

MILAN St. PROTIĆ

BETWEEN DEMOCRACY AND POPULISM

POLITICAL IDEAS OF THE PEOPLE'S
RADICAL PARTY IN SERBIA
(The Formative Period: 1860's to 1903)



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PREFACE

When, upon my return from Bern, Switzerland, it was suggested to me to consider the publication of my Ph.D. dissertation¹ in its original English version, frankly I was caught by a huge surprise. I wrote that manuscript almost thirty years ago and haven't looked at it ever since. Nostalgia or not, but I liked the idea.

After rereading the text, I realized that it needed additional work. Some parts needed to be revised; new chapters had to be added; certain passages had to be rewritten. As it often happens, it turned out that this task required much more time and effort than I had initially thought.

And I enjoyed every minute of it.

Memories started to pour back. I stepped on the soil of the USA for the first time in the summer of 1979 determined to continue my studies at an American university, despite the fact that I knew absolutely nothing about the American educational system. In my junior year at the Belgrade Law School, I'd decided to take a trip overseas. First I visited Harvard where I met Dr. Adam Ulam, a political scientist and Sovietologist; then I went to Stanford, where I talked to Dr. Wayne Vucinich, a Balkan historian, and to Hoover, where I was received by Dr. Milorad Drachkovitch, Fellow and Archives Director. My last stop before returning home was UCSB. After graduation and taking the GRE and TOEFL tests, I managed to get enrolled in the graduate program in History at the University of California, Santa Barbara. In all fairness, that was made possible due to the most generous support and

¹ I received my doctorate in History from the University of California, Santa Barbara, in 1987. My Ph.D. advisor was Dr. Dimitrije Djordjević; the chairman of the Ph.D. Committee was Dr. Joachim Remak, and the remaining two members were Dr. Nancy Gallagher and Dr. Peter Merkl.

warmest recommendation provided by Dr. Dimitrije Djordjević, my dear „čika Mita“,² a professor over there, my future teacher, mentor and guru. He was a Serb by origin, a democrat, anti-communist and patriot, a former inmate of a Nazi concentration camp,³ who had, persecuted by Tito's regime,⁴ fled from Yugoslavia in 1970 in order to take up a permanent teaching position at UC Santa Barbara. I arrived in California in late October of 1980. The following six and a half wonderful years I spent studying and working with him.

In Communist Yugoslavia, notions like political parties, free elections, freedom of public speech, democracy, civil liberties etc. were highly unpopular, if not entirely prohibited. Since I was drawn to politics due to my family background and personal curiosity, history, čika Mita and Santa Barbara seemed like a perfect choice.

I made up my mind about the topic of my doctoral dissertation even before I arrived in the USA. My great-grandfather Stojan Protić⁵ was among the leaders of the People's Radical Party and its chief ideologue from its very inception (1881) until the early 1920s. Frankly, this was quite an inspiration for a young man of my character and interests. Coming from Law School, having a solid grasp of political, constitutional and legal sciences (albeit it mostly Marxist), this particular theme appeared to me as an excellent mixture of history and political theory. Fortunately, my Ph.D. advisor immediately agreed to my proposal.

This was realized thanks to the unique gesture of Mr. Petar Dimitrijević,⁶ who provided an initial grant so that I could pursue my dream of studying in the United States. Later, I got a job as a teaching and research assistant and was able to finance both my studies and my living in California.

Most of the research for this book was done: in Paris, in the Archives of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Quai d'Orsay*), the National library and the Library of the Faculty of Political Sciences; in Belgrade, in

² „Čika“ is a Serbian word for uncle; „Mita“ is a nickname for Dimitrije (Dimitry).

³ Mauthausen-Gusen concentration camp was located in Upper Austria. He was imprisoned there in 1942/43.

⁴ He was sentenced to four years of prison as a member of the royalist resistance movement in Yugoslavia during WW2.

⁵ Serbian and Yugoslav politician, journalist, minister and prime minister (1857–1923).

⁶ Another Serbian political emigrant who had escaped Communism in 1945. The son of a general loyal to the Monarchy and a Harvard graduate, Mr. Dimitrijević made a fortune in the pharmaceutical industry. I met him in Cavtat, a sea resort near Dubrovnik (Croatia) in 1977 upon his first visit to Yugoslavia.

the Serbian Archives, Archives of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, and the National Library of Serbia; at the Hoover Institution Library and Archives at Stanford, CA; and at the UCSB Library (the Nikic Special Collection).

The actual writing process took a little over a year. Encouraged by my colleagues from the History Department,⁷ I decided to write in English rather than to write in my native Serbian and translate it into English. Of course, some serious proof-reading was necessary. Still, the language and style were not of the highest quality. It was pretty obvious that it was written by a foreigner.

I took my Ph.D. written and oral exams in November 1983. In 1984/85 I spent eight months doing research in Paris, France. I submitted the final version of my dissertation in February 1987 and was awarded my Ph.D. in History from UC Santa Barbara on March 21 of the same year.

In 1991/92, I was invited to take a visiting professorship at the History Department at UCSB, teaching several courses in modern European and Balkan history as well as a seminar for graduate students of history and political sciences. I was back to my school, my department, my place. It felt as a homecoming.

Since 1985, I have been employed in the capacity of Research Assistant and Research Fellow at the Institute for Balkan Studies of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Belgrade.

⁷ Nick Vucinich, Lenny Friedman, Elpida Hadjidaki, Bill Wrightson, Tahib el-Baloul, Kim Francev, Eric Knudsen, Bernd Fischer, Linda Nelson, Rick Spence, Francine Bloom and Greg Graves.

PROLOGUE

Radicalism¹ was a political ideology of 19th-century Europe. It belonged to the corpus of liberal thought and stood on its left wing². In the spectrum of political ideologies, it could also be placed on the right side of Socialism³. In its later stages, Radicalism became increasingly conservative, moving to the center-right of the political landscape in most countries where radical parties survived on the political stage throughout the 20th century. In some countries in Europe, Latin America, Asia and Oceania,⁴ Radicalism branched out into separate political parties, whereas in others it remained within the formal framework of liberal parties.⁵

¹ Derived from the Latin “radix”(root). Not to be confused with the contemporary use of the term “radicalism”, denoting extremism or fundamentalism.

² An interesting example in this respect is the Liberal-Radical Party of Switzerland. In German they call themselves the Liberals (*Die Liberalen*), while in French the same party is referred to as the Liberals-Radicals (*les libéraux-radicaux*). See: Clive H. Church, *The Politics and Government of Switzerland*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2004.

³ In France the full name of the party was: The Republican, Radical and Radical-Socialist Party (*Le Parti républicain, radical et radical-socialiste*).

⁴ Political parties under this name exist(ed) in France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Denmark, Spain, Italy, Ukraine, Switzerland, Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia, Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, India and New Zealand.

Between 1854 and 1877, there was a wing within the Republican Party of the US that was called the “Radicals” or “Radical Republicans”. Critical of Lincoln’s conciliatory politics, they advocated immediate and unconditional abolition of slavery and full respect of civil rights for all freed men.

⁵ Namely in the UK, Joseph Chamberlain (1836–1914).

Understandably, political ideologies of those radical parties world-wide varied considerably in several aspects: programs, history, longevity and electoral potential. Nonetheless, it can be concluded that they have all developed from a common origin and hence share the same name.

* * *

The industrial revolution reached its peak in Western Europe in the 1800s. Along with the dramatic changes in the way of life, economy and society in general, certain adjustments appeared in the ways people perceived politics. The map of the Continent was going through a period of such deep and complex transformation that its magnitude stayed incomprehensible to the great majority of contemporaries. The world was in turmoil.

In the 19th-century, Europe was marked by two dominant and long-lasting phenomena: the rise of nationalism or the pursuit of nation-states (the principle “one nation – one state”) and the mushrooming of political ideologies from the Right to the Left.

In that respect, the French Revolution stood out as a turning point. It represented a decade-long historical laboratory of political ideas and ideologies which, in subsequent years, expanded into various political parties and movements across the Continent.

Yes, the French Revolution had shed the blood of thousands of men and women, guilty and innocent alike. But, aside from its extremely violent exterior (“Le Terreur”), it was the birthplace of numerous theories about freedom, equality, democracy, human rights, constitutionalism and governance.

Napoleonic wars, the Restoration, the Revolution of 1848, the Crimean war, colonialism, the Franco-Prussian war, the unifications of Italy and Germany – these historical events were the landmarks of 19th-century Europe. Demands for universal suffrage, free elections, public control, government accountability, equality before law, political liberties, constitutional limitations, social justice, civil unrest, violence and more violence – both external and internal – formed the face of Europe in the 1800s.

In a nutshell, these were the traits of the century before last.

Masses of ordinary folk marched onto the European political scene, reshaping our perception of reality for good. Popular armies of citizens, peasants, workers, employees and others became the decisive factor in European politics both in war and in peace. The struggle for dominance became a game of numbers.

Modern political parties with huge followings of activists and voters were, in fact, vast unions of people gathered around a political program,

organized most effectively, sharing the goal of winning elections, forming a government and implementing their ideas.

The era of the rule of the privileged – absolute or enlightened monarchies and oligarchies of all sorts – was over, no question about it. But, this did not mean that democracy had prevailed. On the contrary, in the course of the 1900s, the activism of masses proved an instrument of responsible governments as well as a vehicle for dictatorships.

The identity of the 19th- century European man was twofold. On one hand, he identified with his roots, his kin, his ethnicity, his nation. On the other, he developed an individualistic consciousness based on his comprehension of personal interest. Social collectivism, in terms of an identifying and unifying force, was only at its early beginnings.

* * *

The Balkans had been occupied by the Ottomans since the 14th century. It represented the most western of the Empire's territories, often referred to as "Turkish Europe" or "European Turkey". Most of the local population was of Eastern Christian faith, while Islamization took a massive toll in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo and Albania and, to a lesser extent, in Bulgaria, Macedonia and Montenegro.

The 19th-century awakening of national consciousness had reached the Balkans during the first several years of the century. The Serbs started their revolt against the Ottomans in 1804, and again in 1815, eventually achieving their autonomous status in 1830. The Greek War of Independence broke out in 1821 and lasted until 1831. The formation of national movements among Romanians, Bulgarians and Albanians ensued. By the beginning of the 20th century, the Balkan peoples were overwhelmed with ideas of building their own nation-states, arguing among themselves about territorial issues. The concepts of Greater Serbia, Greece, Bulgaria, and Albania were merely the blueprints of particular European nationalisms, namely German and Italian. These competing nationalisms threatened to jeopardize the stability of the region. No European power showed much understanding for these aspirations of the Balkan peoples. They favored order over self-determination. Just as the Ottomans were being pushed out from the area, the Habsburgs marched in. After 1878, Austria-Hungary entered into the central provinces (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Sandjak) and extended its political influence on governments in Romania, Bulgaria and Serbia.

In view of the controversies among European states, escalating substantially and forming two opposing military camps, the Continent was

clearly on the brink of war. It was not by chance that the Balkans was nicknamed “the powder-keg of Europe”. It ruptured where it was the thinnest.

The relationship between Europe and the Balkans could be best described as follows: “Do not look at what we do, listen to what we say”. The ancient Latin proverb states that: “Quod licet Iovi, non licet bovi”. In this case, these proverbs ring even truer.

* * *

The People’s⁶ Radical Party in Serbia and Yugoslavia⁷ represented the leading political force in the country during the last two decades of the 19th and the first half of the 20th century. It played an important role in all historical events of the period. It shaped the political environment of both states – fundamentally so. Its popularity among the Serbian population remained unmatched throughout those years, as evidenced by the fact that it lost the elections only on two occasions.⁸

The Serbian Radical Party was the first modern political organization in Serbia and one of the oldest in the Balkans. Its structure spread all over the country, covering virtually every village with its local board or individual activist. The Radicals were the first to employ political campaigning in the form of direct agitation by their candidates and public presentation of their political agendas. Their party’s newspaper was distributed to every municipal branch and read at regular party meetings.

The Radicals’ sudden success among the Serbian peasantry was due to political concepts that were quite popular with the general public. Its leaders soon became masters of demagoguery and “sweet talk”. Peasants – forming the great majority of the overall population and having been left out of the political process for decades, subjected to heavy taxation and deprived of political rights – proved to be the best consumers of the Radical aggressive propaganda. Among local party leaders, a few were of peasant background; having been elected to the national Parliament, they heralded the voice of the Serbian peasant. Most of the Radical leadership in small towns and villages, however, was comprised of local priests, teachers or lawyers.

The top management of the party came mostly from a provincial petty bourgeois background, and had acquired higher education at European universities (Russia, France, and Switzerland) thanks to state-sponsored

⁶ In the sense of popular (national).

⁷ The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (later Yugoslavia) was created at the end of World War One, in December 1918.

⁸ Once in Serbia (1905) and once in Yugoslavia (1920).

scholarships. They belonged to the second generation of 19th-century Serbian intelligentsia.

* * *

Generally, the birth of the Radical Party coincided with two crucial events in Serbian history of the period: the signing of the so-called “Secret Convention” with the Habsburg Monarchy (1881)⁹ and the proclamation of Kingdom (1882).¹⁰

* * *

The topic of this treatise is not the general history of the People’s Radical Party in Serbia. Rather, it is concerned with the history of the People’s Radical Party’s ideology. This means that it is more a study in the realm of ideas than a study of real political developments. Primarily, it is an insight into what the Serbian Radicals believed in, what they thought should be done. It is also an investigation into the results and achievements of their political practice and the degree of their consistency. The balance between the sphere of the imagination and the sphere of reality turned out to be of utmost importance for the completion of this work.

⁹ This treaty (duration of ten years, re-signed in 1889 for an additional ten years) established full political and military subjugation of Serbia to Vienna; it was kept secret until early 20th century.

¹⁰ Serbia was a Principality since achieving independence at the Congress of Berlin (1878).

CHAPTER ONE

THE ORIGINS

In modern European historiography, it is widely accepted that the 19th century was a period of intense nationalism. However, this period was also characterized by the development of strong political ideologies. In the period from the French Revolution to World War One, political development was marked by the growth of numerous movements and ideologies, ranging from the far right to the far left. This process reached its peak in Europe after the revolutionary events of 1848. The second half of the century in European political history was characterized by sharp contrasts and contests of political doctrines manifested through vast political movements. Thibaudet was correct when he claimed: « La politique, ce sont des idées ».¹

The great majority of modern political concepts had their origins in philosophical teachings which preceded the French Revolution. Together with the Revolution itself, this period represents a great historical and political laboratory resulting in various political experiments. The entire nineteenth century merely continued to develop the initial ideas and doctrines born during the great revolutionary age. In the course of the century before last, these concepts clashed, contended and competed with each other and gradually developed into full-scale political movements based on well-defined ideological foundations.

Radicalism lies somewhere in the spectrum of political doctrines, ranging from conservatism to revolutionary anarchism. Its origins are to be found in the beginnings of the French Revolution.

¹ Bloch Roger, *Histoire du parti radical-socialiste*, Paris, 1968, 39.

However, the term “Radical” was first used in England in 1776,² when Major Cartwright founded the first political party bearing this name.³ Although Major Cartwright’s party proved short-lived, his efforts were not insignificant. In 1776, he organized a political party designed to represent the interests of the two most numerous social groups in England: workers and peasants. In his political program, Cartwright insisted on an electoral reform and argued vigorously for secret ballot. In his opinion, this would have caused a fundamental change in English politics by providing a powerful voice to the largest and most politically excluded social groups.⁴ The second important point of Cartwright’s program included freedom of press and equal rights for all citizens.⁵

The impact of the British Radical Party in European history is more symbolic than substantial. The Party started a tradition and provided a certain – albeit vague – basis for the future Radical doctrine. Still, there is no historical continuity between this small political grouping in England and the later Radical movements in Europe – especially in France, where it would become the strongest. Its short existence and relatively modest impact on English politics of the time only supports this fact.

Much more significant for the origins and basic foundations of Radicalism were the contributions of two British political thinkers from the first quarter of the nineteenth century: Jeremy Bentham and James Mill. They provided the philosophical background to democratic Radicalism.⁶

Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) was a British philosopher and jurist. His political theory of “utilitarianism” is explained succinctly in Bentham’s own famous sentence:

The object of all legislation must be “the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people”. In his political writings, Bentham advocated annual elections, equal electoral districts, a wide suffrage, and secret ballot. In 1792 Bentham was made a French citizen.

Among his works of great importance were *The Introduction to Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1789) and *The Catechism of Parliamentary Reform* (1817).⁷

² Jammy Schmidt, *Idées et images radicales*, Paris, 1934, 21.

³ *Ibid*, 21.

⁴ Elies Halery, *La formation du radicalisme philosophique*, vol. 1, Paris, 1900, 215.

⁵ *Ibid*, 216–217.

⁶ Gaston Maurice, *Le parti radical*, Paris, 1928, 19.

⁷ Jammy Schmidt, *Idées et images radicales*, 22.

James Mill (1773–1836) was the founder of what scholars have dubbed “philosophical Radicalism”. His writings on government and his personal influence among the liberal politicians of his time characterized the transition from French Revolutionary theories of human rights and absolute equality to the claiming of securities for good government through a wide extension of the franchise. In 1808, Mill became acquainted with Jeremy Bentham and was for many years his closest companion and ally.⁸

The Radical doctrine undoubtedly belongs to the left side of the 19th-century political spectrum. Probably the best way to describe the creed of the democratic essence of philosophical radicalism would be to quote the following sentence of Condorcet’s: “Toutes les institutions sociales doivent avoir pour but l’amélioration sociale et physique de la classe la plus nombreuse et la plus pauvre”.⁹

Nineteenth-century France witnessed the appearance, growth, and development of the Radical political movement and its ideology. Its importance and impact on French politics grew steadily until it became the dominant force in the country’s society. According to French authors, the origins of Radicalism are to be found in the revolutionary years of the late 18th century. Most of them identify Condorcet, one of the distinguished figures of the Revolution, as the father of French Radicalism, although they acknowledge the existence of similar ideological traces in the Jacobin political experience.¹⁰

The Radicals from the 1880’s often emphasized the revolutionary origins of their movement. Very illustratively, Leon Gambetta stressed the continuing line in the history of French Radicalism, stating:

« La Révolution française, c’est l’affranchissement de toutes les créatures vivantes, non seulement comme individuelles, mais comme membres d’une société collective.

De telle sorte, Messieurs, que pour ceux qui poursuivent l’établissement de la justice, il n’y a rien au-dessus ny’endehors de la Révolution française. »¹¹

And again:

⁸ Halevy, 219.

⁹ Jammy Schmidt, *Les grandes thèses radicales*, Paris, 1928, preface by Edouard Herriot, iv-v.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Pierre Barral, *Les fondateurs de la troisième république*, Paris, 1968, 9–12.

« Qu'est-ce qu'on voulu, en effet, nos prédécesseurs, les auteurs de la Déclaration des droits? Qu'est-ce qu'on voulut Mirabeau, Saint-Juste lui-même, Robespierre, les esprits rendus exclusive par la passion et par cette étroitesse d'esprit qui fait les combattants? Ils ont surtout voulu dans leurs jours de sérénité dans laquelle les frères aînés c'est à dire ceux qui sont arrivé seraient les instituteurs, les patrons, les guides, les protecteurs de ceux qui placés au-dessous, n'avaient pu recevoir les bienfaits de l'éducation de la fortune, mais qui avaient leurs droits, eux aussi. »¹²

It was the same feeling of affiliation with the Great Revolution that inspired Camille Pelletan when he cried out at the First Congress of the French Radical Party in 1901: "Nous sommes tous les fils de la Révolution!"¹³ Moreover, Edouard Herriot, a Radical leader in the interwar period, wrote about the revolutionary roots of the Radical doctrine in France:

« On pourrait soutenir, sans paradoxe, que Voltaire et Diderot furent des radicaux. Condorcet, en tout cas, trace avec vigueur la voie où s'engageront les fondateurs de notre doctrine moderne. Dans l'œuvre de Benjamin Constant je rencontre plus qu'une thèse qui s'incorporera dans notre programme... »¹⁴

The second wave of Radicals in France emerged during the July Monarchy in the 1830s. It was in 1832 that the word "Radicalisme" was used for the first time in France to denote a specific political ideology. More precisely, the republican newspaper "Le Temps" used this term in its issue of February 20.¹⁵

In these early days, the Radicals were gathered around a political group known as *La Société des Droits d'Homme*, organized also in 1832, whose program was based on the Declaration of Civil Rights of 1793 and which espoused the republican political orientation. This group was led by the leading Radical of the second generation – Alexandre Auguste Ledru-Rollin.

The entire second phase in the history of the French Radical movement was closely connected with Ledru-Rollin, a famous lawyer, writer, revolutionary and politician.

¹² *Ibid.*, p.51.

¹³ Jammy Schmidt, *Les grandes...*, 2.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, v-vi.

¹⁵ Claude Nicolet, *Le Radicalisme*, Paris, 1957, 15–16; Albert Milhaud, *Histoire du radicalisme*, Paris, 1951, 17–19.

Ledru-Rollin was born in Paris in 1807 (according to some historians in 1808) into a well-known and established family. While his political career began only in the 1830s, by the 1840s he had already become one of the most distinguished leaders of the movement of the Left.

He soon joined Louis Blanc, and actively contributed to Blanc's newspaper "La Reforme". In the years preceding the Revolution of 1848, Ledru-Rollin formulated his understanding of the Radical concept in numerous newspaper articles and public appearances. Beyond doubt, it was he who laid the basis for the powerful French Radical movement. In 1847 he defined the term « Radical »:

« Nous sommes des ultra-radicaux, si vous entendez par ce mot le Parti qui veut faire entrer dans la réalité de la vie le grand symbole de la liberté, de l'égalité et de la fraternité.¹⁶

It appears obvious from these lines of Ledru-Rollin's that his political convictions were still very dependent on the traditional revolutionary slogans, and that his thoughts grew from the ideas of 1789.

The ideas of Ledru-Rollin were influenced by the philosophy of solidarity. Contrary to the growing Marxist ideology which stressed the struggle of social classes and the fundamental struggle between capital and labor, solidarism defended the idea of union and collaboration between the two. Ledru-Rollin wrote:

« Il faut proclamer l'importance de la question sociale et le danger de la domination du capital: la solution est dans l'union du capital et du travail car LA PROPRIÉTÉ EST BONNE ET DEVRAIT ÊTRE ÉTENDUE Â NOUS. »¹⁷

Solidarism and other Ledru-Rollin's ideas were vigorously attacked by Karl Marx. Solidarism did not accept the Marxist neglect for the intellectual sphere of human development. Thus, Marx saw the leader of French Radicalism as nothing more than a petty bourgeois politician. For Marx, there could be no barrier among men but money.

« Oublierait-on les barrières du savoir et de l'ignorance? » asked Ledru-Rollin.¹⁸

During the 1848 Revolution, Ledru-Rollin joined the union of the Left which consisted of three major groups: the moderates led by François Arago, Lamartine and Marrast, the radicals represented by Ledru-Rollin

¹⁶ Jammy Schmidt, *Les grandes...*, 59–60.

¹⁷ Nicolet, 20–22.

¹⁸ Milhaud, p. 21.

and Flocon and the socialists (*extrême gauche*) headed by Louis Blanc and Albert Martin. In the provisional government, Ledru-Rollin accepted the post of minister of interior. As his main goal, he established the introduction of universal suffrage, which he regards as “arbres de la liberté”.¹⁹

« La République est le gouvernement du peuple par le peuple, la nation fallait elle-même ses affaires . . . Appelez tous les habitants d’une même patrie à nommer leurs magistrats . . . »²⁰

Ledru-Rollin best expressed the revolutionary spirit of his ministerial actions in the message to provincial police prefects:

« Vos pouvoirs sont illimités. Agents d’une autorité révolutionnaire vous êtes révolutionnaires aussi . . . Vous êtes des missionnaires des idées nouvelles . . . Que votre mot d’ordre soit partout. »²¹

Ledru-Rollin became a candidate for the President of the Republic in December of 1848 together with his rivals Louis Napoleon and Cavegnac. Despite the fact that Ledru-Rollin lost the elections, winning a modest 5% of the votes,²² he came out with a completely defined political program. This platform, outlined in five principal points, represented the basis for future radical political programs. His message of 1848 was later included in the foundations of French Radicalism of the Third Republic.²³

The program of Ledru-Rollin could be summarized as follows:

- 1) Executive power is totally subordinated to legislative power.
- 2) The establishment of absolute freedom of the press, association, and public speech.
- 3) Secular, free and compulsory education.
- 4) Proportional and progressive tax system.
- 5) Complete application of the elective principle for all public offices.²⁴

In the entire political career of Ledru-Rollin, there were two main points which determined his political views. As already noted, the first referred to his understanding of the relation between capital and labor. Ledru-Rollin insisted on the union of the two as the only possible path to social prosperity (philosophy of solidarism). The second important point of Rol-

¹⁹ Jammy Schmidt, *Les grandes...*, 116–118.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 120.

²¹ Jean-Thomas Nordmann, *Histoire des radicaux, 1820–1973*, Paris, 1974, 43.

²² Milhaud, pp. 48–49.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

lin's political program was constitutionalism. He emphasized the idea of constitutionalism (limitation of power) as the supreme political and legal document, whose force must be superior in order to provide a secure democratic process. He believed that the constitution must be defended by all means even if that required the use of arms.²⁵

In 1871, Ledru-Rollin was elected delegate in the French National Assembly together with 80 Radicals, among which were Clemenceau, Floquet, Brisson, Lackroy, and others.

In his old age, he led the third generation of Radicals to the parliamentary stage and assisted in the creation of the French Radical Party.²⁶

In the words of His Majesty Victor Hugo:

« Trois illustres esprits représentent cette époque mémorable: Louis Blanc en est l'apôtre. Lamartine en est l'orateur. Ledru-Rollin en est le tribun. »²⁷

Throughout the great revolutionary age, the radical cause remained incorporated in the republican issue and was not clearly visible as a separate political concept. In the 1830s and 1840s, the process of emancipation of radicalism from the ideological tutorship of republicanism began.²⁸ Radicalism was gradually emerging as a complete political doctrine, in which republicanism represented only one point, albeit a very important one. The crucial figure in this process of separation was Alexandre-Auguste Ledru-Rollin. His political actions and ideas, which were finally crystallized in his presidential program, represent the initial ideological definition of radicalism—although the process of emancipation would go on until the 1870s.

Throughout the history of French radicalism, the movement was always closely tied to the Republic.

This relationship was both inevitable and logical. However, until the appearance of Ledru-Rollin, this relationship could be described as parental, in favor of the republican idea. Under his influence, radicalism in France became a full and complete political movement which consistently grew in both numbers and importance. This, of course, does not mean that radicalism came into conflict with republicanism.

On the contrary, the second half of the 19th century witnessed an original kind of parallelism between the two, now entirely defined and organized into political concepts and movements. Ledru-Rollin represented the

²⁵ Nordmann, 47.

²⁶ Milhaud, 52.

²⁷ Jammy Schmidt, *Les grandes...*, 184–185.

²⁸ Milhaud, 16.

transition between the period in which radicalism had existed within the republican ideology, and the period in which it acted as a separate political movement. The history of 19th-century France was marked by the continuing struggle between the Republic and the Monarchy.

Once the Republican system was finally achieved in 1871, it provided fertile ground for the development of various political movements within the Republic. Among these movements, Radicalism emerged as the most important and the most mature. The pivotal figure in this process was none other than Ledru-Rollin.

* * *

In the early 1870s, the French suffered a painful defeat in the Franco-Prussian war (1870–71). Moreover, serious political unrest and crisis culminated in the Paris Commune (1871), the promulgation of the new Constitution (1875), and the final victory of the republican principle (1877). France had entered a period of frequent political change and general instability.

Among many political impulses which exploded in French politics of this period, the Radical movement undoubtedly occupied a distinguished place. The rise and growth of modern Radicalism in France started sometime in the late 1860s. Two important documents marked the beginning of Radical activity. The first was the work of Jules Simon, a well-known political author who wrote *La Politique Radicale* (1868).²⁹ Also, the celebrated *Belleville program*, authored by Léon Gambetta, was made public in 1869.³⁰ This second document clearly defined the Radical political platform and served as the guideline for future political actions of the Radicals.

The 1870s and the 1880s were also years of political fermentation and differentiation within the Republican movement. The Republican movement in France, as previously mentioned, consisted of different political groups, ranging from conservative republicans to socialists – including, of course, the Radicals. In the 1870s the Radicals appeared as a separate and clearly visible political element headed by a group of representatives in the French National Assembly, who fought for the ideas expressed in their program.³¹

By the early 1880s, the Radical movement in France broke up into two independent camps. On one side stood the so-called moderates led by Gambetta, who argued for the postponement of radical socio-political

²⁹ Nordmann, 56.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 58–59. See also Milhaud, 57–58 and Nicolet, 161–162.

³¹ Nordmann, 87.

reforms for a more opportune time: they were hence named the “opportunists.” On the other side, the radical-socialists, headed by Georges Clemenceau, advocated the immediate application of the Radical political and social program.³² The division of the movement occurred during the elections held in 1881. The Radicals were divided into two large groups: *L’Union républicaine* (opportunists) and *L’Extrême gauche radicale-socialiste* headed by Clemenceau, Louis Blanc, and Camille Pelletan. Between these two opposing factions stood a third grouping called *La Gauche Radicale* which refused to accept the split. Distinguished members of this option were Allain-Targé, Floquet and Brisson.³³ Léon Gambetta died soon after the split (in 1882) and the Radical movement continued to exist as a radical-socialist bloc.

What makes these events in the history of French Radicalism even more complex is the fact that throughout this period the Radicals were not officially organized as a political party, although they essentially acted as one. The formation of the Radical Party in France did not occur until 1901. The reasons for the belated creation of official party organization will be discussed later in this chapter. In order to paint a full picture of the French Radical movement and its ideology from the late 1860’s to 1903, one ought to consider primarily its political activities and written documents as well as its social structure and its informal structure.

Jules Simon’s *La Politique Radicale* was the first work which attempted to crystallize Radical political beliefs. Simon was a professor of philosophy at the Sorbonne, who was forced to retire by the Empire on account of his liberal political views. In 1863 he became the deputy of Paris in the *Corps Législatif*. As witnessed by Albert Milhaud, Simon argued for the separation of Church and State, absolute freedom of the press and communal autonomy.³⁴ In *La Politique Radicale*, Jules Simon gave very important explanations regarding the fundamental ideas of Radicalism and, at the same time, offered definitions and established relations between Radicalism and other political ideologies:

« Le titre des « radicaux » signifie seulement hommes des principes. Il convient, donc, d’ajouter que le radicalisme dont il s’agit ici est le radicalisme dans le sens de la liberté. »³⁵

Simon was very specific when expressing his thoughts on Radical policies. His style was characterized by positive simplicity and neatness of

³² Jammy Schmidt, *Idées...*, 58–61.

³³ Nicolet, 30.

³⁴ Nordmann, 57.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

ideas as well as by intellectual dynamism. As one of the leading French authorities in the field of philosophy, Simon succeeded in producing a brilliant piece of work in which he combined two basic elements, and managed to achieve two primary goals.

On one hand, he gave fundamental theoretical generalizations concerning the Radical political doctrine. On the other hand, he dealt with very practical problems of Radical activities and future policies, as well as Radical views on particular questions of everyday politics. Simon defined the Radical policy in few words, covering both its theoretical and practical aspects:

« En fait de politique: comme origine la souveraineté nationale; comme mesure la moindre action; comme garantie la publicité et la responsabilité a tous les degrés. »³⁶

The work of Simon had great importance for the development of the French Radical movement: it marked the beginning of organized Radical action in the last three decades of the 19th century; it stood as the first written work to define the Radical political program; finally, it served as a model for future Radical manifestos and programs.

The Belleville program, made public in April 1869, was the first official political manifesto of French Radicalism. It served as a major political program of Radicalism until 1905.³⁷ The Belleville program became a sort of supreme criterion for Radical political consistency. Loyalty to Belleville meant, at the same time, commitment to the Radical movement as a whole. It was regarded as the source of the Radical ideology and action for more than thirty five years. All subsequent political programs which followed the Belleville document depended heavily on this first and principal manifesto of French Radicalism.

The Belleville program was written in twelve points – very precisely, concisely and clearly. As major issues of Radicalism, this document emphasized: universal suffrage, individual freedom secured by the law, abrogation of the law on general security, legal responsibility of all public officials, absolute freedom of press, absolute freedom of reunion and public discussion of all matters, complete separation of Church and State, secular, free and compulsory primary education, reduction of the standing army for financial reasons, the principle of election for all public officials and the introduction of social reforms according to the principle of justice and social equality.³⁸

³⁶ Nordmann, 58.

³⁷ Tony Revillon, *Camille Pelletan*, Paris, 1930, 20.

³⁸ Nordmann, 58–59.

See also Milhaud, 57–59; Nicolet, 23–29.

Essentially the same set of political demands was repeated in Louis Blanc's appeal to the electorate in 1876. In this proclamation, Blanc insisted on universal suffrage, compulsory, free and secular primary education, communal autonomy, unique and proportional tax system, and on absolute freedom of the press, reunion, and association. In this appeal to the citizens of Paris, Louis Blanc proclaimed that "the acceptance of this program means being a member of the Radical Party".³⁹ Prior to the elections of 1881, which had had special meaning for French Radicals due to the split and the ideological clarification that followed the break, two prominent Radical leaders came out with their political programs. Both Georges Clemenceau and Camille Pelletan declared publicly their "action-platforms" for immediate political reform.

In his campaign for the 1881 elections, Clemenceau insisted on vital political changes which included the revision of the Constitution (dissolution of the Upper Chamber – the Senate), unlimited freedom of press, association and public reunion guaranteed by the Constitution, strict separation of the Church and State, compulsory, secular and free primary schooling, substitution of standing armies by national militia, free and equal justice for everyone, elective and magistrates on all levels, universal male suffrage, personal and criminal accountability of all public functionaries, administrative decentralization according to the principle of communal autonomy and progressive tax system on capital and revenue.⁴⁰ In the section dealing with social issues, Clemenceau stressed the need for the reduction of working-day hours, responsibility of the patron in case of an accident, participation of trade unions in public affairs and the introduction of a ban on exploitation of prison labor.⁴¹

Although expressing similar ideas as that of Clemenceau, Camille Pelletan's program was much more detailed and specific. It stands as the best example of Radical political and socio-economic ideology in the early 1880s. Pelletan, like Clemenceau, emphasized the revision of the Constitution as his primary demand. This revision would abolish both the Senate and the Presidency of the Republic. Pelletan's governmental reform included the establishment of a unicameral National Assembly (House of Deputies) which was designed to deal with matters of national interest. General councils were to act as supreme representative bodies on the level of departments and to decide about the issues of departmental interest. Pelletan applied the

³⁹ Jammy Schmidt, *Les grandes...*, 185–187.

⁴⁰ Maurice, 119.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

same pattern on the level of municipalities (rule of self-government).⁴² He advocated an administrative system comparable to the so-called “system of Convent” based on the principle of representation and local self-government – a kind of governmental pyramid of elective representative bodies on each level of the administrative structure. This system, he thought, would provide a full and complete democratic mechanism of decision making. Pelletan founded the entire state organization on the principle of communal autonomy, wherein “the commune is to be the master of its administration, finances and police”.⁴³

Like all previous Radical programs, Pelletan’s electoral agenda stressed unlimited freedom of press, association and public reunion, the separation of Church and State, compulsory, secular, and free primary education, as well as revision of the tax system and application of universal suffrage as the supreme guarantor of national sovereignty. Like Clemenceau, Pelletan suggested substitution of professional militaries by national guards.

In the chapter of his program dealing with judicial reforms, Pelletan insisted on the revision of all legal codes according to the principles of justice and equality. In the last point of his political program Camille Pelletan demanded that the exclusive right of declaring war should be granted to the entire nation, insisting, simultaneously, on a pacifist policy.⁴⁴

The economic section of Pelletan’s electoral program limited the working day to ten hours, and prohibited work for children under the age of fourteen. He insisted on the establishment of retirement funds for older workers and the disabled. Again, like Clemenceau, he asked for the responsibility of patrons in cases of accident and the abolition of labor exploitation in prisons. Pelletan directly called for nationalization of mines and railroads and for reorganization of the French National Bank.⁴⁵

More than any other Radical political document, Camille Pelletan’s program of 1881 defined in detail the policy of French Radicalism. It embodied all elements of the Radical political doctrine in its full complexity. It suggested a number of extremely important political reforms, while also emphasizing significant socio-economic changes. Opposed to growing socialist – especially Marxist – ideologies, which demanded conflict between social classes, the Radicals suggested the collaboration of the two, accompa-

⁴² Revillon, 44–47.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

nied by a shared effort to secure a better social and political position for the working class within the existing socio-economic order.

These two political programs of 1881 represented the most illustrative examples of Radical policy, and systematically expressed the platform of French Radicalism for the next twenty years.

In 1901, during the founding congress of the French Radical Party in Paris, essentially the same points were repeated. Most of them were included in the final document of the Congress. The Radicals insisted on universal male suffrage, national sovereignty and the revision of the Constitution, equality in education, tax system reform. They also advocated social changes in favor of the "working world,"⁴⁶ as well as a peacemaking policy in international relations.⁴⁷ In 1901, the Radicals gradually turned towards the problems of rural France, emphasizing the need for fiscal reforms because "les taxes immobilisent la propri  t   rurale."⁴⁸ Finally, they concluded that « les taxes sont beaucoup trop lourdes sur la masse des cultivateurs qui forment la majorit   et la force du pays. »⁴⁹ It seems obvious and logical that the Radicals felt it necessary to stress the socio-economic position of the French peasantry, asking for the improvement of its material life.

Instead of making generalizations about the political ideology of the French Radical movement or more precisely about Radical views on the most sensitive political issues, one may, at least, try to find and describe certain general points which characterized Radical political thought from Ledru-Rollin to Clemenceau.

The Radicals in France were always and uncompromisingly opposed to the Monarchy. Their beliefs grew out of the Republican movement, and they always remained unwavering republicans. The highest of their political demands was the principle of universal male suffrage. This principle led them to the very foundations of democracy, which they grew to regard as the only path that could lead to social and political equality and prosperity. They understood democracy to mean equality in rights. The Radicals were always fervent opponents of legal inequalities and advocates of mobility and cooperation among social classes. Their understanding of social mobility meant the preference of unconditional justice over unconditional equality. The prominent Radical historian Jammy Schmidt was most illustrative when defining the Radical political philosophy:

⁴⁶ Jammy Schmidt, *Les grandes...*, 227–228.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

« Assurer pour l'homme le maximum de liberté et de bien-être individuels dans le maximum d'organisation social harmonieuse et solidaire. »⁵⁰

* * *

The organization of the Radical movement in France was somewhat peculiar. It was not formed as an official political party until 1901, although the movement existed, grew, acted and played a significant role in French politics throughout the last quarter of the 29th century. During this period, some of the politicians who considered themselves Radicals even entered the government⁵¹, thus directly influencing French politics. Despite the fact that the Radical movement had remained unstructured, it was still referred to as a political party even prior to 1901.⁵² Throughout the period in question, the Radicals were present and active in the Lower Chamber of the French National Assembly.⁵³ In 1877, for example, there were 100 Radical deputies within the Republican bloc. In 1881, 46 Radicals entered the French Parliament, and in 1885 this number had risen to 60. By 1889, there were 110; in 1893 – 140, and in 1898 – 178 Radical representatives entered the National Assembly. By 1902, the Radicals had become the largest political force in the French Chamber, winning 261 seats in the House.⁵⁴

In view of such massive representation, it is even more intriguing why the Radicals hesitated to create a party structure and hierarchy. The reason could easily be that the spirit of libertarian individuals among them seeped through to their local, independent committees, who were opposed to any kind of registration and the discipline of an organized party (Clemenceau, Pelletan, and Noquet). Georges Clemenceau even boycotted the First Congress of the Radical Party in 1901.⁵⁵

Regardless of the fact that the vertical organizational structure of the Radical Party did not exist until 1901, a number of municipal or departmental autonomous committees were formed, first in Paris and later across the entire country. They provided fundamental organizational entities for the Radical membership. According to Albert Milhaud, in 1885 there were three major Radical committees in Paris: *Le Comité de la rue Cadet*, whose

⁵⁰ Jammy Schmidt, *Idées...*, 33.

⁵¹ See Jammy Schmidt, *Les grandes...*, 242; Nicolet, 89; Nordmann, 137.

⁵² Jammy Schmidt, *Les grandes...*, 56–60.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Nordmann, 122.

members were Clemenceau and Pelletan, *L'alliance républicaine des comités radicaux et progressistes* headed by Brisson and Floquet, and *Le comité central des groupes républicains radicaux – socialistes de la Seine*.⁵⁶ In addition to these three committees, Nordmann mentions another two groups which had been organized later, in 1894. According to him, these committees had a decisive impact on the movement:

Le comité de la rue Tiquetonne which became the central committee of all local Radical groups and *Le comité d'action pour les réformes républicains* headed by Léon Bourgeois, the leading Radical intellectual and writer during the 1890s.⁵⁷ By 1901, the Radical movement in France consisted of 476 local committees covering the entire country. Each committee had at least “dix membres cotisants”.⁵⁸

During the First Congress of the Republican and Radical-Socialist Party in Paris (June 21–24, 1901), the organizational structure was finally established. Each commune had a committee with at least 10 members. All communal committees were represented by a cantonal committee, and in each department there was a Departmental Federation. These federations were represented in regional federations which were organized in every region of France.⁵⁹ At the top of this vertical structure was the Congress, which was to assemble every year. Between congresses, the Party was headed by the Executive Committee, consisting of thirty-three members.⁶⁰ The formative congress of the French Radical Party was attended by 1132 delegates including 78 Senators, 201 representatives in the Assembly, 155 free masonic lodges and 215 political newspapers.⁶¹

* * *

A special feature of the French Radical movement was its social structure.

First of all, it is important to note that all segments of the French society had become completely stratified by the late nineteenth century, and that all of them were present in the Radical movement.

⁵⁶ Nordmann, 96.

See also Milhaud, 90.

⁵⁷ Nordmann, 109.

⁵⁸ Daniel Bardonnnet, *Evolution de la structure du parti radicale*, Paris, 1960, 37–43.

⁵⁹ Jammy Schmidt, *Les grandes...*, 231–232.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

See also Bardonnnet, 43–45.

⁶¹ Nordmann, 122.

They differed, however, in number and significance within the Radical ranks. The only exception in this respect was the old aristocracy, which naturally never joined the Radical Party. The working class, peasantry, and certain layers of bourgeoisie and intelligentsia were all represented in the movement.

By 1871, in the beginning of modern Radicalism in France, Léon Gambetta appealed to the French peasantry, recognizing it as the most numerous social stratum in French society. He was, of course, very well aware of the benefit of attracting peasants for the Radical republican cause. In his appeal, Gambetta argued for « une chambre rurale, dans le sens profond et vrai de ce mot (...) car c'est avec des paysans éclairés et libres, optes a se représenter eux-mêmes qu'on fait une chambre rurale ». ⁶² Despite these early attempts to win over the peasant majority, this rapprochement was a long and gradual process due to the traditional conservatism (religious, political and social) of the French rural population. Deep Catholic beliefs and devotion to the Monarchy were a result of simplified identification of state authority with the personality of the ruler. The same type of bond, if not stronger, had developed between the French peasantry and their Church.

As these conservative convictions started slowly eroding as a consequence of socio-economic and cultural changes and the penetration of the Radical ideas into the countryside, the French rural population started to join the Radical movement, first individually and then in large numbers. Nevertheless, it is evident that the major social force of Radicalism in France was coming from the capital's suburbs: petty bourgeoisie and middle class intelligentsia.

More precisely, the Radicals had the strongest appeal among the Parisian working class, small proprietors and entrepreneurs. As far as the working class was concerned and its membership in the Radical movement, it would be interesting to quote the famous Clemenceau biographer, Zevaes:

« A ce moment-là (1881–1884, M.St.P), Clemenceau a pour lui l'immense majorité de la classe ouvrière qui lui est reconnaissante de ses efforts pour l'amnistie et qui considère en lui le représentant de la démocratie la plus avancée. » ⁶³

The bulk of the Radical movement was composed of lower-class urban population, small businessmen and local officials. Their vitality and

⁶² Nordmann, 166.

⁶³ Alexandre Zevaes, *Clemenceau*, Paris, 1949, 103.

sense for politics were guarantors of prosperity and perseverance of their political organization.⁶⁴

The leadership of the Radical movement was solely of intellectual origin and orientation, although the Paris intelligentsia was represented in all political parties and, moreover, stood at the top of most of them, especially of the most extremist ones.⁶⁵ Georges Clemenceau, Camille Pelletan, Jules Simon, Léon Bourgeois, Stephan Pichon, Georges Laguerre were all intellectuals – physicians, lawyers, teachers, authors or politicians by profession.⁶⁶

It is interesting to note that it was not until 1895 that the Free Masonry started joining the Radicals. Until then, it had largely belonged to the Opportunist wing of the Republican bloc.⁶⁷

* * *

Standing on the left side of the political spectrum, the French Radicals argued in favor of state interventionism, which meant an active role of the public sector in fostering social reforms, keeping the socio-economic stability and safeguarding social justice.

In their own words:

« L'état a le droit et le devoir s'intervenir pour faire respecter la volonté et pour prévaloir l'intérêt supérieur de la communauté »,⁶⁸ stated Clemenceau in 1884.

The second Radical point was the so-called “associationalism”. In theory, this term incorporated mutualism, syndicalism and cooperation among various segments of society.

Solidarism represented the central social principle of French Radicalism. It meant the social amelioration and intellectual emancipation of the society in its entirety.

Here is what they said on the subject:

« Délivrer l'homme des chaînes d'ignorance, l'affranchir du despotisme religieux, politique et économique(...), régler par la seule justice la liberté de son initiative . . . c'est ainsi seulement qu'on assurera le triomphe définitif de la révolution politique, économique et

⁶⁴ Zevaes, 53–54, 126.

⁶⁵ Maurice, 17–18.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Bardonnnet, 229.

⁶⁸ Nordmann, 93.

sociale inaugurée par nos pères, puisque l'émancipation intellectuelle est le vrai fondement de l'émancipation économique. »⁶⁹

Secularism (Laicism) stands as the fourth major item of the Radical socio-political agenda. The Radicals were sharply opposed to any religious impact in education, science, or knowledge in general. Their anti-clericalism was best expressed in their constant emphasis on the separation of Church and State. In their opinion, the principle of secularism had two fundamental effects: first, it secured free development of democracy with no religious interference whatsoever; second, it served as the basis for educational progress of the whole nation.⁷⁰ Finally, the Radicals were uncompromising adversaries of the French colonial policy. As a leftist party, they reckoned that this policy had been profitable only for a handful of capitalists and, more importantly, that it had become an obstacle on the road to internal change, both political and social.⁷¹ This element of Radical social ideology could also be described as Radicalist pacifism.

Let us quote Georges Clemenceau again:

« La grande formule de la Révolution, liberté, égalité, fraternité, qui contient dans ces trois mots les droits d l'homme, toutes les réformes sociales, toutes les préceptes de la morale, se résume dans une formule encore, La Justice. »⁷²

⁶⁹ Nordmann, 81.

⁷⁰ Nordmann, 98.

See also Jammy Schmidt, *Idées...*, 39.

⁷¹ Revillon, 69

⁷² *La Justice*, No. 1, January 16, 1881

CHAPTER TWO

THE HISTORY

Following the Serbian-Turkish wars in the 1870s, an outburst of dynamic political events ensued in the early 1880s, culminating with the formation of modern political parties in Serbia.

This phenomenon was the result of several key preconditions. Although the promulgation of the Constitution in 1869 had not yet established full parliamentary democracy, it had secured a political environment in which larger portions of the nation could take an active part in the process of political decision-making.¹ This particular legal act expressed a compromise between the Crown and the National Assembly by dividing legislative authority, eliminating the previous oligarchical political tradition and almost unlimited power of the ruler. Secondly, after the assassination of Prince Mihailo Obrenović in 1868, Serbia was ruled by his underage nephew Prince Milan Obrenović, who was represented by the Royal Regency. The Royal Regency was dominated by the strong political personality and later founder of the Liberal Party, Jovan Ristić, a graduate of the Heidelberg University.² Facing opposition from both inside and outside, the Serbian ruling circles had to do something. They decided, therefore, to adopt certain – albeit rather limited – democratic reforms from Western political experience. Thirdly, as a consequence of the Serbian-Turkish Wars and the stipulations of the Congress of Berlin (1878), Serbia became an internation-

¹ Slobodan Jovanović, *Vlada Milana Obrenovića*, 1, Beograd, 1934, 230–31. See also Miroslav Djordjević, ed., *Ustavni razvitak Srbije u XIX veku*, Leskovac, 1970.

² *Ibid.*

ally recognized independent state with all sovereign prerogatives, including the required internal constitutional structure. Fourthly, during this period a number of young Serbian students were sent to European universities to receive higher education. Exposure to European political developments, movements, and ideas accompanied them back to Serbia. Finally, Serbia had politically matured in the process, but had nevertheless kept its old partisan struggles and personal rivalries.

The predominantly rural Serbian society passed through several stages in the development of its national consciousness. The Serbs began by opposing Ottoman rule and building the foundations of a future modern nation-state in the early nineteenth century; they progressed by opposing the authority of that very state (peasant uprisings throughout the 1830s and 1840s), ending with the final push against the Ottomans in 1876 (joined by Russia in 1877) and achieving full independence in 1878.

Until the early nineteenth century, Serbia was an egalitarian society composed almost entirely of the peasantry.

Serbian peasantry matured during the subsequent decades, gradually learning to articulate its own views and interests. By the 1880s, Serbia was able to develop a thin, but quite vibrant layer of urban bourgeoisie, whose members had originated from the village and still had a largely peasant consciousness, but coupled with rudimentary entrepreneur-like and merchant-like mentality. At the same time, a third social layer grew within the Serbian society consisting of local intelligentsia (teachers, doctors, priests, local state authorities), who shared the social destiny of the peasantry, but had quite a defined political awareness. Headed by Belgrade intellectuals, this was basically the composition of the Serbian society in the 1880s.³

* * *

The People's Radical Party was officially founded in 1881 as the first organized political party in Serbia.⁴ In its formative period (until 1903), Serbian Radicalism passed through several stages of political and ideological development.

The first period (1869–1880) could be described as the period of *introductory Radicalism or pre-Radicalism*. In terms of its organization, the

³ See Dimitrije Djordjević, "Srbija i srpsko društvo 1880-ih godina", *Istorijski časopis* 29–30 (1982–83), 413–426.

⁴ Živan Živanović, *Politička istorija Srbije*, II, Beograd, 1923–25, 161.

See also Slobodan Jovanović, *Vlada Milana Obrenovića*, II, 317; Živan Mitrović, *Srpske političke stranke*, Belgrade, 1935, 71; Michael Boro Petrovich, *History of Modern Serbia 1804–1918*, II, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, 1976, 411.



The Ottoman Empire, 1801

movement was formally unorganized; in terms of its ideology, it encompassed the ideas of socialism, anarchism and peasant democracy.

The second period, the period of *militant (revolutionary) Radicalism* (1881–1886), was marked by the organized and uncompromising opposition to the ruling system and the Crown, which culminated in the Timok Rebellion of 1883. Basically, this was an attempt to depose the government by force, which ended in complete disaster. The party was destroyed, some of the local leaders were killed; all of its leaders were imprisoned, except for the two who managed to flee.

The aftermath was marked by the Radicals' wavering between armed resistance and legitimism. The period of *pragmatic (compromising) Radicalism* (1886–1894) was a time of general recuperation and reorganization of the movement, followed by its gradual inclusion into the existing order; the Radical Party was moving towards the position of a legitimate political force; coming to power for the first time (1887) and heading the government (1887 onwards); the new Constitution of 1888, which was chiefly influenced by Radical ideological concepts; political deals with other political factors in Serbia, including the Crown. Then came the period of *overpow-*

ered (restrained) Radicalism (1894–1903), wherein, on one side, the Radicals made serious compromises with rival parties and the King, reducing temporarily their political demands, and started competing for power while preserving their basic ideology; on the other hand, they were implicated in the so-called Ivanjdan⁵ assassination attempt and accused again of subversive activities against the Obrenović dynasty.

As any other periodization, this one could be subjected to criticism of various sorts. Its major criteria, however, were the stages in the ideological development of Radicalism in Serbia and their relation to the historical challenges of the time and vice versa. (Of course, in order to correspond to the central topic of this study.)

The period 1903–1914 was often labeled as the Golden Age in the history of the People's Radical Party and the Kingdom of Serbia in general.

After the assassination of the last ruler from the House of Obrenović (May 29, 1903)⁶ and the dynastic change, Serbia entered a period of full parliamentary democracy based on a slightly revised Constitution of 1888. From 1903 to 1914, the Radicals were in power most of the time, leading the country towards the European socio-economic and political model. Through twenty years of political struggle, persecution and temptation, the party had definitely matured, faced numerous impasses and dilemmas, clarified and modified its ideological and structural foundations, and became capable of playing the key role in the process of Serbia's modernization and Europeanization.

After the end of World War One and the creation of Yugoslavia, the Radical Party continued to exist and act as a political movement until 1941. However, general political, social, and cultural circumstances became so different that it seems very difficult, if not impossible, to consider it the same movement before and after 1918.

* * *

The group led by Svetozar Marković burst on the Serbian political scene in the late 1860s, and remained active until 1875.⁷ Svetozar Marković was a young political theorist and politician who had studied in Serbia, Russia, and Switzerland but was more focused on politics than science. He had devised a political doctrine combining elements of Russian socialism, the

⁵ St John's Day.

⁶ For more details see Dragiša Vasić, *Hiljadudevetstotreća*, Beograd, 1925.

⁷ See Slobodan Jovanović, *Svetozar Marković*, Beograd, 1920; Jovan Skerlić, *Svetozar Marković, njegov život, rad i ideje*, Beograd, 1922; Woodford McClellan, *Svetozar Marković and the Origins of Balkan Socialism*, Princeton, 1964.

experience of the Russian “*narodniki*” movement and anarchism with Western European socialist views, including some traces of Marxism.⁸ Having returned to Serbia in 1869 with a group of his fellow Serbian students from Switzerland, he launched a robust political action in Kragujevac, a town in central Serbia. Marković and his associates published a number of political newspapers and organized a dynamic political force. Through innumerable articles and writings, Marković developed his own socio-political teaching, which, although incomplete and at times inconsistent, represented the first radical-socialist philosophy not only in Serbia, but in the entire Balkan region as well.⁹ His theories were somewhat futuristic, romantic, and unrealistic, but they nevertheless had a strong impact on contemporary and future Serbian political events.

Marković’s teaching could be roughly divided into three major sections: his political concept, his socio-economic doctrine, and his national program.¹⁰

In his political agenda, Svetozar Marković stressed several key points. His concepts included a very strong anti-bureaucratic sentiment. He argued in favor of abolition of a professional administration, which he regarded as the main obstacle on the road to economic and cultural emancipation of the Serbian population: “I consider the destruction of the bureaucratic system as the first necessity in Serbia.”¹¹ Marković also underscored the significance of municipal and regional self-governmental organization instead of the professional administrative apparatus. He preferred elected and collective bodies in communes and regions to be supreme authorities in their respective areas. According to Marković, communal assemblies incorporate all democratically chosen officials in the commune: not only the administrators, chief of police, public prosecutor and the judge, but also the doctor and the teacher.¹² The whole structure of state establishment was to be derived from the slogan that “the question of bread is the question of local self-government”.¹³

The last of Marković’s political objectives, the supreme authority of the National Assembly, logically followed the principle of local self-govern-

⁸ Sofija Škorić, “The *Populism of Nikola Pašić: the Zurich Period*”, *East European Quarterly*, vol. XIV, no. 4, Winter, 1980.

⁹ McClellan, 168.

¹⁰ Jovanović, *Svetozar Marković*, 21–30.

¹¹ Svetozar Marković, “Srpske obmane”, *Zastava*, Novi Sad, 1869.

¹² Svetozar Marković, *Odabrani spisi*, Beograd, 1969, 82.

¹³ *Ibid.*

ment. Marković argued that the National Assembly, completely elective on regional basis, represented the ultimate legislative authority. Consequently, this line of reasoning brought him to the “Convent system” of government and, further on, to republicanism.¹⁴

The socio-economic portion of Svetozar Marković’s opus suggested the abolition of private ownership and the establishment of communal property. His economic concept was based on the traditional patriarchal family cooperative, the so-called Serbian “*zadruga*” (cooperative).¹⁵ Fascinated by its authentically democratic organization and spirit, Marković put it at the center of his socio-economic theory: “The modern economic ideal is very close to the economic mechanism of the Serbian *zadruga*”.¹⁶ In his opinion, it represented “the most advanced communism of ownership, work and pleasure”.¹⁷ Marković was heavily influenced by Nikolai Chernyshevsky. This Russian socialist discovered the perfect model for his economic system in Russian traditional institutions -the Russian “*mir*” and “*obshchina*”.¹⁸ Following his teacher, Marković also built his system on the Serbian concept of “*zadruga*”.¹⁹

The national concept of Svetozar Marković was focused on the defeat of both empires present in the Balkans, the Habsburg Monarchy and the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, he pleaded for the liberation of all Serbs and their free association with other Balkan nations in a federation achieved through an armed uprising:²⁰

“The Serbian people have no choice but to launch a revolution in the Balkan Peninsula, a revolution which would end in the disappearance of all states which exist today on the road to the unification of free peoples and workers in a union of communes, regions – or states...”²¹

In the early 1870s, political fermentation in Serbia was mirrored in two parallel processes. On one side, the group led by Svetozar Marković, which included a handful of young, European-educated and politically very conscious men – leaning towards radical-socialist ideas – developed

¹⁴ Jovanović, *Svetozar Marković*, 112.

¹⁵ McClellan, 239.

¹⁶ Svetozar Marković, *Javnost*, no. 20, Kragujevac, 1873.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Richard Pipes, *Russia Under the Old Regime*, Charles Scribner’s Sons, New York, 1974.

¹⁹ McClellan, 241.

²⁰ Svetozar Marković, *Celokupna dela*, vol. II, Beograd, 1892–1921, 35–36.

²¹ Svetozar Marković, *Srbija ne Istoku*, Beograd, 1872, 167–168.



a rather well-organized action, especially through political newspapers such as *Radenik* (Laborer), *Javnost* (Public), *Rad* (Labor) and *Oslobodjenje* (Liberation).²² At about the same time, in 1874, in the National Assembly appeared a group of representatives, attracting attention by their peasant appearance, outspoken attitudes, and public speeches in which they defended the interests of the Serbian peasantry.²³ These representatives came from the countryside and from various regions of the Serbian territory, but all were gathered around the same political objective – the improvement of the socio-economic position of Serbian peasantry.²⁴

Thus, in the politically underdeveloped Serbian environment, these two trends found common grounds for joint action: young intellectuals attracted to European socialism which they vigorously tried to implement in Serbia, and the group of peasant deputies, expressed the simplified and essentially hostile attitude of the peasantry towards the government. But, as much as this combination appears peculiar and confusing, it does have an obvious explanation. Without any traces of working class or capitalist economic relations as a dominant socio-economic factor, no idea of European socialism could find fertile soil in Serbia. Consequently, the promoters of socialist ideology were forced to look for supporters among the peasants, as they made up the most numerous social stratum in Serbian society.

As a result of this mutual influence, the young Serbian socialists toned down their ideological exclusiveness and the peasant element obtained a solid theoretical guideline for future political action. The best illustration of the common origins of these two trends is the fact that Svetozar Marković, the leader of the socialist group, and Adam Bogosavljević, the dominant figure among peasant Assembly members, had both attended *Velika škola* (Belgrade Grand School, the predecessor of the University of Belgrade) at the same time in the early 1860s.²⁵

As early as 1875, the group led by Adam Bogosavljević²⁶ came out with a defined program, which was mainly focused on anti-bureaucratism and included three major points: reduction of state officials' salaries, abolition of district offices,²⁷ and the establishment of regional self-govern-

²² Jovanović, *Svetozar Marković*, 98.

²³ Restislav Petrović, *Adam Bogosavljević*, Beograd, 1972, p42.

See also Skerlić, 174.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ For a short biography, see Chapter 6 (The Leaders).

²⁷ “*Okružna načelstva*” – regional branches of the central government.

ments.²⁸ At the same time, they insisted on a constitutional reform which would guarantee exclusive legislative powers to the National Assembly, as well as the standard principles of democracy (freedom of press, association, and public reunion).²⁹

The point is that the program of Adam Bogosavljević's group was heavily influenced by Svetozar Marković's ideas. However, Bogosavljević adopted only the political, anti-bureaucratic, aspect of Marković's teachings and left out his socio-economic deliberations. This was primarily because the latter held no appeal to Serbian peasantry.

Historically, both of these political movements – the radical-socialist program of Marković's group and the activities of Bogosavljević's group in the Parliament – proved rudimentary and short-lived attempts at building a democratic society. Their importance, however, lies in their role as predecessors of subsequent political developments. Basically, they served as preliminary, yet very valuable, experiences of the people who would later initiate the founding of the People's Radical Party in Serbia. Certain ideas incorporated into the Radical political program had been presented already in the course of these early efforts. To a certain degree, both groups (Marković's and Bogosavljević's) suffered from political naiveté, leftist idealism and simplification of complex issues of state building. Perhaps the most serious problem of their radical-socialist orientation was their inability to cope with Serbian realities: the real, everyday troubles of the Serbian population, and overly optimistic expectations of the Serbian peasantry. Radical-socialist ideas imported from abroad could hardly correspond to the politically, economically and socially underdeveloped Serbian society. On the other hand, the group of Adam Bogosavljević pointed out certain fundamental discrepancies in the Serbian political system, but was incapable of developing its own positive political alternative. Its attitudes were essentially negative and offered no viable option.

The radical-socialist venture of Svetozar Marković's group did not last more than few years. After the death of its front man in 1875, the movement slowly started to fall apart. Its sole attempt at revival in 1876 also failed (the so-called "Red Banner" affair).³⁰

The city of Kragujevac in the heart of Serbia was the center of socialist and radical-socialist action of Marković's group. In February 1876, the conflict between government forces and the radical-socialists over local elec-

²⁸ Jovanović, *Svetozar Marković*, 61.

²⁹ Jaša Prodanović, *Istorija političkih stranaka i struja u Srbiji*, Beograd, 1947, 373.

³⁰ Velizar Ninčić, *Pera Todorović*, Beograd, 1956, p. 47–50; Živanović, II, 137–140; Prodanović, p. 402–406, V.

tions ended in massive demonstrations and open confrontation. The demonstrators, led by radical-socialist activists and followed by workers from the Kragujevac armament factory, raised a red flag with the word “*Samouprava*” (self-government), thus expressing their Markovićevist ideological inclinations.³¹ The same evening, the incident was ended by the energetic reaction of the police and military forces. Among the conspirators of the demonstrations, who were later found guilty and sentenced to prison, were old collaborators of Svetozar Marković and future founders of the Radical Party: Pera Todorović and Pera Velimirović.³² They, however, managed to flee from Serbia before their trial and were pardoned in 1880.³³

After that, the activities of this particular political group gradually lost momentum until it eventually disappeared. Due to the war with the Ottomans (1876–1878), which had mobilized all mental and physical forces of the Serbian people, as well as the later diplomatic developments which chiefly determined the future of Serbia (opposition to the San Stefano Treaty and achieving independence at the Congress of Berlin in 1878), the internal political contradictions were put aside. The radical-socialist movement, as it had existed in the previous period, was never reborn. Nevertheless, individual motions and actions of former Markovićist parliamentarians continued.³⁴ In the late 1870s, this faction gradually grew in importance and numbers, becoming an outspoken voice of the minority opposition in the Serbian National Assembly.

* * *

The late 1870s and the early 1880s brought a drastic political polarization among the members of the Serbian National Assembly. The Parliament became the “grand stage” of Serbian politics and the place from which each and every political party originated. Serbia’s underdeveloped political structures led to a kind of parallelism of powers: the Ruler and the Assembly turned into bitter adversaries, often resulting in a political gridlock.³⁵

³¹ Prodanović, 402.

³² Živanović, p. 141–142.

For personal details about these two, see Chapter 6 (The Leaders).

³³ Prodanović, 403–104.

³⁴ Raša Milošević, *Timočka buna 1883. godine*, Beograd, 1923, 13–18; Živanović, II, 158; Prodanović, 437–440.

³⁵ Jovanović, *Vlada Aleksandra Obrenovića*, III, 411; See also: Milivoje Popović, *Borbe za parlamentarni režim u Srbiji*, Beograd, 1939, 54.

At the beginning of the 1880s, three major political camps formed in the Serbian Parliament. Although not yet completely defined in organization and ideology, these informal blocs of assembly members, who sometimes switched from one side to another, represented the nucleus of future political parties.

The Liberals were the oldest political group in Serbian politics. They emerged from the St. Andrew Assembly in 1858 and dominated Serbian politics from 1868 to 1880.³⁶ Led by the well-educated and influential Jovan Ristić, they brought certain Western liberal ideas to Serbia, even though their nationalism was much more pronounced than their quest for freedom. Influenced by nationalist ideologies from abroad (mainly German), the Serbian Liberals sought internal progress through national liberation and unification. Their rule was marked by two crucial achievements: the Constitution of 1869, which opened the door for semi-parliamentarism and semi-democracy, and the attainment of international recognition and state independence in 1878.³⁷

The Young Conservatives, who later formed the Serbian Progressive Party, included some of the most brilliant scholars and intellectuals in Serbia³⁸ and formulated a program of modernization through moderate reforms implemented from above. Oriented towards the elite of the Serbian society, they sought national growth through collaboration of the intelligentsia and the Crown. Despite the name, its conservatism was “*combined with liberal ideas*.”³⁹ The problem, however, was that the Young Conservatives (Progressivists) did not believe in the capacity of the Serbian “backward and illiterate” peasant to make the right decisions in the realm of public affairs. The necessary advancement of Serbia had to come from the top, since it was only the elites, together with the King, that could lead the nation to a brighter future. Disappointed by the Russians’ behavior towards Serbia,⁴⁰ they championed the closest relations with the Habsburgs.

The third group were the Radicals, who began in coalition with the Young Conservatives (1879–1880), thus forming a powerful opposition bloc to counter the ruling Liberal government. This coalition was, however,

³⁶ Jovanović, *Vlada Aleksandra Obrenovića*, III, 412. See also: Gale Stokes, *Legitimacy through Liberalism: Vladimir Jovanović and the Transformation of Serbian Politics*, University of Washington Press, Seattle, 1975.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Milutin Garašanin, Milan Piroćanac, Stojan Novaković, Čedomilj Mijatović, Milan Milićević, etc.

³⁹ Jovanović, *Vlada Milana ...*, II, 311.

⁴⁰ The San Stefano Treaty of March 1878 stipulated the creation of Greater Bulgaria.

temporary and not based on similar ideological grounds, but rather on a common interest in undermining the government. As a result of their joint pressure, the Radicals and the Young Conservatives were able to topple the Liberal government. Subsequently, the Young Conservatives formed their first cabinet⁴¹ in late 1880.⁴² In those days (prior to the final split), the Radicals often used the Young Conservative newspaper *Videlo* (*The Mirror*) to publish their proclamations and political statements.⁴³

The beginning of 1881 was marked by the most decisive moment in the history of Serbian Radicalism. On January 8, 1881, the first issue of the official organ of the People's Radical Party *Samouprava* (*The Self-government*) appeared, announcing the formal creation of the new political organization.⁴⁴ This was the first political party officially founded in Serbia. It was immediately followed by the formation of the Serbian Progressive Party later in January, and the Liberal Party in October 1881.⁴⁵

The first issue of *Samouprava* contained a general proclamation of the Party's leadership, defining reasons for its foundation, as well as its major political stands. The Radical Party's political program was published in the first issue of *Samouprava* and signed by thirty eight Assembly members, including Nikola Pašić, Aca Stanojević, Raša Milošević, Kosta Taušanović, Dimitrije Katić and Ranko Tajić⁴⁶ – followed by another 38 “fellow representatives in the National Assembly”.⁴⁷

Immediately after its inception, the Radical Party began a series of dynamic and full-fledged activities. Through daily articles in their newspapers,⁴⁸ they launched vigorous attacks on the government, the Crown, and their policies. They focused primarily on practical, daily issues and political problems. The period from 1881 to 1883 was chiefly marked by the Radicals' activities. At the same time, the movement was growing

⁴¹ Presided by Milan Piroćanac, a lawyer.

⁴² Živanović, II, 155.

⁴³ “Prijateljima naroda”, *Videlo*, no. 138, November 21, 1880.

⁴⁴ Živanović, II, 161; see Jovanović, *Vlada Milana Obrenovića*, II, 317; Živan Mitrović, *Srpske političke stranke*, Beograd, 1939, 71; Michael Boro Petrovich, 410–411.

⁴⁵ Jovanović, *Vlada Milana Obrenovića*, II, 318–320.

⁴⁶ See Mitrović, 71–75; Alex Dragnich, *Serbia, Nikola Pašić, Yugoslavia*, Rutgers University Press, New Jersey, 1976, 163; Michael Boro Petrovich, 411. For biographical data, see Chapter 6 (The Leaders).

⁴⁷ Živanović, II, 161–162.

⁴⁸ Besides *Samouprava*, the Radicals published another newspaper – *Rad* (Labor) and a satirical weekly *Ćosa* (Beardless).

rapidly, mostly spreading among the provincial intelligentsia and peasantry.⁴⁹ A result of this growth of the movement was the first convention of the Radical Party, held under the open sky⁵⁰ in the summer of 1882. With over one thousand people present, the caucus elected the Party's leadership or rather its Main Board, as it was then called.⁵¹ Nikola Pašić⁵² became the first Chairman of the Radical Main Board, and Pera Todorović was elected Vice President.⁵³ By 1883, the Radical movement had spread all over Serbia, becoming the country's most numerous political organization. The Radicals felt strong enough to seize power. If they could not use legal democratic means, they were ready to use other available methods. By a machination of the Crown and the Progressivists, the Radicals were prevented from forming their cabinet, although they won a clear majority at the elections in 1882. By 1883, the conflict between the Radicals and the King had become so sharp that a clash seemed inevitable. On one side, there was a young, impatient movement, whose leadership was eager to seize power and implement a series of fundamental political reforms; on the other, there were the ruler and his supporters, who wanted to preserve the status quo in which their predominance would not be jeopardized.

The revolutionary dreams of the Radicals were finally realized in October 1883. After an article in *Samouprava*, in which the Radicals advised the population not to surrender its arms to the government,⁵⁴ although such a demand had been announced, the peasants in Eastern Serbia started an armed revolt, which was soon named the Timok rebellion.⁵⁵

The rebellion was led by local Radical leaders, the most distinguished of whom were Aca Stanojević, Žika Milenović, Ljuba Didić and Priest Marinko Ivković.⁵⁶ Once the garrison stationed in the town of Paracin was called in, the uprising was crushed in a few days. The members of the Radical Main Committee, although not personally involved, were all taken into

⁴⁹ Jovanović, *Vlada Aleksandra Obrenovića*, I, 176.

⁵⁰ Viline Vode near Kragujevac.

⁵¹ Milošević, *Timočka buna...*, 144–150.

⁵² See Chapter 6 (The Leaders).

⁵³ Milošević, *Timočka buna...*, 144–150.

⁵⁴ Anon., "Disarmament of the Popular Army", *Samouprava*, July 30, 1883; Anon., "How to Get Rid of Illegal Elections", *Samouprava*, August 30, 1883.

⁵⁵ For more details see: Milošević, *Timočka buna...*; Dragutin Ilić, *Zaječarska buna*, Beograd, 1909; Momčilo Veljković, *O Timočkoj buni 1883 godine*, Beograd, 1936; Dimitrije Djordjević, "The 1883 Peasant Uprising in Serbia", *Balkan Studies*, 20, 2, Thessaloniki, 1979.

⁵⁶ Ilić, 48.

custody, except Nikola Pašić and Aca Stanojević⁵⁷ who managed to flee to Bulgaria.⁵⁸ The local leaders of the uprising were either court-martialled and sentenced to prison in Zaječar or managed to escape over the Bulgarian border.⁵⁹ The Radical leadership was also tried. Three of its members – Pera Todorović,⁶⁰ Raša Milošević⁶¹ and Nikola Pašić – were sentenced to death; Kosta Taušanović was sentenced to seven and Pavle Mihailović to five years in prison; Giga Geršić⁶² and Andra Nikolić⁶³ were freed.

The trials left the Radical Party in ruins and disarray.

At that crucial point in the history of the Radical Party, several important characteristics regarding its very nature could be singled out. First, the Radicals proved capable of building a political infrastructure and a specific agenda in a very short time span. Secondly, it showed its potential in both political views and manpower. Thirdly, its members became conscious of their own strength, challenging the supreme authority of the Crown and displaying fervor to take power at any cost and by any means. Still owing to their socialist and anarchist past, the Serbian radicals were playing around with prospects of a revolution and they paid a dear price for it. There was, however, a positive side to these events: they had matured through the process.

In the period of 1883–1889, the Radical Party remained largely inexperienced in practical affairs and overwhelmed by its visionary ideas of revolution. The Timok Rebellion had been ill-organized and doomed to failure. The power of the state apparatus, the military and, above all, of the king's personal authority were simply too great for a spontaneous uprising of the peasantry led by local Radical leaders and amateur commanders. The Radicals had stood no chance.

The Timok episode revealed another feature of the movement: the basic difference in mindsets between the Belgrade leadership and their rural followers. Although there were proposals among members of the Main Board to join the rebels, at the secret meeting on the eve of their arrests,⁶⁴ they all remained at a safe distance in the capital. On the contrary, the local

⁵⁷ See Chapter 6 (The Leaders).

⁵⁸ Milošević, *Timočka buna...*, 109.

⁵⁹ Ilić, 52.

⁶⁰ See Chapter 6 (The Leaders).

⁶¹ See Chapter 6 (The Leaders).

⁶² See Chapter 6 (The Leaders).

⁶³ See Chapter 6 (The Leaders).

⁶⁴ Milošević, *Timočka buna...*, 110–111.

Radicals took immediate command of the rebellion, personally taking up arms. It was a sign that the Radical Party – or its top leaders at least – was on the way of “*embourgeoisement*”.

The final aspect of the Timok Rebellion disaster was the fact that it had never spread throughout Serbia. It remained localized in the eastern part of the country and was hence a lost cause from the very beginning.

Even the largest town in the area, Zaječar, was not caught up in the revolt.⁶⁵ This particular circumstance indicated a certain disharmony between the local citizens and the insurgents.

Hence, the period from the formation of the Radical Party in 1881 to the Timok Rebellion in 1883 brought the rapid rise of Serbian Radicalism and its even more rapid downfall. Still, it served as a valuable experience for the future of the Radical movement. The following years were marked by two parallel processes: by attempts to recuperate and reorganize the Party through legitimacy and legalism, and by the activities of the Radical emigrants in Bulgaria preparing for another armed uprising in Serbia. This dichotomy was symptomatic for the state in which the Radicals had found themselves after the Timok tragedy. The two tendencies showed the two different faces, or more precisely, the dual nature of the Radical political mentality: the old – revolutionary; the new – democratic. It became obvious that violence was not the answer. People got killed, the Party was destroyed; in a word, nothing was accomplished. One must admit, though. The Radicals were good learners.

In his first manifesto after he had left Serbia (December 1883), Nikola Pašić called for a new armed insurgency:

“Legal and constitutional means are not sufficient to suppress the violence, abuse and betrayal of the King and his supporters. Laws prevail over lies, robberies and crimes only when committed by ordinary people, but when committed by those who were supposed to protect the people – in that case only weapons can help.”⁶⁶

In a letter to Nikola Pašić sent from Belgrade (February 1884), an anonymous Radical also emphasized the importance of a violent act:

“... but I know that our ‘parliamentary struggle’ has to be merely formal, or at least secondary in importance; our main goal has to be the uprising.”⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Ilić, 67.

⁶⁶ Letter of Nikola Pašić, December 18, 1883, private collection.

⁶⁷ Letter to Nikola Pašić from Belgrade (probably by Andra Nikolić), April 15, 1884, private collection.

During these crucial years after the Timok calamity, the other opinion within the Radical Party argued in favor of a gradual and prudent recovery of the Party structure, and shifting the focus on political issues; avoiding potentially dangerous confrontations and cessation of assaults against the King's person. Some of the Radical leaders from Belgrade criticized their comrades in exile for their harsh statements. Stojan Protić wrote to Nikola Pašić concerning this problem:

“I cannot understand you, Aca (Stanojević, M.St.P.) and Žika (Milenović M.St.P.), but you especially, for making such mistakes.

Why and how come that you came out so openly against the King? I can, but only partially, explain the foolishness of your action by your desperate situation and your psychological condition.”⁶⁸

Instead of a new armed revolution, the Belgrade Radical group suggested to Pašić the founding of a political newspaper which would be designed to reestablish broken relations among the Radical leadership and its rank and file, and to serve as the basis for future Radical work.⁶⁹

During 1884, these two factions confronted each other, the conflict becoming particularly unpleasant among the Belgrade Radicals. In a letter to Nikola Pašić, one of them wrote:

“I decided to approach our closest friends in Belgrade Djaja⁷⁰ (Jovan, M.St.P.), Stojan⁷¹ (Protić, M.St.P) and others ... to decide once and for all: do they think that our Party could accomplish its program under the rule of King Milan, without an uprising.

A lot would depend upon this. Accordingly, our future work should be organized with them or without them.”⁷²

Finally, on September 15, 1885, Nikola Pašić called for another armed rebellion. This was his message to the Serbian nation:

“Dear compatriots! The time has come to stop and cast off the yokes of our masters: they have abolished freedom; they have neglected the rights of the people; they have separated Serbia from Serbdom and Slavophilism...

⁶⁸ Letter to Nikola Pašić from Belgrade (probably by Stojan Protić), February 15 1884, private collection.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ See Chapter 6 (The Leaders).

⁷¹ See Chapter 6 (The Leaders).

⁷² Letter to Nikola Pašić from Belgrade, February 11, 1884, private collection

Stop any communication by mail, telegraph or messengers . . . Form units, battalions and armies and go to Belgrade or Niš, wherever the King happens to reside. We are about to cross the border and come to your aid . . . The army should be with the people; it should not heed any commands against the people, its freedom and fatherland”⁷³

According to Sl. Jovanović, the highest authority on Serbian political history of the nineteenth century, Pašić spent the entire first period of his emigration in Bulgaria (until 1885) preparing for violent action.⁷⁴ By the summer of 1885, Pašić had managed to secure the resources and weaponry for the upcoming revolution. According to Sl. Jovanović again, this plan was disrupted by the Plovdiv coup⁷⁵ in Bulgaria.⁷⁶ If Jovanović’s assumption is correct, and it appears to be, then it would support the theory that the Radical leadership in Belgrade had indeed been dramatically divided.

By early 1886, however, the Radical Party definitely abandoned its revolutionary projects. There were several reasons for this crucial shift in its political strategy. First, on January 1, 1886, the Radical leaders who had been imprisoned for their involvement in the Timok Rebellion were pardoned and freed. The Serbian Crown was forced to back off because the country had suffered a humiliating defeat in the war against Bulgaria (November 1885).⁷⁷ Second, Nikola Pašić and other Radical emigrants in Bulgaria decided to renounce their rebellious and subversive activities for good. Third, the Radical Party had already been revitalized and restructured. The process of its reentering Serbian politics was well underway, especially through its newly launched newspaper *Odjek (The Echo)*, published since the fall of 1884. By early 1885, it had already acquired 900 regular subscribers.⁷⁸ Although quite restrained in comparison to its predecessor *Samouprava*, *Odjek* had an instrumental role in popularizing Radical ideas, as well as in legalizing and legitimizing the Party after the Timok blunder.

The Radicals clearly expressed their tendency towards appeasement in two announcements to the membership published in 1886:

⁷³ AS, fund of Milutin Garašanin, B6, no. 837.

⁷⁴ Slobodan Jovanović, “Pašić u emigraciji”, *Srpski književni glasnik*, vol. XXI, Belgrade, 1927, pp. 509–511.

⁷⁵ Unification of Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia in 1885.

⁷⁶ Jovanović, “Pašić u emigraciji”, 512.

⁷⁷ Stojan Novaković, *Dvadeset godina ustavne borbe u Srbiji 1883–1903*, Belgrade, 1912, 202.

⁷⁸ Stojan Protić, *Odlomci iz ustavne i narodne borbe*, Belgrade, 1911–12, 196.

“The position of our Party vis-à-vis present circumstances should be neither emotional nor inspired by great hopes and moral beliefs; instead, it should be limited to cautious waiting and unanimous readiness for hard political work.”⁷⁹

In a second set of instructions concerning the upcoming elections of 1887, the Radical leadership advised its followers in the following direction:

“...To avoid everything that could be used as an excuse or provoke more severe countermeasures by the government... not to listen to anyone... To exploit shrewdly and jointly the advantages of individual electoral rights... To act prudently and within strict legal limitations.”⁸⁰

The Radicals had undoubtedly grown up through the years of fierce political struggle and unrest. They reemerged as champions of constitutionalism and parliamentary democracy. Along with revolutionism, the People's Radical Party dropped its last socialist overtones.

* * *

The period of pragmatic Radicalism in Serbia roughly spanned the years between 1886 and 1894. This period was notable for the final acceptance of the Party into the legitimate political system. Moreover, the Party's actions were aimed at achieving essential reforms through that system. The Radicals' first success in that respect was the deal they concluded with the Liberals in the spring of 1886.⁸¹ The deal was motivated by two key factors: the need to decriminalize the Radical Party and an opportunity to enter the government. This could be achieved only through an agreement with the other opposition party, in spite of their profound differences in programs and ideology.

The Radical-Liberal agreement, however, did not signal any substantial *rapprochement* between the two political parties.⁸² It was rather a short-term compromise before the upcoming elections, including the prospect of a potential coalition in case of electoral victory.⁸³ The major task of the Liberal-Radical cabinet, which was formed on June 1, 1887 and presided by old Liberal Jovan Ristić, was to initiate a constitutional reform.

⁷⁹ ASANU, doc. no. 13682.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ ASANU, Jovan Avakumović, *Memoirs*, unpublished manuscript, no. 9287, 5.

⁸² *Ibid.*

See also Živanović, III, 405.

⁸³ ASANU, Avakumović, 58–65.

For the first time in their history the Radicals entered the government, receiving the following ministerial sectors: Sava Grujić – army, Mihailo Vujić – finances, Pera Velimirović – public works and Svetozar Milosavljević – education.^{84 85} But the coalition did not last for long. Six months later, in December 1887, the Radicals formed their first exclusively Radical cabinet⁸⁶ under the presidency of General Sava Grujić. Still, the conflict with the King continued to escalate, forcing the Radical government to resign in April 1888.⁸⁷

If the failure of the Timok Rebellion had been a victory of the King over the Radicals, than the promulgation of the new Constitution in December 1888 was a Radical triumph over the ruler. Soon after this document's approval in the Serbian National Assembly, the King abdicated and left Serbia.⁸⁸ A Royal Regency was created in order to represent the sovereign rights of King Milan Obrenović's underage son Aleksandar.⁸⁹

The 1888 Constitution was indeed the result of the efforts of all three political parties, but its spirit essentially reflected the program of the Radical Party. It stood among the more liberal constitutions in Europe of that time, paving the way for full parliamentary democracy and opening the door for the development of a truly modern political system in Serbia. (To be discussed in detail in later chapters, as its provisions reflected the key ideas of Serbian Radicalism.) Therefore, the constitutional act of 1888 could be said to have been the implementation of the Radical political program.

Soon after the King's abdication, Nikola Pašić and other Radical emigrants were finally pardoned and allowed to return to Serbia. Pašić came back in 1889 after six years in exile and immediately took over the helm of the Radical Party.

The period from February 1889 to August 1892 was the longest period (prior to 1903) during which the Radicals were in power. During these three-and-a-half years of uninterrupted rule, they were able to instigate a robust legislative activity according to their program and interests. This period of Serbian history is aptly named *The first Radical regime*.⁹⁰

⁸⁴ ASANU, Avakumović, 8.

⁸⁵ See Chapter 6 (The Leaders).

⁸⁶ Jovanović, *Vlada Milana Obrenovića*, III, 233–235.

⁸⁷ Živanović, III, 240–244.

⁸⁸ February 22, 1889.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ Jovanović, *Vlada Aleksandra Obrenovića*, I, 190–200.

By the Electoral Act (March 1890), the Radicals introduced virtually universal male suffrage without any tax restrictions. This act also introduced several important changes which secured a fair and democratic electoral procedure: secret ballot, supreme authority of electoral boards and a detailed penal code for cases of electoral abuse.⁹¹

Perhaps the two other pieces of legislation passed during Radical rule can shed more light on the Radical understanding of democracy. The Ministerial Responsibility Act (January 1891) established parliamentary control of the cabinet members, with ministerial accountability becoming both political and criminal.⁹² The Communal Prerogatives Act (November 1889) was designed to set up the principle of local self-government as the fundamental principle of decentralization of state power. This particular reform of the country's territorial organization meant the accomplishment of the original Radical program of 1881.

Upon his return to Serbia, Nikola Pašić was elected President of the National Assembly in 1889 and soon formed his first cabinet. The cabinet resigned in August 1892 and was succeeded by the Liberal cabinet of Jovan Avakumović.⁹³ The Radicals were in opposition again, waiting eagerly for the next elections as their new chance. The changes of the electoral system, which denied voting rights to all indebted citizens, resulted in a close vote. The Liberals managed to keep their power by a tight margin (1892).⁹⁴ Within a year (April 1, 1893), the minor Aleksandar Obrenović, while dining with the members of the Royal Regency, backed by the army and some members of the government, proclaimed himself King and took the royal prerogatives. The coup ended in the collapse of the existing power structure, but without violence. The young ruler appointed his former teacher (member of the Radical Party, but friendly with the Court) Dr. Lazar Dokić as Prime Minister.⁹⁵ The Radicals received this sudden twist with vigor and acclamation. It was reported, with obvious cynicism, that "the Radicals accompanied the King all over Serbia cheering and calling him *the first Radical* and *Alexander the Great*".⁹⁶ Except for the military sector, the cabinet

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ Živanović, vol. III, 253.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ For more details see: Raša Milošević, *Državni udar odozgo i Prvi april 1893: svrgnuće krnjeg kraljevskog namešništva*, Beograd, 1936.

⁹⁶ ASANU, Avakumović, 12.

of Dr. Lazar Dokić was comprised exclusively of Radical Party members⁹⁷. Once again, the collaboration proved short-lived. The Radical cabinet was forced to resign and, moreover, the Radicals and the King entered into an open confrontation. Radical public meetings were banned, their membership being labeled “the simple crowd gathered to disturb public peace and order”.⁹⁸ The King’s final move was his decision to abolish the 1888 Constitution (May 1894).⁹⁹ A *déjà vu* ensued: Serbia was pushed into a period of monarchical personal rule and, furthermore, into Royal autocracy. The Radical achievements were annulled, legislation overturned, reforms suspended. Their partnership with the King proved to have been a terrible decision, detrimental to their interests and reputation, as well as badly misjudged. The only positive aspect of the events was that the top radical leaders had stayed away from the affair, never joining the government.

The period of pragmatic Radicalism seems to have been crucial in many ways.

The Radical Party was moving forward in the aftermath of the Timok Rebellion, passing through the painful process of political and tactical re-orientation, becoming a viable and unavoidable political factor. By the same token, however, it started to lose its political “virginity”, as well as its ideological staunchness.

Nevertheless, this period was characterized by several significant triumphs of the Radical Party in the implementation of parliamentarism and modern democracy. Beginning with the 1888 Constitution and followed by a series of legal acts deriving from it, the Radicals came close to fulfilling their basic political program.¹⁰⁰ After all, they proved capable of reaching compromises and working in coalitions. This meant that their partisan selectiveness which, in all fairness, still existed among certain circles of the Party was generally fading away. The Radicals entered the historical phase: the stage in which they understood and accepted the rules of the political game: they were no longer as innocent and unsullied as they had been in 1881. Instead, they had become successful, mature and ready to rule. Yet, there were still a few more barriers on the road to this ambitious goal.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ ASANU, Avakumović, 174.

⁹⁹ Jovanović, *Vlada Aleksandra Obrenovića*, II, 203–221.

¹⁰⁰ Milivoje Popović, *Poreklo i postanak ustava od 1888 godine*, Beograd, 1939, 90–91.

* * *

From 1894 to 1903, during the period of “*overpowered Radicalism*”, Serbian Radicalism was marked by further attempts to return to power. The political efforts of the Radical leaders were mainly focused on journalistic activities. Through its leading political publication *Odjek*, the newly founded *Narod* (The People)¹⁰¹ and the literary-political magazine *Delo* (The Opus),¹⁰² the Radicals were able to maintain their presence in daily politics. Besides writings on everyday issues, their attention turned to questions of European political theory and practice. During this period, the Radicals fully espoused the theory of British parliamentarism, relying on the work of two of their leading theorists: Stojan Protić and Milovan Dj. Milovanović.¹⁰³

And again, the major Radical objective was the demand for a new constitution. The government’s efforts to form a constitutional committee with the representatives of all three political parties definitely failed in 1896 as a result of the Radicals’ strong opposition to the Progressivist government led by Stojan Novaković,¹⁰⁴ as well as their insistence on reinforcing the 1888 Constitution.¹⁰⁵

The summer of 1896 was marked by a massive Radical meeting organized in Belgrade on July 28. According to *Odjek*, between 35 and 40 thousand people were present at the rally.¹⁰⁶ Most of these men were peasants who had come from all over Serbia.¹⁰⁷ Živan Živanović, a prominent Liberal, claimed that this had been the most massive political rally ever organized in Serbia.¹⁰⁸

In late 1896, the Radicals briefly re-entered the government. After an arrangement with the King, Djordje Simić, one of the less important Radicals in the Party hierarchy and a member of its least militant wing, formed a government consisting of neutrals and the most moderate Radicals.

¹⁰¹ Started in 1896.

¹⁰² Started in 1894.

¹⁰³ Slobodan Jovanović, *Moji savremenici*, Windsor, Canada, 1953, 128.

¹⁰⁴ Stojan Novaković was a famous Serbian scholar, linguist and historian, who offered his own (ill-fated) constitutional proposal. The compromise solution submitted by Novaković turned out to be unacceptable to both sides: neither the crown, nor the radicals were willing to endorse it (1896).

¹⁰⁵ See: Novaković, 110–112.

¹⁰⁶ *Odjek*, July 30, 1896.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ Živanović, III, 309–310.

The Radical ministers were Mihailo Vujić, Pera Velimirović, Andra Nikolić and Milovan Milovanović.¹⁰⁹ Behind this group stood the omnipresent Nikola Pašić, political strategist of the first rate, who acted as the “*secret advisor of the government*”.¹¹⁰ As a part of their agreement with the Crown, the Radicals agreed to postpone the constitutional reform for a year. The Party’s pragmatism became evident: in order to remain in power, they temporarily betrayed their most important political objective – the demand for the reinstatement of the 1888 Constitution. This cabinet was forced to resign in the fall of 1897, when the former King Milan Obrenović returned to Serbia. The subsequent years were marked by King Aleksandar’s personal regime, supported and advised by his father, who actually ran the country. The government was headed by Milan’s close old friend and long-time ally, Dr. Vladan Djordjević. Despite their previous attempts to cooperate with the Crown, the Radicals were again out of power, and, more importantly, out of the main political stream. The majority of the laws passed during the Radical rule were changed or rescinded.

What was supposed to be the final blow against the Radical Party came in 1899. An unsuccessful assassination attempt on the life of former King Milan by a youngster from Bosnia was used by the government as a pretext to arrest the Radical leadership, accusing them of inspiring and organizing the plot. The imprisoned Radicals were Nikola Pašić, Stojan Protić, Ljubomir Živković and Kosta Taušanović.¹¹¹

The documents provided by the prosecution stated Nikola Pašić had openly threatened the life of former King Milan Obrenović at a meeting of his Party’s Main Board; that Ljubomir Živković was the author of the brochure “*The Demon of Serbia*” which alluded to Milan and praised Karadjordje, the leader of the First Serbian Insurrection; and that the public activities and writings of Stojan Protić were of revolutionary nature.¹¹² The incident was meant to destroy the Radical Party altogether.¹¹³ At first, the prosecution insisted on death penalties for Pašić and Taušanović as a reprisal for past and present conflicts and insults. But, when the Serbian and European (especially Russian) public, as well as their governments, reacted, former King Milan decided to bargain with Pašić. Pašić agreed to accuse

¹⁰⁹ Jovanović, *Vlada Aleksandra Obrenovića*, III, 148–151. For more details about these individuals, see Chapter 6 (The Leaders).

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ AS, fund of Vladan Djordjević, B9, no. 27.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ *Ibid.* See also Kosta Jezdić, *Ivandanski atentat i Nikola Pašić*, Beograd, 1926.

some of his comrades (namely Protić and Živković) of anti-dynastic attitudes and even of possibly having inspired the assassination. In return, his and Taušanović's lives were spared. Finally, the accused Radicals were sentenced to twenty years of hard labor; Taušanović got nine years of prison and Pašić five.¹¹⁴ These measures were accompanied by organized attacks on the Radicals. They were fired from their jobs, persecuted, and purged throughout Serbia.

In 1901, however, after the death of its nemesis the former King Milan Obrenović, the Radical Party re-emerged in Serbian politics. And again, as they had done so many times before, the Radicals demanded constitutional reform.

Ever since 1894, the country had been virtually without a Constitution. The 1888 Constitution had been rescinded in favor of the old 1869 Constitution, but without official proclamation. In February 1901, some Radical leaders entered the government, namely Mihailo Vujić and Milovan Milovanović. In late March, Vujić formed a coalition cabinet with the Progressivists, immediately tackling the question of the Constitution. The King octroyed the new Constitution in April 1901. This event was preceded by a Radical-Progressivist agreement, known as the "*Fusion*", on King Aleksandar's request.¹¹⁵ The Constitution was a compromise solution, an amalgam of the previous two: the constitutions of 1869 and 1888. The 1901 Constitution stipulated a bicameral Parliament with a Senate and a National Assembly. The Senate as the upper house was only partially elective – the majority of its members was appointed by the Monarch (30), while the remaining 18 would be elected by the voters.¹¹⁶ The legislative initiative was divided between the Monarch and the Parliament. The Constitution enlarged the prerogatives of the State Council as the supreme administrative-judicial body. Secret ballot was re-introduced, and the Constitution guaranteed limited civil liberties.¹¹⁷

The union with the Progressivists ("The Fusion") and the concession on the constitutional issue became the main cause for the ensuing split within the Radical Party. A group of prominent Radical intellectuals left the bulk of the Party and created their own Independent Radical Party (Party of Radical Democracy) in 1901.¹¹⁸ This, however, was the result of a break between the older generation and the younger radical members rather than

¹¹⁴ Jovanović, *Vlada Aleksandra Obrenovića*, III, 352–355

¹¹⁵ Jovanović, *Vlada Aleksandra Obrenovića*, III, 381–385.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ Jovanović, *Vlada Aleksandra Obrenovića*, 391–394.

an ideological division between the two groups. It was evident that the move with “the Fusion” had been tactical and not strategic. Still, the Independent Radicals insisted on a return to the original political program of 1881 and on the restoration of the 1888 Constitution. From that point on, the Independent Radical Party played an extremely important role in Serbian politics. After 1903, the Old Radicals and the Independent Radicals became the two main rival political camps in Serbia. The old political groups, the Progressivists and the Liberals, gradually lost their power and significance, and eventually disappeared from the political scene.

The Independent Radicals were led by three Ljubomirs: Ljubomir Živković, Ljubomir Stojanović and Ljubomir Davidović.¹¹⁹

* * *

1903 was a watershed year in modern Serbian history. It was marked by the murder of King Aleksandar and Queen Draga by a group of young officers.¹²⁰ This tragedy put an end to the Obrenović dynasty, which had reigned over Serbia for over seventy years in total (1815–1842; 1858–1903). The motives behind the assassination were a combination of personal grievances and dynastic rivalries. The truth of the matter is that its background remains somewhat unclear to this day. What has been established beyond reasonable doubt is that no Radical was implicated in the conspiracy.

More importantly, the 1903 regicide resulted in the dynastic change (the Karadjordjevićs replaced the Obrenovićs) and, simultaneously, enabled the realization of a constitutional reform, re-instituting the system of parliamentary democracy. In June 1903, merely a month after the death of the royal couple, the new Constitution was passed by the Grand National Assembly (a slightly revised version of the 1888 text). Petar Karadjordjević, the grandson of Karadjordje Petrović,¹²¹ became the new King of Serbia.

The Radical Party entered its prime. After more than twenty years of struggle, rebellion, crisis, setbacks, frustrations and small victories, it finally grew into a powerful and mature political organization. In the following decades, it would lead Serbia towards the European model, not only in terms of politics, but also in the fields of economy, culture and social development.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.* All three were successive Party Chairmen.

¹²⁰ For more details see: Dragiša Vasić, *Hiljadudevetstotreća*, Beograd, 1925.

¹²¹ Karadjordje Petrović, the leader of the First Serbian Insurrection against the Turks (1804–1813), founder of the Karadjordjević dynasty. He was murdered in 1817 by his arch-rival Miloš Obrenović, the leader of the Second Serbian Insurrection against the Turks (1815–1830) and the founder of the Obrenović dynasty. That is when and how the feud had begun.

CHAPTER THREE

THE SOURCES

From a phenomenological point of view, every political party or movement has two essential aspects: its theory and its practice. The theoretical aspect includes ideology, understood as a set of ideas which define the party's political and philosophical stand on various issues. The practical aspect refers to its functioning and activities in an actual historical context, defined and particular circumstances, time and space. It is this dual nature of political organizations that give them their complex historical character. The two aspects are often so intertwined that it seems almost impossible to separate them and analyze them independently of each other. In other instances, they seem so contradictory to each other that it is virtually unfeasible to determine their common denominator and establish relationships between the theory and practice of a given political organization.

The inherent discrepancy between words and deeds, a major characteristic of individual human behavior, is even more applicable to politics and political parties. Ideologies, in general, are slightly distorted images of reality, subjective enough to serve the purpose, but not to undermine the basic sense of reality. This is not always a question of sincerity. Sometimes, there are historical conditions that determine political moves in a certain direction, regardless of the principles proclaimed. Often, of course, this inherent discrepancy comes from plain dishonesty or self-interest.

* * *

The sources of the ideology of Serbian Radicalism¹ were twofold: imported and original. The imported (or foreign) influences arrived in three great waves. The first wave came from European (especially Russian) socialist, anarchist, and populist traditions, mainly influencing the group around Svetozar Marković, and covering the initial period of pre-Radicalism in Serbia. The second wave came from the French Radical movement, which had a strong impact on Serbian Radicals in terms of both their political program and their party organization.² The third wave of outside influences originated from British parliamentary and constitutional theories which, by the late 1880s, had become fully espoused by the Radicals in Serbia.

Yet, the ideas taken from European political experiences needed to be transformed, altered, and adapted to suit the specific Serbian political environment. The original (or internal) sources of Serbian Radicalism derived from a particular socio-political situation in the country. Within a given historical framework, political decision-making was coming from the Ruler on one hand and from political parties on the other. This feature of late nineteenth century Serbian reality fundamentally influenced and modified the Radical ideology.

Finally, it seems appropriate to draw some general conclusions regarding the multiple sources of Serbian Radical ideology. That is what we did in the concluding remarks at the end of this chapter.

1

The influence of European socialism reached the Serbian Radicals in their earliest phase of development, during the period when future Radical front men were still associated with the group led by Svetozar Marković.³ In the late 1860s, the Swiss city of Zurich attracted many young, politically aware students from all over Europe. At that time and later on, Switzerland in general represented the epicenter of various, mainly leftist, political movements and ideas. Undoubtedly one of the most significant personalities was

¹ For more details see: Milan St. Protić, *Radikali u Srbiji – ideje i pokret, 1881–1903*, Beograd, 1990.

² See: D. T. Bataković, "Francuski uticaji u Srbiji 1835–1914 – Četiri generacije Parizlija", *Zbornik za istoriju Matice srpske* 56, Novi Sad, 1997, 73–95; « L'influence française sur la formation de la démocratie parlementaire en Serbie », *Revue d'Europe centrale* VII/no. 1, Strasbourg 2000, 17–44.

³ For more details see: Jovan Skerlić, *Svetozar Marković, njegov život, rad i ideje*, Belgrade 1922; Sofija Škorić, "The Populism of Nikola Pašić: The Zurich Period", *East European Quarterly* XIV, no. 4, Winter 1980, 469–485.

Mikhail Bakunin, a Russian émigré, politician, vagabond, and revolutionary – the leading figure of the anarchist movement and the First International.⁴ He played a key role among the student youth in Zurich, and organized many clandestine and semi-clandestine political groups and gatherings propagating his theories of revolution and the state. His reputation as the leading figure of the most extremist wing of the Socialist International and Karl Marx's chief rival, secured him a position in the center of attention among the student community in Switzerland. His eventful life, the inhuman tortures and long imprisonments he had endured, his spectacular escapes and dangerous revolutionary adventures all over the world, from his native Russia to the United States, Japan and Western Europe, made him a living legend.⁵

Bakunin's teachings included the concept of a social revolution carried out by violent means, the destruction of state authority and organization, and the establishment of free associations of individuals based on their free will.⁶

In the late 1860s, a small group of Serbian students was sent to Zurich on government scholarships to obtain higher education. In 1868, Svetozar Marković came to Zurich from St. Petersburg, where he had already begun his political career as a follower of Russian socialists such as Chernyshevsky,⁷ Dobrolyubov and Lavrov.⁸ Together with other Serbian students, he organized an informal, distinctly socialist-anarchist political circle known as the "Zurich group". All of its members would eventually become Radicals: Nikola Pašić, Pera Velimirović, Raša Milošević, Pera Todorović and Jovan Žujović.⁹ By the early 1869, they had decided to organize a political party,

⁴ Velizar Ninčić, *Pera Todorović*, Beograd 1956, 31–32.

⁵ Further reading: Paul McLaughlin, *Mikhail Bakunin: the Philosophical Basis of His Anarchism*. New York, Algora Publishing, 2002; Mark Leier, *Bakunin: The Creative Passion: A Biography*. New York, Thomas Dunne Books, 2006; Tom Stoppard, *The Coast of Utopia*. New York, Grove Press, 2002; Daniel Guerin, *Anarchism: From Theory to Practice*, New York, Monthly Review Press, 1970.

⁶ ASANU, Drag. Cilic, "Pera Todorović", no. 10634, 3.
See also Ninčić, 32–35.

⁷ Further reading: N.G.O. Pereira, *The Thought and Teachings of N.G. Černyševskij*. The Hague, Mouton, 1975; Irina Paperno, *Chernyshevsky and the Age of Realism: A Study in the Semiotics of Behavior*. Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1988.

⁸ See Jovanović, *Svetozar Marković*, 8–12; also, Woodford McClellan, *Svetozar Marković and the Origins of Balkan Socialism*, 241–242.

⁹ Sv. Marković to Belimarković, 11 May 1869, in *Odabrani spisi*, Beograd–Novi Sad, 1969.

and to name it the “Radical Party”.¹⁰ In February of the same year, Svetozar Marković, Nikola Pašić, and Pera Velimirović agreed to elaborate the political program of their organization in the making, but the attempt failed because Marković had to return to Serbia. He had been denied a government grant on account of his dissident activities.¹¹

Although their first attempt to create a political party failed, the young students returned to Serbia with enthusiastic ideas about socialism, anarchism and radicalism. The works of Russian populists and Western socialists they brought back to their native country became the main sources of their political beliefs.

Upon their return to Serbia (1870–71), the members of Svetozar Marković’s group started a series of socialist and radical-socialist newspapers¹² and continued political activities along socialist and radical-socialist lines. Until the death of its leader Svetozar Marković (1875), the movement gradually moved from pure socialism to radicalism¹³ due to the peculiarities of the Serbian rural society, but did not give up its revolutionary dreams. Since the majority of the Serbian population was comprised of peasants and since there was virtually no working class, the ideas of socialism¹⁴ could not be applied in their original form. Thus, faced with Serbian socio-political realities, the socialist group of Svetozar Marković focused on political reforms (anti-bureaucratism) instead of social change.

Even so, some purely socialist elements could be found within the Radical movement in its later years.

For example, in a personal letter to a friend, a member of the Radical Party wrote in 1883:

“I’d break the neck of anyone who says I’m not a socialist. I am as proud of that name as I am proud of the name of an active Radical.”¹⁵

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Svetozar Marković, “Srpske obmane”, *Zastava*, Novi Sad, 1869.

¹² 1871–1875: *Radenik* (Worker), *Javnost* (The Public), *Rad* (The Labor), *Oslobodjenje* (Liberation).

¹³ ASANU, Drag. Cilić, “Pera Todorović”, 3–4; see also Slobodan Jovanović, *Političke i pravne rasprave*, I, Belgrade, 1932, 223; Skerlić, 95.

¹⁴ Especially those of Karl Marx (nationalization of the means of production, dictatorship of the proletariat, abolition of workers’ exploitation, etc).

¹⁵ AS, Milutin Garašanin Fund, B6, no. 750.

A report from Smederevo dated the same year mentioned a group of workers among local Radicals “*which has socialist colors and numbers some 70 members*”.¹⁶

A secret report to King Milan Obrenović, also dating from 1883, mentioned a certain T. Milošević, a Radical member from eastern Serbia who pursued his studies in Zurich and now overtly “*declares himself a nihilist*”.¹⁷

From July 1883, Pera Todorović, a founding member of the Radical Party and its ideologue during its formative period, was subscribed to French revolutionary newspapers of a radical-socialist orientation: *La Bataille*, *Le Proletaire* and *L'Intrensigeant*.¹⁸

In defining the position of the Radical Party in relation to socialism,¹⁹ Lazar Paču published in 1881 in *Samouprava* a series of articles under the title “The Middle Class Society and Its Political Parties”,²⁰ in which he made a tripartite classification of political organization:

“The Group of parties that want to take society back to feudalism (reactionary or aristocratic parties); the group of parties called “money aristocracy” that teach that the human society reached its peak at a certain moment in the past and cannot develop any further without destroying its own fruits of culture and civilization; the third group of parties argues for a new economic program: the program of social and economic reform”.²¹

Continuing this line of reasoning, Paču suggested that socialism might take two possible directions: towards theoretical socialism or towards applied socialism. By applied socialism Paču meant the practical political organization of the working classes. He simply concluded that the Radical Party had adopted the concept of applied socialism.²² The Radicals had

¹⁶ AS, no. 667, 30 August 1883, Smederevo.

¹⁷ AS, Dobra Ružić Fund, PO-27/183, 6 June 1883, Požarevac.

¹⁸ AS, Dobra Ružić Fund, PO/183, 8 July 1883.

¹⁹ Following the founding of the Radical Party in 1881 and the publishing of its political program, a group of Svetozar Marković's orthodox followers who maintained a strict socialist position formed a small political group led by Mita Cenić. They confronted the Radicals, accusing them of having betrayed Marković's original ideas and abandoning the socialist cause in general.

For more details see: Latinka Perović, *Srpski socijalisti XIX veka*, Belgrade, 1985.

²⁰ Lazar Paču, “Gradjansko društvo i njegove političke stranke”, *Samouprava*, 5 May to 16 June 1881.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

obviously moved away from the original socialist ideology, but remained sympathetic to the ideas which had inspired them in their early days.

Elements of socialist influences on the Serbian Radical Party were noticeable throughout the period until the Timok Rebellion. Articles about contemporary developments in European socialist circles regularly appeared in Radical publications. In 1881, *Samouprava* published a series of articles on Chernyshevsky.²³ In 1882, this Radical paper devoted a lengthy column to Louis Blanc, stating that Blanc was among the most prominent leaders of the 1848 Revolution in France, praising his intention to establish a “ministry of progress” as the highlight of his political career. *Samouprava* concluded that “*he shall be remembered by generations to come*”.²⁴ In 1883, the newspaper noted the death of Karl Marx, dedicating a long tribute to the father of scientific socialism:

“The importance of his work is as relevant today as it has ever been. But future alone will show the enormous impact of this talented and energetic man... Let the memory of this diligent man, who for more than forty years worked tirelessly for the development of social duties and the liberation of the entire mankind, remain deep in every human heart”.²⁵

Perhaps the most illustrative example of socialist influences on the Radical movement is the fact that, while searching the homes of local Radicals (leaders of the Timok Rebellion), the police found the following books: Karl Marx’s *Communist Manifesto* (1848) and Program of German Social Democracy (1869), writings of F. N. Babeuf (1789), and brochures by a local utopian socialist Vasa Pelagić.²⁶ Traces of socialist ideologies in the Radical movement were, however, more theoretical than practical, except in its revolutionary aspect. From the very beginning, the Radicals abandoned the economic teachings of Svetozar Marković, basically the most socialist part of his theories. They entered full-heartedly into the political battle, concentrating all their forces on political reforms along the lines of constitutionalism and democracy. Hints of socialism shown here suggest that the attitude of Serbian Radicalism towards socialism was merely academic. The sole element of socialism which the Radicals retained was its militancy.

²³ *Samouprava*, 12 February 1881.

²⁴ *Samouprava*, 1 December 1882.

²⁵ *Samouprava*, 15 and 22 March 1883.

²⁶ *Timočka buna*, ed. Milen Nikolić, Belgrade, 1954–55, 372–385.

The Radicals often insisted on their loyalty to their socialist roots. They liked to be regarded as an offspring of the great European socialist family. They expressed strong sentiments towards each and every movement or concept coming from the left. Yet, the realities of the Serbian rudimentary, mostly peasant, society, with other social classes just emerging, forced them to re-direct their actions and their policies towards pragmatic problems and prepare to tackle real obstacles on Serbia's bumpy road to modernity.

* * *

The influence of French Radicalism was much more significant than the impact of European socialism. Two different views have developed in recent Yugoslav historiography regarding the issue of the main foreign influence on the Serbian Radical movement. The first argues that the major impact came from the Russian populist tradition.²⁷ This argument is based on two assumptions. First, the Russian society as it was in the second half of the nineteenth century resembled the Serbian society of the same period to a large extent. The vast majority of the population was comprised of uneducated peasantry. Consequently, the idea of "going to the people", the ultimate slogan of the Russian populist movement, held much appeal to the Serbian Radicals. Second, the political methods used by the Radicals were very similar to those used by Russian populists: the educational mission among the peasantry, accompanied by simplification and demagoguery.²⁸

The view that the French Radical tradition had the most crucial impact on the formation of Radicalism in Serbia deserves more attention.²⁹ It is virtually impossible to establish the exact ways in which French ideas found their way to Serbia. The only fact that seems unquestionable is that most Radical leaders could read and speak French, and that most of them had visited France in the 1870s.³⁰ Some, but not many, had studied in Paris and later came to be known as "Parisian doctors".³¹ According to Radical newspapers, it appears that by the 1880s they had received the French political press on a regular basis, including Clemenceau's "*La Justice*".³²

If the notion of a predominant Russian populist influence has some merit as an instrument of social development and general political inspira-

²⁷ See: Latinka Perović, *Pera Todorović*, Belgrade, 1983.

²⁸ Perović, *Pera Todorović*, 162–167.

²⁹ Slobodan Jovanović, Jovan Skerlić, Živan Živanović.

³⁰ See Ninčić, *Pera Todorović*, 58–62.

³¹ Jovanović, *Vlada Milana Obrenovića*, III, 282–283.

³² Cf. *Samouprava*, June and July 1883.

tion, the hypothesis about French Radicalism as the main source of Serbian Radical ideology is even more convincing. In other words, while Radical beginnings owed much to the “Narodniki” movement, during their prime the Serbian Radicals looked to their French counterparts for guidance and drive.

It is almost an understatement to claim that the relationship between Serbian and French Radicalisms was crucial for the expertise of our topic.

The first written program of the Radical Party in Serbia dates from January 1881. This program was originally published in the opening issue of *Samouprava*, immediately following the formation of the Radical Party.³³ In the introduction, the Radicals stressed two key political objectives:

“...in domestic affairs – national prosperity and freedom; in foreign affairs – state independence, liberation and unification of all parts of Serbdom”.³⁴

The program was divided into eight sections, each defining the Party’s position on a specific issue. Much like the French Radicals, they suggested constitutional reform in the following directions: the National Assembly as the supreme legislative body was to be completely elective; the elections were to be directly accompanied by universal male suffrage. The Grand National Assembly was designed to convene periodically, and to be solely responsible for constitutional change, while the State Council was to be abolished. Serbian Radicals also proposed an administrative division of the country into regions and communes which were to be organized on the basis of local self-government. In the judicial system, the Radicals established elective judges for all civil cases and juries for all criminal cases. Exactly the same terminology was used in discussing the question of State finances; “the establishment of a direct, progressive tax system based on property and income”. The Serbian Radicals also suggested a reorganization of the National Bank along the lines of a central credit institution for agriculture, trade, and industry. Just like the French, the Radicals in Serbia insisted on free and compulsory primary education, and the replacement of the standing army with a popular one. They demanded absolute freedom of press, association and public assembly, the application of the principle of local self-government, and the guarantee of personal and material security.³⁵

³³ “Naš program”, *Samouprava*, no 1, 8 January 1881.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

Ten years earlier, in 1871, the Radical group in Serbia had developed a political program with essentially identical political demands.³⁶ This earliest Radical political platform contained eighteen important points: communal and regional autonomy and self-government, absolute freedom of press, association, public assembly and political action, judicial independence, reforms of state administration based on the principle of local self-government, the establishment of regional banks for peasant and craftsmen loans and town banks for merchants and industrialists, the abolition of guilds, the cancellation of railroad construction, the founding of agricultural and craft schools, reform of the educational system, abolition of the gendarmerie as unnecessary due to the introduction of self-government, the abolition of depository funds, complete control of the budget by the National Assembly, and the demand for constitutional change.³⁷

The similarities between the Serbian Radical program of 1881 and the electoral programs of Georges Clemenceau and Camille Pelletan of the same year were striking indeed. The fundamental issues pointed out in all three documents were identical, not only in the ideas they expressed, but in their wording as well. Serbian Radicalism, just like its French counterpart, insisted on a constitutional reform which in both cases included a unicameral National Assembly elected by all adult male citizens (universal male suffrage). Following their French comrades, the Serbian Radicals singled out the principle of self-government as the basic form of decentralization and the essential tool of democratic decision-making. They both insisted on tax reform and on the introduction of a direct and progressive tax system on capital and income. The idea of the formation of a popular militia instead of professional military corps characterized both ideologies. Finally, Serbian Radicals, like the French, persistently repeated their demand for civil liberties. Their ideas in the field of education were also similar: both argued in favor of free and compulsory primary education.

The differences between the ideologies of the two Radical movements came mainly from their different political and socio-economic contexts. French Radicals were strongly anticlerical due to the dominant role of Roman Catholicism in French politics, social life, culture and education. By contrast, the clergy of the Serbian Orthodox Church was neither powerful nor enjoyed a particularly privileged position in the social hierarchy. This was particularly true of the lower clergy, who had largely shared the social status of the peasantry, but also acted as parish intelligentsia and became af-

³⁶ AS, Dobra Ružić Fund, V1, PO-27/209, "Program of the Radical group", August 2, 1871.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

filiated with the Radical Party.³⁸ However, Orthodox bishops and archbishops seated in the capital and a few larger Serbian cities, never really accepted Radicalism. As a part of the state establishment, the top of the Serbian Orthodox Church opted for the Liberal Party.³⁹

It is worth repeating at this point that the French Radical movement grew out of the Republican bloc, and always remained devoutly loyal to the republican cause. This came as a result of specific historical circumstances in France, where the conflict between the Monarchy and the Republic marked the entire nineteenth century. In Serbia, the Republican issue was never seriously considered. Although the group around Svetozar Marković had developed a theoretical concept of republicanism, the idea was soon abandoned by the Radicals, although there remained several staunch republicans in their ranks.⁴⁰ Serbia's socio-political realities, with the Crown assuming the pivotal role not only in politics but, more importantly, in the minds of the population, the republic could never be a viable option. Both Serbian royal families were of domestic and common origin, and were hence easily identified with the wars for independence against the Turks. The nation was divided between the supporters of the Karadjordjevićs and the supporters of the Obrenovići and that controversy lasted exactly a hundred years (1804–1902). From a historical perspective, there was no room for republicanism.

In Serbia, the Monarchy was identified with the nation-state. In France, that was the case with the Republic.

Instead of embracing overt republicanism, the Serbian Radicals became strongly anti-dynastic,⁴¹ tirelessly fighting to limit the Ruler's power. This meant that the Radical anti-dynastic orientation had become a kind of a substitution for open republicanism.

The French representative in Belgrade noted their anti-dynastic attitude and underlined it in several reports:

« L'opposition radicale en Serbie est loin d'être une opposition dynastique »⁴²

And again in 1888:

³⁸ AS, Andra Nikolić Fund, B18, no. 10.

³⁹ ASANU Jovan Avakumović, *Memoirs*, unpublished manuscript, no. 9287/II.

⁴⁰ For example Jovan Žujović and Dragiša Stanojević, later Jaša Prodanović and Ljubomir Stojanović.

⁴¹ Opposed to the Obrenović dynasty.

⁴² AMAE, Correspondance politique – Serbie (CP-Serbie), 1882–83, 8 May 1883.

« Sans doute, parmi les cinq cents radicaux, que les électeurs ont envoyé siéger à la Grande Skoupchtina, plus d'un est parti de son village avec des dispositions franchement antidynastiques ».⁴³

The French Radical movement favored an anti-colonial and pacifist foreign policy. Following the country's devastating defeat in the Franco-Prussian war (1870–71), in view of the unstable political situation in their country, the French Radicals argued for internal political reforms and opposed any audacious colonial conquests. The Serbian Radical Party, in contrast, was driven by a purely national (nationalist) impetus, advocating the liberation and unification of all Serbs and Serbian lands. This was the effect of historical processes of national emancipation and state-building (the “nation-state”) inspired by massive national unification movements across Europe of the nineteenth century.⁴⁴ As a centrifugal force, Serbia attracted all unliberated parts of the nation. The Radicals were compelled to join in the great national endeavor. Their nationalism grew in time, but reached its peak only after 1903.

Serbian Radicals were primarily influenced by the political aspect of French Radicalism. They found Serbia a most fertile soil for the implementation of French Radical ideas. The socio-economic aspect of the French Radical programs, however, was incompatible with the social and economic particularities in Serbian and, hence, unacceptable and inapplicable. In a developed industrial environment such as France, with a large working class, demands for a limit on working hours, workers' insurance, and the prohibition of child labor were logical steps in the process of improving working conditions. France was no exception in Europe in that respect. Almost all European industrial countries introduced social legislation in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. In the predominantly rural Serbian society, with little industry and no organized working class, the socio-economic segment of the French Radical programs was inapplicable. Thus, it is quite clear that the ideological aspect of the French Radical movement on Serbian Radicalism acquired the central place among the external (or foreign) sources of the Serbian Radical doctrine.

To make a long story short: socialism does not apply to agrarian societies.

⁴³ AMAE, Correspondance politique – Serbie, 1887–88, 25 December 1888.

⁴⁴ Primarily Italian and German, but also Greek, Bulgarian, Polish, Hungarian, etc.

* * *

Influences of British constitutional and parliamentary theories and practices were the third major external source of Serbian Radicalism. This particular item was the last to reach the Radical Party in Serbia in the period after 1883. The Radical constitutional proposal of 1883 was still heavily influenced by “*Markovićism*”. It espoused the “Convention system”, which meant the supreme authority of the omnipotent National Assembly (equipped with all three branches of power), and essentially established a quasi-republic with a monarch as its head.⁴⁵

The British constitutional blueprints were finding their way into the ideas of the Radical Party throughout the 1880s. It was not until after the final text of the 1888 Constitution had been completed that the Radicals definitely espoused the concept of democratic parliamentary monarchy (including a strict division of powers).⁴⁶

A general notion of the British understanding of governmental organization reached Serbia already in the late 1850s. Young members of the Liberal movement, who had for the most part received higher education abroad, were the first to point out the importance of the English constitutional tradition:

“We need to learn from England – mother of freedom and of the world’s constitutional tradition”, one of them wrote in 1870.⁴⁷

In 1876, John Stuart Mill’s classic book *Considerations on Representative Government*⁴⁸ was translated by Vladimir Jovanović, a leading Liberal intellectual of the first generation. The Radical intellectuals, however, came into contact with the British concept in a roundabout way. The works which had been published on the Continent but followed in the footsteps of the British political doctrine became their earliest literature on the subject. In 1880, Kosta Taušanović translated Hoover’s book *Switzerland, Her Constitution, Government and Self-Government*.⁴⁹ At about the same time, Djordje Simić translated Benjamin Constant’s *The Political Principles and On Ministerial Responsibility*.⁵⁰ In 1884, Stojan Protić translated the most

⁴⁵ Slobodan Jovanović, *Rasprave*, I, 43.

⁴⁶ Milivoje Popović, *Poreklo i postanak ustava od 1888*, Beograd, 1939, 109.

⁴⁷ Stojan Bošković, *Serbia*, 1870.

⁴⁸ Published in 1861.

⁴⁹ Slobodan Jovanović, *Vlada Milana Obrenovića*, 332–340; see also Milošević, *Timočka buna*, 252–256.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

liberal constitutions of the period: American (1787), Belgian (1831) and Swiss (1848)⁵¹. They were all published in *Odjek*. In his personal papers dealing with questions of parliamentary theory, Andra Nikolić, a long-time member of the Radical Main Committee, frequently referred to the British political example.⁵²

A more coherent political concept was developed by a younger Radical intellectual, Milovan Dj. Milovanović⁵³. He was educated at the University of Paris, where he earned a doctorate in law. By the age of twenty-six he had already become a professor at the Belgrade Law School (1888).⁵⁴

His inaugural lecture at the University entitled *On Parliamentary Government*⁵⁵ was the most advanced treatment of the British parliamentary concept in Serbia at the time. Milovanović also worked as a preparatory secretary to the Constitutional Committee in 1888.⁵⁶ The final version of the 1888 act chiefly reflected his constitutional ideas.

British theoretical influences came through the writings of political thinkers as well: Maine, Freeman, Boutmy, Guiest, and especially Bagehot.⁵⁷ From their English teachers, the Serbian Radicals adopted the philosophical supposition that the ideal political system would be the one in which the entire nation ruled by itself (direct democracy). In other words, in a perfect world, political decision-making would lie in the hands of the people itself, no political institutions needed. The complexities of modern state conglomerates, regrettably, made such a plain and just order of things impossible and dysfunctional. Consequently, they suggested that the people should rule through a collective representative body by transferring their sovereign governing rights to their elected delegates (Parliament or National Assembly). They declared that, as a result of the fact that the people's interests were varied and often in contradiction, the Parliament (National Assembly) must consist of diverse political groups. The group that held the majority of representation (legislature), thus representing the majority of the people, must be entitled to decision-making (executive power).

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² AS, Andra Nikolić Fund, no. 10.

⁵³ See Chapter 6 (The Leaders).

⁵⁴ For more detail see: Dimitrije Djordjević, *Milovan Dj. Milovanović*, Beograd, 1962.

⁵⁵ Slobodan Jovanović, *Vlada Milana Obrenovića*, 381.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Milovan Dj. Milovanović, "O parlamentarnoj vladi", *Otadžbina*, XIX, May-June, 1888, 166.

This is the most famous axiom of English parliamentarism:

“The government is born, lives and dies together with the Assembly Majority”.⁵⁸ In line with the British concept, the Radicals in Serbia accepted the system of political parties and so-called “party government”: the party which wins the majority in the Parliament forms the cabinet.⁵⁹

“The essence of a parliamentary system lies in the cabinet’s dependence on and responsibility to the Assembly”.⁶⁰

The foreign sources of the Radical political ideology were indeed threefold. They originated from three different European political doctrines, but each left its mark on the formation of the Serbian Radical ideology. Their impacts differ both in intensity and in scope, thus essentially making the Radical ideology an eclectic political doctrine.

2

From an internal perspective, the ideology of the Serbian Radical Party was shaped by the specifics of the Serbian political and cultural situation. It is worth repeating here that by the early 1880s the Serbian political scene had witnessed a drastic divergence. On one side was the Prince (King from 1882 onwards), and on the other – the three major political parties. Their competition for dominance influenced their ideologies, and vice versa: their understanding of politics influenced their political positions.

The role of Serbian rulers was dominant from the very beginning. It was already Karageorge (Karadjordje Petrović), the leader of the First Serbian Insurrection against the Ottomans in 1804, who acted as the supreme and unquestionable authority (taking the title of “Supreme Leader”). His successor Miloš Obrenović led the Second Serbian Insurrection (1815) and became the Prince of Serbia (1830). Prince Milan Obrenović proclaimed himself king in 1882.⁶¹ Despite his youth when he came to power (b. 1854), he was a strong-minded and highly authoritarian ruler, who opposed any attempt of democratic change in Serbia. On the occasion of the promulgation of the 1888 Constitution, he said to an intimate friend, expressing his honest opinion:

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Stojan Protić, “Ustavna vlada i njena odgovornost”, *Samouprava*, January 1888.

⁶⁰ AS, Andra Nikolić Fund, no. 10.

⁶¹ See Slobodan Jovanović, *Vlada Milana Obrenovića*, I; see also Živanović, I-III.

“Everybody screamed and shouted demanding a new constitution. So I agreed to it. But, frankly, I wanted to demonstrate the absurdity of the issue and thus prove that this constitution is not for Serbia.”⁶²

Before his arrival in Serbia in 1868 at the age of 14, Prince Milan Obrenović had lived abroad, where he received a sophisticated education in the most prominent centers of Europe,⁶³ learning French and German better than his mother tongue.⁶⁴ Handsome and restless, with the virtues and vices of any spoilt young royal, he led a lifestyle according to European *bon vivant* standards and customs of the richest aristocracy. He was as foreign to the Serbs as the Serbs were foreign to him. They never liked one another, nor were able to achieve mutual understanding.

Milan Obrenović's policies were marked by two major features: he ran domestic affairs by himself, using political parties and politicians as his pawns, demanding blind obedience, loyalty and admiration. He was no democrat. Internationally, he saw Serbia as the central power in the region and insisted on the establishment of a standing army. By proclaiming the country a kingdom (in 1882), he elevated his own standing, but Serbia's international prestige was also lifted up. Milan's foreign policy was hostile to Russia (due to her betrayal of the Serbian national cause in 1878).⁶⁵ Hence, he turned to the Habsburgs for protection and assistance, signing the so-called “Secret Convention” of reciprocal friendship in 1881.⁶⁶ His statesmanship was too often dictated by his personal preferences; his political moves were inspired by his emotional states even more often.

A police report from the Čačak area, central Serbia, dated December 1888, illustrated to what extent Milan had been alien to the Serbian population. A certain Toma Vilotijević claimed publicly that “the King is German, he is going to Germanize all of us and we'll have to eat cats, because we know that Germans eat cats!”⁶⁷ By the same token, King Milan had a quite harsh opinion about Serbs in general. Shortly before his abdication in 1889, he confided to a close associate:

⁶² Stojan Novaković, *Dvadeset godina ustavne borbe u Srbiji 1883–1903*, Belgrade, 1912, 30.

⁶³ Slobodan Jovanović, *Vlada Milana Obrenovića*, I, 24–27.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Jovanović, *Vlada Milana Obrenovića*, II, 67.

⁶⁶ Jovanović, *Vlada Milana Obrenovića* III, 79.

⁶⁷ AS, Milutin Garašanin Fund, no. 1214, Belgrade, 6 December 1888.

“After twenty years of my rule in Serbia I have come to believe that our people are unable to grasp the meaning of the national idea and prefer partisan interests over the interests of the country.”⁶⁸

The two mainstays of the ruler’s power in Serbia were the army and the capital.⁶⁹ The greatest achievement of King Milan Obrenović was the creation of a standing army and a professional officer corps.⁷⁰ Inasmuch as this innovation fostered the state-building process and the international status of Serbia, the entire military structure was subjugated to the Crown and used as the King’s “Praetorian” guard. Later on, however, the Serbian army acquired a double role: it acted as a decisive political factor, but also represented the source of Serbian national strength.

The other stronghold of the King’s authority was the nation’s capital city of Belgrade. In those days, Belgrade was virtually the only urban settlement in Serbia that bore some resemblance to European cities.⁷¹ State administration, military headquarters, major businesses, banks, trade, university, hotels, restaurants and the Court itself, of course, were located in the Capital, which also housed the bulk of Serbian intelligentsia and the fledgling middle class. The King threw parties, organized receptions and balls, and, on the whole, played a central role in the city’s social life.⁷² It was the only environment in Serbia where King Milan felt both comfortable and powerful.

From the very beginning of the Radical Party, an especially strong animosity had developed between the Radicals and the Crown. The reasons for this almost unbearable conflict were logical: the King was an authoritarian ruler who understood his royal powers as unlimited; he would accept no restrictions whatsoever. The Radicals, eager to come to power, preached constitutionalism, democracy, and self-government – demands aimed directly against the King’s personal power. Andra Nikolić wrote on the subject:

“The supreme power of the Ruler always ends in disaster; Nicholas I, Austria 1859 and 1866, France 1870–71, King Milan in Serbia. It is not good for the affairs of the State when the ruler is too influential.

⁶⁸ AS, Vladan Djordjević Fund, no. 40; Vladan Djordjević, “Uspomene Vladana Djordjevića”, *Vreme*, 5 December 1925.

⁶⁹ Dragutin Ilić, *Zaječarska buna*, Belgrade, 1909, 25.

⁷⁰ See Živanović, III, 171–173.

⁷¹ See Dimitrije Djordjević, “Srbija i srpsko društvo 1880–ih godina”, *Istorijski časopis* XXIX–XXX, 1982–83, 413–426.

⁷² See Živanović, III, 201–205.

Even if he is not irresponsible, he is unable to control everything by himself and therefore the outcome is always unfavorable...⁷³

Having escalated between 1881 and 1883, this conflict culminated in the 1883 Timok Rebellion. Although the rebels never openly admitted that the revolt had been directed against the Ruler personally, the rebellion was indeed an aborted anti-dynastic mutiny. The driving force behind the revolt, a prominent Radical leader from Knjaževac, Aca Stanojević,⁷⁴ was dubbed the *Commander of the Knjaževac Army in Action against the Abuser of the Constitution and the People's Rights*,⁷⁵ in a clear reference to the King. In September 1883, on the eve of the revolt, one of the Radical representatives in the National Assembly⁷⁶ supposedly said:

“It is easier for me to overthrow the King than to remove a village kmet (local official)”⁷⁷

Another report from the same year stated that the Radical Party had organized a coup against King Milan.⁷⁸ Pera Todorović, one of the co-founders of the Radical Party, who had abandoned the movement in 1886 and became the King's spokesperson, addressed this letter to the Serbian monarch:

“In the hands of Djaja, Kosta (Taušanović) and Stojan (Protić), the Radical Party is a permanent threat to the country, and if there is no other way, his patriotic duty would dictate to the ruler and the government to fight that Party to the bitter end, to the final annihilation of one side. At this point there can be no truce, there can be no excuse – it is a life-or-death fight”⁷⁹

The King himself never fully trusted the Radicals, nor did he ever see them as a genuine ideological movement. In his view, they were a mob of anti-dynastic elements plotting to overthrow him. He defeated them once in 1883, but his struggle with them continued until his death in 1901:

“The Radicals in Serbia are not a political party willing to fight for certain principles applicable in state institutions, but rather an anti-

⁷³ AS, Andra Nikolić Fund, no. 10.

⁷⁴ See Chapter 6 (The Leaders).

⁷⁵ Ilić, *Zaječarska buna*, 39.

⁷⁶ His name was Ljubinko Milinković.

⁷⁷ AS, Dobra Ružić Fund, PO-27/183, September 10, 1883.

⁷⁸ AS, Dobra Ružić Fund, August 27, 1883.

⁷⁹ AS, Milutin Garašanin Fund, no. 1064.

dynastic party, which has, since its very inception, been systematically working on overthrowing our dynasty”⁸⁰

There were two attempts on King Milan's life during his thirty-year presence in Serbian politics. The first occurred in 1882 and the second in 1889. He utilized both attempts as a pretext to crush down the leadership of the Radical Party. The first attempted assassination was perpetrated by Jelena-Ilka Marković,⁸¹ the sister-in-law of Svetozar Marković, whose husband, a Radical sympathizer, had been executed for alleged high treason.⁸² She died in prison under unclarified circumstances. She was very close to most of the Radical leaders in Belgrade, especially to Raša Milošević,⁸³ and it seems likely that at least a few of them had been aware of her intention. The King, however, was convinced that the assassination had been entirely organized by the Radicals.⁸⁴ The second attempt on King Milan's life was made in 1899. This event had a twofold importance in regard to the relations between the Radicals and the King: first, it confirmed the profound animosity between the two; second, it indicated the intention of the former king to destroy the leadership of the Radical Party, even after almost twenty years of their presence in Serbian politics. This assertion is supported by the former king's letter to his son Alexandar dated 1898, in which he informed his successor that the Radicals had been the chief enemies of the Obrenović dynasty and that they should be “destroyed and annihilated”⁸⁵ According to the same source, the former king ordered that a secret agency be formed, headed by Court Marshal Mihailo Rašić, in order to follow closely the actions and moves of prominent Radicals.⁸⁶ The open clash between the King and the Radicals left a deep mark on the Radicals' policy. Their opposition to the King inspired their demands for constitutional and democratic reforms – their understanding of democracy compelled them to oppose the King.

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Relations among the three political parties constitute the second internal factor in the formation of Radical political ideology.

⁸⁰ AS, Vladan Djordjević Fund, no. 27, 1899.

⁸¹ See Chapter 6 (The Leaders).

⁸² See Jovanović, *Vlada Milana Obrenovića*, I, 210–215.

⁸³ Milošević, *Timočka buna*, 51–58.

⁸⁴ AS, Vladan Djordjević Fund, no. 27.

⁸⁵ ASANU, no. 11657/1.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

At this point, it should be noted that neither the Progressive nor the Liberal Party had directed their political actions towards the masses. The Progressive Party, which came up with a program of a moderate reform in the 1870s, sought to effect the change through collaboration with the King. Their understanding of statehood was based on the premise that it was the intellectuals headed by the Crown that should lead the State and shape its policies. This aspect of the Progressivist ideology was noticed by the French representative in Belgrade and described in several reports:

« A Belgrade, les progressistes sont détestés par la population qui est libérale ou radicale. On ne leurs pardonne pas de s'être faits les instruments de la politique Autrichienne du Roi Milan. »⁸⁷

In another of his reports to Paris, the French representative was even more outspoken:

« Le parti progressiste qui n'a jamais eu de racines profondes dans le pays, que le Roi a créé en quelques fortes pour appliquer sa politique personnelle, est en pleine décomposition ». ⁸⁸

In his report dated March 1888, the Frenchman gave his final assessment of the Progressive Party in Serbia:

« C'est toute une génération politique qui disparaît de la scène: génération de petits bourgeois honnêtes, mais étroits et entêtés, qu'on pourrait appeler les doctrinaires de la Serbie. Ayant emprunté à l'Europe quelques idées constitutionnelles, conservant de l'Orient l'esprit stationnaire... »⁸⁹

The Liberal Party, which grew out of the romantic national sentiment of the 1850s and saw internal progress in terms of national liberation, was also essentially an elitist organization. The leaders of this group were in power throughout the 1870s and already had significant political experience, tradition and self-confidence. The Liberals did not deem it necessary to gain massive support in the population. In their view, largely shared by the Progressivists, the Serbian peasant was uneducated and primitive, and was not to be allowed to act as a politically relevant factor.

Both political organizations, therefore, resembled political clubs rather than true political movements with mass followings. Their strength derived either from the King's authority or from their intellectual prominence

⁸⁷ AMAE, CP-Serbie, 1889, May 28, 1889.

⁸⁸ AMAE, CP-Serbie, 2 Jan. 7, 1889.

⁸⁹ AMAE, CP-Serbie, 1887–88, March 10, 1888.

and political experience. Both were small in numbers and incapable of ever winning the majority of the electorate, partly because they never took elections as a decisive criterion in the competition for power, and partly because they were not rooted deeply enough in the Serbian population.

In contrast, the Radicals concentrated all their power and ability on winning over the peasantry. Their political strategy was entirely based on introducing the people to politics and making them a significant political factor. From the very beginning, the Radicals sought to ensure the broadest possible support from the countryside. The power of their movement came from two sources: the village and the numbers. Some figures may illustrate this assertion. In November 1887, the Radicals won 81 seats in the Assembly, the Liberals 61, and the Progressivists none.⁹⁰ In March 1888, 133 out of 156 members of the National Assembly were Radicals.⁹¹ At the elections held in 1889, the Radicals received 158,856 votes and the Liberals only 21,829.⁹² In the 1890 elections, the Radicals won 152,935 votes, the Liberals 23,548, and the Progressivists only 8,895,⁹³ which meant that the Radicals had attracted over 80 percent of the electorate. The Radical official newspapers were distributed all over the country. A number of reports from the interior of the country stated that no other political journals were available there.⁹⁴ The Progressivist official publication ironically commented on the Radical vast membership:

“The Radical Party is still powerful; its power does not necessarily lie in intelligence, but at least it is the power in numbers...”⁹⁵

This “power in numbers” was obviously not enough in the Serbian political circumstances for the Radicals to come to power. As a result, they resorted to making agreements with rival political camps. Their competition with Progressivists and Liberals worked in both directions: it pushed the Radical movement towards the electorate, towards the peasantry, and towards the countryside; the drive to come to power motivated their collaboration and coalition tactics. Both processes marked the Radical ideology. One endowed it with its simplicity and demagoguery, but also with a

⁹⁰ AMAE, CP-Serbie, November 11, 1887.

⁹¹ AMAE, CP-Serbie, March 10, 1888.

⁹² Jovanović, *Vlada Aleksandra Obrenovića*, I, 191.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ No. 199, Vranje, November 3, 1881.

⁹⁵ AS, Milutin Garašanin Fund, no. 1058.

straightforwardness and clarity of ideas. The other led to its flexibility and pragmatism.

To sum up, the ideology of Serbian Radicalism was essentially a combination of various influences. Its sources were multiple and came both from outside and inside the country. In a purely political sense, French Radicalism was the most significant single impact. A comparison of the French and Serbian political programs convincingly supports this assessment. The inspiration for the movement came from socialists. The British constitutional concept also played a significant role. From the viewpoint of internal political relations, the Radical doctrine was shaped under the impact of confrontation and collaboration with other actors on the Serbian political scene.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CHARACTERISTICS

From the most general viewpoint, there were two major aspects of Serbian Radicalism: its political thought and its political practice. The two were not always and necessarily in full accord.

The main elements of Serbian Radical ideology in its prime were the following: constitutional reform, parliamentarianism, self-government, democratic freedoms (freedom of press, association and public assembly), and a Serbian national program.

The main features of Serbian Radicalism as a politically relevant movement could be summed up as: militancy, pragmatism, cohesion, and populism.

Its ideological elements can be singled out from Radical programs, constitutional proposals, and numerous writings and articles. The features of the movement were shaped by the political realities in which it had existed and struggled for power or, at times, for its very survival. Its first facet – the ideological aspect – provided the movement its firmness, consistency and rationale; the other, the practical aspect, ensured its popularity, success and might. Together they formed the essence of Serbian Radicalism.¹

¹ A. Radenić, *Radikalna stranka i Timočka buna. Istorija radikalne stranke. Doba narodnjstva*, Zaječar, 1988; see also Milan St. Protić, *Radikali u Srbiji: Ideje i pokret 1881–1903*, Institute for Balkan Studies, Belgrade, 1990; G. Stokes, *Politics as Development. The Emergence of Political Parties in Nineteenth-Century Serbia*, Duke University Press, Durham–London 1990; D. Janković, *Radjanje parlamentarne demokratije. Političke stranke u Srbiji XIX veka*, Belgrade, 1997.

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Each and every political ideology, as much as each and every individual belief, is subject to revision and change. Still, it is possible to look for some relatively permanent ideas or concepts which can be described as the fundamental principles of a given political party. Following this line of reasoning, and bearing in mind the historical development of the Radical Party's manifests, four basic items of the Radical understanding of politics and government ought to be highlighted: constitutionalism as the supreme principle of state organization, parliamentary democracy as its method, civil liberties as its safeguard, and local self-government as its manifestation. Each of these elements was defined gradually, over a long period of ideological fermentation. Once they became fully clarified and accepted, the Radical Party acquired its firm theoretical ground. From that point on, it could be classified as an organization of a radical-democratic orientation. By then, the last socialist and revolutionary traces had faded away. The national program, another fundamental facet of their political ideology, belonged to its external ingredients. Namely, the Radicals viewed Serbian national emancipation, liberation and unification ("nation-state") as originating from internal freedom. In other words, the national program was the result of democratic changes, and not vice versa. Yet, in the subsequent years (1903 onwards), their nationalism was less pronounced than that of the other political parties in Serbia or Europe. Perhaps it was simply a little more pragmatic.

* * *

A liberal constitution had been the Radicals' main objective from their early days.² Svetozar Marković had sharply criticized the Constitution of 1869 and raised the question of a constitutional reform.³ In the first written Radical program (1871), the constitutional change was placed at the top of their agenda.⁴ In a number of public statements and parliamentary motions, Adam Bogosavljević's group insisted on a constitutional reform "according to the principles of modern democracy".⁵ A good part of the Radical Party's first program (1881) was dedicated to the prospects of a new constitution and its substance.⁶ In 1883, the Radicals prepared their own constitutional

² The Radicals had pressed for constitutional reform since 1871.

³ See Marković, "Srpske obmane".

⁴ ASANU no. 9783/44.

⁵ R. Petrović, *Adam Bogosavljević*, 77.

⁶ ASANU, no. 10634.

See also "Naš program", *Samouprava*, no 1, January 8, 1881.

proposal.⁷ The 1888 Constitution was mostly an expression of their constitutional ideas.⁸ They also contributed to the work on the 1901 Constitution, but the spirit of this document did not fully reflect their notions of constitutionalism. Rather, it was a reflection of the compromise between the Radicals and the Progressive Party, i.e. the Crown.⁹ The 1901 Act was the spark that triggered the split within the Radical Party. The Radicals reinstated the 1888 Constitution in June 1903, immediately after the dynastic change and before the new King (Petar I Karadjordjević) had even arrived to Serbia.¹⁰ The 1903 Constitution was unique in that it established a parliamentary monarchy, but bore no royal signature.

In a nutshell, the principle of constitutionalism represented the focal point of Radical political ideology.

The Radical understanding of the constitutional issue is best illustrated by the following two documents: the 1883 constitutional proposal, and the 1888 Constitution.

The guiding principle of the proposal drawn up in July 1883 was the sovereignty of the people.¹¹ It stated that the people should be the sole source of power, executing their sovereign will through national representation – the National Assembly.¹² The Assembly should be fully elective by direct and secret ballot. Universal male suffrage was guaranteed. The National Assembly as the supreme legislative authority was at the top of the state pyramid. According to the proposal, the Assembly could be bipartite: Regular and Grand. The jurisdiction of the Grand National Assembly was defined by the Constitution itself, making a constitutional change its sole responsibility. All legislative prerogatives were assigned to the Assembly. The Ruler was entitled to approve proposed legislation, but the Assembly was empowered to pass legislation even in case of royal disapproval. The proposal established the Council of Ministers at the top of administration acting as a mere instrument of the Assembly. Thus, the Radical project envisaged a system that subordinated the executive and judicial branches to the legislature. The state territory was to be divided into districts and municipalities,

⁷ ASANU, no. 9729.

⁸ ASANU, no. 10593.

⁹ See Jovanović, *Vlada Aleksandra, III*, 112–114.

¹⁰ J. Prodanović, *Ustavni razvitak i ustavne borbe u Srbiji*, Belgrade, 1938, 203–205; see also K. St. Pavlowitch, “The Constitutional Development of Serbia in the 19th Century”, *East European Quarterly*, vol. 5, no. 4, 456–467.

¹¹ Djordjević, ed., *Ustavni razvitak*; see also R. Milošević, *Timočka buna*, 108–128; M. Popović, *Borbe za parlamentarni režim u Srbiji*, Beograd, 1939, 54.

¹² Djordjević, ed., *Ustavni razvitak*, 84.

and these subdivisions were to be organized according to the principle of local self-government (highest level of autonomy).¹³ This was basically the materialization of the so called “Convent system”, with a supremely powerful National Assembly.¹⁴ The role of the King was entirely marginalized. It essentially created a republic disguised in monarchical form.

In terms of their ideological evolution, the 1883 Radical constitutional draft was placed halfway between their radical-socialist past and their parliamentary democratic future. On one hand, it was expressive of their covert republicanism, a concept inherited from Svetozar Marković. On the other, it insisted on fundamental democratic principles, which included universal suffrage, civil liberties, ministerial responsibility, free, direct and secret elections, and judicial independence.¹⁵ This was a sign of their coming closer to the ideology of Radical democracy rather than socialist revolution. At that point, the process of political maturation was already underway. Only two months later, the Radicals opted for violence, trying to overthrow the government by violent means (the Timok Rebellion). The Radicals were still torn by a dilemma: is democracy attainable through legitimate political struggle or it does it need to be achieved by the use of force? As we saw, the outcome of the Timok Rebellion provided the most convincing answer.

As far as we know today, the proposal was the result of the activities of the entire Radical membership. The text was distributed, analyzed and commented upon by local party boards throughout Serbia. The final version was adopted through a procedure that could be described as democratic and by general consent, even though it was never actually subjected to a vote.¹⁶

The 1883 proposal is most illustrative of the multiplicity and diversity of Serbian Radicalism’s sources. The point to be made here is that – both in their socialist-revolutionary and radical-democratic theories and practices – the Radicals were the disciples of the Western political tradition.

The 1888 Constitution, a cornerstone of Serbian democracy, was undoubtedly a great triumph of the Radical Party.¹⁷ The legal preparations had been done by Radical experts; it mainly expressed Radical concepts.¹⁸ For-

¹³ Djordjević, ed., *Ustavni razvitak*, 85–90.

¹⁴ Slobodan Jovanović, *Političke i pravne rasprave*, I, 43; this particular “Convent system” was also applied in the French Constitution of 1793.

¹⁵ Djordjević ed., *Ustavni razvitak*, 91.

¹⁶ ASANU, no. 9783/1–22.

¹⁷ D. Janković, *Političke stranke*, 257; M. Popović, *Poreklo i postanak*, 65.

¹⁸ *Zaključci i rezolucija radikalnih zemaljskih konferencija u 1920 i 1921*, Beograd, 1923, 2–4.

mally, though, it was agreed upon by all three political parties as well as the Crown, and was passed by a great majority, with only a few votes against.¹⁹

Its most significant feature was the fact that it had introduced a system of parliamentary democracy based on a strict division of powers.²⁰ Its major characteristics may be classified as follows:

1. Guarantees of political and civil rights: a multiparty political system.
2. Free and fair elections; universal male suffrage; fully elective unicameral Parliament (National Assembly).
3. Dual legislative initiative shared between the Assembly and the King.
4. Power of the National Assembly to appoint and control the executive branch (Council of Ministers).
5. Ministerial responsibility, both political and criminal.
6. Sovereign right of the National Assembly to pass the budget.
7. Administrative organization of the country according to the principle of local self-government.

The 1888 Act also guaranteed freedom of press, association and public assembly,²¹ introduced compulsory primary education,²² and abolished capital punishment for political crimes.²³

The 1888 Constitution showed that the Radical ideology had matured: democracy overpowered revolution. At the same time, it represented the peak of radical constitutionalism. Thereafter, rather than further developing their constitutional concept, they only insisted on its full implementation. This particular item became their chief political demand in the years to come.

* * *

The other three elements of the Radical ideology were derived from the first. Parliamentarianism, self-government and civil liberties were, in fact, the specific points of the Radical perception of constitutionalism.

¹⁹ ASANU, no. 10593.

²⁰ Popović, *Poreklo i postanak*, 170.

²¹ *Ustav Kraljevine Srbije*, Beograd 1888.

²² *Ibid.*, art. 125–132.

²³ *Ibid.*, art. 54.

The idea of parliamentary democracy found its way into the ideology of Serbian Radicalism gradually, and for two main reasons: first, multi-partism required a well-developed political environment supported by organized public opinion, and this would not occur in Serbia until the 1870s; second, parliamentarianism had originated from European, more precisely British, political practice. The Radical thought had to evolve through several stages before that particular system could be applied. Here is what Andra Nikolić wrote about parliamentarism in the 1880s:

“Parties and politics – those are realities, necessities... because not all people think the same, and people want freedom.... hence, different opinions ought to be publically and equally represented”²⁴

According to the Radicals, who followed the British model, the multi-party system was simply an organized way to demonstrate various interests of various groups of people. They argued for a system in which the party which wins the majority forms the government. Here is a famous sentence of the leading Radical expert on the subject:

“The government is born, lives and dies with the Assembly majority.”²⁵

Another radical theorist noted:

“The essence of parliamentarianism resides in the cabinet’s dependence on and responsibility to the Assembly”²⁶

The principle of local self-government was the oldest element of Radical ideology. It arose from the teachings of Svetozar Marković, and demands made by Adam Bogosavljević in early and mid-1870s. Present in all Radical programs and manifestos, it was the most enduring item of their political ideology. As such, it requires a closer examination.

As an alternative to royal and governmental centralism, the Radicals proposed a system of direct election of local officials by the local population with broad competences. They believed that this would ensure the principle of national sovereignty and relieve the paternalistic pressure of the central authorities. The Radicals did not restrict self-government to the sphere of administration; rather, they argued that the municipal physician, teacher,

²⁴ AS, Andra Nikolić Fund, no. 10.

²⁵ M. Dj. Milovanović, “O parlamentarnoj vladi”, *Otadžbina*, XIX, May–June 1888, 166.

²⁶ St. Protić, “Ustavna vlada i njena odgovornost”, *Samouprava*, January 1882.

priest, and even the local military commander, should be chosen by popular vote.²⁷

The system of local self-government as conceived by the Radicals was based on a division of the country into districts and municipalities.²⁸ The municipality was seen as the fundamental political and economic entity.²⁹ Each municipality was entitled to two elected representatives in the District Assembly.³⁰ These districts were designed to be quite large, with about 10,000 taxpayers (families) each, and governed by three bodies: the District Assembly (fully elective supreme decision-making body), District Control Committee (the executive organ of the Assembly), and District Administrative Council (with administrative and judicial responsibilities).³¹ All executive and administrative offices were fully elective and their officials accountable to the District Assembly. The competences of the District Assembly included all educational, judicial, administrative, financial, statistical, technical, economic, and religious matters in the district.³² In 1883, Raša Milošević,³³ a distinguished leader of the Radical Party and a member of its Main Board, wrote a booklet – *District Organization according to the Principle of Self-Government and Electoral Rights* – thoroughly exploring the concept and the system of local autonomy. The booklet was also published in *Samouprava* and distributed to all local party committees.³⁴

The demand for civil rights liberties was among those upon which the Radicals had insisted from the very beginnings of the movement. As early as 1875, Adam Bogosavljević repeatedly underscored the importance of freedom of press and public speech:

“Try telling a simple peasant that he is forbidden to write and speak the only way he knows, and he wouldn’t believe something like that

²⁷ R. Milošević, *Organizacija sreza na načelu samouprave i izbornog prava*, Beograd, 1883, 14.

²⁸ Milošević, *Organizacija sreza*, 23; see also Jaša Prodanović, *Istorija političkih stranaka i struja u Srbiji*, Beograd, 1947.

²⁹ Milošević, *Organizacija sreza*, 22–24.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Milošević, *Organizacija sreza*, 26; see also F. Nikić, *Lokalna uprava Srbije u XIX i XX veku*, Beograd, 1927, 242.

³² Jovanović, *Vlada Aleksandra Obrenovića*, I, 26–27; see also Prodanović, *Istorija...*, 473.

³³ See Chapter 6 (The Leaders).

³⁴ Milošević, *Organizacija sreza* 28–30.

was possible... I claim that today Serbia needs freedom of expression more than ever..."³⁵

And again there were two aspects to a tenet of the Radical political program: the theoretical and practical. Civil liberties were inherent to their concept of democracy. Yet, it was often used as an instrument of populism and demagoguery. The radical leaders mastered the craft of sweet-talk, learning to reach out and touch the most sensitive emotions of the Serbian peasantry. Speaking in plain language, using every opportunity to attack Belgrade bureaucrats and bourgeoisie, simplifying the complexities of any modern government and its considerations, and arguing for a drastic decrease in taxes, the radicals built an image of popular tribunes and spokesmen of the masses.

The 1888 Constitution marked a turning point in this respect too. Abolishing any kind of censorship, it enabled the total proliferation of political press.³⁶

* * *

The Radical Party's national program was an external component of its ideology. In the formative period of the movement, major national issues and foreign policy in general were of secondary importance: domestic problems prevailed over the question of Serbia's international position. It was only after the Radicals had entered the cabinet (1887) and King Milan had abdicated (1889) that they began to be more concerned about foreign policy, fully developing a national program during the 1890s.³⁷ This segment of the Radical ideology revolved around four major points: the Serbian national idea; Russia as Serbia's key ally; the prospect of a Balkan alliance; and a South-Slavic union. From the outset the Radical Party thought of itself as a nationalist movement.³⁸ The original Party program (1881) stipulated "an independent Serbian state and the liberation and unification of all parts of Serbdom" as its foremost goal.³⁹ In a proclamation to the Radical membership dated 1886, the leadership reaffirmed its view of Serbia as "Serbian Piedmont."⁴⁰

³⁵ ASANU, no. 10438/22.

³⁶ AMAE, January 7, 1889.

³⁷ *Zaključci i rezolucija*, 1; AMAE, January 6, 1888.

³⁸ ASANU, no. 13681/1.

³⁹ *Zaključci i rezolucija*, 1.

⁴⁰ ASANU, no. 13681/1.

In 1894, the national program was articulated along these lines:

“Serbia simply cannot abandon the interests of Serbdom. From the Serbian standpoint, there is no difference between the interests of the Serbian state and the interests of other Serbs. The question of Serbdom is the “to-be-or-not-to-be” question of the Serbian state... Cut off from other Serbian lands, Serbia alone is nothing and has no *raison d'être*.”⁴¹

This statement mirrored the nationalist orientation of the Radical Party, following in the footsteps of earlier European and Serbian national programs. There are obvious similarities between the first Serbian national program of 1844⁴² and the Radical concept of 1894.

The national policy of the Radical Party was the result of its views on domestic policy. The Radicals espoused the concept of modern democracy and, consequently, the principle of popular sovereignty, which in turn required an independent state and a high level of national consciousness (nation-state). It was at an early point in their evolution that they abandoned the concept of a social revolution leading to national emancipation, liberation and unification,⁴³ but they retained something of their socialist past nevertheless: the precedence of internal reform over national aspirations.

The Radical movement followed the tide of history, carrying Serbia towards the nineteenth-century European ideal: one nation – one state. European nationalism went hand-in-hand with European democracy. It was this collectivism that contradicted the notion of individual freedom. In the latter stages, during the twentieth century, it became increasingly difficult to combine nationalism and liberalism.

In the Serbian case, this ideological blend meant striving for the liberation and unification of the Serbs living in neighboring undemocratic empires, the Habsburg and the Ottoman. Although they were internationalists in their early days, the Radicals soon turned into ardent nationalists

Most historians who have studied nineteenth-century Serbia have claimed that Russophilia was the main feature of the Radical foreign policy. Yet, as much as this claim is generally correct, it requires a more detailed

⁴¹ M. Dj. Milovanović, “Naša spoljna politika”, *Delo*, IV, 1894, 246.

⁴² *Načertanije* (“The Draft”) was a secret document created by the Serbian statesman Ilija Garašanin (1812–1874). A good part of the work was done by Frantisek Zach (1807–1892), a Czech national revolutionary and agent of the Polish emigre leader Adam Czartoryski (1770–1861).

⁴³ V. Čubrilović, *Istorija političke misli u Srbiji XIX veka*, Beograd, 1958, 368.

analysis. The question may be formulated as follows: What were the Radicals' motives for their inclinations towards Russia? Or vice versa: What reasons did Russia have to support the Radicals? On one hand, Tsarist Russia was a conservative, autocratic and unconstitutional state. The Radical Party, on the other hand, championed constitutionalism, parliamentarism, and democracy. How come, then, that an undemocratic empire (Russia) would agree to assist a democratic political organization (Radical Party)?

The answer lies in the realm of interests and not of ideology.

The answer may partly be found in the fact that the Radical leaders had been inspired by Russian populism and anarchism in their youth, and had identified with Russian liberal intelligentsia.⁴⁴ It could easily be, therefore, that some of them had kept close and personal friends in St. Petersburg or Moscow. Moreover, and more importantly, imperial Russia was viewed as the guardian of the Orthodox and Slavic world. For her part, Russia supported all national movements in the Balkans, her fundamental interest being to gain access to the Mediterranean (the Straits).^{45 46} Thus, the national interests of Balkan nations⁴⁷ coincided with Russian foreign policy priorities. Hence, the Radicals believed that Russia was best suited to be Serbia's closest ally and the best supporter of her national objectives of all the Great Powers:

“As far as our attitude towards Russians is concerned, I think that we should really lean in her direction; but, personally, I would prefer to see Russian influence on our affairs limited to the extent needed to act as a counterweight to that of Austria-Hungary.”⁴⁸

The Radical front man Nikola Pašić has been quoted as saying: “If it is difficult with Russia, it is even more difficult without Russia.”⁴⁹

Another Radical from Belgrade wrote to Pašić in Bulgaria (1884):

“I think that so far our attitude towards Russia has been good. But, maybe we should now come out as open Russian exponents.”⁵⁰

⁴⁴ AMAE, CP Serbie, 1885, July 10, 1885.

⁴⁵ The Straits of Constantinople: Bosphorus and Dardanelles.

⁴⁶ For more details see Ch. Jelavich, *Tsarist Russia and Balkan Nationalism*, California University Press, Berkeley 1958.

⁴⁷ Serbs, Bulgarians, Greeks, Romanians, Montenegrins.

⁴⁸ Letter to Nikola Pašić, Belgrade, 1884, private collection.

⁴⁹ M. Gavrilović, *Nikola P. Pašić*, Windsor, Canada, 1963, 8. This sentence has also been attributed to Jovan Ristić, a Liberal.

⁵⁰ Letter to Nikola Pašić, Beograd, 1884, private collection.

From 1881, the Radical leadership established a close relationship with Russian representatives in Belgrade.⁵¹ Lamansky and especially Persiani⁵² were seen as their “intimate friends.”⁵³

Archival sources suggest that these two Russians extended more than just moral support: Russian financial aid was substantial, but highly secret.⁵⁴ A number of documents indicated that Russia was the major financial sponsor of the Radical emigrants in Bulgaria. In a series of reports the Serbian representative in Sofia accused Pašić and other Radicals of having contacts with and receiving money from Russian emissaries.⁵⁵ Both were opposed to the Serbian King Milan Obrenović: Russia because of his Austrophile foreign policy and the Radicals because of his foreign as well as his domestic policies.

But relations between the Radicals and Russia had not always been so cordial. The Radicals viewed Russia's involvement in Balkan affairs with a certain cautiousness. In Serbia, Russia had backed the Liberal Party before and simultaneously with the Radicals. Due to their pan-Slavism and strong Orthodox influences, the Liberals were warmly received in St. Petersburg. What the Radicals thought on the subject may be seen from a letter dated 1884:

“Giga (Geršić)⁵⁶ talked to Lamansky. He complained about the Liberals' disregard and insult of our party comrades. Lamansky told him that he had acknowledged some serious mistakes of the Liberal government and would give it more attention. But, he also said that we need to keep collaborating with (Jovan) Ristić.”⁵⁷

Even more skeptical was the Radicals' reaction to Lamansky's proposition that Belgrade Radicals give their full support to their exiled comrades in Bulgaria regarding their relations with Russia:

“Be careful not to become a mere tool of others who will let you down as soon as your role is finished.”⁵⁸

⁵¹ J. Avakumović, “Memoirs”, ASANU, no. 9287/III, 131–133.

⁵² Russian diplomats in Belgrade.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ AS, Dobra Ružić Fund, PO-27/183, September 19, 1883; ASANU, no. 11548.

⁵⁶ See Chapter 6 (The Leaders).

⁵⁷ Stojan Protić to Nikola Pašić, August 31, 1884, private collection.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

Russia's Balkan policy followed two different courses: pro-Serbian and pro-Bulgarian. The Radicals considered pro-Bulgarian Russia as a serious threat in case of a Serbo-Bulgarian conflict, but believed that Serbia, in the absence of a better ally, needed to accept Russia as "the foremost defender of its national interests".⁵⁹ By the same token, the Radical foreign policy was very much concerned with ameliorating relations with Sofia.

The claim that the Radical Party was essentially Russophile does seem accurate, but requires additional elaborating.

Namely, the Radicals' pro-Russian position passed through several phases. As we saw, in the early years of the Radical movement, it stemmed from the influence of Russian socialist thinkers and their ideas. With time, this idealistic sentiment gave way to a more rational justification. Russia came to be seen as the best possible supporter of the Serbian national cause, galvanized by the feeling of common ethnic and religious origins. This orientation toward the East was confirmed by Nikola Pašić himself on his visit to St. Petersburg, sometime in the 1890s:

"Serbia will always and in any circumstances be on the side of Russia."⁶⁰ (How sincere was the Radical Chairman's statement is quite another matter. His pro-Russian inclinations, however, never wavered.)

The vision of a Balkan alliance was also one of the Radicals' oldest ideas. As most their views, it could be traced back to the teachings of Sveztozar Marković, who had advocated "social revolution leading to a Balkan federation of freely associated nations". The Radicals modified Marković's doctrine, transforming it into a concept of a Balkan alliance of sovereign states based on mutual interests.⁶¹

Of all Balkan peoples, the Radicals were most attracted by Bulgarians, since it was the territory of Macedonia⁶² that was the target of both nationalisms. They considered Serbs and Bulgarians as two different peoples with their own separate states and histories, but with similar ethnic and historical backgrounds and languages.⁶³ As two "sibling" nations sharing a common interest to fend off the Ottoman Empire in Macedonia, Serbs and Bulgar-

⁵⁹ M. Dj. Milovanović, "Srbi i Bugari", *Delo*, XVII, 1898, 291.

⁶⁰ AS, Milutin Garašanin Fund, no. 1904.

⁶¹ D. Ilić, *Zaječarska buna*, 122.

⁶² At the time, Macedonia was under Ottoman rule, but was populated almost entirely by Slavic population with a very low ethnic consciousness.

⁶³ Milovanović, "Srbi i Bugari", 290–292.

ians would be much stronger if united.⁶⁴ It is true that the Radical views on Macedonia were less nationalistic than those of other political parties in Serbia. The Radicals saw Macedonia as neither Serbian nor Bulgarian, but rather as a mixture of both. In order to resolve the problem of conflicting claims, they proposed a deal between Serbia and Bulgaria to partition Ottoman territories in the Central Balkans. This pragmatic approach was realized in 1897, when an agreement was reached: it was a triumph of their policy of compromise in the Balkans, a concept they persistently advocated.⁶⁵

Besides the official aspect of the Radical policy towards Bulgaria, there was a much more personal and an equally significant one. First, the Radical Party was particularly popular in Eastern Serbia, a region bordering Bulgaria, with the population on both sides of the border ethnically and culturally quite similar. Second, some of the most prominent Radical leaders were originally from eastern Serbia.⁶⁶ Third, the Radical leadership maintained close contacts with the leaders of the Bulgarian Liberal Party: the two movements showed significant ideological kinship. Exiled after the Timok Rebellion, the Radicals were welcomed and assisted by the Bulgarian Liberals.⁶⁷ The Radical friendship with Suknarov, Slaveykov and Karavelov was deeper than just political collaboration; they shared common feelings of ideological and national closeness.⁶⁸

If their Balkan alliance project reflected the Radical's national aspirations towards the Ottoman Empire, the South-Slavic union project revealed their intentions towards the Habsburg Monarchy. National romanticism of nineteenth-century Europe had given rise to the idea of South-Slavic unity. Yugoslavism was a complex and somewhat controversial concept. Different parts of the Balkan Peninsula, different ethnicities with different perceptions, different motives, and different histories, at one point or the other, developed their specific concept of the idea.

According to Serbian Radicals, the two key Yugoslav ethnic groups were Serbs and Croats.

Disillusioned by the defeat of federalism, the acceptance of a dualist solution and the formation of Austria-Hungary (1867), Croatian nationalists looked for a viable alternative in a potential South-Slavic unification.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ See Jovanović, *Vlada Aleksandra Obrenovića*, II, 381–398.

⁶⁶ See Chapter 6 (The Leaders).

⁶⁷ ASANU, no. 11548 and 11551; AMAE, CP Serbia, 1884, July 11, 1884.

⁶⁸ AMAE, CP Serbia, 1889, October 20, 1889.

⁶⁹ M. Dj. Milovanović, *Srbi i Hrvati*, 21.

Similar projects were hatched among the Serbs in Southern Hungary (Vojvodina). It was only later (after 1903) that the Serbs in Serbia proper started to consider the idea seriously.⁷⁰ A common ethnic background and the same language offered justification for their dreams about a Yugoslavian state. The Yugoslav idea was basically a matter of Serbo-Croatian relations.

The Radical approach to the Yugoslav question was realistic and rational. The Radicals were aware of the dissimilarities between the two nations: different religions (the Croats being Roman Catholic and the Serbs Eastern Orthodox), different historical experiences (the Croats living under the Habsburgs, the Serbs under the Ottomans). This is what they had to say on the issue in 1882:

“The gap that exists today between the Serbs and the Croats is much deeper than we tend to think. The questions of religion, history and politics are so intermingled that one can rightfully ask whether we are one people or not...”⁷¹

The Radicals reflected on the future development of Serbs and Croats and prospects for their unification, offering two possibilities:

“To become members of the same state, to further our linguistic kinship and to pursue the same goals. In that case, we shall be separated only by religion. On the other hand, a completely different thing might happen. Our hostile divisions may remain. The language may take divergent paths, and then the Serbs and Croats would be left with nothing in common.”⁷²

What did the Radicals see as the major point of Serbo-Croat disagreement? In the words of the same Radical:

“We seek happiness for our people outside Turkey but, God, outside Austria-Hungary as well. This ‘outside Austria-Hungary’ leads to conflict with our Croatian brothers”⁷³

In essence, the Radical idea of Yugoslav unification was a logical continuation of their idea of Serbian unification. Serbian unity was an essential item on their agenda (the concept of a nation-state). The Yugoslav solution was a broader framework for pursuing the same objective. The Radical Party grew into a nationalist movement expressing and defending the Serbian

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁷¹ St. Protić, “Srpsko-hrvatsko pitanje”, *Samouprava*, December 2–31, 1882.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*

national cause. The Yugoslav alternative could only be the next stage of the Serbian idea, but by no means its substitute.

2

If the basics of the Radical ideology belonged to the ideal world of philosophy, the characteristics of the Party belonged to the imperfect world of reality. In fact, these two sides have defined Serbian Radicalism in its historical context. On one hand, the adaptability of the Radical Party – its ability to respond to existing situations and to adapt to the changing reality – seem of utmost importance. On the other hand, it was its adaptable nature that allowed the Radical Party to have an impact on the political reality. This phenomenon had two major aspects: ideological and strategic. The first was characterized by its successive transformations, which have already been discussed.⁷⁴ The second, however, requires a more in-depth analysis. In their early days, the Radicals were focused on influencing political events directly, using instruments such as propaganda, public criticism and the press. Milutin Garašanin, the Chairman of the rival Progressive Party, observed mordantly but accurately:

“In its childhood, the Radical movement was annoying, obnoxious and insolent...”⁷⁵ Here is another of Garašanin’s mordant observations:

“In its adolescence, the Radical movement was a delinquent; as a young man – a rebel; as an adult it has become a criminal.”⁷⁶

Garašanin concluded:

“It (the Radical Party) still has a chance to save itself, not to indulge in sin, not to deny itself, not to spit in its own face... The Radical Party is in power today on the basis of concluded agreements and faits accomplis, fully at the service of the abdicated King Milan and the retired Jovan Ristić...”⁷⁷

⁷⁴ M. St. Protić, “The Serbian Radical Movement 1881–1903: A Historical Aspect”, *Balkanica* XXXVI/2005 (2006), 129–149; M. St. Protić, “Sources of the Ideology of the Serbian Radical Movement 1881–1903”, *Balkanica*, XXXVII/2006 (2007), 125–142 .

⁷⁵ AS, Milutin Garašanin Fund, no. 1925.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ AS, Milutin Garašanin Fund, no. 1922.

Milutin Garašanin's sarcastic tone (quite understandable for a bitter opponent of the Radicals) aside, it becomes crystal-clear what the flexibility of the Radical ideology had meant.

The second distinctive feature of the Radical Party was its pragmatism. The Radicals were very resourceful in finding practical ways and means to put their ideological tenets into practice. In other words, they were able to adjust their theoretical model so as to serve their purpose. Every concept which proved inapplicable or inconvenient was remodeled or altered. Whatever seemed too complicated was simplified and modified. Its ideology served the Party, not the other way round. If the years of Svetozar Marković were marked by an ideological consistency verging on rigidity, by the 1880s the Radical Party had become extremely rational. In the introduction to the 1881 program, they insisted on political realism and demanded urgent and practical reforms.⁷⁸

The Radicals were often accused of using demagoguery as an instrument of political propaganda,⁷⁹ even of deliberately oversimplifying and distorting matters in order to gain popular support. Local Radicals in various parts of Serbia were reported to the authorities for "holding secret meetings every evening, stirring up discontent among the population and promising them sweet dreams if they vote for them in the coming elections".⁸⁰

In 1881, Nikola Pašić's brother was accused of depicting "the work and attitude of Nikola Pašić as remarkably beneficial to the people; but his depictions do not have much effect because he likes to deceive people and that is why many do not believe him. Lazar Pašić will not be happy until he sees his brother in the ministerial chair. His current story is that things as they are now are all wrong".⁸¹

Similar reports about Radical activities were sent from Carina,⁸² Pirot⁸³ and Kruševac.⁸⁴

A proclamation to the membership dated 1886 is a good illustration of Radical populism:

⁷⁸ See "Naš program".

⁷⁹ See Jovanović, *Vlada Milana Obrenovića*, III, 261; Janković, *Političke stranke*, 132.

⁸⁰ AS, Milutin Garašanin Fund, no. 470, Požarevac, July 21, 1882.

⁸¹ AS, Milutin Garašanin Fund, no. 62, Zaječar, November 16, 1881.

⁸² AS, Milutin Garašanin Fund, no. 472.

⁸³ AS, Milutin Garašanin Fund, no. 442.

⁸⁴ AS, Milutin Garašanin Fund no. 525.

“What makes the Radical Party different from other parties is the fact that it is not led by authorities or famous names... but by the desires and interests of its entire membership.”⁸⁵

Moreover, according to a proclamation by the local Radicals of Jagodina⁸⁶ dated 1883:

“The Radical Party is numerically stronger than any other party in Serbia: it is the deepest-rooted in the people – it is only the Radical Party, then, that is hundred percent pure people.”⁸⁷

Reflecting on political honesty and integrity, Andra Nikolić insisted on moral standards for any public statement or action of the Radical membership. Aware that deliberate and frequent use of demagoguery may be harmful to the Radicals’ reputation, he wrote:

“A politician assumes duty, publicly promises to act according to certain principles and to work on the implementation of the proclaimed program. If he acts out of his own self-interest instead, he commits deceit.”⁸⁸

In all fairness, two remarks ought to be made here. First, the majority of accusations against them came from their political adversaries. Second, the line between democracy and populism has always been thin here.

The last distinctive characteristic of the Radical movement was its cohesive durability. The Party succeeded in maintaining its ideological and structural unity throughout their time in opposition, from 1881 to 1901. It kept growing in numbers, mostly unshaken by internal strife and dissension. Attempts to undermine the harmony of the organization ended in failure. Over the years, some individuals did leave the Party, but its membership remained compact.

Two factors kept the Party together. One was its internal mechanism of decision-making and vertical and horizontal lines of communication. The other was unconditional commitment to Radicalism shown not only by the leaders but also by the entire rank and file of the Radical Party. The movement relied on the staunch partisanship and enthusiasm of its members. In the words of their political foes:

⁸⁵ ASANU, no. 13781/2.

⁸⁶ Town in central Serbia, 85 miles south of Belgrade.

⁸⁷ ASANU, no. 9783/27.

⁸⁸ AS, Andra Nikolić Fund, no. 10.

“Radicals are plain partisans and nothing more. Their only concern is their Party’s success, with no consideration whatsoever for justice or the needs of the state.”⁸⁹

Or:

“Radicals are still at full strength... happy with their partisanship.”⁹⁰

Jovan Avakumović, a prominent Liberal leader, was even more direct:

“Radicals demonstrated their separatist aspirations from the very beginning of the coalition government [1887]. They never missed an opportunity to pursue their partisan interests.”⁹¹

Their partisanship became particularly visible after they entered the government. Once in power, they did their best to install their party members in as many public offices as possible. According to Avakumović, “courts, administration and the State Council were flooded with Radicals”. The Radical leadership promoted partisanship for obvious reasons. To be a Radical meant to be a member of a strong political organization. Commitment to Radicalism was a matter of political conviction, yet it enhanced the individual sense of self-importance and offered possibilities for climbing up the social ladder. Frankly, belonging to the Radicals was becoming ever more useful.

These features were the cause of both the strengths and the weaknesses of the Radical Party. They ensured its survival, prosperity, and success. But they were, in addition, responsible for its failures, inconsistencies and self-interestedness. And again, that brings to mind another analogy between politics and life.

* * *

In conclusion, we could sum up our main points as follows:

- The formative period of the Serbian Radical movement (1881– 1903), was a period of its ideological fermentation resulting in the shift from vaguely defined socialism to the concept of parliamentary democracy. The emergence and evolution of Radicalism was intertwined with the shift taking place in Serbia from an agrarian society to a modern European one. The Radical movement was both the cause and the ef-

⁸⁹ ASANU, Avakumović, « Memoirs », 45.

⁹⁰ ASANU, Avakumović, « Memoirs », 51.

⁹¹ ASANU, Avakumović, « Memoirs », 11.

fect of this process: it arose from the underlying social and political trend but it also encouraged the process of modernization. Thus, the Radical Party was a force of progress in Serbian politics.

- The formative period was also marked by a certain parallelism between theory and practice, between ideology and *realpolitik* – a process in which *realpolitik* eventually prevailed over ideology, theory was overpowered by reality, and interests triumphed over beliefs. The Radicals were concerned with accomplishing the possible. In time, it evolved into a Party of action rather than a Party of doctrine.
- The Radical movement may be defined as a kind of ideological association. It included individuals and groups of various political colors, socialists, democrats, opportunists, demagogues. What made such a conglomeration functional and enduring was probably its flexibility of practice. In that sense, Serbian Radicalism had the capacity to represent an entire spectrum of social groups and individuals. It was more than a political party: it was a political movement.
- The Radical achievements were twofold: firstly, it was instrumental in introducing the peasantry into politics and in promoting it to a relevant political factor; secondly, it was the driving force in the process of Serbia's political democratization, Europeanization, and modernization.

The flaws of the Radical Party included its conformism leading to inconsistency, partisanship leading to exclusiveness, and demagoguery leading to populism.

- In terms of its ideology, the nature of the Radical Party was dual. Its commitment to constitutionalism, the middle-class background of its leadership and the social solidarity affirmed in its program made it a party of the Center. Its emphasis on democracy, its struggle for social justice and its socialist roots made it a party of the Left.
- In theory, its major objective was a political system based on universal justice for all. Its method was constant work aimed at achieving an effective state organization providing national stability. Its political doctrine was a democratic parliamentary monarchy. Its social doctrine was founded on accord among all social classes.
- Serbian Radicalism was an open ideology in the sense that it was more influenced by the reality than by deduction. The process of its development was based on political practice rather than on ideological assumptions. The Radicals had gone a long way: from socialist revolutionaries to pragmatic democrats.
- The Radical Party served as a bridge between European ideas and Serbian actuality. In that sense, its ideology was eclectic: it was drawn

from foreign sources, but implemented in a specific environment. The Radicals were not original or creative thinkers, yet the concepts they espoused bore a distinctly Radical mark; they were modified so as to correspond to the Serbian social and political situation.

An observation of the French historian J. Kayser seems most appropriate to end this chapter:

« Il n'y a pas de doute, les radicaux furent des opposants, les hommes qui criaient: Non! Ils étaient contre: leur force d'attraction vient de là, leur prestige aussi et leur vulnérabilité. »⁹²

⁹² Jacques Kayser, *Les Grandes Batailles du Radicalisme*, Paris 1962, 7.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE STRUCTURE

The story about the People's Radical Party in Serbia would be incomplete without an examination of its social structure and organizational network.

This particular aspect of Serbian Radicalism mirrored its ideological essence, as well as its appearance on the grand stage of historical developments. The Radical social structure reflected the composition of the Serbian society during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. Consequently, as Serbia evolved from a peasant egalitarian to a modern stratified society, such changes were reflected in the Radical social makeup.

Every social segment within the Serbian populace was represented in the Radical Party. Its leadership consisted of Belgrade intelligentsia, which had been educated in Serbia and abroad. The party's most lively activists and promoters were provincial intellectuals: high school professors, doctors, teachers, lower civil servants, countryside clergy, etc. The largest constituency was made up of peasants, who almost unanimously joined the Radical Party.¹ The growing merchant and businessmen community – which had not yet become a social class in its own right, but whose social expansion was already underway – was also represented in the Radical Party. Even a handful of industrial workers employed in several factories and manufac-

¹ See Andrija Radenić, "O Radikalnim seljačkim bunama u Srbiji 1892–93 godine", *Istorijski časopis*, vol. IX-X, Beograd, 1960, 451–465.

tures joined the Radical Party.² Each of these social groups had a specific understanding of Radicalism as a political organization and ideology despite their different social status, level of education, and collective interests.

Thus, from a sociological point of view, the Radical Party represented a conglomerate of multiple social layers. The sense of solidarity among them enabled the growth and success of the Party. Their differences made Radicalism a complex socio-political phenomenon. Therefore, the Radical Party could be defined as a political movement, political alliance or a political bloc,³ rather than strictly a monolithic political party.⁴ It proved to be ideologically and organizationally broad enough to meet the expectations of the vast majority of the Serbian population. In terms of numbers, the Radicals were unmatched.

The organizational mechanism of the Radical Party played a key role in bringing and keeping the membership together. The Radicals' operational apparatus was the chemistry of the Party – the main vehicle of its coordinated activities. As the first massive political movement and the most popular political organization in Serbia, (which in 1882 included 80 percent of the population⁵), the Radical Party required an elaborate and effective system in order to synchronize its large following and electorate. In this respect, the Radicals were more successful than any other political group in Serbia.⁶

Thus, despite the fragmentary archival sources, it is necessary to take a closer look at the socio-organizational groundwork of the Radical Party.

* * *

In a sociological examination of the Radical Party, one is bound to begin with the great majority of its rank and file – the peasantry. But, before tackling the problem of peasant membership in the Party, let us cite a few sources dealing with the total size of the Radical Party in its early years.

According to J. Prodanović, *almost five-sixths of the nation*⁷ had joined the Radicals by 1883. M. Dj. Miličević, a member of the Progressive Party, claimed that *the opposition by the name of 'Radicals' had spread all over the country*⁸ and Sl. Jovanović admitted that the Serbian people “had become

² ASANU, no. 9783/77.

³ Georges Clemenceau was the first to define it as a political bloc.

⁴ Very similar to French Radicalism.

⁵ See Prodanović, *Istorija...*, 5, 12–513.

⁶ Jovanović, *Vlada Milana Obrenovića*, III, 105–110.

⁷ Prodanović, *Istorija...*, 513.

⁸ ASANU, no. 9327/11.

“completely Radical” prior to the Timok Rebellion.⁹ According to Radical sources, the Party numbered about 45,000 registered members in early 1883,¹⁰ and on the eve of the Timok Rebellion it had reached the number of 60,000, with at least the same number of non-registered sympathizers.¹¹ In a report dated September 1885, the French envoy in Belgrade informed his superiors in Paris that “the Radicals had absolute majority in the regions of Užice, Valjevo and Požarevac”.¹²

A contemporary source from the early 1880s claimed that the Timok region had been “the stronghold of the Serbian Radical Party with virtually every man being a member”.¹³ The capital of Belgrade, however, was never among the Radical monopolies. Pera Todorović¹⁴ wrote that “Belgrade was never Radical. Our capital, unlike all other capitals of the World, has always had a conservative character.”¹⁵ Niš, as the second largest city in Serbia, had a Liberal majority, while the Progressivists and the Radicals were much weaker there.¹⁶ A report from the small town of Arandjelovac claimed in 1883 that the position of the Radical Party was “weak and unimportant”.¹⁷

From the very beginning of Radicalism in Serbia, small peasant proprietors who represented the vast majority of the overall population¹⁸ joined the Radical Party. What were the real reasons for this mass attachment of the peasantry to the Radical movement?

Two major factors inspired the Serbian peasant to identify with the Radicals. First, the Serbian peasant had been left out of Serbian politics for decades. It was the city and the city elites which had profited from the modernization process. Under the long Ottoman rule, democratic traditions were non-existent. The Serbian peasant was subject to exploitation and persecution. Having acquired his own state and independence, the average

⁹ Slobodan Jovanović, *Vlada Milana Obrenovića*, vol. III, pp. 58–59.

¹⁰ Raša Milošević, *Timočka buna 1883. godine*, p. 42.

¹¹ Pera Todorović, *Male novine*, no. 190, August 15, 1890.

¹² AMAE, CP Serbie 1885, Beograd, September 6, 1885.

¹³ Dragutin Ilić, *Zaječarska buna*, p. 55.

¹⁴ See Chapter 6 (The Leaders).

¹⁵ ASANU, no. 13512.

¹⁶ ASANU, no. 9783/148.

¹⁷ ASANU, no. 9783/6.

¹⁸ By 1889, 72.60% of the overall population owned less than 12 acres of land, 20.31% had 12 to 24 acres, 6.03% owned 24 to 45 acres, 1% had 45 to 100 acres and only 0.06% owned estates of over 100 acres.

See Nikola Vučo, *Privredna Istorija Srbije*, Beograd, 1955, 177.

Serb expected fewer burdens and more freedom. Neither hope was realized. Domestic bureaucrats proved to be as abusive and authoritarian as the Turks had been. The mistrust that the Serbian peasant developed towards the foreign rule remained intact under the Serbian government. The lack of political experience, heavy Ottoman heritage and ignorance about contemporary European trends resulted in a sort of oriental despotism alien to the Serbian peasant. His somewhat anarchic inclinations only contributed to the general instability and chaos, accompanied by frequent revolts and removal of rulers.¹⁹ Moreover, no political party before the Radicals had ever turned towards the peasantry as a viable political force, or tried to seek support among the agrarian social stratum. With the emergence of the Radical Party, the peasantry gradually achieved two major objectives: it became politically organized and its interests were represented in the National Assembly. They became politically relevant.

In several of his reports, the French ambassador in Belgrade referred to the Serbian National Assembly as “composée presque entièrement de paysans”,²⁰ or “avec des députés pour la plupart des paysans simples”.²¹

It is worth mentioning here that in 1881 the annual session of the National Assembly had to be postponed for a full month due to agricultural spring works.²²

The Serbian village was attracted by the Radical program because its demands corresponded to its interests: universal suffrage, local self-government, tax reform, and abolition of the standing army. According to the aforementioned French source, these promises were “impossible à mettre à execution”, but still vigorously promoted by the Radicals.²³

It is interesting to note that the Radicals proved the Frenchman's skepticism wrong. The 1888 Constitution did indeed introduce nearly universal suffrage and the principle of local self-government.²⁴

During their brief period in power (1889–1892), the Radicals alleviated the heavy tax burden on the peasantry. By the legal changes of Decem-

¹⁹ See Dimitrije Djordjević, “Srbija i srpsko društvo 1880-ih godina”. *Istorijski časopis* 29–30 (1982–83), 413–426.

²⁰ AMAE, CP Serbie, 1887–88, Belgrade, September 25, 1887.

²¹ AMAE, CP Serbie, 1881, Belgrade, April 22, 1881.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ AMAE, CP Serbie, 1882–83, Belgrade, November 12, 1883.

²⁴ See M. Popović, *Poreklo i postanak*; Fedor Nikić, *Lokalna uprava*.

ber 20, 1889, the Radical government relieved the agrarian population of about 1.5 million dinars in taxes.²⁵

The numerical prevalence of the peasantry is well illustrated in Radical membership records (March/April of 1883): for example, 519 out of 547 registered Radicals in Vratarnica were peasants;²⁶ in the region of Pirot, 330 out of 450 members were of peasant origin²⁷; in Ivanjica there were 124 registered Radicals, among them 77 peasants.²⁸

As it made up the bulk of its members, the Serbian peasantry developed a deep emotional attachment to the Radical Party. In their opinion, the Party was something like an extended family, a neighborhood, or a village. The peasant could relate to the Party more easily than he could relate to the State. The State was distant, demanding and inconsiderate. It existed somewhere far away in Belgrade, occasionally sending its officials to collect taxes and draft for the army. The State was the peasant's enemy, just like it had been for centuries under Ottoman rule. The Radical Party appeared as an organization of his self-defense against the State nomenclature and its demands. The Radical Party became a fact of his everyday rural life – his window into a brighter future. Through his membership in it, the Serbian peasant was becoming less and less suspicious towards the State, but the process was slow and turbulent. Still, in 1888, when Serbia was about to obtain its most liberal Constitution, two peasant deputies from the Radicals' ranks voted against it just because they distrusted the King.²⁹

Living up to peasant expectations, the Radical leaders were quite harsh in their criticism of the State's bureaucratic apparatus. The Radicals exploited unfavorable conditions in Serbia, accusing the government of arrogance, incompetence and fraud.

This is a fragment of Pera Todorović's speech at the First Congress of the People's Radical Party in 1882 (a masterpiece of Radical demagogy):

“Precisely because I am poor I have the right and I want more than anyone else to be involved in State affairs. Precisely because I am poor ... I feel more than anyone else the burdens and injustices of the State”³⁰

²⁵ Jovanović, *Vlada Aleksandra Obrenovića*, I, 191.

²⁶ ASANU, no. 9783/60.

²⁷ ASANU, no. 9783/77.

²⁸ ASANU, no. 9783/117.

²⁹ Jovanović, *Vlada Milana Obrenovića*, III, 206.

³⁰ Jovanović, *Vlada Milana Obrenovića*, III, 64.

The general assertion that the peasant component of the Radical Party had an essentially negative approach to politics³¹ does not appear entirely correct and, frankly, sounds quite cynical. Even if we accept the claim that the peasantry could contribute no proposal besides the alleviation of taxes and the demand for the highest level of local autonomy, these issues were far from insignificant. Behind that, however, were the peasants' common sense and their sentiments about collective interests. The peasantry was the first to reject the socialism of the early Radicals.³² It was enthusiastic about democracy, but hostile to any type of collectivization. The Serbian peasant was a landowner and, as such, very sensitive about his private property. In addition, he was traditionalistic, parochial and individualistic. His horizons reached out perhaps to his neighbor or his village, but hardly much further. By joining the Radical movement, the Serbian peasants grew into a unified force, developing a consciousness beyond their previous limits. Although they never completely dropped their localist approach and mentality, the sense of belonging to a massive political movement widened their perspectives.

The Serbian peasant was anti-dynastic, but not anti-royalist. He did not care much for the King, but he liked the monarchy. He was a traditional, church-going and family-oriented man. He liked to keep things right and in order. As much as the Radical Party served as a bridge between European ideas and Serbian peasantry, it was the peasant who brought rationalism to the Radical Party. Their relationship was a two-way street.

The process of national and political emancipation of the Serbian peasantry coupled with the rise and growth of the Radical Party.

* * *

If the peasantry represented the rank and file of the Radical movement, the provincial intelligentsia represented the local Radical leadership. In the Radical social framework, this stratum occupied a rather distinguished place. It was the most vibrant part of the Party – its driving force.

Provincial intelligentsia formed a link between the Radical top leadership and its constituency. Being among the few literate and educated people, they led local Party boards, organized meetings and, most importantly, explained Radical ideas to the largely illiterate Serbian population.³³ Their

³¹ Jovanović, *Vlada Aleksandra Obrenovića*, I, 172; Michael Boro Petrovich, 447.

³² Živanović, II, 214.

³³ In 1885, there were 1,270 teachers in Serbia. See Vladimir Karić, *Srbija, opis zemlje, naroda i države*, Beograd, 1887, 247.

role in recruiting new members and spreading the organization was instrumental indeed.

A number of archival sources emphasize the activities of the local leadership. A report from the Ub region dated 1882, pointed out the local teacher and the public notary as “the greatest Radical agitators for the upcoming elections”.³⁴ A report from Knjaževac, a small town in Eastern Serbia, dated 1883, described the work of the Mayor’s secretary “who, accompanied by the Mayor and other known Radicals, constantly campaigns in the neighboring villages, criticizing the government”.³⁵ A report from 1882 spoke of the Radical reunion in Veliko Gradište organized by a local priest and two teachers³⁶.

A similar account was sent from Kruševac that same year: the Radical public meeting was organized “by three local teachers”.³⁷ Teachers from Golubinja and Glogovac were described as “well known Radical organizers in the area”.³⁸ A report from Kragujevac expressed the general allegation that public servants in that region “all belong to the Radical Party and deliberately misinterpret the present political situation”.³⁹ In his personal account of the Timok Rebellion, D. Ilić stated that “the uprising in Boljevac was prepared by three local Radical leaders, all of them teachers”.⁴⁰ The same author gave a vivid description of the local Party leadership:

“Really, these were... men whose lives merged with ordinary folk: they were truthful tribunes whose characters personified the program of the Radical Party – the self-consciousness of the entire nation.”⁴¹

When the Main Board lost initiative and direction following the outbreak of the Timok Rebellion, it was the second echelon that took the lead of the Radical Party.⁴²

Differences did exist in understanding Radicalism among various groups of the provincial intelligentsia. Lower clergy represented its mod-

³⁴ AS, Milutin Garašanin Fund, no. 704, Ub, August 24, 1883.

³⁵ AS, Milutin Garašanin Fund, no. 664, Knjaževac, August 20, 1883.

³⁶ AS, Milutin Garašanin Fund, no. 587, Veliko Gradiste, April 26, 1882.

³⁷ AS, Milutin Garašanin Fund, no. 461, Kruševac, July 4, 1882.

³⁸ AS, Milutin Garašanin Fund no. 431, Donji Milanovac, April 20, 1882.

³⁹ AS, Milutin Garašanin Fund, no. 429, Kragujevac, July 3, 1882.

⁴⁰ Ilić, 22.

⁴¹ Ilić, 15–16.

⁴² Ilić, 94.

erate component due to its dependence on church hierarchy and its religious affiliation. In 1881 Queen Natalija told one of her confidantes that she “cannot understand all these priests who join the Radical Party”.⁴³ An identical comment could be made about local officials, who also belonged to the moderate faction, because of their professional association with the State authorities and their subordination to the Ministry of Interior. Frequent governmental replacements, however, made their position rather vulnerable. Being in and out of work, they represented a kind of bureaucratic proletariat threatened by the unfavorable socio-economic conditions in the country.

Provincial teachers represented the most radical segment of the Radical leadership. More independent than others groups and more educated, this group emerged as the most revolutionary element of the Radical Party. Certain socialist tendencies were also present among the countryside teachers.⁴⁴ Their attachment to the Radicals was colorfully illustrated by two teachers from the village of Sikola, who wrote to the Radical Main Board asking to be publically excused for being absent from the First Radical Congress in Kragujevac in 1882.⁴⁵ *Samouprava* published their letter on its front page and added that both were excused.⁴⁶

Higher officials in the state administration started joining the Radical Party at a later date. Whereas the provincial intelligentsia was Radical from the very beginning, the higher bureaucracy signed up to the Radicals only after they had come to power, approximately from 1887.⁴⁷ This social stratum, which included judges, public persecutors, cabinet staff, etc., represented the opportunistic wing of the Radical Party. Their loyalty to the Party was essentially self-serving. When it had become beneficial to be a Radical, they decided to join in.

* * *

The top leadership of the Radical Party, located in Belgrade, consisted of the Serbian educated elite. Most of them had received university education in European cities of Switzerland, Germany, Austria, France, and Russia.⁴⁸

⁴³ ASANU, no. 9327/11.

⁴⁴ Dragiša Stanojević, *Gluho doba u radikalnoj stranci*, Beograd, 1891, 39.

⁴⁵ ASANU, no. 9777/IV.

⁴⁶ *Samouprava*, August 24, 1882.

⁴⁷ ASANU, no. 11651 and no. 11564.

⁴⁸ See Milan Dj. Milićević, *Pomenik znamenitih ljudi*, Beograd, 1888.

They belonged to the second and third generation of Serbian intelligentsia.⁴⁹ With regard to their social backgrounds, only a few of the Radical top leadership had been born in the capital and only a handful had originated from distinguished and affluent families. On the contrary, the Radical leaders were either of peasant or provincial origin, and hence very eager to climb up the social ladder.⁵⁰

Concerning their professional orientation, they consisted of diverse occupations: engineers, lawyers, physicians, professors, economists, etc. After the creation of the Party, most of them became professional politicians. Exceptions were university professors, who continued to pursue their academic careers, occasionally being expelled from the university.⁵¹

Several among the founding fathers of the Radical Party belonged to the socialist group of Svetozar Marković and were his closest associates: Nikola Pašić, Pera Todorović, Pera Velimirović, and Raša Milošević.⁵² Their approach to socialism, however, remained purely theoretical and academic. The Radical intellectuals flirted with revolutionary ideas, but never harbored any realistic revolutionary intentions. Although the classic works of socialist authors held a special place in their libraries,⁵³ their socialism was idealistic and emotional. Despite their intellectual sympathies for socialist ideas, the Belgrade Radicals were members of the urban class in the process of gradual “embourgeoisement”. The manners which they had adopted in Europe largely influenced their style of life.

The following is a brilliant description of Pera Todorović’s appearance while being arrested in 1883:

“He wore a top hat, gloves and glasses, although his eye vision was perfectly normal. He resembled more a foreign journalist than a domestic insurgent... No one would have ever guessed that this preppy gentleman was the first flag-bearer of the People’s Radical Party.”⁵⁴

Following the outbreak of the 1883 Timok Rebellion, the Radical leaders were apprehended in a Belgrade coffee house, while they were “sipping coffee”. Pera Todorović went to prison wearing a monocle; Jovan Djaja was brought in dressed in a formal suit; and Giga Geršić was found dining in his

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Jovanović, *Vlada Aleksandra Obrenovića*, I, 175–76; see also Michael Boro Petrovich, 448.

⁵² Jovanović, *Vlada Milana Obrenovića*, I, 9; Michael Boro Petrovich, 449.

⁵³ Andra Nikolić, *Književni radovi*, preface by Pavle Popović, Beograd, 1938, 14.

⁵⁴ Jovanović, *Političke i pravne rasprave*, I, 320–321.

favorite restaurant.⁵⁵ Not exactly the sight of a revolutionary bunch planning to overthrow the monarchy, was it?

The top Radical leadership was never entirely unified. From the Party's beginnings in 1881, one could not but notice various factions emerging among the Belgrade Radicals.

Prior to the Timok Rebellion, the Radical leadership had stuck together. Most of the members of the Main Board were close personal friends. Except for Svetomir Nikolajević, the vice chairman of the Radical Party,⁵⁶ who was expelled from the Party as early as 1882,⁵⁷ the Radical leadership kept its unity. The older members from the 1860s and 1870s were joined by several youngsters in 1881, some of which were to become future prominent Radical leaders.⁵⁸ Their zeal for politics and individual dynamism, as well as their fresh ideas and intellectualism, facilitated the cohesion of Party leadership.

The undisputed front men in these days (until 1883) were two distinguished personalities, Nikola Pašić and Pera Todorović. While Pašić was something of a manipulator, Todorović was a talented author and orator. Both had belonged to Svetozar Marković's socialist and radical-socialist group. Both were among the founding members of the Radical Party. During these initial years, they walked shoulder to shoulder, but then they went their separate ways. Pašić fled Serbia, finding refuge in neighboring Bulgaria. Todorović was arrested, trialed, sentenced to death and paroled. Their latter life paths were as different as they could be.⁵⁹

In 1892, the Radical leadership was torn between two camps: the camp of Nikola Pašić and the camp of Kosta Taušanović.⁶⁰ The falling-out occurred after the death of a Royal Regency member, Gen. Kosta Protić, when both Radical leaders showed interest in replacing him.

According to the Liberal J. Avakumović:

"If the Radicals had remained in government, the split would have been unavoidable, public and final."⁶¹

⁵⁵ Dimitrije Djordjević, "The 1883 Peasant Uprising In Serbia", *Balkan Studies*, no. 20, 253; see also Raša Milošević, *Timočka buna*, 158.

⁵⁶ See Chapter 6 (The Leaders); for more details, see Božidar Nikolajević, *Radikalna stranka i Svetomir Nikolajević*, Beograd, 1938.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Jovanović, *Vlada Milana Obrenovića*, III, 233–34.

⁵⁹ See Chapter 6 (The Leaders).

⁶⁰ ASANU, no. 9287/III, Avakumović, 99; see Chapter 6 (The Leaders).

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

The quarrel was somehow settled for the time being. In 1897, Kosta Taušanović, accompanied by Jovan Djaja, finally left the Radical Party. Formally, the motive behind this decision was his personal disagreement with another Radical leader, Stojan Protić, but it was Pašić who stood behind the scenes, pulling strings.⁶²

In his resignation letter addressed to Nikola Pašić, Taušanović wrote:

“We do not find ourselves responsible for the split, since we believe that the unity of the Party required that Stojan Protić and Okica Gluščević do not enter the editorial board [of the newspaper *Narod* (“The People”)]; their conduct makes them absolutely inapt for collective work.”⁶³

Pašić sensed that Taušanović was becoming a threat and did what was necessary to get rid of him. It doesn't seem that either Taušanović or Djaja ever had any suspicions about the identity of the person who actually incited their departure from the ranks of the Radical Party. Protić and Gluščević were used as Pašić's baits. As simple as that. So typical of Nikola Pašić and his understanding of politics.

During the formative period of Serbian Radicalism, the group of peasant popular tribunes had been particularly visible. Three outstanding representatives of this faction were Ranko Tajsic⁶⁴ from Čačak region, Dimitrije Katić from Svilajnac region, and the priest Milan Djurić from Užice.⁶⁵ Their political attitudes was characterized by unconditional opposition to any agreements or compromises and, moreover, by a stubborn emphasis on the interests and expectations of the peasantry (the most radical Radicals, so to speak). Although none of them had belonged to the top Party leadership (none of them was ever appointed to the Radical Main Board), they were particularly active as representatives in the National Assembly. This faction of the Party was named “les monagnards”, “les jacobins” or even “l'extrême gauche” of the Radical Party.⁶⁶ It was reportedly Dimitrije Katić,⁶⁷ the best educated among them, who stated in 1893:

“It is not the Liberals I fear, but the traitors in my own Party...”⁶⁸

⁶² ASANU, no. 11806.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ See Chapter 6 (The Leaders).

⁶⁵ AMAE, CP Serbia, 1889, Beograd, December 24, 1889.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ See Chapter 6 (The Leaders).

⁶⁸ AS, the fund of Milutin Garašanin, no. 1734.

According to the same source, Katić decided to stop collaboration with Nikola Pašić, but did not withdraw his membership from the Party.⁶⁹

Naturally, the Radicals' peasant faction enjoyed enormous popularity among the rural population. The peasantry showed a special respect for Ranko Tajsic. A peasant sent him a note in 1883:

“Long live Ranko Tajsic! He is the mother of the poor. If God would make him King of Serbia, we would need this one no longer!”⁷⁰

Even Sl. Jovanović, a Serbian historian who usually showed very little sympathy for populism of any kind, admitted that Ranko Tajsic had been one of the most outspoken Radicals in the National Assembly.⁷¹

The right wing of the Radical Party could also be labeled as a group of opportunistic Radicals. It consisted of intellectuals who had joined the Party after 1883, accepting compromises with other parties and especially the Crown. They were mostly active and influential during the 1890s and early 1900s.

It was the French envoy in Belgrade who pointed out the compromising bloc among Radicals in his dispatch dated January 1888.⁷² In December 1889, he reported that the Radical leadership was “sharply divided” between the right, the center, and the left⁷³. His sympathies were obviously with the moderates. The French diplomat described Sava Grujić as “assez capable”:

« Il a un caractère des manières agréables dans les fonctions diplomatiques... »⁷⁴

Further on, he wrote about Mihailo Vujić:

« Celui qui paraît devoir jouer le premier rôle est Mr. M. Vouitch, qui appartient tout au moins au Ministère des Finances des habitudes de travail inconnues jusqu'alors. »⁷⁵

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ AS, Dobra Ružić Fund, PO-27/183.

⁷¹ Jovanović, *Političke i pravne rasprave*, I, 319.

⁷² AMAE, CP Serbia, 1887–88, Belgrade, January 6, 1888.

⁷³ AMAE, C P Serbia, 1889, Belgrade, December 28, 1889.

⁷⁴ AMAE, CP Serbia, 1887–88, Belgrade, January 6, 1888.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

Rather unsurprisingly, the French Minister accorded particular respect to Milovan Dj. Milovanović,⁷⁶ who had studied in Paris and was fluent in French:

« Mr. Milovan Milovanovitch de Belgrade, docteur en droit de la faculté de Paris, publiciste très distingué et dont un récent ouvrage à fait quelque impressions dans le monde savant... »⁷⁷

The Chairman of the Progressive Party, Milutin Garašanin commented more than once that Milovan Dj. Milovanović was “a genuine Radical”.⁷⁸

Andra Nikolić was also associated with the group of moderate Radicals.⁷⁹ This faction of opportunists among the Radicals emerged after the Timok Rebellion, and represented a counterbalance to the militancy of the Radical emigrants in Bulgaria. They served as a bridge between the Obrenović dynasty and the Radical Party and were chiefly responsible for the Radicals’ rise to power in 1887.

A few members of the merchant and businessmen class joined the Radical Party from the outset.⁸⁰ Some of Yugoslav Marxist historians have used this as key evidence of the “bourgeois” character of the Radical Party, denying its complex social structure and eclectic ideology.⁸¹

It is worth mentioning that the Radicals also had several women in their ranks.⁸² They stood as a unique example in Serbian politics of the nineteenth century. Even though they did not have any substantial influence in the Party, the very fact of their Party affiliation was a remarkable achievement.⁸³ Most of them were wives or relatives of the Radicals’ male members.

⁷⁶ See Chapter 6 (The Leaders).

⁷⁷ AMAE, CP Serbie, 1889, Belgrade, January 27, 1889.

⁷⁸ AS, Milutin Garašanin Fund, no. 1921.

⁷⁹ ASANU, no. 9287/111, Avakumović, 8.

⁸⁰ Jovan (Joca) Jovanović, a merchant from Šabac; Luka Čelović, a businessman from Herzegovina; Rista Popović; Arsa Drenovac and Steva Stevanović; Kosta Taušanović, etc.

See R. Milošević, *Timočka buna*, 52.

⁸¹ See Dragoslav Janković, *Radjanje parlamentarne demokratije. Političke stranke u Srbiji XIX veka*, Pravni fakultet, Beograd, 1997; see also V. Čubrilović, *Istorija političke misli u Srbiji XIX veka*, Beograd, 1958.

⁸² Archival sources mention Marija Barjaktarević from Kragujevac and Mara Stojanović from Valjevo as members of the Radical Party; Vaja Taušanović, Milica Ninković, Draga Ljočić and Marija Zibod were also registered members of the Radical Party in Belgrade.

⁸³ A. Pavlović, *Radikalna stranka u Srbiji pre Timočke bune prema arhivskoj gradnji iz zbirke muzeja u Smederevu*, Smederevo, 1981, 7–8, 55, 85.

* * *

The organizational structure of the Radical Party was the most powerful source of its political might.

There were three basic structural entities: the Main Board, as the highest decision-making body; the parliamentary group made up of Radical elected assemblymen; and local and regional network of local boards. Vertical and horizontal lines of communication between them were the key to the Radicals' organizational and electoral success.

Radical newspapers were published twice or three times a week and immediately distributed across the country. They also used personal messengers, i.e. Party activists who traveled back and forth on business. The same method was used for the distribution of booklets, brochures, leaflets and proclamations of any sort.

Printing was just as important as distribution. The Radical Party owned its own printing unit or, at times, used printing equipment belonging to its members.

Financial resources were mostly collected from affluent members. Campaigns were financed by the nominees' and candidates' personal funds. From the very beginning, a symbolic semi-annual membership fee was introduced. This charge could be waived "in cases of verified poverty".⁸⁴

Belgrade members of the Main Board traveled regularly to various parts of the country. Each was assigned a certain area, usually the region which he had come from.

In 1882, Kosta Taušanović toured western Serbia, starting in Šabac, Valjevo and Loznica, passing through Čačak, Užice, and Bajina Bašta, and finally arriving in Niš.⁸⁵ According to a report from Ljubovija, he made contacts with Radical boards in every place he visited and distributed the Party's brochures.⁸⁶

In July 1883, Raša Milošević traveled to central Serbia, passed through Čuprija and continued to Kruševac, and Aleksinac.⁸⁷ The local police reported to the Ministry of the Interior that he had met with a number of prominent local Radicals and "held secret talks with them".⁸⁸ The same

⁸⁴ AS, Milutin Garašanin Fund, no. 276.

⁸⁵ AS, Milutin Garašanin Fund, no. 531.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ AS, Dobra Ružić Fund, PO-27/183.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

source revealed that the purpose of his visit were discussions about the Radicals' constitutional proposal.⁸⁹

In August 1883, Ranko Tajsic traveled all over Serbia, visited the regions of Čačak, Rudnik, Kragujevac and Užice, established contacts with local Radicals, gave speeches, and distributed money to local boards.⁹⁰

From 1881 onwards, the Radicals established local party boards throughout the country, with the major objective of organizing and spreading their Party organization. In 1881 and 1882, Radical campaigners held formative meetings in almost every village and town in Serbia.⁹¹

Contemporary reports from the countryside mentioned about 400–500 people being present at those meetings, at least half of them joining the Radicals.⁹² Already in March 1883, the Party had 12 regional boards and over 100 local boards.⁹³

According to an instruction issued by the Main Board in 1883, the local boards were responsible for distributing Radical publications, as well as for collecting fees and sending them to the central cashier in Belgrade.⁹⁴ Many local boards reported:

“The number of new members is rapidly growing, but not many pay the full fee and some are registered without paying anything.”⁹⁵

Close collaboration between the Radicals' leadership and membership was maintained by frequent visits of the representatives to Belgrade.

In April 1883, eighteen deputies arrived in the capital, where “they discussed the prospects of a constitutional reform” with the members of the Main Board.⁹⁶

An instruction of the Main Board issued in March 1883 stated that the delegates from the interior of the country “must be invited to Belgrade whenever the Party needed to decide about its future political strategy.”⁹⁷

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ AS, Dobra Ružić Fund, PO-27/184.

⁹¹ ASANU, no. 9783/20 and 9783/41.

AS, Milutin Garašanin Fund, no. 644 and no. 135.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ ASANU, no. 9730.

⁹⁴ ASANU, no. 9731.

⁹⁵ ASANU, no. 9783/17.

⁹⁶ AS, Dobra Ružić Fund, PO-27/184.

⁹⁷ AS, Milutin Garašanin Fund, no. 276.

The Radical press acquired a special place in the organizational structure of the Party.

In 1882, *Samouprava* was sent to 1100 addresses,⁹⁸ while *Odjek* was printed in over 900 copies in 1885.⁹⁹ According to an official report from Ub (August 1883), eleven copies of *Samouprava* were arriving every week.¹⁰⁰ In May 1883, the Minister of Education Stojan Novaković wrote to the Minister of Interior Milutin Garašanin concerning the popularity of *Samouprava*:

“We distribute *Samouprava* to villages by official channels. Very stupid and naive. The newspaper is sent by mail. But, where there is no post office, it is sent together with our official documents by regional public officials”.¹⁰¹

Several other publications were distributed to the Radical membership as well.

In a letter to the Main Board, the local board in Lenovac asked for 150 copies of the brochure *The Work of the Radical Assembly in Kragujevac* and 50 copies of *The History of French Peasant*.¹⁰² The local board in Gornja Lepenica demanded 50 copies of the first brochure and 50 copies of a booklet about regional autonomy in Dragačevo.¹⁰³

A student from the Teachers’ School in Bresnica wrote a letter to the Main Board asking for a free subscription to *Samouprava*, because he “couldn’t afford to pay for it”.¹⁰⁴

According to the Radical Statute of 1881, the Main Board represented the executive organ of the Grand Radical Assembly.¹⁰⁵ The Assembly was the supreme body of the Party and consisted of representatives from all local boards.¹⁰⁶ The Statute stipulated that “every important decision must be based on the membership’s majority opinion”.¹⁰⁷

By 1882, three sections were organized within the Main Board in order to elaborate specific issues: the constitutional proposal, the principle of

⁹⁸ ASANU, no. 9729.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ AS, Milutin Garašanin Fund, no. 704.

¹⁰¹ AS, Milutin Garašanin Fund, no. 680.

¹⁰² ASANU, no. 9783/20.

¹⁰³ Authored by Lj. Jevremović. AS, Milutin Garašanin Fund, no. 9783/7.

¹⁰⁴ AS, Milutin Garsanin Fund, no. 9783/9.

¹⁰⁵ ASANU, no. 9731.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

local self-government and the organization of the central government.¹⁰⁸ The Radical leadership was chiefly interested in spreading the Party. In February of 1882, Nikola Pašić wrote to Stojan Protić:

“Keep in mind that the men who join us today have wandered around various political groups until yesterday: it is up to us to organize them.”¹⁰⁹

* * *

The Radical Party has been described either as a peasant-democratic movement¹¹⁰ or as a petty bourgeois political organization¹¹¹. Objectively, it included the elements of both. On one hand, the Radicals heralded the voice of Serbian peasantry and introduced it to politics. Their main base of support was the village. On the other hand, they appealed to the emerging middle class, which was to become the promoter of free market economy, nationalism and modern democracy.

A more appropriate and less Marxist classification of Serbian Radicalism would be to delineate it as a political alliance or a political movement, since its complex social structure made the Radical Party a conglomeration of various social strata. Basically, the entire Serbian society of the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries was mirrored in the ranks of the Radical Party. During these decades, Serbia was experiencing profound social changes; the Radical Party could not but follow that course of historical development. The process of social stratification had begun; however, it was still far from complete. From a sociological standpoint, the Radical Party was an “umbrella” organization, meaning that it was ideologically, politically and, in terms of composition, sufficiently wide, open and flexible to meet the needs and expectations of the great majority of the Serbian population.

¹⁰⁸ AS, Milutin Garašanin Fund, no. 276.

¹⁰⁹ ASANU, no. 9783/19.

¹¹⁰ Jovanović, *Vlada Milana Obrenovića*, III, 11.

¹¹¹ Čubrilović, 358.

Table 1
Registered Radical Membership in Certain Areas (1883)¹¹²

Rečka	1200	Timok	329
Svrljig region	1022	Gruža	200
Brza Palanka	797	Aleksinac	184
Pirot	659	A. Banja	134
Boljevac	600	Knjaževac	128
Zaglava	591	Ivanjica	124
Vratarnica	547	Gornja Lepenica	122
Donja Lepenica	493	Šabac	91
Lenovac	470	Sijecha Rijeka	76
Donja Kragujevac	412	Valjevo	65
Ub	400	Užice	61
		Požarevac	50

Table 2
Social Structure of Radical Membership
In Certain Areas (1883)¹¹³

	<u>Pirot</u>	<u>A. Banja</u>	<u>Vratarnica</u>	<u>Pozarevac</u>	<u>Šabac</u>	<u>Aranjevac</u>	<u>Valjevo</u>	<u>Ivanjica</u>	<u>Užice</u>
<u>Merchants</u>	14	19	6	32	20	4	15	10	15
<u>Craftsmen</u>	23	6	18	7	50	4	24	12	26
<u>Civil Servants</u>	9	0	1	9	6	0	12	3	8
<u>Teachers</u>									
<u>Clergy</u>	0	3	0	5	2	1	2	7	0
<u>Restaurant Owners</u>	37	4	3	3	6	1	2	0	5
<u>Workers</u>	10	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
<u>Peasants</u>	277	134	519	3	6	7	5	77	0
<u>Others</u>	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	20	0

¹¹² These are the only available statistics regarding Radical membership. ASANU, no. 9783/75-160.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

CHAPTER SIX

THE LEADERS

The final chapter of this work deals with the Radical leadership. These are brief biographies or, rather, mere sketches of their lives, in which we tried to describe not only who they were and what they stood for, but also their social and family backgrounds. They all belonged to a single generation born in the span of twenty years (1840s to 1860s).

Most of the individuals portrayed here have already been mentioned in various contexts and in more or less detail. Even so, put one next to another, these short life stories should hopefully provide additional insight into the history of the Serbian Radical Party and its ideology in its initial stage of development.

Most of the Radicals' leaders belonged to the countryside or provincial bourgeoisie. Most of them were the first in their families to receive higher education. Only a few of them had been born in Belgrade, while the rest had moved to the capital while in secondary school or at university.

With a couple of exceptions, the Radical leaders came from anonymous backgrounds, climbing the social ladder alone.

Svetozar Marković (1846–1875)

Svetozar Marković was born in 1846 in Zaječar,¹ small town in eastern Serbia. He lost both parents early in his life and was raised by relatives in Jagodina in the central part of the country. Until recently, Jagodina was considered his birthplace and bore his name (Svetozarevo) for several decades in the 20th century (during the Communist era).

His older brother Jevrem² (1839–1878) was a colonel in the Serbian army who attended gymnasiums in Kragujevac and Belgrade. He enrolled in the Military Academy in 1861. The older Marković took part in the Polish uprising of 1863, acted as a commander in the Serbo-Turkish wars (1876–78) and was elected deputy to the Serbian National Assembly (1878) as a member of the Radical opposition. In 1878 he was charged with participating in a conspiracy and rebellion against Prince Milan Obrenović and his government,³ sentenced to death and executed. In 1882, Jevrem's widow Jelena-Ilka Marković, vengeful and desperate, tried to kill Milan Obrenović, who had in the meantime become the King of Serbia. The attempt failed. Ilka was first sentenced to death and then pardoned. She soon died in prison under suspicious circumstances.

We have already discussed Svetozar Marković earlier in this volume. At this point, we can only repeat that he was a Balkan representative of European socialist and radical-socialist thought and, at the same time, the ideological forerunner of the People's Radical Party in Serbia. As has already been explained, he authored the first program of Serbian Radicalism and coined the name of the future political organization.

Svetozar Marković was an unusually gifted young man, the leader of his generation and a sharp critic of his predecessors' views on politics as well as literature. A champion of literary realism and modernism, he espoused some concepts of socialism, ranging from Russian left revolutionaries to Marxism. Svetozar Marković was a man of passion more than a man of *ra-*

¹ Nikola Pašić was born in the same town a year earlier.

² Jovanović D., *Jevrem Marković, Ispred svog vremena*, Jagodina, 2009.

³ The so-called *Topolska buna* (Topola Rebellion).

tio. Despite his materialistic convictions, there was something of a Balkan idealist in him. Deep down, he was a dreamer. Many notions popular in his time – radicalism, socialism, social sciences, realism, positivism, secularism, etc. – existed and competed in his empathic world of ideas. Svetozar was not an anti-nationalist: his nationalism was merely subjugated to his liberalism. And his socialism was not of the authoritarian kind: he believed in freedom as much as he believed in equality.

Marković studied technical engineering, first in Russia and later in Zurich, but never graduated. He was a personal friend of Nikola Pašić and other future Radicals. They collaborated closely in Switzerland and later in Serbia.

Svetozar Marković was a man of enormous energy and courage, one of those 19th century personalities of a fanatical determination. He was a fearless fighter and polemicist, as well as a born leader. His untimely death prevented him from making an outstanding political career.⁴

The Radical Party itself considered Svetozar Marković its original founder, hero and saint, even though the Radical ideology had, in subsequent decades, considerably moved away from his socialist beliefs.

⁴ See Slobodan Jovanović, *Svetozar Marković*, Beograd, 1920; Jovan Skerlić, *Svetozar Marković, njegov život, rad i ideje*, Beograd, 1922; Woodford McClellan, *Svetozar Markovich and the Origins of Balkan Socialism*, Princeton, 1964.

Adam Bogosavljević⁵
(1843–1880)

Born in eastern Serbia, Adam Bogosavljević was Nikola Pašić's senior by two and Svetozar Marković's by three years. Together they formed the "Zaječar trojka" of early Serbian Radicalism. Unlike the other two, Bogosavljević came from an affluent agrarian family.

He left *Velika škola* before graduation to return to his native village, choosing the life of a peasant over a career in the city. He devoted plenty of time and energy to helping his fellow villagers in modernizing their production and their overall emancipation, social as well as political.

From 1874 on, Bogosavljević led the Radical opposition in the National Assembly, becoming the most outspoken opponent of government policies. Marković's writings and revolutionary activities were accompanied by Bogosavljević's speeches and actions in the Serbian Parliament.

His sensitivity towards the Serbian peasant mellowed the rigor of Svetozar Marković's theories to certain extent. Actually, Adam had an instrumental role in mobilizing the rural population of Serbia and introducing them to politics. It was largely due to his groundwork that the Radical Party proved capable of establishing such a strong and lasting influence among the Serbian peasantry.

Adam Bogosavljević was the epitome of a genuine Radical: he was an intellectual deeply rooted in the Serbian village. A master of simple rhetoric, a self-taught orator, speaking the language of ordinary folk, he was also the first Radical demagogue.

His populism brought him fame; his bravery determined his fate.

Basically, his violent and sudden death in 1880 triggered the formation of the People's Radical Party in 1881.

What really happened?

Adam Bogosavljević was arrested on several years old criminal charges of illegal managing of communal grain.⁶ The arrest took place in his na-

⁵ For more details, see: Rastislav Petrović, *Adam Bogosavljević*, Belgrade, 1972.

⁶ At that time, there were special municipal stocks of grain to be distributed in cases of crisis under the supervision of the local authorities.

tive Zaječar. He spent a night in jail; his health abruptly deteriorated. The next morning, he was transferred to the local hospital, ill with pneumonia. It was too late. Bogosavljević died on the following day. It was March 19, 1880.

The Radical opposition immediately accused the regime of having murdered Bogosavljević, exploiting the incident for political propaganda.

Nikola Pašić remained the only survivor of the “Zaječar trojka”. Svetozar Marković and Adam Bogosavljević did not live to participate in the creation of the Radical Party. Their martyrdom became legendary. If Marković was the Radical apostle and Pašić was the Radical mastermind, then Bogosavljević was its most popular tribune.

Nikola Pašić (1845–1926)

Nikola Pašić was born into a humble baker's family in Zaječar (as were Marković and Bogosavljević), not far from the Serbo-Bulgarian border. His father, most probably, came from Macedonia. Those two facts had a substantial impact on his latter relations with Bulgaria and the Bulgarians. Other than that, little is known about Pašić's childhood and adolescence. He was an average student in high school. At *Velika škola* in Belgrade, he did not particularly excel in his studies, but did earn a government scholarship to study abroad.⁷

He never pursued the career of a civil engineer, since he turned to politics already while in Switzerland.

In 1878, he was elected to the Serbian National Assembly. His career lasted for over half a century; he led the nation through three wars and in two different states, under two dynasties and four kings.⁸

He was twice accused of treason and sentenced to capital punishment; both times he managed to avoid this tragic scenario. In 1883, after the Timok Rebellion, he escaped to Bulgaria. In 1899,⁹ he accepted a deal with the authorities and testified against his Party colleagues¹⁰.

Pašić married late in life, at the age of 50. His bride came from a prominent and wealthy Serbian family from Trieste.¹¹ They had a boy and two girls. His son¹² was later implicated in a serious financial fraud, which

⁷ He studied civil engineering at the prestigious *Eidgenössische Polytechnische Schule* in Zurich.

⁸ The First and Second Balkan Wars and World War One; Serbia and Yugoslavia; Obrenovičs and Karadjordjevičs; Milan and Aleksandar Obrenovič; Petar and Aleksandar Karadjordjevič. See Vasa Kazimirovič, *Nikola Pašić i njegovo doba 1845–1926*, Beograd 1990

⁹ The so-called *Ivanjdanski atentat*.

¹⁰ As a result, Pašić was pardoned, while a few of his associates were sentenced to 30 years of hard labor (Stojan Protič and Ljubomir Živković).

¹¹ Djurdjina Duković.

¹² Radomir (Rade) Pašić married three times and had five children.

caused a huge public scandal in the 1920s. His elder daughter was married to a Serbian diplomat and politician,¹³ while the younger one's husband was a wealthy ship-owner from Dubrovnik.¹⁴

Nikola Pašić's political-psychological profile could be summed up like this:

1) He did not care much for ideologies. His ideology was power itself. Perhaps in his youth he did believe in socialism and radicalism. As soon as he entered into real politics, however, he became a keen pragmatist of the Machiavellian sort.

2) He never developed close personal ties with his political associates and conspired with very few. His relationship with his comrades was based on mutual interests. He was quick to break up with people, remove and replace them. There was nothing personal about his relationships.

3) He was not a man of political ideas, but a man of political schemes. The power struggle was the name of his game. His lust for power had no limit: he died at 81 after a meeting with the King about the prospects of forming another cabinet. Politics are about power, he thought.

4) He had an unmistakable instinct for danger, always sensing from where and whom it might come. He was a born survivor, a political animal in the Aristotelian meaning of the term. Pašić knew when to step up; even more so, however, he knew when to back off or run away.

5) He had no distinctive talents, except a talent for political maneuvering. He was what they call a "Jack of all trades". Merciless when dominant, kind when pushed against the wall.

6) Paradoxically, Radicalism was for him nothing more than a simple vehicle for personal prominence. He was a skeptic rather than a believer; a realist rather than a visionary.

Deservedly or not, but in the minds of many Serbs Nikola Pašić still stands on his pedestal as the greatest statesman in modern times. His legacy has evolved into a legend. Longevity was his secret key to immortality, was it not?

¹³ Dara Pašić was married to Božidar Purić, Yugoslav ambassador in Paris (1935–41) and Prime Minister 1943/44.

¹⁴ Petrosava (Pava) Pašić married Stefan (Stefi) Račić.

Petronije (Pera) Todorović (1852–1907)

Undoubtedly, Todorović was the most influential figure of the Radical Party in its opening phase of existence (1881–1883) – the body and soul of Serbian Radicalism.

Pera Todorović was an adventurous spirit, soldier, revolutionary, propagandist, organizer and essayist. He was a man of enormous energy and zeal, unique talent and panache, yet one of those personalities whose glow was so bright that it could not last for long.

Todorović's career was brilliant, but short.

Due to his colorful temperament and eventful life, he has been the most popular idol to a number of historians. More biographies were written about him than about any other Radical, excluding, of course, Nikola Pašić.¹⁵

Pera Todorović's parents were members of affluent peasant bourgeoisie from the provincial town of Smederevska Palanka about 55 miles southeast of Belgrade. He studied in Zurich, but left the university to join Svetozar Marković as one of his most ardent supporters. He traveled through Europe spending most of his time in Paris. He volunteered in the Serbian army and participated in the war against Turkey (1876–1878). His military adventures were published under the title *A Volunteer's Journal*.¹⁶

Todorović was among the founders of the People's Radical Party. He authored its original political program and was the editor of the Radical newspaper *Samouprava*.

Pera Todorović was largely responsible for the swift success of the Radical Party and its popularity among the general population. He pioneered the use of political demagoguery in Serbian politics, both in his writings and his speeches. Famous for his candor and wits, he was admired among the ordinary citizens of Serbia. Never becoming a government official or a Member of Parliament, Pera Todorović was a kind of national superstar. Only for a moment, though.

¹⁵ For details see the Bibliography at the end of this book.

¹⁶ Pera Todorović, *Dnevnik jednog doborovoljca*, Beograd, 1938.

Implicated in the preparations for the Timok Rebellion, he was apprehended by the police and brought to trial for conspiring against the *Obrenović dynasty and the legitimate government*. He was persecuted together with a group of Radical leaders accused of the same crime. Initially, Todorović's verdict was death by firing squad. Luckily, he was granted clemency by the King. While in prison, the monarch himself paid him a secret visit, one night in 1886. The offer included a truce between the Crown and the Radicals, the formation of a coalition cabinet and freedom for Todorović. Upon his release, he made a formal proposal of the deal to the Party's Main Board, but was rejected. As a consequence, he was expelled from the Radical Party. He spent the later years of his life as a journalist of a tabloid newspaper.

Here is a fragment characteristic of Todorović's literary style in the early 1880s:

“What does Nikola Hristić (acting Prime Minister) mean? Nikola Hristić is nothing but Garašanin (former Prime Minister) in a negligence. Garašanin just had a mask of constitutionalism over his unconstitutional face. Nikola Hristić went out on the streets naked as God had created him.... His government means only another unmasked edition of the Progressivist regime.”¹⁷

He died at the age of 55.

¹⁷ Pera Todorović, “School For the People”, *Samouprava*, October 8, 1883.

Stojan Protić (1857–1923)

Stojan Protić was born in Kruševac in southern Serbia into a fairly modest family. His father was a local tailor, but a descendent of well-known ancestry. Stojan's great-grandfather, originally from Kosovo, had been an "oborknez"¹⁸ in the Razanj area and a warlord during the First Serbian Insurrection against the Turks (1804–1813). He was captured and publicly executed, while his elder son managed to survive, becoming a higher priest in the town of Varvarin.

Stojan graduated from Belgrade *Velika škola* to be appointed professor at Svilajnac gymnasium, teaching Serbian language and literature. At the age of 24 he received an invitation from Nikola Pašić to join the headquarters of the Radical Party in Belgrade and take up the editorship of its newspaper *Samouprava* (1881). From that point on he turned to professional journalism and politics.

Stojan Protić acted as editor-in-chief of most of the Radical press, writing countless articles and editorials over the next forty or so years.

Aside from being the leading author and defender of the Party's positions, he was also very interested in constitutional reform and the theory of parliamentarism. A disciple of W. Bagehot and a follower of the British system of government, Protić took an active part in drawing up the Serbian Constitutions of 1888, 1901 and 1903. Equally, he was concerned with Balkan regional questions, dealt with Serbo-Croat, Macedonian and Bulgarian issues. He translated extensively from French, German, Russian and English.

Protić was regarded as the leading political theorist of the Radical Party and its most talented writer. Because of his ideological firmness and uncompromising attitudes towards his opponents, he was nicknamed "stubborn Stojan".¹⁹ There is a story that he kept a signed resignation in his pocket even before he would take up public office. The American phrase *My way or the highway* perfectly applies to his belligerent character.

¹⁸ Regional representative chosen by their fellow neighbors.

¹⁹ "Bandoglavni Stole".

He was imprisoned on three occasions during the 1880s for printing offenses, serving two and a half years in jail; in 1899, he was sentenced to 20 years of hard labor (pardoned in 1901).²⁰

Protić was first elected to the Serbian parliament in 1887. In 1903, he entered the government for the first time as the Minister of the Interior, the post he held often during the period preceding and during WW1. He was also the Minister of Finance.

Stojan Protić played a key role in the Yugoslav unification process. In December 1918, he was appointed the first Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (later Yugoslavia). He led the Yugoslav cabinet one more time in 1920. Both his governments were unstable coalitions and hence short-lived.

He broke up with Pašić and the Radical Party in 1921. His independent attempt to organize a new political organization and enter the Yugoslav Parliament turned out to be a failure. He died soon after that, in 1923.

With Nikola Pašić and Dr. Lazar Paču, Stojan Protić formed the “Three Ps” or the “Holy Trinity” of the Serbian Radical Party.

²⁰ The *Ivanjdan* assassination attempt. See Dejvid Mekenzi, *Stojan Protić – srpski novinar i državnik*, Beograd, 2008

Dr. Lazar Paču
(1853–1915)

Paču was born in Čurug in southern Hungary (Vojvodina), then a part of the Habsburg Empire. His father was a Serbian Orthodox priest of Aromanian²¹ ethnicity. His ancestors moved northward during the mass migrations of the Serbs in the 18th century.

Paču began his studies in medicine in Zurich, where he joined the Bakuninist group of future Radicals. He befriended Pera Todorović, both considering themselves followers of Svetozar Marković. Paču left university in order to publish a political journal in Novi Sad (*Straža*²²). After his political activities were suppressed by the authorities, Paču returned to his medical studies, graduating from the University of Berlin. He then moved to Belgrade and established a private practice there. In addition, he was one of the founders of the People's Radical Party and a member of its Main Board.

Belonging to mainstream Radicals, he acted as the director of the national agency for monopolies (tobacco and salt) throughout the 1890s.

After the dynastic change in 1903, he entered the Radical cabinet in January 1904 as the Minister of Finance and was reelected in 1906 and 1912. While in charge of Serbian finances, he managed to balance the budget; the domestic currency reached full external convertibility and the entire sum of the national debt was reprogrammed.

In 1914, Dr. Lazar Paču was deputy prime minister dealing with the Sarajevo assassination and the Habsburg ultimatum (with Stojan Protić) in Pašić's absence.²³

He is remembered as a very thrifty minister and the finest expert in public finances and budgetary matters in Serbian modern history.

²¹ Aromanians (Tsintsars or Vlachs) are an indigenous people of Latin origin who live throughout the Balkan Peninsula.

²² *The Guard*.

²³ Pašić was busy campaigning in the countryside.

Sava Grujić (1840–1913)

Of all Radical leaders, Grujić was the oldest, the only military man and probably the most flexible. Some contemporaries and historians have questioned his loyalty to the Radical Party, suspecting that he never truly stopped being a Liberal.

Grujić was born in the village of Kolari near Smederevo, approximately 45 miles east of Belgrade. His uncle was a district chieftain during the Serbian revolts against the Ottomans and so was his father. Young Sava was, therefore, destined to choose the career of an army officer.

He was educated at military academies in Belgrade, Prussia and St. Petersburg. As a young commander in the Serbian army, he took part in the Serbo-Turkish wars (1876–78) and was promoted to the rank of colonel.

He was a general in the Serbian army (since 1887), prime minister on five occasions,²⁴ minister of armed forces and foreign affairs and a diplomat.²⁵

At first, Sava Grujić was affiliated with the Liberals. After the formation of the Radical Party, however, he became politically closer to Pašić and his associates. Each time the Radicals were seeking compromise and a coalition government, he was the person assigned the job of premiership.

Unlike the rest of the Radical leadership, he was no partisan whatsoever. On the contrary, it seems that his modest and dedicated personality had been agreeable to everyone: the Court as well as rival political parties.

In general, Sava Grujić represented a perfect example of a public bureaucrat in the best sense of the word.

²⁴ 1887–88, 1889–92, 1893–94, 1903–04, 1905–06.

²⁵ Grujić served as minister to Athens, St. Petersburg and Constantinople.

Svetomir Nikolajević (1844–1922)

Nikolajević was originally from western Serbia (the town of Ub), a son of fairly humble parents, who would go on to become a distinguished Serbian politician, scholar and academician. Svetomir Nikolajević was a member of the Radical Party very briefly, despite being one of its founders. In 1881, he was elected Deputy Chairman of the Party's Main Board, but was soon estranged due to his amicable relations with the Crown and the ruling establishment. At odds with the Radical mainstream, he abandoned the organization never to return.

Nikolajević served as Mayor of Belgrade (1887) and Prime Minister (1894). After 1903, he went to Athens to take the position of the Serbian minister to Greece.

Svetomir Nikolajević attended universities in Belgrade, Berlin, Bern, Paris and London, enjoying government scholarships. After his return, he became a professor at *Velika škola* and later the University of Belgrade. He taught comparative literature and introduced Shakespeare, Milton and Lord Byron to Serbian students. There was nothing rebellious about Svetomir Nikolajević. He was no rebel, even less a revolutionary. His nature was subtle and calm; his approach – partly enigmatic. He spoke in a quiet voice and avoided mass gatherings. He was a typical representative of the “*nouveau riche*” intelligentsia. Svetomir's intellectualism had an elitist note to it. A true academic, he was also a perfect snob.²⁶

Nikolajević was a well-known freemason: the longtime Grand Master of the Belgrade freemasonic lodge *Pobratim*.²⁷

²⁶ See Božidar S. Nikolajević, *Radikalna stranka i Svetomir Nikolajević*, Beograd 1938

²⁷ “The Stepbrother”. Other prominent freemasons among the Radicals were: Lazar Paču, Milovan Dj. Milovanović, Andra Nikolić, Petar Velimirović, Jovan Djaja and Mihailo Vujić. Nikola Pašić and Stojan Protić did not belong to Freemasonry.

Milovan Dj. Milovanović (1863–1912)

Milovanović has already been mentioned in this volume when we discussed the Balkan alliance of 1912. Here we added some biographical data that might help us understand his individuality and policies.

Milovanović was born in Belgrade. He came from a distinguished family: his father was a well-respected judge at the Court of Appeals, a former Minister of Justice and a state councilor.

After graduating from high school in Belgrade, he went to Paris to study law. Milovan Milovanović graduated in 1884 and received his doctorate in 1888.²⁸ He was instantly given a position at the Belgrade Law School, where he taught public law and constitutionalism. As such, he was appointed by the King to proceed as a Secretary of the Committee for constitutional reform (1888). In that capacity, he traveled across Europe, learning about the political systems in Belgium, France and Denmark. It was his idea to take the Belgian Constitution of 1831 as the most suitable model of parliamentary monarchy for Serbia.

Milovan Dj. Milovanović was viewed as a moderate Radical, not alien to the Obrenović Court. Due to his age, parental background and confidence-inducing character, he was labeled “the most acceptable Radical”. Still, he was forced out of the University for political reasons. Consequently, he successfully ran for Parliament in 1893. In 1896–97, he served as the Minister of Justice in the conciliatory government led by Djordje Simić.

During the Radical persecution 1899–1900, he was in exile. Not long afterwards, he joined the government again, this time as the Minister of Finance. In 1901, a compromise between the Crown and the Radical Party was reached (*y compris* drafting of the new constitutional proposal). That tactical arrangement was, to a large extent, a result of his efforts.²⁹

Milovanović’s political career exploded after 1907. He had spent the previous four years as the Serbian ambassador to Rome. He was the coun-

²⁸ His doctoral dissertation was in the field of international public law. The title was: “*Les Traités de garantie au XIXe siècle*” (*Guarantee Treaties in the 19th century*).

²⁹ The so-called “*Fuzija*” (*Fusion*) of 1901.

try's representative in the proceedings at the Second Conference in The Hague, and was responsible for the French editing of the convention's final text.

Milovan was appointed Foreign Minister in Petar Velimirović's cabinet in 1908, never to leave politics until his death in 1912. It has already been mentioned that he was appointed Prime Minister in 1911–12.³⁰

Milovan Dj. Milovanović was perhaps the most capable, most modern and best educated leader of the Radical Party. A genuine European, specialist in constitutional theory and foreign relations equally, negotiator of exceptional talent with an excellent understanding of the Balkans as well as Europe, and a polyglot, he stood out as the true statesman of the new age.

³⁰ See D. Djordjević, *Milovan Dj. Milovanović*, Beograd, 1962.

Andra Nikolić (1853–1918)

Nikolić was the quiet one. Despite the fact that he belonged to the inner circle of the Radical leadership, his standing in Serbian history remained if not entirely irrelevant than certainly sidelined. He was Belgrade-born, raised and educated in a typical late 19th-century middle class environment. In terms of his education, Nikolić was a lawyer, although he never practiced law.

Lazar Paču, Stojan Protić and Andra Nikolić formed a threesome of closest political associates and personal friends. The other leadership duo consisted of Nikola Pašić and Aca Stanojević.³¹

Nikolić had rather good relations with the group of younger Radicals who split in 1901, launching a new political organization called the Independent Radical Party (Party of Radical Democracy), but decided not to join them (1901–03).

Andra Nikolić served in several governments after 1903, acting as Minister of Education and Foreign Affairs, Speaker of the National Assembly and the head of the diplomatic mission in Paris. He was also a professor of comparative literature and a literary critic. In 1897, he was elected a member of the Serbian Royal Academy. Nikolić was one of the co-signers of the London Peace Treaty, which ended the Second Balkan War in 1913. He died in Paris in September 1918.

Andra Nikolić was another moderate at the top of the Radical Party. One could argue that it was in fact Nikolić who symbolized the voice of reason and common sense and, at the same time, maintained unity and cohesiveness in the Radical Main Board.

³¹ For details see: Milan St. Protić Sr., “Pašić i Protić pre 1914”, *Istorijski glasnik*, Belgrade, 1971.

Aleksa (Aca) Stanojević
(1852–1947)

Stanojević was another Radical leader from eastern Serbia (the town of Knjaževac), one of the founders of the Party and an influential member of its Main Board. He was the son of a well-to-do peasant and landowner. Without any higher education, Stanojević never married and remained very much attached to his native *milieu*. He was heavily involved in the preparations for the Timok Rebellion (1883) and was officially indicted as one of its key coordinators. As a consequence, he left the country, escaping capture.

During his long career in politics, he was elected deputy to the National Assembly numerous times and also served as its Speaker.

Aca Stanojević developed a special and intimate rapport with Nikola Pašić early on. Both from eastern Serbia and implicated in subversive activities against the Crown, they lived together in exile and became a sort of a conspiratorial duo within the Radical leadership. Stanojević was considered Pašić's sidekick, confidant and most trusted ally. Still, on his visits to Belgrade, he used to stay at Stojan Protić's home, where he had a private room.

Aca Stanojević outlived all other Radicals of the first generation and succeeded Pašić as the Party's chairman after the latter's death in 1926. However, he held no public office thereafter.

After World War Two, he endorsed the Communist regime in Yugoslavia and hosted Tito personally upon the latter's visit to Stanojević's hometown. With his death in 1947, the People's Radical Party ceased to exist.

Petar (Pera) Velimirović
(1848–1921)

Velimirović was born in the provincial town of Negotin (also in eastern Serbia) and shared a common regional origin with Svetozar Marković, Nikola Pašić and Aca Stanojević. He studied at the *Eidgenoessische Polytechnische Schule* in Zurich at the same time as Marković and Pašić. Together they formed the “inner three” of the so-called “Zurich group” of future Serbian Radicals.

In 1876, he was accused of taking part in civil demonstrations organized by Marković’s radical-socialists in Kragujevac (central Serbia).³² Chased by the police, he managed to escape to Hungary. In 1880, he ran for the Serbian Parliament and won.

After the Timok Rebellion, Velimirović immigrated again, this time to Bulgaria, where for a while, he taught at a gymnasium in Sofia.

He was the minister of public works in several coalition and Radical governments in the late 1880s, 1890s and early 1900s. Twice he led the government as its Prime Minister: the first cabinet under his presidency was very short-lived (1902); his second lasted for seven months (July 1908–February 1909).³³

Petar Velimirović’s life and political career resembled that of the Radical Party itself. He began as a radical-socialist with revolutionary tendencies, but gradually moved towards the center, becoming simultaneously a respectable member of the Serbian social elite and political establishment.

³² The so-called “*Red Banner*” demonstrations; Pera Todorović was a participant too.

³³ During the international crisis over the Austrian annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Kosta Taušanović (1854–1902)

If Svetozar Marković was a radical-socialist, Kosta Taušanović was a radical-capitalist. He definitely epitomized the right wing of the People's Radical Party in Serbia in its formative period.

Taušanović was born in Aleksinac, a small town about a hundred miles south of Belgrade in a *petty bourgeois* social environment. He studied agriculture in the Austrian Empire (Tabor, Bohemia) and economy in Germany (Hohenheim). Being among the small group of Radical original founders and a deputy in the Serbian Parliament (1880–1883), he was held in high esteem by the Radical rank and file.

Kosta Taušanović was sentenced to eight years in prison for his alleged role in organizing the Timok Rebellion and nine years in prison for the 1899 *Ivanjdan* assassination attempt on the former King Milan Obrenović: he was pardoned both times after two years in jail. In the meantime, he was responsible for the Liberal-Radical agreement of 1886, was a co-chairman of the Grand Constitutional Council (1888) and Minister of Interior and Economy (1889–1892). In the mid-1890s, he confronted Nikola Pašić, thus jeopardizing his foremost position in the Party. As a result, he and Jovan Djaja were eventually expelled from the Radical Party.

A very successful businessman, Taušanović was by far the wealthiest Radical politician. His investments and business affairs ranged from banking and insurance to the tobacco industry and commerce.

Most likely due to his health having deteriorated while he was imprisoned, Kosta Taušanović died in 1902 at the age of 48.

Jovan Djaja
(1846–1928)

Djaja was a gymnasium professor, politician, journalist, translator and diplomat. Born in the vicinity of Dubrovnik, he was of Serb Catholic origin and came from a rather modest family. He graduated from the Dubrovnik high school and studied in Vienna before settling in Belgrade.³⁴ At first, the young Ragusan demonstrated no interest in politics, but did join the Radicals in 1882, quickly coming to prominence. He was a very active contributor to the Party's press (*Samouprava, Odjek*) throughout the 1880s and 1890s. From 1896 to 1906, he was the editor-in-chief and leading author of the newspaper *Narod*.³⁵ He authored two important booklets: *Pictures from the Classical Age*³⁶ (1882) and *The Union of Serbia and Bulgaria*³⁷ (1904).

Together with Kosta Taušanović, Jovan Djaja stood on the right wing of the Radical political spectrum and was ousted for resisting the official Party line. He served in Ministries of Education, Foreign Affairs and Interior. He was the head of the Serbian diplomatic missions in Athens and Sofia.

Djaja spent the latter part of his life away from politics, devoted to his translation work from Italian, French and Latin.³⁸

³⁴ The apocryphal story goes that he once met Jovan Ristić in Vienna, who invited him to come to Serbia and promised him help and assistance.

“Fine, but you won’t remember me”, said the Serbian student. “Oh, yes, I will, I certainly will”, replied the old statesman.

Djaja accepted the invitation and the leader of the Serbian Liberal Party, prime minister and member of Royal regencies kept his word.

³⁵ *The People*.

³⁶ *Slike iz klasičnog doba*.

³⁷ *Savez Srbije i Bugarske*.

³⁸ From French, he translated Victor Hugo's *Quarantevingt-treize*; from Italian, Alessandro Manzoni's *The Betrothed*; from Latin, Tacitus' *Annals*.

Raša Milošević (1851–1928)

Another of the Radical founders born in Aleksinac, Milošević; was educated in Belgrade and St. Petersburg; he was seen as the major theorist of the People's Radical Party until 1883; he was a National Assembly deputy 1880–1883 and was sentenced to death for high treason (masterminding the Timok Rebellion), but received clemency prior to execution; he was jailed until 1886 and served as the minister of national economy in multiple governments (early 1890s).

Milošević contributed to all Radical publications; wrote numerous articles and two relevant brochures;³⁹ his political memoirs appeared in 1923.

His wife Dr. Draginja (Draga) Ljočić Milošević (1855–1926) was the first female physician in Serbia. She graduated from Zurich Medical School in 1879 as the top of her class and started a private practice in Belgrade (early 1900s).⁴⁰ She was a pioneer of feminism in Serbia, arguing tirelessly in favor of women's voting rights. She volunteered in World War One and gave birth to four children. In the second part of his life, Milošević withdrew from active politics, keeping the position of CEO of the national Monopolies agency.

His son-in-law was Momčilo Ninčić⁴¹ (1876–1949), a long-time foreign minister and high-ranking diplomat in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and President of the Assembly of the League of Nations (1926–27).

³⁹ One on local decentralization and communal self-government, and another about the 1893 Royal coup. See Raša Milošević, *Timočka buna 1883 godine*, Beograd, 1923; Raša Milošević, *Državni udar odozgo: 1 aprill 1893: svrgnuće kraljevskog nameštva*, Beograd, 1936.

⁴⁰ In order to do that, she needed a special permit issued by the Ministry of Interior.

⁴¹ A notable Radical of the second generation.

Gligorije (Giga) Geršić (1842–1918)

Gligorije Geršić was a well-respected jurist, writer and politician. Originally a Serb from southern Hungary (Bela Crkva), he attended law schools in Budapest and Vienna, before getting a teaching job at Belgrade *Velika škola* (1866).⁴²

As a young intellectual, he was initially allied with the Liberals and was their fervent advocate. In 1881, however, he decided to switch sides and joined the founders of the People's Radical Party.

In 1883, Professor Geršić was charged with conspiracy against the Crown (Timok Rebellion) and brought to trial: fortunately, he was acquitted. He served as the Minister of Justice in three different cabinets between 1888 and 1892. Geršić's contribution to the drafting of the 1888 Constitution carried special weight since he was regarded as the prime authority in the field. He was twice elected to the Serbian State Council (1889–1894; 1901–1907).

In 1888, he was elected a member of the Serbian Royal Academy.

Gligorije Geršić was a prolific writer and the author of two textbooks for law students.⁴³

More of an academic than a politician, he did not fit in with the most assertive group of Radical leaders. After the Timok episode, his public behavior became increasingly lenient and cautious. Intellectually, he belonged to the very top of the Radical Party. Politically he did not.

⁴² Lecturing in Roman and international public law.

⁴³ *Sistem rimskog privatnog prava* (System of Roman Private Law), 1882; *Današnje diplomatsko i konzularno pravo* (Contemporary Diplomatic and Consular Law), 1898.

Ranko Tajsić (1843–1903)

Tajsić was a peasant from western Serbia, a “radical” Radical, a staunch opponent of the Obrenović dynasty and an extraordinarily gifted tribune. His ancestors were renowned members of the local community (Dragačevo region) and local commanders during the Serbian revolts against the Turks (first decades of the 19th century).

Having remained in his native village, Ranko was largely self-educated. His interest in politics increased with the appearance of Svetozar Marković and his movement. In 1874 he was elected to the Serbian National Assembly, where he represented the radical-socialist opposition against the ruling establishment.

Due to his attachment to the ordinary folk and his unique talent for popular rhetoric, Tajsić enjoyed vast recognition across the country. He never held any public office except multiple terms in the Serbian Parliament.⁴⁴ Despite the fact that the 1888 Constitution basically reflected Radical ideas and concepts, he decided to vote against it, stating that the text was a “rotten compromise” with the enemies of democracy.⁴⁵

Tajsić avoided indictment after the Timok Rebellion because his region had remained peaceful, but was taken to the Criminal Court in 1893 and accused for political conspiracy; he was freed due to a lack of evidence. In 1897, he fled to Montenegro, enjoying the hospitality of the Montenegrin Royal family. In 1899, *in absentia*, he was found guilty of conspiracy in the *Ivanjdan* assassination attempt and sentenced to capital punishment.

Rehabilitated in 1900, he returned to Serbia in a bad psychological state and died less than three years later.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Tajsić led seventeen successive and successful electoral campaigns.

⁴⁵ Only two Radical deputies voted against it: Ranko Tajsić and Dimitrije Katić.

⁴⁶ See Dragoje Todorović, *Narodni tribun Ranko Tajsić*, Beograd, 1981.

Mihailo Vujić (1853–1913)

He was one of the few Radicals born in Belgrade in a typically urban middle class Serbian family. He received his B.A. degree in philosophy from *Velika škola* and earned his Ph.D. in economy in Germany in 1879. Vujić later became a university professor of political economy, which he remained until his death.

Vujić represented a faction of the Radical Party that developed special ties with the Obrenović dynasty and was hence pejoratively nicknamed the “Court Radicals”.

He was the minister of finance from 1887 to 1892, again in 1893–94 and 1896–97, mostly in coalition governments. Remembered for certain positive steps in budget balancing and his multiple attempts to reprogram Serbian foreign debts, as a minister he was mainly responsible for nationalizing of tobacco and salt monopolies, as well as the railway. In February 1901, he was chosen to run the Foreign Office; a year later he formed his own cabinet, keeping the portfolio of foreign affairs; it was a Radical-Progressivist coalition government; Vujić resigned in November 1902.

As the head of Serbian diplomatic missions, he served in Paris (1901), Vienna (1903), Berlin (1906) and Rome (1909).

He was elected to the Serbian Royal Academy in 1901.

Professor Mihailo Vujić wrote a number of seminal books in the fields of finance and economy.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ *Načela narodne ekonomije I-III* (Principles of National Economy I-III), 1895–1898; *Osnovna prethodna pitanja i istorijski razvitak nauke o narodnoj privredi* (Basic Questions and Historical Development of National Economy), 1895; *Ekonomska teorija* (Economic Theory), 1896.

Dimitrije Katić (1845–1899)

Together with Bogosavljević and Tajsic, Katić was the third Radical who came from the countryside and spoke on behalf of the Serbian peasantry. He was born in central Serbia, but went to a commercial secondary school in Belgrade. After two years of apprenticeship in the capital, he returned to his native village and rural life. Starting out as a Liberal, he was elected Member of Parliament in 1874, as were his two peasant Radical friends. He remained a Serbian assemblyman for the next twenty four years.

Katić and Tajsic were the only Radical deputies who voted against the 1888 Constitution. In 1891, he was appointed the Speaker of the House, a position he held for several years.

Katić was a life-long member of the Radical Main Board and an influential voice of the Serbian popular interests.

His political views were rather different from Tajsic's. Katić was a reasonable man, patient and very polite. His ideological firmness did not need additional manifestations of belligerence. Quite the contrary: his savvy behavior and prudence contributed to the weight of his political stands and action.

Admired even by his most bitter adversaries, Dimitrije Katić earned the respect of all sides, including the Crown.

Dr. Lazar Dokić
(1845–1893)

Dokić is remembered as the epitome of a pro-Obrenović Radical. Born in Belgrade, he was a student of medicine in Vienna and Prague and a university professor of anatomy, physiology and zoology. He was the personal doctor of the Royal family, especially responsible for taking care of the young heir Aleksandar Obrenović (1883 onwards). Dokić served as the President of the State Council since 1889.

On April 1, 1893, he was appointed Prime Minister following the Royal coup of his former protégé Prince Aleksandar. His cabinet survived only a few months. He died in December.

We decided to include Dr. Lazar Dokić in the list of the most distinguished Radical leaders even though he really did not belong there. The reason is that he has remained known in Serbian history as the person whose acts testify to the Radical tendency to make any kind of compromise in order to reach power.

The truth of the matter is that the official Radical Party organs, as well as the most influential Radicals, remained opposed to the ruling government until 1901.

EPILOGUE

The Context

In the course of the 19th century, Serbia followed, for the most part, the path of more advanced European nations. Its history was, essentially, not that different to that of its neighbors, Bulgaria or Greece. The entire century was chiefly marked by a long-lasting process of modernization, nation-building and social emancipation.

During the 20th century, however, two key events altered Serbia's road to modernity. The first was World War One (1914–1918) and the creation of Yugoslavia (1918); the second was the triumph of Communism in 1945.

After centuries of Ottoman rule, in early 1804 Serbian warlords rose against the Turks in the First Serbian Insurrection. Despite their considerable successes in liberating the country, followed by the beginnings of state building, the Serbian rebels could not endure long against a more powerful adversary. Their supreme commander was Karageorge Petrović (aka Black George), an affluent peasant from central Serbia with some previous military experience as a frontier fighter for Austria against the Ottomans in the 1790s. The Serbian war of independence lasted until 1813, when it was finally crushed by the Ottomans.¹

¹ Russia and Turkey previously concluded a peace treaty in Bucharest (1812).

Two years later (1815), another prominent Serb notable, Miloš Obrenović, launched the Second Serbian Insurrection with the identical objective as his predecessor: to free the country from foreign rule and win national sovereignty and international recognition. Unlike his predecessor, however, whose struggle was one of constant armed conflicts, Prince Miloš sought to negotiate, finally achieving an autonomous status for Serbia in 1830, including hereditary principedom for himself.

It turned out that the two leaders of the two national revolutions founded the two rival dynasties (Karadjordjevićs and Obrenovićs), whose representatives replaced each other on the Serbian throne throughout the entire 19th century, until 1903.

Along with the war against the Ottomans, Serbs met multiple challenges along the way to developing their independent government and state administration. Knowing little about public institutions and governance, their early experiences were mostly inherited from the Ottomans: unlimited power of the ruler, voluntarism of the ruling elites, widespread abuses of authority and bitter power struggles among the warlords. Initial efforts to adopt a Constitution in 1835, for instance, proved a victory in terms of its modern and democratic content (it was drafted by a Serbian intellectual Dimitrije Davidović from Vienna); this act, however, was short-lived, since the Serbian Prince Miloš would accept no boundaries to his absolute prerogatives.² The major European powers were equally disenchanted by the sudden Serbian shift to democracy.

Political, economic and cultural ideas from Western Europe gradually reached Serbia in the late 1850s and continued to penetrate in the following decades. Their champions were the members of the first generation of Serbs to receive higher education abroad. Strongly influenced by the ideas of romantic liberalism (*National liberation and individual freedom are two sides of the same coin*), they shared the dreams of their mentors from Italy, Germany or Poland. The concept of a cultural and political unification of all Serbs in the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires (developed in the well-known document entitled *Načertanije*³ in 1844) reflected national agendas of nationalist movements from all over Europe. Polish nationalist Adam Czartorysky's agent of Czech origin, František Zach, was the one to encourage and

² He abdicated in 1839 and left Serbia, only to be called back to the Serbian throne in 1858. He died in 1860. Serbia was ruled by Karadjordje's son Prince Aleksandar Karadjordjević for 16 years before he was removed from power by a popular vote in 1858.

³ "The Draft". The document was secret until the late 19th century.

assist the Serbian statesman Ilija Garašanin in drawing up the document that would later become the cornerstone of the Serbian national program.

From 1860 to 1868, Serbia was ruled by Prince Mihailo Obrenović, Prince Miloš's younger son, an enlightened despot inspired by European culture and manners rather than by its political beliefs and institutions. Well educated, Mihailo dreamed about an all-Balkan alliance against the Turks, but did not live to see his vision come to fruition. He was killed in an assassination plot (1868), the background of which has never been fully revealed.

The war between Serbia and Turkey (1876-1878) was triggered by the Serbian revolt in Herzegovina in 1875. Serbia did not come out victorious in military terms, despite Russia's involvement (1877). Rather, it was imperial Russia that used the victory to impose its own order of things in the Balkans. According to the provisions of the San Stefano Treaty (March 1878), Greater Bulgaria was created (stretching from the Black to the Aegean Sea) as an exponent of Russian interests in South-Eastern Europe.

Alarmed by this outcome, European powers called for an international conference presided over by the German Chancellor Otto Von Bismarck (Congress of Berlin, June/July 1878). The final stipulations of the treaty granted full independence to both Serbian states Serbia and Montenegro, including certain territorial enlargements to the south; allowed the Habsburg Empire to occupy Bosnia-Herzegovina (Ottoman territory) and establish military control over former Sanjak of Novi Bazar (an Ottoman dominion located between Serbia and Montenegro); Greater Bulgaria was to be dissolved, creating two separate entities, Eastern Rumelia and the Principality of Bulgaria, both under Ottoman sovereignty.

In 1882 Serbia became a Kingdom; its first King in modern history became Milan Obrenović, the grand-nephew of Prince Miloš Obrenović.⁴

Strong pressures from the opposition forced the King to endorse a democratic Constitution in 1888, introducing a parliamentary system with nearly universal male suffrage (very low tax census) and strict limitations to monarchical prerogatives, free press, local self-government and free education. King Milan soon abdicated in favor of his son Aleksandar Obrenović and left the country. Serbia's new ruler was no more a democrat than his father and quickly abolished the Constitution in 1894.

King Aleksandar Obrenović and his wife Draga were assassinated in 1903, in a coup organized and executed by a group of young army officers disgusted by the couple's public behavior and numerous scandals. The 1888 Constitution was restored; Prince Petar Karadjordjević, the grandson

⁴ In 1881 King Milan signed the so-called *Secret Convention* with Austria-Hungary that made Belgrade completely dependent on Vienna.

of Karageorge, was elected the new King and the Radicals finally came to power.

The period from 1903 to 1914 has often been described as the *Golden Decade* in modern Serbian history. Serbia was structured as a parliamentary monarchy with a functional democratic system; its economic growth was steady and budgetary discipline strict.

From 1904 on, Serbia held general elections on a regular basis. Its domestic political life was characterized by an extremely flamboyant free press. One of the main independent daily newspaper in the Balkans, *Politika*, was launched in Belgrade in 1904.⁵ Belgrade's *Velika škola* ("Grand School") was upgraded to the rank of university in 1905. New political parties were founded; the most interesting among them being the Serbian Social- Democratic Party created in 1903.

Serbia not only emerged triumphant from an economic clash with Austria-Hungary (the so-called "Tariff War" 1906–1911), but was successful in freeing its foreign trade from Habsburg dominance.⁶ Serbia's economy was mostly agricultural, its produce reaching markets all over Europe and bringing back substantial foreign exchange. During this particular period, Serbia achieved solid economic development, which in turn facilitated the stability of its domestic currency (*dinar*), which was fully convertible.

Throughout the 19th century, Serbia was going through an overall Westernization, slowly abandoning old Ottoman and local traditions to gradually embrace European lifestyles, ways of thinking and social organization. A land reform carried out as early as the 1830s facilitated this process.

Unofficial, yet continuing, political influence wielded by the military officers who conspired against King Aleksandar Obrenović cast a dim shadow on an otherwise prosperous Serbia in the onset of the 20th century. By 1911, they had control over a large secret organization within the commanding corps of the Serbian army.⁷ Their program was based on modern nationalism (liberation and unification of all Serbs and Serbian lands), applying military methods in achieving their goals. The secret organization posed a serious threat not only to the neighboring countries, but to Serbia's political order as well.

⁵ *Politika* celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2004.

⁶ Until then about 90% of Serbia's foreign trade was with Austria.

⁷ The official title was *Unification or Death*, better known as the *Black Hand*.

The decision of Vienna to annex Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1908 almost triggered a war between Austria-Hungary and Serbia. The local Serbs⁸ responded harshly as did the government in Belgrade. The Russian Emperor (Nicholas II) intervened at the last minute and the crisis was averted. As a result, the relations between Austria-Hungary and Serbia deteriorated even further.

Serbia's foreign policy at the time turned from pro-Austrian under King Milan to pro-European under the Radicals. In 1912 and 1913, Serbia participated in two Balkan wars and emerged victorious from both.⁹ Consequently, it gained territories to the south (Kosovo and Vardar Macedonia), driving Turkey out of the Balkans with only a small area around Adrianople left.¹⁰

Serbia's name can be found in every history book due to the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the Habsburg throne, in Sarajevo on June 28, 1914. The assassin was a young Serbian nationalist and the conspiracy was logistically supported by the secret Serbian organization (*Unification or Death*, also known as the *Black Hand*). The incident was used by powers as a pretext for World War One.

In 1914 the Serbian army pulled off several surprising and heroic victories against the far stronger Austrian army, at one point completely liberating the country. However, after a combined Austro-German attack and a Bulgarian campaign from the southeast (October 1915), the Serbian armed forces together with its government and the Parliament embarked on a lengthy and arduous retreat across the Albanian mountains in the hope of reaching the coast of the Adriatic Sea. Suffering heavy losses, the Serbian soldiers finally found refuge on the Greek island of Corfu in early 1916. After recovering and regrouping, the Serbian army was transferred to northern Greece, where it joined the Allied forces (French, British, Italian and Greek) to form the Salonika front.

A robust military campaign was launched in September 1918 and ended successfully by November. Serbia emerged from the war as one of the great victors against the Central Powers.

The effect of five years of warfare was disastrous. Serbia lost almost third of its population and its army suffered severe casualties, while the country was ravaged after three years of foreign occupation.

⁸ According to official Austrian figures, ethnic Serbs accounted for 44% of the population in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1910.

⁹ First against Ottoman Turkey, the Second against Bulgaria

¹⁰ Albania was recognized as an autonomous State.

In summer 1917, the Serbian government led by Nikola Pašić and the Radicals opened talks with the representatives of South Slavs from Austria-Hungary.¹¹ The two parties issued a declaration after the conference, expressing willingness to create a common Yugoslav state after the war, rallying all South Slavs in the Balkans and joining their territories (Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina) with the Kingdom of Serbia. They also agreed that the new State would be a monarchy ruled by the Serbian Karadjordjević dynasty.¹²

The Yugoslav unification took place in Belgrade on 1 December, 1918. The official name of the new State was the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. A few days prior to the event, Montenegro and Vojvodina declared their unconditional unification with Serbia.

Sadly, Yugoslavia was an unfortunate creation from its very inception. Rifts between the two largest ethnic groups, the Serbs and Croats¹³ and their political elites, marked the period between the wars in Yugoslavia.

The first confrontation arose on the question of the 1921 Yugoslav Constitution. The majority of Croats was rallied in a single political party (Croatian Peasant Party) and supported a federal type of state organization, giving Croatia a high level of autonomy. The Serbs were divided among many political parties (Democrats, Radicals, Agrarians and several smaller parties) and proposed a number of options for the new Constitution, ranging from centralism with a strong monarchical figure to decentralization with local self-governments and autonomous regions based on the historical principle. No form of federalism, though, was acceptable to the Serbs. After more than two years of bitter political debates, the acting King (Aleksandar Karadjordjević, the great-grandson of Karadjordje Petrović) imposed his view of a centralized state with powerful royal prerogatives. The Constitution was passed in the Parliament by a narrow majority in June 1921, since the Croat Peasant Party and the Communists boycotted the vote. Instead of a national safeguard, the 1921 Constitution became a source of tensions between the Serbs and Croats.

¹¹ The Austrian South Slavs were represented by the Yugoslav Committee, a political organization founded in Paris in 1915. It is worth noting that Austro-Hungarian South Slavs repeatedly requested to be allowed participation at the Versailles Peace Conference, but were rejected every time.

¹² The document known as the Corfu Declaration

¹³ It is important to note that Serbs are Eastern Orthodox Christians who established their independent (autocephalous) church early in the 13th century, while the Croats are Roman Catholics.

In the following years, the political climate in the country, triggered by the Croatian nationalism, deteriorated to the point of open conflict. The crisis culminated in 1928, when a Serbian nationalist, provoked by their insulting remarks, shot three Croatian deputies during a session of the Parliament. Stjepan Radić, the chairman of the Croatian Peasant Party and the undisputed political leader in Croatia, was mortally wounded and died soon thereafter.¹⁴ Yugoslavia was on the brink of a civil war.

In January 1929, King Aleksandar I issued a royal decree assuming full political authority. He outlawed all political parties and dissolved the Parliament. It was a *coup d'état* followed by Aleksandar's personal rule.¹⁵ Beside its authoritarian character, the new regime was strongly rooted in so-called "integral Yugoslavism", and thus hoped to ease ethnic frictions. Despite immense effort, it achieved little. By 1931, the King terminated his personal regime and offered a new Constitution, which practically legitimized his personal rule allowing certain severely limited civil liberties. The King's firm control over Yugoslav politics remained intact.

In October 1934, Aleksandar I was assassinated in France by a Macedonian terrorist during a visit to Marseilles. The plot was organized by a Croatian fascist organization (the *Ustasha*) supported and financed by revisionist circles in Italy and Hungary. The Ustasha were never held accountable, although the debate about their involvement continued until the breakout of World War Two.

Naturally, the tragic incident aggravated the situation and deepened the distrust between the Serbs and Croats, escalating towards pathological ethnic hatred.

The King was succeeded by his first cousin Prince Pavle, who assumed royal prerogatives in the name of Aleksandar's underage son King Petar II Karadjordjević.¹⁶ A British disciple and a champion of the "policy of appeasement",¹⁷ Prince Pavle Karadjordjević avoided confrontation with Italy and Germany. The international course Yugoslavia pursued at that time can be best defined as "active neutrality". Seeing major European powers re-treating before Hitler and making important concessions and the domestic

¹⁴ The tragic incident took place on 20 June, 1928. Stjepan Radić died 49 days later on 8 August, 1928.

¹⁵ Sometimes referred to as the "Dictatorship of King Aleksandar".

¹⁶ The Royal Regency consisted of three members; Prince Pavle was the first Regent, while the other two regents had practically no political influence.

¹⁷ The architect of that particular foreign policy was the British diplomat Neville Henderson, Prince Pavle's close friend and confidant.

situation extremely volatile, Prince Pavle and his government tried to stay out of European conflicts.

At home, Prince Pavle felt it necessary to address the disturbed relations between the Serbs and Croats. In August 1939, an agreement was reached proposing an enlargement of the Croatian territory and the broadest autonomy (Banovina Croatia). The effect was not what Pavle had hoped for. Now that the Croats were satisfied, the Serbs felt betrayed. Prince Pavle saw the maneuver as a segment of a larger picture of the “policy of appeasement”. Influenced by his London friends, he followed their example with loyalty so typical of the British.

But by 1941, this policy was no longer in effect. Yugoslavia was forced to choose a side. In March, Prince Pavle went to Germany to meet Hitler and a deal was struck: Yugoslavia was to join the Axis formally, but it was up to her own independent judgment to choose when it would become actively involved. In the meantime, Yugoslavia had no obligations toward the Axis, except to allow German supply shipments to pass through the country on their way to Greece. Hitler guaranteed Yugoslavia’s territorial integrity as well. The pact was signed on March 25, 1941.¹⁸

The next day, large-scale demonstrations against the pact broke out in Belgrade. Traditional anti-German sentiments were inflamed among the Serbs by a network of British agents who flooded Belgrade in 1940–1941, which sparked another political crisis.

A speedy and bloodless military *coup* took place early in the morning of 27 March. Prince Pavle and his government were dismissed and the young King Petar was declared of age, which enabled him to assume complete royal duties. The new cabinet was headed by an Air Force general and included a few prominent Serbian and Croatian politicians.

The *Luftwaffe* attacks started at the crack of dawn on April 6, 1941. Yugoslavia capitulated eleven days later.

What followed was the Armageddon of World War Two: Nazi occupation, dismemberment, terror, civil war, ethnic atrocities, Communism.

¹⁸ Hitler obviously wanted to secure Southeastern Europe as soon as possible prior to his major campaign in the Soviet Union. He already had Romania and Bulgaria on his side and was mainly concerned about Yugoslavia and Greece.

The Overview

1

Indeed, the People's Radical Party was the first modern political party in Serbia.

Due to their massive following among the Serbian peasantry and effective organizational structure, both horizontal and vertical, the Radicals were able to broaden their base and include most of the Serbian population into politics. This process of political mobilization had twofold consequences. On one hand, it did contribute to the general democratization of the country; on the other, it opened the doors to shallow populism and demagoguery. Instead of an oligarchic rule of the monarch and a narrow circle of national elite from the previous era, the Radical Party introduced a type of partisan regime as a result of its dominant position within the electorate.

During the twenty-year period (1881–1903) examined in this volume, the Radical Party spent most of its time in the opposition, with a few brief intervals in power. This formative period in its history, therefore, was chiefly marked by its bitter political struggle against rival political factors, the King in the first place.

Other political parties in Serbia at the end of the 19th century never achieved such vast popularity and support. Both the Progressivists and the Liberals¹⁹ consisted of narrow circles of Belgrade intellectuals and high government officials. Belonging to the political and social establishment, neither of the two was ever really interested in serious electoral campaigning and popularization of their programs and ideas. They never championed universal suffrage, nor believed in the fundamental principles of democracy. They thought that reforms should be instigated from the top, believing that the illiterate Serbian villager could not comprehend the concept of public interest, civil duties and decision-making responsibilities; it was up to educated elites to lead the country in the best interest of the people and work on its emancipation before any democratic standards could be introduced. In other words, they thought that the Serbian society was not ready for democracy.

¹⁹ Both were officially founded in 1881/82, even though they had already existed on the political scene for quite some time before their formal initiations.

By contrast, the Radical Party insisted on constitutional limitations of powers, universal male suffrage, and freedom of press and free and fair elections, because those were the vehicles that could provide its accession to power. Having no match in the popular support, the Radicals emerged as the leading political force in Serbia, fighting for national sovereignty and a democratic government.

The Radicals are remembered for their clash with the Serbian Obrenović dynasty. Prince (later King) Milan Obrenović²⁰ was their arch-enemy and they fought him until his death in 1901. Earlier, the Radicals had an instrumental role in forcing him to abdicate and leave the country in 1889. His son Aleksandar,²¹ although underage, enjoyed some respect among a group of moderate Radicals, but soon after acquiring full royal prerogatives proved to be as authoritarian and anti-Radical as his father. Together with his Serbian wife,²² he was assassinated in a military plot in 1903. As a result, the Radical Party finally came to power, passing immediately a new Constitution and establishing Serbia as a parliamentary monarchy led by the Karadjordjević dynasty.

At the turn of the century, Serbia was still a rather underdeveloped society. The country of small rural land owners, with an extremely high percentage of illiteracy, virtually no industry and only several cities, Serbia stood on the European periphery, and not just in geographic terms. A thin layer of urban intelligentsia educated abroad and a handful of wealthy merchants nurtured by state monopolies represented the nucleus of Serbian bourgeoisie. But the vast majority of peasants – who had won freedom and independence from the Ottoman Empire, became proprietors of land after the agrarian reform of 1830 and started trading livestock on the markets in the neighboring Habsburg Monarchy – were still the social backbone of late 19th-century Serbia.

* * *

In the early days, the Radicals tried to realize their goals by using violence. The Timok Rebellion of 1883 in eastern Serbia²³ was an attempt to challenge the legal authorities and confront their abuses by violent means. The attempt ended in disaster. The Party leadership was arrested, its chairman

²⁰ Lived from 1854 to 1901; ruled from 1868 (1872) to 1889.

²¹ Lived from 1876 to 1903; ruled from 1889 (1893) to 1903.

²² Draga Masin (1864–1903). She was a widow, 12 years his senior. They married in 1900.

²³ The birthplace of the Radical founder and life-long chairman Nikola Pašić.

(Nikola Pašić) was forced to escape to Bulgaria, and many local rebels were court-martialed, executed or sentenced to long imprisonment. The Radicals were blamed for subversive and revolutionary activities aimed at overthrowing the legitimate government and the King himself. The failure of the Timok uprising had dire consequences for the future of the Radical Party. At first, it was outlawed and outcast; its members were persecuted all over the country; its political activities were prohibited. The party took a tremendous blow which jeopardized the very survival of the organization. Several years passed before the Radicals managed to recuperate, regroup and return to the Serbian political scene in full force.

The trauma of Timok Rebellion also contributed to the internal transformation of the Party's strategies. The Radicals abandoned violence as a political tool for good, started negotiating with other political players including the King and demonstrated a capacity to operate within the existing political framework and even form coalition governments (1886 onwards). However, a deep distrust between King Milan Obrenović and the Radicals remained intact until his abdication in early 1889. The Radical leader Nikola Pašić was allowed to come back from Bulgarian emigration only after the King had left.

No matter how tragic, the Timok episode was a sobering experience for the Radical Party and Serbia in general. It was the last of the armed rebellions that stamped 19th-century Serbia. Yet, it was not the last violent act in Serbian politics. Some of the bloodiest were to follow in the opening decades of the 20th century.

* * *

The top leadership of the Serbian Radical Party was comprised of a group of Serbian intellectuals with socialist, non-Marxist, ideological backgrounds. Affiliated with the anarchism of Mikhail Bakunin²⁴ in 1860s Switzerland and influenced by the Russian *narodniki* movement and especially the writings of Nikolay Chernyshevsky, the young Radicals returned to Serbia eager to storm into politics and reform its political system.

Besides, they became acquainted with the radical-socialist movement in France and soon espoused its basic concepts believing that they were best suited for Serbia. Returning to a country with no industrial capitalism (or capitalism of any kind, for that matter), the future Radicals were

²⁴ Mikhail Alexandrovich Bakunin (1814–1876) was a Russian anarchist, theorist and revolutionary. He was the leading opponent and critic of Karl Marx, his philosophy and practice in the First International (1864–1876).

faced with a largely peasant society of small ownership very much opposed to any kind of collectivism. Serbian reality could hardly correspond to the socialist theories they encountered in Western Europe. The ideas of French Radicalism – including political reform, democratization, constitutionalism and regional decentralization (communal self-government) – appeared as a much more suitable agenda for the bulk of the Serbian agrarian population than the socialist concepts of compulsory collectivization of land.

Anti-monarchism soon emerged as one of the pillars of the Radical political program. Criticism of King Milan Obrenović's rule and misconduct became the trademark of Serbian Radicals' politics, yet they never advocated open republicanism (unlike their French counterparts).

Nikola Pašić remained the untouchable front man of the People's Radical Party from its formation (January 1881) until his death (December 1926). A civil engineer educated at the *Politechnische Academie* (ETH) in Zurich, he started out as a sympathizer of the anarchist left. As a highly pragmatic person, however, he never considered himself a revolutionary. A master of political tactics, shrewd and flexible, Pašić led the Radical Party through the turmoil of constant internal instabilities and a World War. A diplomat rather than a commander, a tactician rather than a strategist, a realist rather than a visionary, Nikola Pašić was never very fond of political ideology. He was no doctrinaire; he was always ready to make a deal rather than deepen the conflict. Intrigues, political games and maneuvers were his favorite methods and the instruments of his greatest successes in politics.

Other Radical leaders were much more interested in Party ideology than their chairman. Pašić liked to have beside him men of strong convictions, political fighters, individuals of integrity and belligerent spirit: his very opposites. Such a choice of associates provided Pašić with a comfortable position in the backstage and with enough space to act as a conciliatory negotiator or even an "honest broker", a role he liked best. He was not the type of a commander who stands before his soldiers and leads the assault on the enemy; he preferred to remain in the headquarters and do the battle planning.

Bearded, tall and heavily built, often dressed in a redingote and a top hat, Nikola Pašić seemed like an early 19th-century academician or doctor. His oriental mysticism and European education made him a tough person to deal with. A man of few words, conspiratorial and covert, he attracted both attention and resentment.

Nikola Pašić's career lasted over fifty years. A prime minister on more than forty occasions in Serbia and Yugoslavia, he earned the nickname "Pašić the Eternal".

Beyond any doubt, Pašić was a democrat. He believed in the fundamental right of the people to elect their government. In terms of securing parliamentary majority, however, he was quite open-minded.

Worshipped by followers and detested by his enemies, Pašić marked an era not only in Serbian but also in European history at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century.

In Western historiography, Nikola Pašić's name has frequently but with no tangible evidence been associated with the Sarajevo assassination of 1914.²⁵

The truth of the matter is that neither the Radical Party nor Pašić himself ever enjoyed the trust of the military conspirators behind the Sarajevo murder. It is worth repeating that the *Unification or Death* movement represented a nationalist revolutionary secret society within the Serbian army (including several civilians, none of whom were members of the Radical Party) formed in 1911. Furthermore, the "Blackhanders" considered the Radicals as a major obstacle on the way to the completion of ultimate Serbian interests.²⁶ Owing a great deal to earlier clandestine organiza-

²⁵ List of politically motivated assassinations in Europe 1881–1916:

Monarchs and Presidents

- 1881 Alexander II of Russia (St. Petersburg)
- 1894 Marie François Sadi Carnot, President of France (Lyon)
- 1898 Elisabeth I of the Habsburg Empire (Geneva)
- 1900 Umberto I of Italy (Monza)
- 1903 Alexander I (Obrenović dynasty) of Serbia (Belgrade)
- 1908 Carlos I and Luis Filipe (heir) of Portugal (Lisbon)
- 1913 George I of Greece (Thessaloniki)
- 1914 Franz Ferdinand, Austrian heir apparent (Sarajevo) *Prime-ministers and high officials*
- 1897 Antonio Cánovas del Castillo, Prime Minister of Spain
- 1903 Dimitrije Cincar Marković, Prime Minister of Serbia
- 1905 Pyotr Stolypin, Prime Minister of Russia
- 1905 Eliel Soisalon-Soininen, Attorney General, Finland
- 1905 Theodoros Deligiannis, Prime Minister of Greece
- 1911 Valde Hirvikanta, President of Turku Court of Appeal, Finland
- 1912 José Canalejas, Prime Minister of Spain
- 1913 Mahmud Şevket Pasha, Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire
- 1914 Jean Jaurès, French socialist politician and pacifist
- 1916 Lord Kitchener, British Field Marshal and Secretary of State for War
- 1916 Count Karl von Stürgkh, Minister-President of Austria

²⁶ Their highest officials repeatedly made life threats to Radical ministers. For example, in 1912 Gen. Damnjan Popović publicly assaulted Stojan Protić, the Minister of Interior.

tions of a similar sort (the Italian “Carbonari” for example), the militants of the *Unification or Death* sought national freedom through violent means. The simple fact was that the Serbian government headed by the Radicals was too weak to neutralize its subversive activities.²⁷ The real question is not whether Nikola Pašić and the Serbian Radicals were implicated in the assassination, but how it was possible for a group of military men to acquire such power and influence so as to be able to endanger the very foundations of the Serbian constitutional system. This question remains open to this day: was there anyone from outside Serbia, among the European powers or their secret services, who had backed the activities of the *Unification or Death*? Certain indications do point in that direction...²⁸

2

Beyond any doubt, the ideology of the People’s Radical Party in Serbia owed a lot to the British parliamentary theory and practice. Besides, the Serbian Radicals, not only in name, represented an offshoot of the French Radical movement and stood under its strongest impact.

Bulgarian and Greek Liberals also tried to move in a similar direction, making substantial progress in democracy building. Neither of the two, however, reached the level of internal organization and electoral popularity of the Serbian Radical Party.²⁹

²⁷ In July of 1917, the conspiracy was revealed and the leaders of the “Unity or Death” were court-martialed for high treason. Their chief commander Col. Dragutin Dimitrijević-Apis was sentenced to death and executed together with two of his associates. Others received verdicts of long time imprisonment. This took place in the midst of the war, in Thessaloniki (Greece), under a Radical government headed by Nikola Pašić.

²⁸ That particular scenario was not the topic of this work, but it would be worth considering more closely.

²⁹ Bulgarian Liberals (f. 1879) were unable to preserve their party’s unity. Despite initial parliamentary victories, numerous factions and splits characterized its early history. Founders: Petko Karavelov and Dragan Cankov. They established close personal and political ties with the Serbian Radicals.

See: “Bulgaria”, *The Times, London, April 6, 1880*; “The Bulgarian Elections”, *The Times, London, September 25, 1894*.

The Liberal Party of Greece (f. 1910) was featured by an ideological mixture of liberalism and nationalism. Its founder and leading figure until 1936 was Eleftherios Venizelos, several times Greek Prime Minister 1915–1933. Ally of Nikola Pašić.

See: Victor Roudometof, *Collective Memory, National Identity, and Ethnic Conflict: Greece, Bulgaria, and the Macedonian Question*, Praeger Publishers, 2002; D. Alastos, *Venizelos, Patriot, Statesman, Revolutionary*, Lund, Humphries & Co, London,

Yet, the ideologies of all three had certainly originated from the same source.

* * *

The philosophical background of Radicalism as a political ideology could be found in the teachings of English philosophers Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) and James Mill (1773–1836), namely their theory of utilitarianism and parliamentary reform.³⁰ In Bentham's own words: "It is the greatest happiness of the greatest number that is the measure of right and wrong."³¹

The Radical understanding of parliamentarism was very much influenced by the writings of the British political author Walter Bagehot (1826–1877) and his book *The English Constitution* published in 1867.³² In this volume, Bagehot discussed the nature of British constitutionalism and especially the relations and interdependence of the Parliament, the Council of Ministers and the Crown.

The Serbian Radicals favored the system of coherent parliamentary democracy ("The government is born, lives and dies with parliamentary majority") over any other political system. They believed that the English example would suit the Serbian environment best for two fundamental reasons: England was the cradle of parliamentarism and Serbia was also a monarchy.

In terms of a constitutional reform, the Radicals have chosen the Belgian Constitution of 1831 as a model. It was relatively new and concise, as well as fairly easy to translate from French to Serbian. In the early 1880s, the Radical experts translated and published American, Swiss and the aforementioned Belgian Constitution in preparation for drafting the constitution of Serbia (finally passed in 1888).

1942; P. Kitromilides, *Eleftherios Venizelos: The Trials of Statesmanship*. University Press, Edinburgh, 2006.

³⁰ For more details, see: John Dinwiddy, *Bentham: selected writings of John Dinwiddy*, Stanford University Press, 2004; Charles W. Everett, *Jeremy Bentham*. Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London, 1966; Ross Harrison, (1983) *Bentham*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1983; P.J. Kelly, *Utilitarianism and Distributive Justice: Jeremy Bentham and the Civil Law*. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1990.

³¹ Jeremy Bentham, *A Fragment on Government*. Preface, London, 1776.

³² Chapman and Hall, London, 1867; 2nd edition, 1872; reprinted by Oxford University Press.

* * *

French Radicalism could be traced back to Alexandre Auguste Ledru-Rollin (1807–1874), a prominent political figure in France in the first half of the 19th century and a presidential candidate of the Left in 1848.³³

The French Radicals continued to participate in politics during the second half of the 19th century as an informal movement. In the 1860s, it was Léon Gambetta who acted as the leading figure. Later, in the 1890s, this role was assumed by Léon Bourgeois. Finally, in the following years, it was Georges Clemenceau who was seen as the undisputed Radical front man. The French Radical Party was formally founded in 1901.³⁴

With regard to ideological concepts, the French Radical influences on their Serbian counterparts can be discerned in a comparative analysis of their respective political programs. Not only did they belong to the same epoch, but the resemblance of their agendas appears rather astonishing.³⁵

3

Generally, there were four external variables in the Balkan geo-strategic equation: Turkey, Russia, the Habsburg Monarchy and the Western Powers. Of these, only Russia was genuinely concerned with supporting local nationalisms. Russia's vital interest was to gain control over the Straits³⁶ and thus secure an outlet to the Mediterranean. The Russo-Ottoman conflict, therefore, decided the fate of the Balkan nations. The Slavic origin of the

³³ He won a modest 370,000 votes. Others consider Louis Blanc (1811–1882) another forefather of French Radicalism.

³⁴ See also: F. Tarr, *The French Radical Party: from Herriot to Mendès-France*, 1980 Jean-Marie Mayeur and Madeleine Rebérioux, *The Third Republic from its origins to the Great War, 1871–1914*, 1988.

³⁵ The main difference being, of course, that the Radicals in France were ardent republicans, while the Radicals in Serbia never dared challenge the monarchical rule in Serbia, even though they did develop a strong anti-dynastic sentiment. Another was that the French Radicals had a program of fierce anti-clericalism, opposing the presence of the Roman Catholic Church in education and public life in general, whereas the Serbian Radicals did not need to be at odds with the Serbian Orthodox Church since a number of local priests were active members of the Radical Party in Serbia. Finally, the French Radicals preserved the adjective “*radical-socialiste*” in their official name (*Parti Républicain Radical et Radical-Socialiste*). Despite their socialist origins, the Serbian Radicals were not identified with socialism in title or otherwise.

³⁶ Bosphorus and Dardanelles.

Balkan nations only contributed to their pro-Russian inclinations. In Serbia, the shift towards Vienna resulted from the profound disappointment after the San Stefano treaty of 1878 and the creation of Greater Bulgaria. Since 1903, however, with the Radical Party in command, the role of Russia re-emerged. Simultaneously, the controversy in relations with Austria-Hungary heightened, leading towards full-scale conflict: first economic, then political and finally armed.

Russia prevented Serbia from declaring war on the Habsburgs in 1908, when the government in Vienna proclaimed a unilateral annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

At last, the People's Radical Party prevailed and formed a government in 1903. Until 1918, it ran the country with almost no interruption, although it was forced to accept coalitions on a few brief occasions.

The Radical policies of that period became increasingly nationalistic. The wave of European nationalism of the 19th century reached Balkan shores with some delay, but found fertile ground among Southeastern peoples. National liberation and unification emerged as the major political objective all over the region, with Serbia joining the party. Crowds shouting "The Balkans to the Balkan peoples" could be heard in Belgrade, Sofia and Athens, in 1908, 1910 or 1912 alike.

The Balkan alliance of 1912 (sponsored by the Russian Tsar Nicholas II) that pushed the Ottomans out of Europe was the sole successful attempt at making a joint effort of all Balkan states. This proved possible largely due to the negotiating skills of the Serbian Radical leader and diplomat Milovan Milovanović,³⁷ at the time both Prime and Foreign Minister of Serbia. Equipped with a French doctorate in public law from Paris University and a long experience in Serbian and regional politics, Dr. Milovanović managed to bring the competing Balkan states together (Serbia, Montenegro, Bulgaria and Greece). Unfortunately, he did not live to see the fruits of his endeavor. He died in June of 1912.

The First Balkan War broke out a few months later, in October 1912 and ended in the triumph of the Balkan Alliance over the Turks.

During the Second Balkan War which ended in Bulgarian defeat,³⁸ it was the Radical leader Nikola Pašić who headed the Serbian government.

³⁷ He was among the youngest and most educated leaders of the Radical Party (1863–1912) and the only one capable of contesting the leading position of Nikola Pašić in as the Chairman of the Party. Unfortunately, he died at the age of 49.

³⁸ The Balkan Alliance broke down due to quarrels over territorial gains after the war: Bulgaria was the greediest.

He remained at the country's helm throughout the hardships of World War One.

* * *

Yugoslavism was not in the focus of the Radical Party's policies either in the late 19th or the early 20th century. Until the outbreak of the Great War, the Radicals were quite busy trying to achieve Serbia's national goals, i.e. enlarging the country's territory to the South.

The so-called Niš Declaration represented the first public statement by Serbian officials concerning the prospects of a potential Yugoslav union. The document was issued by the Serbian National Assembly in December 1914 under the pressure of the opposition MPs. Pašić personally expressed caution at the idea.

The Radicals remained quite reserved towards the prospects of a Yugoslav unification until mid-1917. Nikola Pašić, in line with his usual *modus operandi*, quietly encouraged and subsidized the formation and work of the Yugoslav Club,³⁹ an organization of South Slav politicians from Austria-Hungary sympathetic to the unification cause.

It seems that there were two fundamental motives for the turn of the Radical stand on Yugoslavia. The first had to do with the developments in Russia during 1917 leading up to the revolution, in which case Serbia could count no more on Russian support. The second dealt with the possibility of Austro-Hungarian survival after the war, an outcome absolutely unacceptable to Serbia and detrimental to her most vital interests.

In July 1917, on the island of Corfu in the Ionian Sea, under the chairmanship of Nikola Pašić, the two delegations (the Serbian government and the Yugoslav Club) finally met in order to discuss the details of the merging process.

The Corfu Declaration issued at the end of the conference called for the creation of a unified Yugoslav state of three ethnicities (Serbs, Croats and Slovenes), organized as a parliamentary monarchy with the Serbian Karadjordjević dynasty at its head. It was agreed that the new Constitution would be passed "*by a qualified majority*" without additional clarifications:

"This State [Yugoslavia] will be a guarantee of their national independence and of their general national progress and civilization, and a powerful rampart against the pressure of the Germans."⁴⁰

³⁹ Founded in Paris in 1915, but soon moved to London; two of its most prominent figures were both Dalmatian politicians: first Frano Supilo and later Ante Trumbić.

⁴⁰ A passage from the original text of the Corfu Declaration.

The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was proclaimed on December 1, 1918 in Belgrade. Nevertheless, the misunderstandings among the key participants continued.

The People's Radical Party (together with King Aleksandar I Karadjordjević) emerged as the driving force of centralism and a stubborn opponent of any compromise over the question of national unity. As the Prime Minister, Pašić was instrumental in passing the centralist Constitution (June 1921), whose adoption was seriously challenged by a number of non-Serbian political parties, namely the Croatian Peasant Party and the Communists, both preferring republicanism and federalism, albeit for different reasons.⁴¹

Controversy over the character of the unified state dominated Yugoslav politics until the outbreak of World War Two. Throughout that period, it was the Serbian Radicals or their individual representatives⁴² who insisted upon the so-called 'unitary state' at any cost, despite the profound political crisis and rising ethnic frictions.

A compromise between the Serbs and Croats was reached in August 1939. The Yugoslav Prime Minister Cvetković and Croat leader Maček signed an agreement (The "Sporazum"), creating a Croat *corpus separatum*, the so-called *Banovina Hrvatska*. Instead of being a stabilizing factor, the agreement became the point of further grievances.

* * *

During World War Two, the Radical Party was represented in the Yugoslav government-in-exile in London. Its leader Miloš Trifunović⁴³ held the position of Prime Minister in 1943.⁴⁴

The formal chairman of the Radical Party since the death of Nikola Pašić in 1926 was his closest and most intimate friend Aca Stanojević, who died in his native town in eastern Serbia in 1947, at the age of 95.

After the war, the Radical Party survived for a few years with no political significance whatsoever. The Communist revolution in Yugoslavia declared any political activity illegal; banned the existence and work of all po-

⁴¹ Of 419 MPs in the Constituent assembly, 223 voted in favor, 35 against, with 161 boycotting the vote. The document became known as the Vidovdan (St. Vitus Day) Constitution, because it was promulgated on June 28, 1921.

⁴² A group of top Radical leaders left the Party in 1935, forming the Yugoslav Radical Union (in power until 1941).

⁴³ In December 1946, he was arrested, tried and sentenced to 8 years of prison by Yugoslav communist authorities.

⁴⁴ From June to August.

litical parties except Communist Party of Yugoslavia and introduced a “dictatorship of the proletariat”, in line with the doctrine of Marxism-Leninism.

In the early 1990s, there were several unsuccessful attempts to revive the work and the organization of the People’s Radical Party.

The End

1

Democracy could be defined as a political system of representative and responsible government. In other words, this means that the government is chosen by the people, comprised of the people and supervised by the people⁴⁵. Democracy usually includes checks and balances of the three branches of power (legislative, executive and judicial). As Montesquieu put it over 250 years ago:

“There is no word that has admitted of more various significations or made more different impressions on human minds than that of Liberty. Some have taken it for a facility of deposing a person on whom they had conferred a tyrannical authority; others for the power of choosing a person whom they are obliged to obey; others for the right of bearing arms, and of being thereby enabled to use violence, others in fine for the privilege of being governed by a native of their own country or by their own laws. Some have annexed this name to one form of government, in exclusion of others: Those who had a republican taste, applied it to this government; those who liked a monarchical state, gave it to monarchies. Thus they all have applied the name of liberty to the government most conformable to their own customs and inclinations: and as in a republic people have not so constant and so present a view of the instruments of the evils they complain of, and likewise as the laws seem there to speak more, and the executors of the laws less, it is generally attributed to republics, and denied to monarchies. In fine as in democracies the people seem to do very near whatever they please, liberty has been placed in this sort of government, and the power of the people has been confounded with their liberty.”⁴⁶

And further on:

“Democratic and aristocratic states are not in their own nature free. Political liberty is to be found only in moderate governments; and even in these it is not always found. It is there only when there is no

⁴⁵ A paraphrase of the famous words by U.S. President A. Lincoln (The Gettysburg Address, November 19, 1863).

⁴⁶ Charles de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws (L'esprit des lois)*, Book XI, Chapter 3, Paris 1748.

abuse of power. But constant experience shows us that every man invested with power is apt to abuse it, and to carry his authority as far as it will go. Is it not strange, though true, to say that virtue itself has need of limits?

To prevent this abuse, it is necessary from the very nature of things that power should be a check to power. A government may be so constituted, as no man shall be compelled to do things to which the law does not oblige him, nor forced to abstain from things which the law permits.⁴⁷

Necessary prerequisites for the successful implementation of democracy as a workable mechanism of decision-making could be summed up as follows:

- equality before law (equal civil and political rights for all)
- universal suffrage
- guaranteed civil liberties (freedom of press, public speech and political association).

Yet the keystone of democracy, its supreme guarantor and safeguard is – the Constitution. It represents the highest legal document that specifies the prerogatives and limitations of power, establishes the hierarchy of authority (central and local), introduces principles of the judiciary and provides a bill of rights.

Democracy is hardly feasible without a Constitution, but a Constitution does not automatically mean democracy. These are compatible notions, but not synonyms. Constitutionalism can exist without democracy, but there can be no democracy without a Constitution.

Parliamentary democracy is just one of the possible subsystems of representative democracy. The truth of the matter is that parliamentarism is also the most frequently applied and probably the most effective of these subsystems.

2

The People's Radical Party was the herald of constitutionalism, parliamentarism and democracy in Serbia, as well as in the Balkan region generally. By the same token, it was the harbinger of general political and social progress. Its formative years (1881–1903) witnessed great changes in Serbian politics, culture and social values.

⁴⁷ Montesquieu, Chapter 4.

Serbia was on the road to becoming a modern European country based on free market economy, the rule of law and parliamentary democracy. And the Radicals, their ideas and their practice, played a key role in this fascinating process.

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ASANU — Arhiv Srpske akademije nauka i umetnosti (Archives of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts), Belgrade
AMAE — Archives du Ministère des Affaires étrangères (Archives of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Paris
CP — Correspondance politique (Political correspondence)

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Anja Nikolić

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