

UDC 930.85(4-12)

ISSN 0350-7653
eISSN 2406-0801

SERBIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND ARTS
INSTITUTE FOR BALKAN STUDIES

BALCANICA

XLVIII

ANNUAL OF THE INSTITUTE FOR BALKAN STUDIES

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BELGRADE
2017



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<https://doi.org/10.2298/BALC1748107K>

UDC 94:327(497.11:439.5)"188/190"

327.2(497.11:439.5)"188/190"

050.488СРПСКИ КЊИЖЕВНИ ГЛАСНИК"190/191"

Original scholarly work

<http://www.balcanica.rs>

Austria-Hungary's "Civilizing Mission" in the Balkans A View from Belgrade (1903–1914)

Abstract: The conflict between Serbia and Austria-Hungary in the years preceding the First World War is looked at in the global context of the "age of empire". The Balkans was to Austria-Hungary what Africa or Asia was to the other colonial powers of the period. The usual ideological justification for the Dual Monarchy's imperialistic expansion was its "civilizing mission" in the "half-savage" Balkans. The paper shows that the leading Serbian intellectuals of the time gathered round the *Srpski književni glasnik* (Serbian Literary Herald) were well aware of the colonial rationale and "civilizing" ambitions of the Habsburg Balkan policy, and responded in their public work, including both scholarly and literary production, to the necessity of resistance to the neighbouring empire's "cultural mission".

Keywords: imperialism, colonialism, "civilizing mission", nationalism, Austria-Hungary, Serbia, *Srpski književni glasnik* (Serbian Literary Herald)

I

Pierre Renouvin remarked long ago that the history of Serbia in the decade that preceded the First World War cannot be understood outside the context of her conflict with Austria-Hungary.¹ Moreover, his remark may be expanded on to claim that the political, economic and cultural history of the Serbs in the period bounded by the entry of Austro-Hungarian troops into Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1878 and the Sarajevo assassination in 1914 cannot be understood outside the context of the resistance of Serbian nationalism to Habsburg imperialism. The resistance began to germinate in Serbian society, in the electorate's mass response to the messages of the People's Radical Party, taking clear shape by 1895, when even the Serbian Progressive Party turned its eyes to Russia.² After the overthrow of the Obrenović dynasty in 1903, the state was "conquered" by society, and the resistance of Serbian society to the imperial ambitions of the neighbouring empire took the form of a conflict between two states.

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¹ Pierre Renouvin, *La Crise européenne et la Première Guerre mondiale*, 3rd ed. (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1948), quoted after the translated edition: *Evropska kriza i Prvi svjetski rat* (Zagreb: Naprijed, 1965), 99.

² See Mihailo Vojvodić, *Srbija u međunarodnim odnosima krajem XIX i početkom XX veka* (Belgrade 1988), 43–56.

What this paper seeks to do is to bring under attention the broader, European or even global, context of the conflict. What was going on in the world at the time was above all determined by the phenomenon of imperialism – the rivalries among the great powers for creating colonial empires. It is not at all by chance that Eric Hobsbawm, in his famous trilogy devoted to the nineteenth century, dubs the whole period between 1875 and 1914 “the age of empire”.³ Empire and imperialism studies are nowadays considered to be a very relevant and topical research field, and the literature on these phenomena keeps growing.⁴

The subjugation of “small”, faraway countries and peoples was nothing new in world history. What was new in “the age of empire” was that the process of European conquest and colonization of distant continents abruptly gathered pace and, in this first era of globalization, until 1914, almost the whole world ended up divided among the great powers. Also new were theoretical, ideological arguments used to justify the conquests. Economic arguments invoked the need for new markets, raw materials and cheap labour. Racist theories, concocted in justification of the enslavement of Africa and, to a lesser extent, Asia, invoked the necessity of having “inferior”, “mixed” races ruled by “superior”, “pure” races. Social Darwinists claimed that the weak and incapable of adaptation should, as is the case in nature, succumb in the struggle to survive in favour of big, strong and adaptable societies and nations. Finally, there were many who believed that it was the duty of Europeans to help “primitive” peoples embrace the benefits of civilization. They claimed that local tribal wars could only be stopped by foreign occupation. European administration would impose peace and order, improve dietary habits, housing conditions, health care, road systems, and then the local population would be able to enjoy the benefits of Christianity, and of Western science and art. This doctrine was dubbed the “civilizing mission” (*la mission civilisatrice*). An alternative term was “the white man’s burden”, after Rudyard Kipling’s popular poem of the same title (1899) which preached the “duty” of the white man to “help” the other races climb up the ladder of civilization. The term in preferred usage in Vienna was “cultural mission”. More recent work, especially within post-colonial studies, has been examining the areas of art and science in search for theoretical arguments for and sources of imperialism and colonialism. A particular emphasis has been laid on the theories of power and the need of the colonizers to control the souls, possessions and natural resources of other peoples.⁵

³ Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire 1875–1914* (London: Weidenfeld, 1987).

⁴ Useful general overviews are *Encyclopaedia of the Age of Imperialism, 1800–1914*, 2 vols., ed. Carl Cavanagh Hodge (Westport, US, London, UK: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2008); *Encyclopaedia of Western Colonialism since 1450*, 3 vols., ed. Thomas Benjamin (Macmillan Reference USA, Thomson Gale, 2007); Andrew Porter, *European Imperialism 1860–1914* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1994); Wolfgang J. Mommsen, *Theories of Imperialism* (University of Chicago Press, 1982), first published in German in 1977.

⁵ For a general introduction see Robert J. C. Young, *Postcolonialism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2003); John Tomlinson, *Cultural Imperialism: A Critical Introduc-*

The application of such theories in Austria-Hungary's Balkan policy, especially in its administering of Bosnia-Herzegovina and parts of the Sanjak of Novi Pazar in 1878–1914, would mean that rule over those lands was to Vienna what rule over Egypt or India was to London or what rule over Indochina or Algiers was to Paris. Indeed, the sources confirm that the Habsburg Monarchy's Balkan policy was perceived domestically as a "civilizing mission". The Balkan countries admittedly were in Europe, and inhabited by white people, but they were seen as barbarian and semi-oriental, and it was repeatedly underlined that they were torn by chronic conflicts and kept in a state of backwardness by primitive economies. Not a small part of the contemporary literature on these topics paints the Habsburg Monarchy's Balkan policy in positive colours, notably its administration of Bosnia-Herzegovina, seeing it as a grand modernizing undertaking, which, by the way, is just another word for a "civilizing mission". But then, there are historians who see Austria-Hungary's rule over Bosnia-Herzegovina as typical of the "age of empire", and use the terms "civilizing mission" and "white man's burden" to describe it.⁶

Yet, what has not been researched so far is the question as to whether the local Balkan elites saw Austria-Hungary's advancement into the Balkans as a "civilizing mission", and whether they viewed it against the background of global trends in the "age of empire". We shall try to look into these questions using the example of the group of leading Serbian intellectuals who, between 1901 and 1914, gathered round the foremost Serbian journal of the period, the Belgrade-based *Srpski književni glasnik* (Serbian Literary Herald).⁷ It was the group of

tion (London: Continuum; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2002). Within postcolonial studies and the study of "cultural imperialism", particularly relevant to our subject are Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978) and Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (Oxford University Press, 1997).

⁶ On the divergence of opinion among historians on the nature of Austria-Hungary's administration in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and for the conclusion that it was a classic case of imperialism, see Alan Sked, *The Decline and Fall of the Habsburg Empire 1815–1918* (London and New York: Longman, 1989), 243–246. See esp. Robin Okey, *Taming Balkan Nationalism. The Habsburg "Civilizing Mission" in Bosnia 1878–1914* (Oxford University Press, 2007), vii–ix, 217–223, 251–257. That Bosnia-Herzegovina was "the white man's burden" to Austria-Hungary just as Africa was to the other empires, is also the view of Alan J. P. Taylor, *The Habsburg Monarchy, 1809–1918: A History of the Austrian Empire and Austria-Hungary*, quoted after the Serbian edition: *Habsburška monarhija 1809–1914: Istorija Austrijske carevine i Austrougarske* (Belgrade: Clio, 2001), 173. The "civilizing mission" in the set of the notions of the uncrowned king of Bosnia-Herzegovina Benjamin von Kállay is especially highlighted in Tomislav Kraljačić, *Kalajev režim u Bosni i Hercegovini 1882–1903* (Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša, 1987), 61–87.

⁷ The literature on the "old series" (until 1914) of the journal is too vast to be covered by a single footnote. Among more recent works see, by all means, Dragiša Vitošević, *Srpski književni glasnik 1901–1914* (Belgrade 1990); *Sto godina Srpskog književnog glasnika. Aksiološki*

intellectuals who, as one of them, Milan Grol, later wrote, “came to power”⁸ after 1903, and whose ideas would become incorporated into the official cultural model in the Kingdom of Serbia.

II

In the 1880s and 1890s, growing up in a Serbia whose newly-won independence was under threat from the ambitions of the neighbouring empire, and pursuing their higher education in metropolises of colonial empires, the generations which would later gather round the *Srpski književni glasnik* had the opportunity to acquaint themselves with imperialism first hand. Interpretations and explanations of the phenomenon, they found them, too, in the books of West-European authors.

It was even during his doctoral studies in Lausanne that Jovan Skerlić (1877–1914) encountered theoretical justifications for imperialism and “civilizing missions”. In the French historian Edouard Driault’s book *Political and Social Problems at the End of the 19th Century* he found the claim that imperialism was the most important political phenomenon in Europe at the time. In his review of the book he sent from Lausanne to the Belgrade literary magazine *Zvezda* (Star)⁹ in 1900, Skerlić recapitulates Driault’s views, occasionally adding his own interpretations. He claims that: “Colonial expansion is the most characteristic phenomenon at the end of the 19th century”,¹⁰ and concurs with Driault that: “Never on earth has force been more brutal, the weak more disempowered and bigger words used to obscure great crimes.”¹¹ He also notices the increasingly frequent mention of the “civilizing mission” concept in Europe. The reasons for the “colonization mania” are economic in nature, but the “capitalist class” has “clapped a mask of the interest of civilization and Christianity” on its “half-piratic desires and ambitions”.¹² In advance of others in colonial conquest are Western powers, England and France; and even America, “which has for a whole century so honourably, with her history and her politics, stood up for the

aspekt tradicije u srpskoj književnoj tradiciji, eds. Staniša Tutnjević and Marko Nedić (Novi Sad: Matica srpska; Belgrade: Institut za književnost i umetnost, 2003). See also Ljubica Djordjević, *Bibliografija Srpskog književnog glasnika* (Belgrade 1982).

⁸ Milan Grol, “Bogdan Popović”, *Iz predratne Srbije: Utisci i sećanja o vremenu i ljudima* (Belgrade: SKZ, 1939), 59.

⁹ Jovan Skerlić, “Politički i socijalni problem krajem XIX veka. Les problèmes politiques et sociaux à la fin du XIX-e siècle, par E. Driault, professeur agrégé d’histoire au lycée d’Orléans”, *Feljtoni, skice i govori*, vol. VII of Jovan Skerlić’s *Collected Works* (Belgrade: Prosveta, 1964), 49–52.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 49.

¹¹ *Ibid.* 50.

¹² *Ibid.* 49.

cause of national freedom, even America has been intoxicated with imperialism, and jumped from Cuba to the Philippines".¹³ Russia herself is also busy "nibbling at China from the north"; Germany and Italy are penetrating into Africa and "throwing themselves" on an already "half-dead China".¹⁴

What was especially important was that Skerlić found the following statement in Driault: "Austria is the only great power which has no colonies, but only on the face of it. Driault claims that the Balkan Peninsula is planned to become an Austrian colony and the route for Germany's thrust towards Asia Minor."¹⁵ It is in French writers, then, that Skerlić found not only the interpretation of "civilizing missions" as an excuse for imperialistic conquests but also the view that the Balkans was to the Habsburg Monarchy exactly what Africa and China were to the other great powers.

The same keynotes appear in the texts he published in the *Srpski književni glasnik* upon returning from his studies abroad, and even his early articles met with an encouraging response. It was he who set the tone of the whole journal when he succeeded Bogdan Popović as editor, at first together with Pavle Popović (1905–1907), and then as sole editor (1907–1914).

In his article "Youth Congresses" published in 1904, Skerlić alerts the Balkan nations to the danger coming from "semi-feudal and clerical Austria",¹⁶ arguing that either they will cooperate or they will be left to await "the day when they will become a Russian *guberniia* or an Austrian province".¹⁷ Rejecting both Central- and Eastern-European models, he concludes that "the West is the source of light and the focus of life on earth; there are two roads for new nations, to embrace Western culture, like the Japanese, and live, or to oppose it and be run over, like the American Redskins or the Australian Blacks..."¹⁸

The reference to the Japanese or the Blacks shows that Skerlić thought in global terms and placed the Serbs' experience with the neighbouring empire in a global context. In his article "The Principle of Solidarity" he even dubs Serbia "the China of the Balkans".¹⁹ The awareness of the importance of cultural affiliation for the future of "small" and "new" nations entailed the belief that the adoption of "Western culture" was the main prerequisite for their survival. It meant the rejection of the over-assertive colonial Central-European cultural models and the adoption of Western ones, the French, the British and even the

¹³ Ibid. 50.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ "Omladinski kongresi", *Srpski književni glasnik* (hereafter: SKG) XIII/2 (1904), 126, 127.

¹⁷ Ibid. 124.

¹⁸ Ibid. 127.

¹⁹ "Načelo solidarnosti", SKG XI/8 (1904), 592.

American. These ideas should be seen as making up the gist of the ideology of the *Srpski književni glasnik*.

In the view of the journal's editors and contributors, what was hiding behind Vienna's "civilizing mission" discourse were the imperial ambitions of German elites and, lurking behind them, a much greater, pan-German threat. The neighbouring empire's civilizing ambition was one of the main reasons for the *Glasnik's* markedly "Westernizing" editorial policy. The purpose of asserting one's own Western identity and – expressed in the terminology of the period – "capacity for culture" was to invalidate Austria-Hungary's "civilizing" arguments in order to preserve one's own independence; at the same time, it was supposed to garner the support of the West for the Serbian national cause.

That Jovan Skerlić recognized clearly the main features of the age of empire may also be seen from the texts he wrote shortly before his premature death in 1914. In the 1913 article "New Youth Newspapers and Our New Generation", he says: "We are living in an age of cultural regression, of the revival of the vile 'right of the fist'; in an age when human ideals, law and justice are being trampled underfoot, when, amid the merciless ride roughshod over the small and the weak, the barbaric shout is heard: Woe to the small, woe to the conquered! Brutal force alone has a say, and when it comes to the right of small nations to exist, the chancellors of great powers speak in the language of the times when the Teutonic knights were exterminating Baltic Slav tribes 'with fire and sword'."²⁰

Books and articles of French authors were an important source of knowledge about the phenomenon of imperialism. Under Skerlić's editorship, the *Glasnik* published a translation of René Pinon's essay on German and British imperialism in which a particular emphasis is laid on the distinctly German civilizing zeal. Pinon claimed that the Germans had a sense of civilizational superiority combined with the readiness to use force to spread that civilization: "The Germans have found in their philosophers the idea of a Germany which rules by force and uses force to establish a higher level of civilization produced by the German genius. From Hegel to Nietzsche, a whole string of thinkers posited a metaphysics of beneficent force, and of war as bringer of order and progress. This idea, to which Wagner composed lauds and which Bismarck put into practice, has been disseminated by university professors down to the deepest strata of the people. It is by German battalions and battleships, trade and merchant navy, that the empire of German science and culture should be expanded."²¹

The Serbian intellectuals around the *Glasnik* did not, of course, have much good to say about British and French imperialism either. After all, they did not fail to notice that some British and French authors hailed the Austrian

²⁰ Jovan Skerlić, "Novi omladinski listovi i nas novi naraštaj", *SKG* XXX/3 (1913), 321.

²¹ René Pinon, "Englesko-nemačko suparništvo" (translated from French by M. Zebić), *SKG* XXIII/10 (1909), 777–778.

"civilizing mission" in Bosnia-Herzegovina. A quite interesting article of Kosta Kumanudi that appeared in the *Glasnik* in 1902²² pointed to the fact that the French were not disinclined to liken the Dual Monarchy's administration of Bosnia-Herzegovina to their own rule over their African and Asian colonies. Namely, Kumanudi reviewed the article about Austria-Hungary's achievements in Bosnia-Herzegovina which Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu, one of the leading ideologues of French imperialism,²³ had published in the influential *Revue des deux Mondes*, a forum of liberal, pro-Catholic Parisian circles. Leroy-Beaulieu saw Kállay's administration in Bosnia-Herzegovina as bringing Western order and civilization to sluggish populations of the East.²⁴ He even claimed, according to Kumanudi, that France should draw lessons from the example of Bosnia-Herzegovina for her own colonial rule in Algiers, Tunisia and Indochina.²⁵ Leroy-Beaulieu expressed his support for the Jesuits in Bosnia-Herzegovina who, unlike the unreliable local Franciscans, were putting into practice the ideas of the pope Leo XIII and the bishop Strossmayer about an alliance between Rome and the Slavs, and the union of the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches.²⁶

It was known in Belgrade that the British tended to draw analogies between the Habsburg administration of Bosnia-Herzegovina and their colonial experience in Egypt. In 1912 Jovan "Pižon" Jovanović presented to the Serbian public an article from the London *Times* which showed that Vienna and London harboured similar ideas. The article claimed, among other things, that the Austro-Hungarian foreign minister, count Aehrenthal, on the occasion of a meeting between Edward VII and Franz Josef I shortly before the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina to the Habsburg Monarchy in 1908, had made it explicit to the British that the annexation of Egypt to their empire would be a normal thing to expect.²⁷

Yet, the *Glasnik* was careful to weigh its words when covering the powerful northern neighbour; after all, its mission as a modern Serbian and pro-Western magazine was to reach Austria-Hungary's Serbian community on a regular basis. Still, the fear of a "cultural invasion" would surface in times of crisis in relations between the two countries. In the wake of the disturbing Münzsteg Agreement reached between Russia and Austria-Hungary in 1903, Kosta Ku-

²² Kosta Kumanudi, "Jedno mišljenje o Bosni i Hercegovini. L'Autriche-Hongrie en Bosnie-Herzégovine. Nationalités, religions, gouvernement. *Revue des deux Mondes*, 15 mars 1902", *SKG VII/6* (1902), 1102–1109.

²³ Said, *Orijentalizam*, 293.

²⁴ Kumanudi, "Jedno mišljenje o Bosni i Hercegovini", 1107–1109.

²⁵ *Ibid.* 1108–1109.

²⁶ *Ibid.* 1105–1106.

²⁷ Inostrani [Jovan Jovanovic Pižon], "Grof Erental. Izbori u Turskoj", *SKG XXVIII/5* (1912), 392.

manudi openly called Austria-Hungary the vanguard of the pan-German campaign against the Slavs,²⁸ concluding: “Behind her good wishes and civilizatory glaze Austria-Hungary has always been hiding an insatiable voracity, her entire politics is permeated with imperial ambitions.”²⁹ After the annexation crisis of 1908/9, Vladimir Ćorović, in his review of a German army officer’s travel account of Mostar, wrote that the latter had chosen to “*dip his sabre into ink* [italics V. Ć.] and start a literary career by writing about the lands dotted with so many minarets and harems, about new parts, unexhausted, alien to the innocent German public which, in preparation for a car ride across the Sava, packs tents, canned food and weapons, as if venturing into Tibet or those frighteningly described parts around the source of the Nile.”³⁰ In an ironic and acerbic tone, Ćorović in fact implied that the German public looked at Bosnia-Herzegovina as just another non-European colony.

III

The refusal to submit to the neighbouring empire’s cultural, scientific and literary tutelage had been noticeable in the *Glasnik* from its very first issues. Back then, in 1901, under the editorship of Bogdan Popović, which marked the beginning of the magazine’s opposition to the regime of king Alexander Obrenović,³¹ it seemed necessary to opine on relations between Serbia and Austria-Hungary as well. On the front line in this respect were those members of the magazine’s Editorial Board who came from the Political-Educational Department (PED) of the Ministry of the Interior, which was responsible for national propaganda in Old Serbia and Macedonia. In a retrospective overview of Serbia’s foreign policy in the century which had only just elapsed, Slobodan Jovanović drew an analogy between the position of Serbia in relation to Austria-Hungary after the “Secret Convention” and the position of Tunisia in relation to France after the colonial conquest the same year (1881).³² His explicit conclusion was that Serbia would not be able to avoid a conflict with Austria-Hungary.³³ Svetislav Simić and Ljubomir Jovanović, *Glasnik* contributors recognized as experts in

²⁸ Kosta Kumanudi, “Pogled na ulogu Rusije i Austrije u Istočnom Pitanju” SKG XXVIII/5 (1903), 604.

²⁹ Ibid. 605.

³⁰ Vladimir Ćorović, “Mostar, von Robert Michel, Prag 1909”, SKG XXIV/5 (1910), 390.

³¹ See Miloš Ković, “Politička uloga ‘Srpskog književnog glasnika’ 1901–1914”, in *Sto godina Srpskog književnog glasnika*, 363–378; Slobodan Jovanović, “Političko poreklo S. K. Glasnika”, SKG XXXII/2 (1931), 129–131, as well as his “Svetislav Simić”, SKG LXII/6 (1941), 437–439; “Osnivanje Srpskog književnog glasnika”, *Tamo daleko* I/1 (Oct.–Nov. 1958), 2–12; and *Vlada Aleksandra Obrenovića*, vol. II 1897–1903 (Belgrade 1931), 267–270.

³² Slobodan Jovanović, “Spoljna politika Srbije u XIX veku”, SKG IV/6 (1901), 472.

³³ Ibid. 472–473.

the domain of "national work", did not conceal their resentment towards Serbia's northern neighbour.³⁴ Providing an overview of "Serbian national-political life", Ljubomir Jovanović claimed that, with the beginning of the Austro-Hungarian thrust towards the south-east, at the Congress of Berlin, Austria-Hungary replaced Turkey as Serbia's main adversary, and that "the twentieth century will be able to see many a fight between her and the Serbian people".³⁵

Dragomir Janković had quite a lot of experience in national propaganda, just like Slobodan Jovanović and Svetislav Simić. In an overview of the current Serbian theatre he published in the *Glasnik* in 1901, at the time he served as head of the PED, he observed that the repertoires predominantly consisted of plays translated from German and Hungarian.³⁶ "In that way, we are suffering a loss both in a cultural and in a national sense," he warned³⁷ and, adding that even French and English authors were being translated from German, suggested following the French example and protecting national authors and national drama.³⁸

Especially important for the rejection by Serbian intellectuals of Austria-Hungary's scientific tutelage was a text by Ljubomir Jovanović published in the first issue of the *Glasnik*, in 1901, right after Janković's analysis of the situation in the Serbian playhouses. In his review of Milan Rešetar's study *Die serbokroatische Betonung südwestlicher Mundarten* published by the "Balkan-Kommission" of the Imperial Academy of Sciences in Vienna, Stojanović quotes from a statement of the Balkan Commission where the historiographical-archaeological and philological-ethnographical study of the Balkans is described as "one of our natural and first cultural tasks, worthy of the Academy" (italics Lj. S.).³⁹ "The expression 'sphere of interest' has become so popular in Austria that Austrian scholars are even using it in scholarship when referring to the Balkan Peninsula," he remarks.⁴⁰ Suspecting that there is more to it than mere academic pursuits, he adds: "One should not forget that scientific expeditions used to be, and still are, sent from Vienna to other parts of the world (e.g. to India, whence they brought a bit of the plague to Vienna) without any scientific sphere of in-

³⁴ Miloš Ković, "Istočno pitanje kao kulturni problem: Svetislav Simić i 'Srpski književni glasnik'", in *Evropa i Istočno pitanje (1878–1923): političke i civilizacijske promene*, ed. Slavenko Terzić (Belgrade: Istorijski institut SANU, 2001), 618–622.

³⁵ Ljubomir Jovanović, "Pregled nacionalno-političkog života srpskog u XIX veku", *SKG III/1* (1901), 49.

³⁶ Dragoslav Janković, "Pogled na današnje pozorišne prilike", *SKG I/1* (1901), 49.

³⁷ *Ibid.* 67.

³⁸ *Ibid.* 62, 65.

³⁹ Ljubomir Stojanović, "Srpsko-hrvatski u jugozapadnim govorima od Milana Rešetara", *SKG I/1* (1901), 70.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 60.

terest being mentioned; no, that is reserved for the Balkans alone, no one must go there but them.”⁴¹ Commenting in the same tone about the engagement of Viennese scholars in philological research in the Balkans, Stojanović concludes: “They’ve done the job of examining every single of the many languages at home and now, not wanting to sit idle, they’ve set out for the Balkans.”⁴²

Ljubomir Stojanović voiced what the *Glasnik* founders thought: the way to oppose the patronage of German and Austro-Hungarian science was to raise the quality of national production, in which French and British examples should be taken as models. A few years earlier, Stojanović had been polemicizing with Vatroslav Jagić, his former professor in Vienna and a leading authority in Slavic studies. Namely, Stojanović believed that Jagić’s scholarly work supported the Austro-Hungarian government’s policy in Bosnia-Herzegovina embodied in Benjamin Kállay.⁴³ It was not by accident that Stojanović, a German-educated philologist, signed his abovementioned review of Rešetar’s book as follows: “In Paris, January 1901, Lj. Stojanović.”⁴⁴ Almost thirty years later, in an issue of the *Glasnik* new series (restarted in 1920 after the break caused by the war), he recalled that, in the years before the Great War, Franz Ferdinand himself had liked to say that “the Balkans should be won over for European civilization.”⁴⁵

This programmatic resistance to the establishment of Austria-Hungary’s “scientific sphere of interest” in the Balkans by relying on French and British models instead, was demonstrated even more clearly by Mihailo Gavrilović. In his critical review of Benjamin Kállay’s history of the Serbian uprising against the Ottomans (*Die Geschichte des serbischen Aufstandes 1807–1810*) prefaced by Kállay’s closest associate, historian Lajos Tallóczy,⁴⁶ Gavrilović offered ample proofs of their methodological inadequacy. What he noticed in Tallóczy’s text apart from “the Serbs being lectured in a discreet and less discreet way” was “a certain condescendence when speaking about their affairs. We shall not dwell on that; that is a manner which has already become a prerogative even of the Hungarian second-rate press.”⁴⁷ A disciple of the French school of history, Gavrilović chose instead to dwell on the examples of Tallóczy’s political bias, factual errors, and unfamiliarity with the archival material and literature of French, Russian

⁴¹ Ibid. 70.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ “Pristupna akademska beseda Ljub. Stojanovića govorena na svečanom skupu Akademije 11. jan. 1986”, *Glas Srpske kraljevske akademije* LII/34 (1896); Ljubomir Stojanović, “Jagić i Oblak o pristupnoj akademskoj besedi”, *Delo* XIV (1897), 347–362.

⁴⁴ Stojanović, “Srpsko-hrvatski u jugozapadnim govorima”, 74.

⁴⁵ Ljubomir Stojanović, “Hrvatska ‘Austrijanština’”, *SKG* XVII/5 (1926), 360.

⁴⁶ See Kraljačić, *Kalajev režim*, 252–256 and 267–272.

⁴⁷ Mihailo Gavrilović, “Istorija srpskog ustanka 1807–1910 od Benjamina Kalaja”, *SKG* XXV/9–10 (1910), 788.

and Serbian provenance.⁴⁸ He also remarked that Tallóczy did not know French all that well.⁴⁹

The same motives led yet another French-educated intellectual, Bogdan Popović, to make wholesale, and negative, judgements about contemporary Austrian and German literature.⁵⁰ For the same reason, Tihomir Djordjević, educated in Central Europe, or Ljuba Stojanović when enumerating "the most beautiful cities" of Europe, chose not mention Berlin or Vienna, but rather Paris and London,⁵¹ while French-educated Milan Grol wrote that "Austrian waltzes and petty officers' courtesies have no place in the National Theatre in Belgrade",⁵² Such ideas spread in all places reached by the *Glasnik*. Jovan Skerlić contentedly relayed the demands of the youth from Bosnia-Herzegovina for the "introduction of logical French-English punctuation, which is increasingly in use in Belgrade, instead of grammatical German punctuation".⁵³

As usual, Skerlić was the most forthright of all. From his 1904 "Youth Congresses" and debates with Serbian intellectuals from Austria-Hungary to his 1910 polemic with Stanoje Stanojević, he persevered in denigrating "Austrian half-culture" and advocating Serbia's cultural emancipation through emulating Western models. He was the most explicit in the polemic with Stanojević in which he turned what may have been their personal disagreement into a principled debate between the proponents of French and the proponents of German cultural and scientific models. Remarking that Stanojević is "Austrian-educated" and "firmly believes that Vienna is the centre of world culture and the source of the highest wisdom", Skerlić observes that Stanojević is completely unfamiliar with "other cultures, and the cultures which are not equal to Austrian culture but incommensurately higher than it."⁵⁴ After a few belittling remarks about the intellectual abilities of the Germans,⁵⁵ the editor of the *Glasnik* concludes: "Mr Stanojević only knows that which he was taught at school; he thinks that there is no culture other than German culture, that Vienna is the Athens of our times. He is unable to understand our successful movement of the last twenty years towards ridding Serbia of Austrian half-culture, to be more than merely an

⁴⁸ Ibid. 787–797.

⁴⁹ Ibid. 794.

⁵⁰ [Bogdan Popović], "Nemačka secesionistička lirika", *SKG* V/5 (1902), 392; [Bogdan Popović], "Pol Verlen u Nemaca", *SKG* VII/6 (1902), 473; U. B. [Bogdan Popović], "Artur Šnicler, 'Potporučnik Gustel'", *SKG* V/3 (1901), 237.

⁵¹ Tihomir Djordjević, "O etnologiji", *SKG* XVII/7 (1906), 520.

⁵² Milan Grol, "Pitanje o opereti u Narodnom pozorištu", *SKG* XI/4 (1904), 302–310.

⁵³ Skerlić, "Novi omladinski listovi", 216.

⁵⁴ Jovan Skerlić, "Ocena G. Stanoja Stanojevića o 'Srpskoj književnosti u XVIII veku'", *SKG* XXV/7 (1910), 546.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

Austrian spiritual province. Mr Stanojević, with his narrow-minded and primitive notions, is unable to realize that nowadays we are learning from the true sources of literary science, from those the others learn from, from the French and the English, and that we have been so successful in our emancipation from the 'Slavist' philological empty-wordiness and the sluggish and undigested German learnedness that nowadays the history of Serbian literature can be learnt and worked on in a modern and European manner only in Belgrade, in Belgrade and nowhere else!"⁵⁶

Škerlić here said loud and clear that which he had only hinted at elsewhere. The political motives of the *Glasnik's* scholarly and literary mission were laid out in just a few sentences. It should be noted, however, that its response to Vienna's and Berlin's colonial arguments went along much the same lines: generalized judgements about whole nations and "superior" and "inferior" cultures. It would seem that it was as difficult to escape one's own time as ever.

On the eve of the First World War Slobodan Jovanović, in his inaugural speech as rector of the University of Belgrade, advocated the transformation of the University into not only a Serbian but also a South-Slavic "scientific centre" which would hold "first place" in the "scientific study of the whole of the Balkans."⁵⁷ Many texts about Belgrade University and the inaugural speeches of its rectors published in the *Glasnik* may be described as genuine programmes of national policy.⁵⁸ At Škerlić's funeral in 1914, Pavle Popović summed up Škerlić's basic ideas and concluded the eulogy he gave on behalf of the University as follows: "Professors die in Vienna and Berlin, too, but their students do not weep for them."⁵⁹

Behind principled, academic and ideological, dissensions as a rule stood also personal disagreements. Jovan Škerlić and Pavle Popović were members of the academic staff of what was popularly known as the "Serbian Seminar" of Belgrade's Faculty of Philosophy together with Stanoje Stanojević and Aleksandar Belić.⁶⁰ Stanojević's father had been Škerlić's best man, and Belić was his childhood friend.⁶¹ The prelude to their falling-out was the negative re-

⁵⁶ Ibid. 547.

⁵⁷ Slobodan Jovanović, "Univerzitetsko pitanje", *SKG XXXII/3* (1914), 191–199.

⁵⁸ See Petar L. Vukićević, "Beleške o Univerzitetu", *SKG XIII/8* (1904), 599–601; Sava Urošević, "Pred Srpskim Univerzitetom", *SKG XIV/3* (1905), 192–204, as well as his "O zadatku Univerziteta na prosvetivanju i moralnom preporodjaju naroda", *SKG XXII/2* (1909), 198–201, and "Naša Univerzitetska Omladina", *SKG XXIV/3* (1910), 184–198.

⁵⁹ Pavle Popović, "Dr Jovan Škerlić", *SKG XXXII/10* (1914), 786.

⁶⁰ Dragoljub Pavlović and Dimitrije Vučenov, "Katedra za istoriju jugoslovenske književnosti", in *Sto godina Filozofskog fakulteta*, ed. Radovan Samardžić (Belgrade: Narodna knjiga, 1963), 358.

⁶¹ Živorimir Mladenović, "Univerzitetska karijera i ženidba", *Život i delo Jovana Škerlića* (Belgrade: Ž. Mladenović, 1998), 81.

view of Stanojević's *Istorija Bosne i Hercegovine* (History of Bosnia and Herzegovina) published in the *Glasnik* in 1909 by Jovan Tomić,⁶² a close friend of Pavle Popović's. In the private correspondence maintained between Popović and Tomić in and around that year, critical remarks about Stanojević and Belić are not a rare occurrence.⁶³ Their disagreements became public in 1910 when Stanojević, in the *Letopis Matice srpske*, harshly criticized Skerlić's and Popović's scholarly work.⁶⁴ In their replies published in the *Glasnik*, Skerlić and Popović dismissed Stanojević's criticisms as inspired by motives of self-interest, claiming that he saw the two of them as rivals in his aspiration for promotion to full professorship.⁶⁵ This exchange led to an invisible dividing line being drawn across the "Serbian Seminar": on one side of it were Skerlić and Popović, disciples of the French positivists; on the other, Stanojević and Belić, followers of the Austrian and Russian traditions of philological criticism.

IV

Examples of other "small nations" which had to cope with German imperialism encouraged the Serbian intellectuals in their resistance to the neighbouring empire's "cultural mission". The *Glasnik* kept up with the latest news about the conflict of Masaryk's Czechs with the Germans and with what they used to call the Czechs' "private cultural work".⁶⁶ It even tended to interpret the Norwegian question in much the same way. In his review of a performance of Edvard

⁶² Jovan Tomić, "Istorija Bosne i Hercegovine. U Beogradu u Državnoj štampariji Kraljevine Srbije 1909", SKG XXII (1909), 10, 783–789; 11, 846–855.

⁶³ Arhiv Srpske akademije nauka i umetnosti [Archives of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts; hereafter: ASANU], Jovan Tomić Papers, 14509/V-93/9, Popović to Tomić, Vienna, 10 Dec. 1909; 14509/V-93/10, Popović to Tomić, Vienna, 15 Jan. 1910; 14509/V-93/12, Popović to Tomić, St. Petersburg, on St Sava's Day [27 Jan.], 1911.

⁶⁴ Stanoje Stanojević, "Stara srpska književnost u Pregledu srpske književnosti g. Pavla Popovića", *Letopis Matice srpske* 268 (1910), 50–61, and "Jovan Skerlić, Srpska književnost u XVIII veku", *ibid.*, 61–69.

⁶⁵ Jovan Skerlić, "Ocena G. Stanoja Stanojevića o 'Srpskoj književnosti u XVIII veku'", SKG XXV (1910), 6, 457–473; 7, 544–550; Pavle Popović, "Stanoje Stanojević, Kritika na 'Pregled srpske književnosti'", SKG XXV (1910), 10, 767–787; 11, 853–876; 12, 929–955.

⁶⁶ I[van]. Š[ajković]., "Slovenska kancelar ('Agence Slave')", SKG V/3 (1902), 239–240; I[van]. Š[ajković]., "Naše doba", SKG V/4 (1902), 317–318; I[van]. Š[ajković]., "Zemledelska politika", SKG V/5 (1902), 319; I[van]. Š[ajković]., "Prva radenička izložba u Pragu", *ibid.*, 320; Dr. Ivan Šajković, "Slovenski klub u Beogradu", SKG V/5 (1902), 343–348; "Češka otazka", *ibid.*, 391 (unsigned); "Jednoženstvo i mnogoženstvo" od T. G. Masarika, SKG VII/6 (1902), 479 (unsigned); Jaša Prodanović, "O zadacima djaka. Od prof. T. G. Masarika. Preveo Dr Ivan Šajković", SKG VII/2 (1902), 233–235; Dr Tomaž Masarik, "Etika i alkoholizam", SKG XXIII/2 (1909), 122–138.

Grieg's works at the National Theatre in Belgrade in 1908, Cvetko Manojlović referred to the composer's intention to rid Norwegian music of German influences. According to him, Grieg realized "that Norway was able to create her own language, her own freedom and a completely independent art. What it required above all was: 'To cut loose from foreign countries, from Germany'."⁶⁷

Perhaps an even more interesting text in this respect was Pavle Popović's brief note on Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, where the role of the Germans as "cultural subjugators" was assigned to the Danes, Norway's one-time masters.⁶⁸ "The Norwegian people, politically free, has been slowly freeing itself from the former intellectual influence of Denmark,"⁶⁹ but outmoded Danish romanticism still dominated in Norwegian literature.⁷⁰ Then this "lonely artist" who "carries inside him the soul, aspirations and hopes of all of Norway"⁷¹ placed himself at the head of the radical party and the movement for intellectual emancipation, relying on the "modern European spirit", on the works of John Stuart Mill, Hippolyte Taine and other Western writers.⁷² To say the name of Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson means, according to Popović, to "fly the Norwegian flag."⁷³

This portrait of Bjørnson did not depart much from his actual role in Norwegian cultural and political life.⁷⁴ The *Glasnik* gave him quite a lot of space even later.⁷⁵ As if the reason was to emphasize that Bjørnson, a conventional nineteenth-century author, defender of the rights of small nations and Captain Dreyfus,⁷⁶ was much closer to the *Glasnik* than his countryman, the radical individualist, rebel and modernist Ibsen. Moreover, the writer of Ibsen's obituary in the *Glasnik* even found it relevant to make the remark that Ibsen had been held in high esteem by "the German press" in particular.⁷⁷

⁶⁷ X.X.X., "Edvard Grig", SKG XX/1 (1908), 64.

⁶⁸ "Bjersterne Bjernson", SKG VIII/1 (1903), 79–80 (unsigned).

⁶⁹ Ibid. 80.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid. 79.

⁷⁴ On Bjørnson and his political role see Ronald G. Popperwell, *Norway* (London – Tonbridge 1975), 240–242.

⁷⁵ See the lengthy essay of George Brandes, "Bjersterne Bjernson" (translated from German by Nikola Stajić), SKG XXIII (1909), vols. 3, 202–297; 4, 288–297; 6, 453–460; 7, 532–544; 8, 605–613; 9, 694–700; see also R. [Pavle Pavlović], "Bjersterne Bjernson. 'Laboremus'", SKG III/2 (1901), 156–158; "Bjersterne Bjernson", SKG VIII/1 (1903), 79–80 (unsigned); L. [Branko Lazarević], SKG XXIV/9 (1910), 718–720; Milan Grol, "Bankrotstvo, komad u četiri čina, od Bjersterna Bjernsona", SKG XXV/8 (1910), 602–605.

⁷⁶ Popperwell, *Norway*, 242.

⁷⁷ IV. [Miloš Ivković], "Henrik Ibzen", SKG XVI/10 (1906), 799–800.

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The group of leading intellectuals of the Kingdom of Serbia gathered round the *Srpski književni glasnik* from its inception in 1901 apparently were acutely aware of the fact that the age they lived in was the "age of empire". Moreover, they saw their entire public engagement as serving the cause of the defence of Serbian culture against Austria-Hungary's colonial "civilizing mission". That is the ideological framework which should be borne in mind in every analysis of not only the foreign and domestic policy of the Kingdom of Serbia but also and above all of its culture in the critical years preceding the First World War.

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This paper results from the project of the Institute for Balkan Studies *History of political ideas and institutions in the Balkans in the 19th and 20th centuries* (no. 177011) funded by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia.