*, so national revolts and revolutionary movements in the Ottoman Empire were either ignored or even condemned. Therefore, Miloš was the first to consider that what Serbia got with the *Hatisherifs* from 1830 and 1833—a significant form of autonomy—was the most that could be obtained at that international political moment. However, it still encouraged ideas about renewing the Serbian state, even myths about renewing the Serbian empire, hoping to further weaken Turkey in the future under more favorable international circumstances. This primarily referred to Bosnia and Old Serbia, the sources of the largest number of immigrants to Miloš’s Serbia. In this setting, after 1830, Miloš developed a policy of secretly supporting popular movements in Turkey to achieve freedom at the right time. From 1834 to 1838, a series of riots broke out around Niš, Pirot, and Western Bulgaria, where Miloš appeared as a mediator to ease the people’s situation.

It was not far from the idea of liberating the Serbian people to the idea of cooperating and liberating other Christian peoples in the Balkans, for which Miloš and Serbia primarily sought associates in the Bosnian and Rumelia provinces. The first were Bulgarians, Greeks, and even Arbanasi, seen as potential allies with whom Miloš enjoyed a considerable reputation, especially among Bulgarians and in Bosnia. He had his trusted people from Sarajevo in Bosnia through Herzegovina and Montenegro and then among the Arbanasi (especially with the Mirdita tribe) to Prizren and Skopje in Rumelia.<sup>12</sup> Books were printed in Serbia and then distributed to priests and teachers in Bulgaria.<sup>13</sup>

In addition to Miloš’s, another document from that time is interesting for the then Serbian view of the national question. In Vuk Stefanović Karadžić’s writing, *All Serbs and Serbs of anywhere*, he advocated the thesis that all Štokavian speakers, regardless of religion, tradition, or regional affiliation, are Serbs. The document was published in 1849 in Vienna, as part of the book *Treasure box for the history, language, and customs of Serbs of all three laws* (Kovčežić za istoriju, jezik i običaje Srba sva tri zakona), but it was written in 1836, which is why some authors consider it the first project of ‘Greater Serbia.’<sup>14</sup>

12 Gavrilović, 1981, p. 145.

13 Gavrilović, 1981, p. 272.

14 In the article, Vuk claims that Serbs include all those who speak Serbian, and he calls all Shtokavian dialects Serbian. Thus, he concludes that there are ‘Serbs of three laws’ (i.e., religions), but only those of ‘Greek law’ (Orthodox faith) call themselves ‘Serbs’; the others ‘will not accept this name,’ so the ‘Turkish law’ they call Turks. They call themselves ‘Roman law’ ‘by the places where they live, for example, Slavonians, Bosnians (or Bosniaks), Dalmatians, Dubrovnik citizens, or in Bačka Bunjevci, in Srem, Slavonia. and Croatia Šokci, and around Dubrovnik and in Boca Latins.’ Vuk believed that the Štokavian dialect was Serbian and that only the Čakavian dialect could be the true Croatian vernacular, while the Kajkavian dialect was Slovenian. Therefore, it was appropriate to apply this theory to the territory inhabited mostly by Croats, reduced to Istria, the northern Adriatic coast, and most of the Adriatic islands. Although this was not Vuk’s original idea, but an opinion present in the early Slavic studies of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Josef Dobrovský, Pavel Josef Šafařík), some of Vuk’s contemporaries assessed it as bias and nationalism. Malcom, 1995.

#### 4. National policy of the Ustavobranitelji ('Defenders of the Constitution') (1842–1858)

The Ustavobranitelji's national policy was a kind of paradox. Although they and Prince Alexander were considered Turkophiles, serious work began in their time on the program for national liberation and the creation of the Serbian state. In that sense, they were in connection and cooperation with the so-called Illyrian movement. The Illyrian newspaper 'Branislav' was published in Belgrade, from where it was secretly sent to Austria. In addition, the Ustavobranitelji members and Miloš sought to achieve the widest possible cooperation—including not only the Serbs in the Balkans but all nations—to gradually liberate themselves from Turkish rule and create a nation-state. To achieve that, the regime developed dynamic propaganda activity and offered help to neighboring nations. Garašanin's commissioners covered the Balkan Peninsula from Bosnia to Bulgaria and from the Habsburg Monarchy to Macedonia.<sup>15</sup>

Of all the national programs created in Serbia in the modern age, Ilija Garašanin's Načertanija, written in 1844, had by far the greatest significance. Garašanin was the Minister of the Interior of the Ustavobranitelji government, and the document was created based on the document draft of František Zach, a Czech agent of the Pan-Slavic movement. It was a secret document that determined the directions of Serbia's foreign policy, leading her toward national unification, neighboring countries, and the Great Powers. The Načertanija remained secret until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but it was also the foundation of Serbian politics until the beginning of the First World War. All later programs originated from the Načertanija and emphasized a modernized version of Pan-Slavism.

Contrary to Zach's concept, which emphasized Pan-Slavism, Garašanin's Načertanija was in line primarily with Serbian national goals and diminished its distinctly anti-Turkish character. The essence of the Načertanija is reflected in the following statement: 'From this knowledge comes the *certa* and the foundation of Serbian politics, that it is not limited to planting borders, but that it seeks to embrace all the Serbian peoples that surround it.'<sup>16</sup> Unlike Zach's concept, Garašanin left open the possibility of cooperation between Serbian and Russian politics in the Balkans, provided that Russia pursued its policy sincerely. According to this document, the national goals were to be achieved primarily through cultural and educational activities among the Serbian people and the unliberated Serbs in Turkey and the Habsburg monarchy. The Načertanija emphasized for the first time the principle of unifying all Serbs and thereby left the theoretical foundation of Serbian nationalism in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>17</sup>

The ideas of national romanticism that flourished in Central Europe in 1848 only slightly touched Serbia. For the most part, the Serbian public at the time thought that the rights demanded by the revolutionary movements in Europe had already been won

15 Stranjaković, 1932; Gavrilović, 1981, p. 273.

16 Garašanin, 1844.

17 Jakšić and Vučković, 1963, pp. 430–466.

in Serbia. Revolutionary ideas among young liberals about the complete liberation of the Turkish government and the renewal of ‘Dusan’s empire’ found few supporters among the people. They remained a lonely, isolated attempt by young idealists, who were educated mainly in the Habsbourg Monarchy and united in associations of mostly students and high school students (e.g., Dušan’s regiment).

### 5. The foreign policy of Prince Mihailo (1860–1868)

Mihailo was the second son of Prince Miloš and Ljubica Obrenović. After his father abdicated, he and his father went into exile. However, soon after the death of his older brother Milan, he ascended to the throne of Serbia. Since he was a minor, he was temporarily replaced by a Viceroyalty consisting of Jevrem Obrenović, Toma Vučić Perišić, and Avram Petronijević. He was overthrown in a revolt led by Toma Vučić Perišić. Afterward, he traveled to Europe and married Countess Julia Hunyadi.

After Prince Aleksandar Karadjordjević and the *Ustavobranitelji* were overthrown at the St. Andrew’s Assembly, Mihailo returned to Serbia. Following his father’s death in 1860, he became the Prince of Serbia for the second time. This time he had more experience in diplomacy and government. One of his great successes was removing Ottoman fortresses, crews, and fleets from Serbia. Prince Mihailo was the first to have the idea of creating a Balkan alliance, but due to distrust toward Montenegro and Bulgaria, that alliance was never reached. He was killed in 1868 in the assassination in Košutnjak.

The most significant results Prince Mihailo achieved during his rule were in foreign policy. To achieve these, he skillfully used his wife, who was of Hungarian origin. Through Countess Julia Hunyadi de Kethelj,<sup>18</sup> he wanted to get closer to the Hungarians who at that time nurtured good relations with the Viennese court. Of course, he also had sympathizers in the Austrian capital, such as Vuk Stefanović Karadžić. His highlights include two significant foreign policy endeavors, although complete unification of the Balkans against the Turks could not be accomplished due to his untimely death.

His first outstanding foreign policy achievement occurred when, after a long initiative in 1867, the Turkish garrisons left the six fortified Serbian cities.<sup>19</sup> This would not have been possible without the help of the Great Powers. France and Russia supported the initiative, while Austria and Great Britain called for caution. The issue was finally resolved when the Habsburgs changed their position and sided with the Serbs, counting on strengthening their influence in the Balkans.<sup>20</sup>

The principality’s second great foreign policy achievement was forming the First Balkan Alliance.<sup>21</sup> Mihailo set his goal as overthrowing the Ottoman government, which is why he tried to ally with other countries in the region that were under the

18 Jovanović, Kovčić and Nikolić, 2018.

19 Jelavich, I, 1996, p. 220.

20 Ćorović, 2001.

21 For more information see: Sotirović, 2008, pp. 65–82.

Turkish yoke. Ilija Garašanin, Serbia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, played a major role in forming the Alliance. Serbia and other countries in the region were clear that power over the Balkans could be very attractive to the Great Powers. Consequently, they wanted to fight the Turks on their own, as they did not want to fall under Austrian or Russian governance.<sup>22</sup> The European crisis helped form the Alliance. In 1866, Prussia defeated Austria, which was most opposed to Serbian expansion, and space was opened to create an alliance. Montenegro joined the agreement in 1866, followed by Greece in 1867 and Romania in 1868. However, implementation of the plan was hampered by Mihail's death.

## 6. The foreign policy of Milan and Aleksandar Obrenović (1872–1903)

Prince Milan Obrenović assumed governance of the state in 1872; until then, the Vice-royalty had ruled in his place. He was not a favorite ruler, in part due to his debauched life and the fact that he could not adopt Pan-Slavic feelings. He supported the uprising against the Turks in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1875, but it was too late. He was also under internal pressure. The Serbian uprising of 1876 ended in a catastrophic defeat, and Serbia was saved by the fact that Russia joined the war in 1877 and defeated the Turkish forces. England prevented the conquest of Turkey's capital by sending a navy to the region, forcing Russian forces to stop. Russia's foreign policy at that time was determined by territorial expansion to the detriment of Turkey, and she often supported the Balkan countries that aspired to independence, including Serbia.

The Russo-Turkish war ended with the Peace of San Stefano,<sup>23</sup> and the warring parties made peace without involving the Great Powers. The agreement also affected the Balkan countries: Montenegro's territory doubled, while Serbia and Romania became independent states. Serbia got Niš and Novi Pazar, and Romania got Northern Dobruja. However, the real winner was Bulgaria, which annexed Macedonia and part of the northern coast of the Aegean Sea. Serbia, who aspired to certain parts of Macedonia, was dissatisfied, but since Russia supported Bulgaria in this matter, it could only expect support from Austria.<sup>24</sup>

The Great Powers did not accept peace; Great Britain and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy forced Russia to consider the issue again. Nor did the Berlin Congress<sup>25</sup> give an advantage to the Serbs. Greater Bulgaria was abolished, but the Austro-Hungarian

22 Jelavich, I., 1996, p. 294–295.

23 The Russo-Turkish war of 1877–78 ended with the Peace of San Stefano on January 31, 1878. In an agreement made without the involvement of the Great Powers, Turkey had to pay war reparations, and Russia got Bessarabia.

24 Jelavich, II., 1996, pp. 30–31.

25 The Berlin Congress was held between June 13 and July 13, 1878. The Great Powers, Turkey, and the Balkan countries participated in creating an agreement under which Bulgaria lost Thrace, Macedonia, and her territories south of the Balkans, which became autonomous territories. Ottoman Empire. Serbia got the region of Pirot, Romania, and the South Dobruja. The Monarchy could occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina for 30 years; England got the island of Cyprus.

Monarchy gained the right to supervise Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Novi Pazar's Sandžak. For Serbia, which claimed the rights to these territories, it was a real disaster. Nation-states were formed, but since the borders were not drawn on ethnic grounds but to maintain a balance of power, ethnic problems still made the territory difficult to manage.

Russia and the Monarchy practically shared the right to control the Balkans, and Serbia fell under the sphere of interests of the latter great power. Subsequently, Serbia's foreign policy has been determined by her relationship with Vienna. In that spirit, one trade agreement<sup>26</sup> was signed and then one political<sup>27</sup> agreement.<sup>28</sup> The latter meant Serbia's dependence, which caused a crisis in the country. However, Milan still relied on the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, which supported Serbia's transformation into a kingdom. The ruler took the title of king in 1882.

Serbia was saved by Vienna in 1885 when Milan attacked Bulgaria over territorial disputes. Many thought that the state of Alexander Battenberg would be easy prey for Serbia, considering that the prince lost favor with the Russians due to internal political skirmishes. However, in 1886, the Bulgarian army defeated the Serb forces near Slivnica. The war quickly ended with strong intervention by the Monarchy, and the conclusion of peace left the borders intact.

After Milan's abdication, his son Aleksandar Obrenović inherited the throne in 1889. As he was a minor, the Viceroyalty ruled Serbia until 1893. At that time, the Monarchy did not consider Serbia a serious source of danger. However, Russia realized that it should not have supported Bulgaria against Serbia because of Bulgaria's lack of gratitude. King Alexander visited Petrograd in 1891, where Tsar Alexander III promised that he would not allow the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and that he would help Serbia in her actions in Macedonia.<sup>29</sup>

During his reign, King Aleksandar had changeable relations with Russia and the Monarchy. In 1892, he relied on the Liberal Party instead of the Radical Party, which was close to Russia, and reestablished the constitution from 1869.<sup>30</sup> He returned from exile, and appointed his father Milan, who was in favor of the Monarchy, as the supreme commander of the army. Naturally, Russia did not like that move.

Aleksandar's marriage also contributed to getting closer to Russia. The king married a ten-year-old widow, Draga Mašin, which caused great indignation among his entourage. The parents opposed the marriage, and the Serbian government resigned. In that tense situation, the emperor hurried to the ruler's aid, supporting

26 The Monarchy supported the conclusion of agreements, according to which it could supply her industrial products on favorable terms.

27 Under a treaty signed in 1881, the two countries pledged neutrality in case the other went to war with someone else. In addition, Vienna supported Serbia's territorial claims to the south; Milan, in turn, had to promise that before concluding the agreement with other states, it would first negotiate with the Monarchy. Jelavich, II., 1996. p. 31.

28 Ćorović, 2001.

29 Ćorović, 2001.

30 Jelavich, II., 1996, p. 33.

the marriage. The resulting improvement in relations was that, to balance the influence of the Monarchy, Russia opened a consulate in Serbia. However, a military coup was organized against Aleksandar in June 1903, and the conspirators killed the royal family. Petar Karadjordjević then returned to the throne from exile.

## 7. Foreign policy of Peter I Karadjordjević and wars to liberate Kosovo and South Serbia

The new king denied that he was in any way connected with the assassination; despite these protests, there were indications in the foreign press, even in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.<sup>31</sup> Petar was raised in Genf and Paris, so he was not well acquainted with Serbian internal relations. However, he immediately introduced radical changes in foreign policy. Instead of central powers, especially the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, he sought alliances with France and Russia. Of course, the Habsburgs could not accept that, and consequently, trade conflicts broke out between the two countries. In addition, Serbs and Bulgarians wanted to conclude an agreement<sup>32</sup> that violated the Monarchy's interests. In 1908, Vienna responded with an embargo which prevented livestock from being exported to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy's territory. The intimidation failed, and Serbia became even closer to France and Russia.<sup>33</sup>

Serbia refused to renounce Bosnia and Herzegovina and expected Russia's support in that. The conflict deepened after Austria-Hungary annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1908. The Great Powers resolved the situation that threatened to start an armed conflict. Seeing the unity, Russia also stopped supporting the Serbs, and on March 30, along with England, France, and Italy, she called on the Serbs to recognize the annexation.<sup>34</sup>

The Russians played a double game in this matter, as they later tried to turn the Balkan states against Austria-Hungary; among them, of course, was Serbia. However, control was increasingly slipping out of Russian hands, and Serbia and her neighbors were beginning to unite against the Ottoman Empire. The Balkan Alliance was established by an agreement signed between Serbia and Bulgaria in March 1912. Among other things, it determined the division of certain parts of Macedonia. Greece and Montenegro joined the Alliance, and while the Great Powers realized, Montenegro attacked Turkey. Almost immediately, Montenegro's allies got involved and quickly achieved success. Austria-Hungary and Russia, which were interested in maintaining the *status quo* with Turkey, immediately issued warnings. Under the influence of the Great Powers, the parties stopped fighting, and in 1913, the Treaty of London was concluded, ending the First Balkan War.<sup>35</sup>

31 Népszava, 1903. június 13. p. 1.

32 Based on an agreement in 1905, the two countries agreed to establish a real trade alliance in 1917.

33 Jelavich, II., 1996, p. 34.

34 Hornyák, 2005.

35 Jelavich, II., 1996, pp. 89–92.

During the war, the Ottoman Empire lost a large part of its European territories. The Great Powers, especially Austria-Hungary, which, with Italy's support, did not want Serbia to expand toward the Adriatic, created an independent Albania. Serbia was thus left without the long-awaited ports, and because of that, it submitted a request with Greece for Macedonian territories intended for Bulgaria. A secret alliance was soon formed against Bulgaria, which preventively building on a quick military success, attacked Serbia on June 29 and Greece on June 30. Romania, Montenegro, and Turkey joined the fight against Bulgaria. The Second Balkan war ended in the absolute defeat of Bulgaria. The Peace of Bucharest, signed in 1913, regulated the division of Macedonia and strengthened the formation of Albania. Serbia's territory, along with the Macedonian territories, had almost doubled.

Serbia's strengthening sharpened its differences with Austria-Hungary. In the Balkan wars, exhausted Serbia was not interested in participating in the new conflict, but members of the Black Hand<sup>36</sup> organization<sup>37</sup> were not satisfied with Prime Minister Nikola Pašić because they did not believe he acted strongly enough in advocating Pan-Slavic ideas. Based on the organization leader's suggestion, it was decided to assassinate the heir to the throne of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. The Prime Minister opposed the assassination, fearing international sanctions but was unable to prevent it. Thus, in Sarajevo on June 28, 1914, Gavrilo Princip<sup>38</sup> killed the heir to the throne, Franz Ferdinand, and his wife, thus starting the First World War.<sup>39</sup>

At the beginning of the war, the elderly Petar handed over the tasks of governing the country to his son Aleksandar, who ruled the country as a regent until 1921. As World War II is not the subject of this chapter, we deal only with Serbia and the background of the later Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenians.

36 For more information see: Szeghő, 2014.

37 Unification or death is a secret military organization better known as the Black Hand and was founded by Dragutin Dimitrijević Apis in 1911. Its goals included preparing to unite Serbs into one state. To realize their plans, they did not distance themselves from committing terrorist acts. These were not carried out by a membership of Serbian military officers, but mostly by young Serb nationalists on the other side of the border. After the outbreak of World War II, the contradictions between the organization and the regent became so strong that Alexander, with the help of the White Hand organization, eliminated the leaders of the Black Hand. Dragutin Dimitrijević Apis was convicted in Thessalonica and executed along with several of his associates.

38 Gavrilo Princip (Obljaj, July 25, 1894–Theresienstadt, April 28, 1918), was a Bosnian terrorist of Serbian origin. He was a member of the terrorist organization Young Bosnia, whose goal was to annex Bosnia and Herzegovina to Serbia. He killed the heir to the throne, Franz Ferdinand, on the orders of the Black Hand organization and tried to commit suicide after the assassination. As he failed, he was brought before the court with his associates. Because he was young, he could not be sentenced to death, so he received 20 years in prison. Princip did not live to see the end of World War II; he died of tuberculosis on April 28, 1918. His identity has been disputed to this day—some consider him a fighter for Serbian freedom, while others see him as the king's assassin and a terrorist.

39 Tarján M., (without date)

## 8. Challenges of Yugoslav integration

### 8.1. Yugoslavia as a monarchy (1918–1941)

The ideas of Pan-Slavism and Yugoslavism, which lived in cultural circles in the Balkans, met their time by coinciding with the interests of the victorious Great Powers. The enormous strategic significance of integrating the South Slavic community after 1918 as a barrier to Pan-Germanism and German expansion paved the way for this idea, although it was not generally accepted among the South Slavic peoples. Thus, after the end of the First World War, a state was created on the ruins of the Habsburg Empire, which gathered the South Slavs who lived in the territories of Serbia, Montenegro, and the Slavic parts of Austria-Hungary. At the beginning of the First World War, the Kingdom of Serbia set the unification of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenians as her war goals by adopting the Niš Declaration on December 7, 1914. The formation of the Yugoslav Committee in London in 1915 and the Montenegrin Committee for National Unification in 1917 soon followed. Negotiations regarding the organization of the future state were conducted directly on two occasions: in Corfu in 1917 when the Corfu Declaration was adopted, and in Geneva in 1918 when the Geneva Agreement was signed. After the war, the State of Slovenians, Croats, and Serbs was formed in Zagreb under the leadership of the Yugoslav Committee, while the Montenegrin delegates at the disputed Podgorica Assembly simultaneously decided on Montenegro's accession to Serbia. At the same time, on November 25, the delegates of the Grand National Assembly of Vojvodina decided to directly join the Kingdom of Serbia. Serbia's unification with the countries of the independent state of Slovenians, Croats, and Serbs into a single Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenians was proclaimed by Regent Aleksandar I Karadjordjević on behalf of his father, King Peter I Karadjordjević, on December 1, 1918.<sup>40</sup>

The Great World War ended with negotiations, and the Peace of Versailles between the victorious Allied coalition and Germany was signed on June 28 in the old royal court in Paris. The Allied goal in Germany was to 'destroy the militaristic spirit forever.' The treaty with the small Austrian Republic, which remained after the collapse of the Habsburg Monarchy, was concluded on September 10, 1919, in Saint-Germain; with Hungary at Trianon on June 4, 1920; and with Bulgaria in Neji on November 27 of the same year. The last, and more formally for the Yugoslavs, was peace with Turkey in Sèvres on August 10, 1920.<sup>41</sup> With these agreements, the newly created Slavic state became the largest Balkan country. Following unification, the issue of the country's external borders, which were disputed in many places, was considered. After its founding in 1918, at least one border, that with Albania, was a

40 For the historical context and preconditions for forming Yugoslavia, see: Ekmečić, 1989; Čulinović, 1961, p. 5; Petranović, 1988, p. 15; Mitrović, 2012, pp. 17–33.

41 More about the origin of Yugoslavia and different visions: Petranović, 1988a, pp. 3–30; Mitrović, 1969; Bataković, 2008; Dimić, 2001; Petranović and Zečević, 1991; Matković, 1998.

continuous place of low-intensity conflict. Hungary, Bulgaria, Italy, and partly Austria were also considered hostile neighbors. Thus, the Carinthian issue was resolved in a referendum in which it was decided that Carinthia would remain part of Austria. The Dalmatian port of Zadar and several Dalmatian islands fell to Italy, which tried to occupy and annex Montenegro. Hungary resisted the 'shredding' of St. Stephen's crown for a long time, but in the end, they had to give in. Bulgaria ceded the Strumica area to Yugoslavia, and in Neji, the strategically important sections of Caribrod and Bosiljgrad within the old borders. Initially, under the government of Aleksandar Stamboliyski, Bulgaria was friendly; after his assassination in 1923, relations with subsequent governments were strained.<sup>42</sup>

Under pressure from England and France, Yugoslavia relented on November 20, 1920, and signed an agreement with Italy in Rapallo. The city of Rijeka was proclaimed the Free State of Rijeka. However, it was soon occupied, and then, in 1924, annexed by Italy. Tensions around the border with Italy continued, as Italy sought more Dalmatian coasts. The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenians sought Istria, part of the former Austrian coast, which had been annexed by Italy but had a large Slovenian and Croatian population. On January 27, 1924, the Yugoslav government reached an agreement with the Italian government. It recognized the annexation of Rijeka to Italy and concluded a pact of friendship and mutual assistance to preserve the order created by the peace treaties.<sup>43</sup>

As a new addition to the map of Europe after the First World War, a remarkably diverse, Yugoslav state oscillated dramatically during its existence and wandered in search of its place in the world. The Kingdom of Yugoslavia first maintained close and tight relations with the Allies of the First World War, especially the traditional allies France and the United Kingdom, between 1920 and 1934. In France, in the inter-war period, the Yugoslav cultural and political elite were educated. During the first decade, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes 'tied her small boat to a French ship,' seeking to use Francophone politics and participation in regional alliances such as the Little Entente in 1920 (with Czechoslovakia and Romania) and the Balkan Pact in 1934 (with Greece, Romania, and Turkey) to stabilize the status of war winner. The world economic crisis of the 1930s and the change in power relations in Europe led to increasing economic, and thus foreign policy, opening toward Italy and Germany.

The winner of the First World War was first recognized as a pillar of the so-called Versailles order. It sought to develop close cooperation, primarily with Czechoslovakia and Romania. The seal of this cooperation was King Alexander's marriage to the Romanian Princess Maria in 1922. The Little Entente, a military-political alliance of Czechoslovakia, Romania, and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, was founded in 1920. The cooperation of these countries was based on the need to remove the threat caused by the revision of the Versailles Order of the Outcomes of the First

42 Čulinović, 1961, p. 298.

43 The Neptune Conventions of June 20, 1925, regulated the main traffic and legal issues related to Rijeka. Čulinović, 1961. p. 306.; Mitrović, 2012, p. 303 and on.

World War, to which Italy, Hungary, Austria, and Bulgaria were committed. However, the alliance soon disintegrated because the Kingdom of SCS did not participate in Romania and Czechoslovakia's actions against Hungary. In response to growing Italian expansionism, the Royal Yugoslav Government signed a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with Great Britain and France in 1927. In 1934, for a similar reason, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, Greece, Romania, and Turkey established the Balkan Pact, which was intended to maintain balance on the Balkan Peninsula. The alliance existed until the beginning of the Second World War when Yugoslavia declared neutrality (1939), which is why it could not side with Greece when Italy attacked it. The definitive end of the alliance occurred in 1940 when Romania joined the Triple Alliance and the 'Axis Powers' of Germany-Italy-Japan.<sup>44</sup>

The Kingdom of Italy under Mussolini had even stronger territorial aspirations against the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and allied with Albania, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria, states with similar state plans. In Italy, certain elements were opposed from day one to creating a greater Yugoslavia because they did not want to have a strong and consolidated neighbor on the east coast of the Adriatic Sea that they believed could become their rival. Mussolini's idea was for Italy to take on the role of the ancient Roman Empire, become a real empire, and be the leading power in the Mediterranean. In that sense, Italy worked against the interests of Yugoslavia in Albania and soon managed to completely oust her. On November 27, 1926, the Albanian leader, Ahmed Zogu, allied with Italy, which very quickly became an Italian protectorate. Then, on September 1, 1928, Ahmed Zogu proclaimed himself king.<sup>45</sup>

In the 1930s, Germany and Italy ruthlessly trampled on all international agreements and their obligations, seeking a new world order. The rise of Nazi Germany and its rapprochement with fascist Italy destabilized these alliances. Like other countries in the region, Yugoslavia was reluctant to adapt to this change by approaching Germany, so Prime Minister Milan Stojadinović and Prince Regent Pavle Karadjordjević met with Hitler. After King Aleksandar Karadjordjević was assassinated in Marseilles on October 9, 1934, by terrorists supported by Italy, Milan Stojadinović's foreign policy sought to neutralize the anti-state element of the extreme Croatian and Macedonian emigration, which had their strongholds in these countries, by approaching Italy and Germany. Stojadinović himself was fascinated by the idea that he could keep Yugoslavia neutral during a new war. He was replaced by Prince Regent, Pavle Karadjordjević, in an attempt to persuade Croatian circles to a state agreement and preserve the divided country's stability. However, even after the agreement was reached on March 25, 1937, relations with Italy failed to become much more sincere. Rome continued to be the source of all troubles, and most Yugoslavs rejected Germany's inherited anti-German mood and revisionism, especially the harsh methods of force used against the Czechs and Poles. Milan Stojadinović's policy of relying on the Axis powers, therefore, had no support among the people, although

44 More in Sladek, 2019.

45 Mitrović, 2012, p. 32; Petranović, 1988, p. 163; Čulinović, 1961, pp. 304–306.

it brought certain practical results.<sup>46</sup> The involuntary rapprochement with Germany culminated in Yugoslavia's accession to the Triple Alliance on March 25, 1941. The pact was signed under much more favorable conditions than with other countries; Yugoslavia was formally promised neutrality and access to the port of Thessaloniki. With the overthrow of the Cvetković-Maček government, which signed this pact in a coup two days later, and the new government's failure to cancel the pact, Yugoslavia became the target of the Axis powers' revenge. She was defeated in the short-lived April War, occupied, divided among the victorious powers, and temporarily wiped off Europe's political map.<sup>47</sup>

The attitude toward the first socialist country, the USSR, was extremely hostile. Apart from ideological reasons, there was also the important fact that the Bolsheviks killed members of the imperial family, otherwise closely related to the Karadjordjević dynasty. Moreover, they systematically encouraged revolutions in other countries, including Yugoslavia, through the Comintern. During the interwar period, the Communists were one of the most aggressive anti-state elements until the second half of the 1930s, when they gradually changed their policy toward Yugoslavia. There was warming at the end of the thirties, but Yugoslavia only established diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union in June 1940, among the last European countries to recognize the USSR.<sup>48</sup>

The Commissar Government of Milan Aćimović was soon established after the collapse of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. It was followed by the Government of National Salvation, which was formed on August 29, 1941 and replaced the former Quisling administration. The intent was to calm the uprisings, stifling the resistance movement and bringing order to the authority of General Milan Nedić. During the entire occupation period, the Serbian Quisling government was de facto subordinated to the German military administration known as the Territory of the Military Commander of Serbia (German: Militärverwaltung in Serbien). The German military administration was formed in 1941, after the invasion of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Unlike the Independent State of Croatia (NDH), the Germans never enabled international recognition for the puppet regime in occupied Serbia. Serbia had the status of a country under full occupation, and it could not have official diplomatic relations with the Axis powers.<sup>49</sup>

### **8.2. Yugoslavia as a Federal Socialist Republic (1945–1990)**

The idea of Yugoslavism underwent a significant transformation after the Second World War. Yugoslavia was territorially expanded, but because of that, the internal organization was drastically changed. The unitary monarchy began to federalize with the formation of the Banovina of Croatia in 1939, and from this, the union of six socialist republics was formed in 1945. Two provinces were established in Serbia's territory. However, the borders in Yugoslavia at that time, at least according to Tito, were 'lines

46 Pavlović, 2009; Petranović, I. 1988a, pp. 304–305.

47 More in: Petranović, 1989.

48 Petranović, 1988a, pp. 360 and further; Mitrović, 2012, pp. 71–101, 252–294.

49 Dimitrijević, 2011, pp. 38–44; Petranović, 1989, p. 746.

on granite' (a type of stone). However, since the beginning of the 1960s, the national question has played an increasingly important role in the federation, and in the 1970s, the republics gained such power that constitutional experts considered the SFRY as almost a confederation. At the same time, after 1945, there was a significant change in the ethnic picture in Vojvodina and Dalmatia, where the ethnic revenge policy led to the complete expulsion of the German Volksdeutscher and Italians. The harsh regime toward the Hungarians was alleviated after Machash Rakoshi intervened and the rapprochement of the two 'fraternal' communist regimes.<sup>50</sup>

After the Second World War, the revolutionary victory, and the coming to power of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, the foreign policy orientation changed radically. The Soviet Union, the archenemy of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, became a key foreign policy partner and protector by 1948, and there was a rift between the Yugoslav and Soviet communists. Initially, in all spheres of society, all communist countries in Eastern Europe followed Soviet policy and completely imitated the Soviet social model. At first, Yugoslavia was extremely negatively oriented toward the United States and Western capitalist world. In the summer of 1946, the Yugoslav army even shot down two American planes, creating a major incident and an element of discord. Only after the attack from the USSR and the Inform Bureau's resolution condemning the Yugoslav communist leadership was Yugoslavia forced to look for an alternative and play for a 'third way.' US policy was becoming a tactic to 'keep Tito swimming.' In the context of the Cold War, this meant their support for Tito was to be followed by other communist countries in the Eastern Bloc. This policy, created in leading US circles in the early 1950s, was more or less implemented until the end of the Cold War era.<sup>51</sup>

The dispute between Yugoslavia and Italy over the city of Trieste and its surroundings lasted for a whole decade after the end of the war and threatened to turn into an armed conflict. It was a permanent cause of discord in relations with Italy and the West. The border with Greece was also porous, allowing aid to be supplied to the Greek communists, the losing side in the civil war, and against the will of the USSR. After the split with the Informbiro, the borders with Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, and Albania became scenes of incidents in which numerous border guards on both sides were killed. With relations normalized, the neighborhood ceased to be an open enemy but was viewed with suspicion. Yugoslavia, with rare exceptions, sought its foreign policy partners outside the Balkan region.<sup>52</sup>

The Balkan Pact, which took force on May 29, 1953, is a military-political alliance formed by Yugoslavia, Greece, and Turkey whose motive was defense against external aggression by the USSR and its satellites. The situation in the USSR was not entirely clear even after Stalin's death (March 1953), so creating an alliance was a kind of additional guarantee of potential Western support. Yugoslavia had already begun to

50 More in Petranović, 1988b, pp. 67–99.; See also Dimić, 2001.; Matković, 1998.

51 Contextualization of all relationships in Bekić, 1988, pp. 229–251, 368–382, 411–432; Petranović, 1988b, p. 152.; Tripković, 2012; Bogetić, 2010.

52 Petranović, 1988b, p. 162; More on the Trieste crisis in Dimitrijević and Bogetić, 2009.

receive material and military aid from the United States, so a closer alliance with its new NATO partners was an additional guarantee to the American side that Yugoslavia would not engage in an easy reconciliation with the USSR after Stalin's departure. Reconciliation with Greece and closer relations with Turkey gave importance to the entire region and thus to Yugoslavia. One of the pact's extremely important motives was solving the status of the border with Italy. Yugoslavia had a very firm stance on the status of the territories liberated by the partisans and the city of Trieste. The transition of the 'Trieste question' from the sphere of the Cold War confrontation as it was in the beginning to the dispute between the allies (Italy) and potential ally (Yugoslavia) gave the Yugoslav side an incomparably better diplomatic negotiating position. The Alliance also enabled closer cooperation with the West without joining NATO. Yugoslavia showed interest in the idea of forming a European defense community, which was discussed at the time. The discussion was initiated by the United States to encourage stronger European integration and renew West Germany's military role.<sup>53</sup>

After 1948, Yugoslavia first found herself in short-term isolation, as all her neighbors belonged to either the capitalist West (Italy, Austria, and Greece) or the Soviet East (Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania). The humorous acronym that Yugoslavia was surrounded by BRIGAMA (Serbian for WORRIES) was that each letter of the word was the initial letter of the name of a neighboring country. To legitimize her unusual position as a communist country economically aided by the capitalist West, Yugoslavia resorted to a policy during the Cold War of balancing between opposing blocs and vigorously developing relations with non-aligned countries. As a result, she found herself among the founders of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961, which was Yugoslavia's third and final basic foreign policy doctrine. At the same time, the 'Third Way' brought distant Afro-Asian countries closer to the Yugoslavs, but also distanced them geographically and politically from their immediate surroundings.<sup>54</sup>

Josip Broz Tito played a key role in creating and developing the movement. Trying to strengthen Yugoslavia's role as one of the founders of the movement, he spent a huge part of his time forging contacts with statesmen of non-aligned countries. At the initiative of Tito and Nasser, the Conference of Heads of States or Governments of Non-Aligned Nations was organized in Belgrade in September 1961 and was attended by representatives of 25 countries plus three observers. In the following years, despite the resistance of superpowers and contradictions among the non-aligned countries, the institution of periodic conferences came to life, and the number of participants grew. Increasing the number of members strengthened the specific weight of the movement, but at the cost of its cohesion. The great differences between the members and their mutual conflicts threatened the movement's unity during the eighties, and the crisis and collapse of the socialist bloc called into question its purpose, as seen at the last conference in Belgrade (1989) near Yugoslavia's end.<sup>55</sup>

53 More in Dimitrijević, 2003; Bogetić, 2010, pp. 27–34.

54 More in Bogetić, 2010.

55 Gedīs, 2003, pp. 224–227, 269–272; Bogetić, 2012, pp. 13–18.

Socialist Yugoslavia pursued a dynamic foreign policy, symbolized in the activities of Josip Broz Tito, the head of the party and state. Even during the war, he made direct contact with Churchill and Stalin. However, Yugoslavia's true breakthrough on the international scene occurred after her exit from the Eastern bloc, the opening to the West, normalization with the East, and taking one of the key positions in the movement of non-aligned countries. Maintaining this position, Tito met with the world's leading politicians for the rest of his life. After becoming Yugoslav president (1953), Josip Broz Tito visited seventy countries, many of them several times, leading as many as 160 state delegations (38 to socialist countries, 35 to the West, 87 to Third World countries).<sup>56</sup>

During the Cold War, the importance of Yugoslavia and the role she played in international relations significantly outweighed her size and importance. The door was open not only to political and economic cooperation but also to receipt of global cultural influences, and vice versa, Yugoslav sports, tourism, art, science, music, and film also crossed borders. This exchange provided the Yugoslav model of self-governing socialism with not only recognizability but also a kind of popularity. The country was visited by the world's most influential statesmen (Khrushchev, Nixon, Brezhnev, Ford, Nehru, Nasser, etc.), world-famous actors, scientists, and even astronauts, as well as a growing number of tourists, both from the West and East. Pablo Picasso made a poster for the film *Neretva*, while the film *Walter Defends Sarajevo* became a hit in China. Ivo Andrić became the first Yugoslav Nobel laureate, the world's leading philosophers gathered at the summer school in Korčula, and Sarajevo hosted the Winter Olympic Games (1984). 'Ordinary' Yugoslavs also travelled; with passports, it was easy to enter most countries of the world without visas. However, Yugoslavia's position was largely conditioned by the bipolar context of the Cold War, the end of which found it without a new concept. The crisis that deepened Yugoslav society after Tito's death led to the state's disintegration, international isolation, and war. After this, all of Yugoslavia's successors tried with varying success to attain membership in the European Union and thus redefine their position in the world.<sup>57</sup>

### **8.3. Slobodan Milosevic's regime—Bloody disintegration and slow transition (1990–2000)**

At the end of the eighties, while the Eastern European communist regimes were declining in power one after another, the unreformed Communist Party of Serbia was in power in Serbia under it received the new name of the Socialist Party of Serbia. Slobodan Milošević managed to successfully impose nationalist ideas on communist ideology and left-wing phraseology and present himself as a protector of Serbian interests in the wars that marked the disintegration of the SFRY. The Milosevic regime initially supported conservative communist structures in the USSR, hoping that the coup there and the return to the old would enable him to stay in power longer. The

<sup>56</sup> Petrović, 2010, pp. 318–324

<sup>57</sup> Petrović, 2012, pp. 319–324.

regime also tried to find an alternative to European integration, trying to get as close as possible to Russia and China in foreign policy. From the very beginning, Milošević was faced with two types of pressure. One came from within: the aspirations for democratization and the essential deviation and dismantling of the communist system by opposition parties and citizens. The second was the international community's pressure, which, in addition to the democratization that was still in the background, sought to use it to solve the national question in the Balkans and end the wars for Yugoslav's heritage. In the conflict over the concept and manner of unfolding the crisis, the West, the United States, and Germany sided with Croatia and Slovenia. The situation was complicated by the bloody war in Bosnia, where Milošević, as in the case of Serbs from Croatia, first emerged as a factor that encouraged Serb nationalism and aspirations and then pushed against the wall after the 1995 Dayton Accord became a 'guarantor of peace and stability.'

The International Community's policy of sanctions and coercion inevitably contributed to the economic difficulties and citizens' suffering, and thus to the public's long-term dissatisfaction with Milošević's government. However, this potentially 'positive' outcome had other counterproductive effects that allowed the regime to consolidate power. Coercion and sanctions did not weaken Milošević's control over the ruling party coalition, 'gray' economy, coercive apparatus, and media, but increased the new elite's dependence on the regime. Illegal breaking of the blockade and deep-rooted corruption, along with various ways of drawing citizens' foreign currency savings, had become a constant source of government revenue. It thus strengthened the military and police forces, 'bought' social peace and votes, and even financed private business ventures.

Although it accelerated the process of disintegrating Serbia's already weak economy, the bombing of the NATO pact in 1999 provided the regime with a perfect alibi for the country's catastrophic situation. The controversial incidents used to justify imposing sanctions and bombing in public, along with the fact that the West's treatment of Serbia was unequal to that of other war participants, strengthened the sense of injustice among many Serbs and redeemed the regime in their eyes. This also resulted in weakening those elements in society that represented a democratic and pro-Western alternative and saw the regime as the main culprit for the country's catastrophic situation. Finally, exclusively using a policy of coercion as their means, Western governments missed at least two important opportunities (1992 and the time of local victory and demonstration in 1996/1997) to provide help and advice to the opposition that would contribute to a faster regime change. It was only after the 1999 bombing, in preparation for the 2000 elections, that Western governments finally took on such a role; their efforts, albeit constructive, were unable to counterbalance the consequences of the economic sanctions and seventy-eight days of bombing. Thus, some analysts and historians in Serbia believe that the 'October Revolution' in Serbia happened despite the intervention of the West and not because of it.<sup>58</sup>

58 Dragović-Soso, 2003.

After the fall of Milošević, Zoran Djindjić's government (2000–2003) did much to return Serbia to the world and reintegrate it into the international community. However, the political legacy was a huge burden on that government. On the outside, it was a question of recognizing Kosovo and defining the borders imposed by the United States and the EU. On the inside, there were problems of democratization, inherited unreformed secret services, and a deeply criminalized state apparatus. Caught between these demands and the resistance of nationalist circles on the one hand and political-criminal structures from the 1990s on the other, Zoran Djindjić became the target of another political assassination that otherwise marked the modern history of Serbia. It can be said that even today, twenty years after October 5, Serbia is dragging her feet on the problems of the Milošević regime: on the one hand, the imperative of recognizing Kosovo as a state and, on the other, demands for the democratic democratization of the political system.<sup>59</sup>

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