

BALKAN “PROPAGANDA WARS” IN THE LATE 19TH CENTURY PARTICIPANT AND INTERPRETER: HISTORIAN SLOBODAN JOVANOVIĆ

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Slobodan Jovanović (1869–1958) was a renowned Serbian scholar and statesman, political philosopher, lawyer, historian, literary critic and writer, professor of public and constitutional law. He was president of the Royal Serbian Academy, rector of Belgrade University, dean of Belgrade University’s Law School, and president of the Serbian Cultural Club, a leading Serbian political and cultural organization in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia on the eve of the Second World War. He died in 1958 in London, where he had served as prime minister and deputy prime minister of the Yugoslav government-in-exile during the Second World War. In post-war Yugoslavia, in a political trial in absentia held in 1946, he was sentenced to twenty years’ hard labour, confiscation of property and deprivation of civil rights. He was exonerated by a Serbian court in 2007.¹

The father of Slobodan Jovanović played a significant role in his upbringing. Vladimir Jovanović (1833–1922) was one of the leading ideologists of the Serbian Liberals and the United Serbian Youth, a patriotic organization whose goal was the liberation and unification of the Serbian nation. Vladimir Jovanović’s children, Slobodan (meaning free, liberal) and Pravda (meaning justice), were given symbolic, political, ideological, liberal names which had not

¹ For more on Slobodan Jovanović see B. Milosavljević, *Life & Times of Slobodan Jovanović (1869-1958)*. Belgrade, 2021; idem, “Slobodan Jovanović”, *Life, work, times: on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of his birth*, eds. Kosta Čavoški and Aleksandar Kostić; English translation Jelena Mitrić, Tatjana Čosović, Tanja Ružin Ivanović, Belgrade, 2019; idem, *Slobodan Jovanović. Teorija*, Belgrade, 2017; D. N. Basta, *Pet likova Slobodana Jovanovića*, Belgrade, 2003; M. Jovičić, *Slobodan Jovanović. Ilustrovana monografija*, Belgrade: Vajat, 1997; A. Pavković, *Slobodan Jovanović: An Unsentimental Approach to Politics*, New York, 1993; D. Djordjević, “Historians in politics: Slobodan Jovanović”, *Journal of Contemporary History* 3, 1, 1973, p. 2-40; M. B. Petrovich, “Slobodan Jovanović (1869-1958): the career and fate of a Serbian historian”, *Serbian Studies* 3, 1/2, 1984/85, p. 3-26; Slobodan Jovanović; D. T. Bataković, preface to S. Jovanović (Slobodan Yovanovitch), “Sur l’idée yougoslave: passé et avenir (1939)”, *Balkanica* XXX-IX [2008] 2009, p. 285-290.

been used among the Serbs as christen names.² As a political opponent of Prince Michael Obrenovic, during his second period in office (1860-1868), Vladimir Jovanović had to leave Serbia. He lived in England, France, Switzerland, and in Austria-Hungary, where his children were born (in Novi Sad, present-day Vojvodina, Serbia). In Geneva he started the journal *Sloboda (La liberté)*, renamed *Srpska sloboda (La liberté serbe)*, published in Serbian and French, and in Novi Sad co-edited the newspaper *Zastava* started by Svetozar Miletić, leader of the Serbian Liberals in Austria-Hungary (Vojvodina). After the assassination of Prince Michel in 1868, even though an entire set of political circumstances that resulted in the assassination had not been clarified, the authorities at the time reacted swiftly and fiercely. Vladimir Jovanović was among those that were held responsible for the crime committed. He and the Bulgarian writer Lyuben Karavelov were tried before a court of first instance in Pest for conspiring against Prince Michael but the case was dropped for lack of evidence.

Vladimir Jovanović had a remarkable and long political career first in the Principality, and then Kingdom, of Serbia. He was assistant secretary (junior secretary) of St. Andrew's Day Assembly (1858), finance minister (1876–1880), president of Serbia's National Audit Office (supreme financial control), vice-president of the State Council, senator (member of the Upper House), an MP and professor of political economy at the Belgrade Faculty of Law. In addition, he was the last president of the Serbian Learned Society before it grew into the Royal Serbian Academy (1886). He was a typical mid-19th century European liberal and nationalist, particularly influenced by the Italian liberal and nationalist Giuseppe Mazzini. Vladimir Jovanović believed that nations should be liberated from foreign rule and united. On the other hand, he criticized Social Darwinist nationalism in the late 19th and early 20th century.³ Although father and son diverged on some political and theoretical issues, the son shared his father's view on Social Darwinist nationalism.⁴

Slobodan Jovanović was a prolific author. In the interwar period his collected works were published in 17 volumes. He published papers in different research areas – theory of the state and law, constitutional law, political

² The names Slobodan and Pravda were new and uncommon and so everybody must have known they were Vladimir Jovanović's children. Vladimir Jovanović may have not been aware that the name Slobodan did exist in the Christian calendar, but in its Greek and Latin versions (Eleftherios, Liberal, Liberius). On Vladimir Jovanović see G. Stokes, *Legitimacy through Liberalism: Vladimir Jovanović and the Transformation of Serbian Politics*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1975; B. Milosavljević, *Slobodan Jovanović. Teorija*, Belgrade: Institute for Balkan Studies, SASA, 2017.

³ Vladimir Jovanović laid out arguments against Bismarckian nationalism in a booklet titled *The Near-Eastern Problem and the Pan-German Peril* (Watts & Co, London, 1909) published in English, where he pointed to the dangers of German militant politics.

⁴ B. Milosavljević, "Liberal and Conservative Political Thought in Nineteenth-century Serbia. Vladimir Jovanović and Slobodan Jovanović". *Balkanica* XLI, 2010, p. 131-153.

philosophy, general history and the Serbian history of the 19th and 20th century, sociology, political science, interpretation of literary works, literary and theatre criticism. Nowadays he has been acknowledged for his contribution to the establishment of some academic disciplines in Serbia. His best known work is his multi-volume history of Serbia. His historiographic texts spanned the period from the late 18th to the mid-20th century. Moreover, owing to his refined literary taste, the language and style of his writing, regardless of the academic discipline it belonged to, has always been praised for its literary grace and narrative clarity. Historiography occupies a special place in Slobodan Jovanović's work. Jovanović reflected deeply on the issues concerning methodology and historiography. Those are the issues that demand particular attention. He explored the issue of personal and generational prejudice, as well as prejudices in general because they hinder an objective interpretation of the past. Slobodan Jovanović recorded and used information obtained from contemporaries, either participants in or observers of historical events. He also included his own testimonies in his historical texts and he left his memoirs behind. In some cases he had multiple functions – as a participant, an observer and a historian at the same time. The examinations of Jovanović's claims and the facts he refers to, including his memoirs, confirm the credibility of his texts.⁵

As a young diplomat, Slobodan Jovanović worked in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Serbia at the time of an intense propaganda war fought in the Balkans by the great powers and the Balkan states with the aim to resolve the Macedonian question as a part of the Eastern Question, in the context of the division of the possessions of the Ottoman Empire. It was the war of all against all, “a bitter, life-or-death war, all means permitted”, as it was described in the report of the diplomat Mihailo G. Ristić, Slobodan's brother-in-law.⁶ Since Jovanović directly took part in and eye-witnessed the events in the Balkan “propaganda wars” in the late 19th century, and at the same time he was an objective and critical historian, it is important to shed light on his first-hand account of this period in the history of the Balkans.

Upon completing their studies abroad, the recipients of scholarships awarded by the Kingdom of Serbia had to work as civil servants for a period of time equivalent to the period for which they received the scholarship.⁷ Upon his

⁵ B. Milosavljević, “Slobodan Jovanović - istoriografija i metodologija”, *Tokovi istorije* 2, 2014, p. 157-184.

⁶ M. Ristić, “Izveštaj o poslovima propagande od godine 1885. do naših dana” [1893], prepis od 29. avgusta 1903, in B. Vučetić, *Naša stvar u Osmanskom carstvu*, Belgrade, 2012, 38; J. M. Jovanović, *Južna Srbija od kraja XVIII veka do oslobođenja*, Belgrade: G. Kon, 1938.

⁷ Slobodan Jovanović enrolled at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich for the winter semester of 1886/7. Among his professors one should mention Joachim Wilhelm Franz Philipp von Holtzendorff (who taught Criminal Law, International Law and State Law), to whom Jovanović refers to in his works. The Jovanović family moved from Munich to Zurich in 1887, where Slobodan Jovanović continued his studies, enrolling at the Staatswissenschaftliche Fakultät

arrival in Belgrade in March 1892, Slobodan Jovanović took up the post of a 2nd class court clerk at the First Instance Court of the Podunavlje (Danube) District in Belgrade. In late summer and only ten days after the new Liberal government took office, he was appointed as a 2nd class civil servant at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He was assigned to the Political-Educational Department, known as “Propaganda”, which performed the tasks concerning the Serbian population living outside Serbia, primarily in the territory of what then were Balkan possessions of the Ottoman Empire. These areas were commonly known in Serbia as “Old Serbia” (Raška, Kosovo, Metohija and the area between Skoplje and Tetovo) and “South Serbia” (Macedonia).⁸ Of course, it should be borne in mind that the population in Macedonia was not homogenous or compact everywhere, there were differences from area to area. “Old Serbia” and “Macedonia” were a part of Ottoman administrative units and, religiously, into the eparchies of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Bulgarian Exarchate. The administrative units were changed in accordance with the Ottoman state’s assessment of their practicality. The eparchies of the Orthodox church had a historical origin, but were adapted to new state and administrative boundaries.

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for the summer semester. This faculty was later renamed Rechts und Staatswissenschaftliche Fakultät, whereas today it is known as the Rechtswissenschaftliche Fakultät. For the winter semester of 1887/8 Slobodan Jovanović enrolled at the Faculté de Droit at the University of Geneva. He attended lectures on the philosophy of law and the general history of law delivered by Henri Brocher, on public law by Ferdinand Genet, on the French civil code by Dean Alfred Martin, on Roman law and comparative civil law by Louis Bridel. Bridel was an expert in comparative family law and the issues of the legal status of women. Slobodan Jovanović studied in Geneva until the summer semester of 1890. He completed six semesters in Geneva and passed five tests of licentiate exam. A licentiate, “an academic degree of licentiate”, had a different meaning from the one it has now in Switzerland and France. It was the subject matter of the studies in Paris that Slobodan Jovanović was particularly interested in. He opted for the *École libre des sciences politiques*. Based on the list of its students at the time Slobodan Jovanović studied at it, the school had an international character, with students from the USA, England, Argentina, Belgium, Greece, Italy, Japan, Hungary, Nicaragua, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia (3 students 1891/2), the Netherlands, Montenegro and Switzerland. While in Paris, Slobodan Jovanović lived at 15, rue Monge. According to the Science Po archives, the French writer Marcel Proust (Proust, Marcel, 9, Boulevard Malessherbes) studied at the School of Political Sciences at the same time as Slobodan Jovanović. Therefore Jovanović should have been able to experience the world that was at the centre of Proust’s literature. From the review of Proust’s *À la recherche du temps perdu* Jovanović wrote in 1922, it seems that he had in front of his eyes Proust he could meet in Paris, in all probability in the lectures of very popular Albert Sorel. Arhiv Srbije (AS), Ministarstvo prosvete i crkvenih poslova (MPs), Prosvetno odeljenje (P) 1890, XXIX, 21, AS, MPs-P, 1891, XXXIII, 96; Archives des Sciences Po, Paris, *École libre des sciences politiques*, 1 SP 3; 1 SP 13a; B. Milosavljević, *Slobodan Jovanović. Teorija*, Belgrade: Institute for Balkan Studies, SASA, 2017.

⁸ S. Terzić, *Stara Srbija, drama jedne civilizacije (XIX-XX vek). Raška, Kosovo i Metohija, Skopsko-tetovska oblast*, Novi Sad - Belgrade, 2012.

The strategy for policy of liberation and unification of the Serbian people took shape during Prince Michael's rule (1860–1868) and treaties were concluded with Montenegro, Greece, Romania and the Bulgarian Revolutionary Committee. Serbia started organizing a network of agents across the Balkans and commanders of irregular units ready to muster volunteers once a liberation war against the Ottomans was launched.⁹ After the assassination of Prince Michael in 1868, the Regency set up the Educational Committee on Schools and Teachers in Old Serbia. Three years later, the Orthodox Seminary was established in Prizren (1871), owing to Sima Andrejević Igumanov and the Russian vice-consul in Prizren, Ivan Stepanovich Yastrebov. Before the Serbo-Turkish wars of 1876–78, the Ottoman authorities did not hamper the opening of Serbian schools, the number of which in Old Serbia and Macedonia neared seventy. After the wars, the Ottomans began to persecute Serbian teachers, and Serbian schools survived only north of Mt Šara. Thus, after its successful beginning, Serbian national action in the Balkan part of the Ottoman Empire had an almost ten-years-long break (1876–1885) as a result of the Serbo-Turkish wars.¹⁰

In early 1885 the Austro-Hungarian finance minister and administrator of Bosnia-Herzegovina (1882–1903), Benjamin Kallay, alerted to Bulgaria's expansion in Macedonia in order to divert Serbia's attention from Bosnia, of which the Serbian minister in Vienna, Milan M. Bogićević, informed the Serbian government. The message to King Milan and Prime Minister Milutin Garašanin meant that Serbia should abandon her interests in Bosnia (in accordance with the Secret Convention of 1881), but that she would not be prevented from involvement in the south and confrontation with Bulgarian action, which had greatly intensified owing to Russian support.¹¹ Milutin Garašanin's Progressive government drew up a programme of educational and cultural activity, “Instructions for sustained influence in Old Serbia and Macedonia” (1885).¹² Serbia's minister in Constantinople, Jevrem Grujić, tried to reach an

⁹ S. Jovanović, “Druga vlada Miloša i Mihaila”, *Ustavobranitelji i njihova vlada. Druga vlada Miloša i Mihaila* [Beograd: G. Kon, 1923; Sabrana dela 6, 1933], Sabrana dela [SD] 3, eds. R. Samardžić and Ž. Stojković, Belgrade: BIGZ, Jugoslavijapublik, SKZ, 1990-1991, p. 413.

¹⁰ On the general state policy in Macedonia before and during Jovanović's work in the Education Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, see S. Jovanović, *Vlada 91-99*; M. Vojvodić, *Serbs in International Relations at the End of the 19th and the Beginning of the 20th Century*, Belgrade, 1988.

¹¹ Archive of Serbia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Political Department (AS, MID -PO), 1881-1886, VI, II, 9, Milan M. Bogicevic, MP in Vienna, Milutin Garasanin, President of the Council of Ministers and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Vienna 10/22. February 1885; ASANU, ZMR, 14243, 4109, S. Jovanovic to M. Ristić, Belgrade, March / April [no date] 1895. Jovanović refers to this Bogićević's letter in the Government, 1, 92, fn. 2. Mihailo Ristić transferred the entire letter to the Report [1893], *Naša stvar u Osmanskom carstvu*, 40-41. M. Jovanović, “Novaković in diplomacy”, p. 168.

¹² AS, Milutin Garašanin Fund, no. 836. See M. Vojvodić, “Vladimir Karić, Serbian Consul in Skopje (1889-1892)”, *Vardarski zbornik* 1 (1999), 4 (hereinafter: M. Vojvodić, “Vladimir Karić”).

understanding with the Ecumenical Patriarchate concerning the appointment of Serbian bishops. The following year, the new minister in Constantinople, Stojan Novaković (1886–91), was tasked with making arrangements for the conclusion of a railway, trade and consular convention with the Ottoman government. After the conclusion of a provisional consular convention (4/16 September 1886) and the enactment in Serbia of the law on the organization of the Foreign Ministry, diplomatic missions and consulates (1/13 November 1886), Serbia's consulates general were opened in Skopje and Thessaloniki (21 January/2 February 1887) and consulates in Priština and Bitola (1889). The Belgrade–Thessaloniki railway was opened in May 1888 and the trade convention was signed and ratified in June the same year.¹³

Initially, Serbian national and educational activity in the Ottoman Balkans was to be carried out by the Society of St Sava, just as Greek propaganda was carried out by the secret society Syllogos, and Bulgarian by the Society of Sts Cyril and Methodius. In 1887, the Department for the Serbian Schools and Churches outside Serbia was established at the Ministry for Education and Religious Affairs with the task of being a liaison between the government and the Society of St Sava and of supervising the Society's activities.¹⁴ After the opening of Serbia's consulates in the Ottoman Empire, the affairs of this service were taken over by the Political Department of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (1889), which included a separate unit, the Political Division. The Department for the Serbian Schools and Churches outside Serbia was reassigned from the Ministry of Education to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1889) and constituted as a separate division of its Political Division. The Educational Section of the Political Division (Educational-Religious, Political-Educational or Educational-Political/p.p.) was popularly called "Propaganda".¹⁵ Propaganda meant systematic work on fostering and spreading the ideas of own state and defence against the propaganda of other states.

Given the situation in the Ottoman Empire, the Macedonian question was inseparable from the church question. People still "observed the old customs", fasting and regularly going to church, and were able to choose between the liturgy in Greek in the churches of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and in Church Slavonic in those of the Bulgarian Exarchate. The Ecumenical Patriarchate represented Greek interests, and the Bulgarian Exarchate (in the

¹³ *Srpske novine* (SN), (7/19 November 1886).

¹⁴ The first basic rule of the Society of Saint Sava (July 31 / August 12, 1886), as well as the report, was spoken at the first public meeting of the Society (August 24 / September 5, 1886). in: M. Vojvodić, *Društvo Svetog Save, dokumenti 1886-1891*, Belgrade: Archive of Serbia, 1999, 17-26.

¹⁵ See State Calendars (1892-1898); Material (1890), AS, MID-PP, 1890, 265, pp no. 714, C. Grujić, Organization of the Education Board at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 25 / June 6, 1890. Ref. M. Vojvodić, SNVK, 85.

Ottoman Empire) represented Bulgarian interests. Both were recognized by the Ottoman state.

Since there was no recognized (either by positive law or by canon law) Serbian Church in the Ottoman Empire (e.g. the Patriarchate of Peć or a Serbian Exarchate), there was no rubric for Serbs in Ottoman census registers, and hence no legal recognition of the existence of Serbs in the Ottoman Balkans: “The Serbs, lacking their own recognized church, were left without their rubric in the Ottoman census registers.”¹⁶ By promoting the liturgy in Church Slavonic as opposed to Greek, Bulgarian propaganda sought to get the entire Slavic population to be declared as Bulgarian.¹⁷

All warring parties in the Balkan propaganda war, as it was vividly characterized by Mihailo Ristić, had high and often unnecessary expenses. The concept of state propaganda, of course, is broader than the concept of propaganda as a name of a ministry division. The funds from the budget of the Foreign Ministry used to finance the operation of this division and of the Serbian diplomatic missions in the Ottoman Empire were not the only funds used for propaganda purposes. Slobodan Jovanović speaks of the expenses incurred by Serbian and Bulgarian propagandas:

“[Vladimir Karić] believed that propaganda affairs should be managed with a select few and that money should not be squandered like ammunition in a war. It is a job, Novaković wrote to him, played à fonds perdu. The Bulgarians, with a much older and more experienced propaganda, complained that they had high unnecessary expenses due to agents who were agents only on paper.”¹⁸ There were many unreliable agents as well as those Karić called “exploiters of patriotism” (who changed their national affiliation opportunistically): “Those were people who speculated in the national struggle in Macedonia, who had several passports and no nationality – Serbs today, Bulgarians tomorrow, Greeks the day after tomorrow – ready to serve whoever pays, but also ready to resell themselves as easily as they sold themselves.”¹⁹

If we observe a longer period of time, it becomes obvious that during this propaganda war alliances were concluded and broken, but that the influence

¹⁶ S. Jovanovic, *Vlada*, 94; M. Jagodić, “The Nufus Question: The Problem of the Official Recognition of the Serbian Nazi in Turkey 1894-1910”, *Istorijski časopis* 57, 2008, p. 343-354.

¹⁷ A. Jovanović, *The Origin of the Exarchate and Turkey, Russia and Serbia*, Skopje, 1936; Lj. Aleksić-Pe jaković, “Preface”, [in:] *Documents on the Foreign Policy of the Kingdom of Serbia 1903-1914*, 2, Appendix 1, Organization Serbian defence 1903-1905. Year (ed. Ljiljana Aleksić-Pe jaković), Belgrade: SASA, 2008, 10.

¹⁸ Vladimir Karić reports on organized groups who “pull the nose of both Serbs and Bulgarians” and threaten us with Bulgarians, and Bulgarians again with us “there are cases where the same people took from the consul, the ministry and the society of St. Sava”. Vid. M. Vojvodić, SNVK, 333-344, AS, PsC, 1889-1890, pp no. 47, Report C. Karića in: V. Karić S. Novakovic, Skopje, 8/20. February 1890; S. Jovanovic, *Vlada*, 102.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

of the great powers was, of course, decisive. At first, it was only the Ottoman Empire and the Albanians, whose interests sometimes coincided and sometimes did not, could use armed force, or violence, to achieve their ends.

After one year in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Slobodan Jovanović was appointed as an attaché (1st class civil servant) to the Serbian Legation in Constantinople in 1893.²⁰ Much of the work of the Legation in Constantinople overlapped with that of the Propaganda. The question of some parts of the dioceses of Mostar and Sarajevo, which remained in the Ottoman Empire upon the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary (1878), was raised again. Important communication was either encrypted or dispatched.²¹

In spite of the so-called Law on Exile, ex-King Milan returned to Serbia (9/21 January) at the invitation of King Alexander, which was the reason for the resignation of the Radical government of General Sava Grujić. By decision of the new president of the Ministerial Council and foreign minister, Djordje Simić (in office from 12/24 January 1894), Slobodan Jovanović was recalled from Constantinople (25 January/6 February). Upon his return to Belgrade, he wrote to Mihailo Ristić in Constantinople (28 February/12 March): “I visited your family a week ago [...] I told them [...] that Constantinople’s does good to your health, but I also told them that your hands ‘are tied’ and you haven’t been able to give your patriotic curiosity a free rein as much as you could and would like to. When I acquainted them with plans for your transfer to Skopje in more detail, I noticed that the news upset your mother, who later confided that she wouldn’t want you to go there, still being shaken as she was by tragic fate of L. M. in Priština.”²² The initials L. M. belong to Luka Marinković, the first consul of Serbia in Priština, who was killed by Albanians (19 June/1 July 1890). Two years later Ristić (unwillingly) took up the post in Skopje, to which he was appointed by Stojan Novaković.²³

²⁰ AS, MID – A, 1893, 145, Decree, 15/27. August 1893; SN (17/29 August 1893); AS, MID - PsC, 1893, I, 133, no. 8325, Decree Notice, 16/28. September, September 20 / October 2, 1893. AS, MID - A, 1894, 2435, no. 3934.

²¹ AS, MID – PP, 1893, 179, XIV. A dictionary of ciphers has been preserved in the Archives of Serbia.

²² ASANU, ZMR, 14243/4097, S. М.овановић М. Ristic, Belgrade, February 28 / March 12, 1894.

²³ Ristic recorded a conversation with Novakovic, who conditioned him to accept the duties in Skopje. See M. Stanić, “Memories of the Metropolitans I worked with, Mihailo G. Ristić”, *Vardarski zbornik* 2 (2003), 87 (hereinafter: M. Ristić, “Memories of the Metropolitans”). Mihailo G. Ristic, secretary of the 2nd class in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he was appointed consul of the 2nd class. Consulate General in Skopje, by decree of 22 April / 4 May 1896 (SN, 25 April / 7 May 1896). He worked in Skopje before the decree was issued, in October 1895. At that time, he married Pravda Jovanović, Slobodan Jovanović’s sister.

In May 1894, Slobodan Jovanović was promoted to a 5th-class secretary in the Foreign Ministry.²⁴ As chief of the Educational Division (Propaganda),²⁵ he operated in cooperation with the Educational Committee. Archimandrite Nićifor Dučić (president) and Ljubomir Kovačević, an academician (trustee of the foundation of the late Sima Igumanov), alongside Panta Srećković, an academician, former professor of history and district governor (Dučić and Srećković were members of the Regency appointed by the Educational Committee in 1868) were again appointed members of the Committee in 1894. Soon Stojan Novaković, a member of the State Council and former minister in Constantinople, was also appointed as member of the Educational Committee.²⁶

At the Committee's meetings, Slobodan Jovanovic reported on all important cases submitted to his Division, mostly petitions by private persons and proposals by diplomatic missions (Constantinople, Thessaloniki, Bitola, Skopje, Priština) and customs offices (Raška, Javor). The main affairs of the Committee (examination of documents and formulation of decisions) were performed by Stojan Novaković, the only Committee member with long administrative experience. In June 1894 Jovanović wrote to Mihailo Ristić in Constantinople that “since Novaković joined in, what he says, everyone accepts”,²⁷ a statement he later (1917) reiterated: “it may well be that the Committee never took a different decision from what Novaković suggested.”²⁸ An illustration of the way in which the Committee operated may be its deliberation on the proposal of the Consulate in Skopje to threaten the Metropolitan of Skopje Methodius with depriving him of aid. The Committee discussed the proposal on two occasions and expressed a negative opinion: “the proposal of that Consulate should not be endorsed because it follows from the letter itself that it is not Metropolitan Methodius who hampers the reintroduction of Slavic liturgy in the church of the Saviour [in Skopje] but the Greek consul;

²⁴ AS, MID-A, XIII, 3027; SN (19/31 May 1894).

²⁵ Before Jovanović, the propaganda service was led by Vladimir Karić (1885/89), Branislav Nušić (1889), Mihailo Ristić (1890/93) and Svetislav Simić (1893/94). Propaganda chiefs are not listed in state calendars. Schematics of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (systematization of jobs) which are stated in the Records of the Administrative Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, are not in the material of the Archives of Serbs, nor in the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the RS.

²⁶ AS, MID - PP, 1894, 523, I, pp no. 216, Education Board, Decision, Belgrade, 11/23 February 1894; ASANU, ZMR, 14243/4097, S. М.овановић М. Ristic (Belgrade, February 28 / March 12, 1894); S. Jovanović, “Stojan Novaković”, p. 117-118; AS, MID - PP, 1894, 523, I, pp no. 794, Board of Education, Decision, Belgrade, May 20 / June 1, 1894; AS, MID - PP, 1894, 523, I, pp no. 792, Stojan Novaković to Simo Lozanić, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Belgrade, 6/18. June 1894.

²⁷ ASANU, ZMR, 14243/4098, S. Jovanovic, Belgrade, 15/27. June 1894. Cf. S. Jovanović, “Stojan Novaković [1917, 1921]”, p. 117.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

rather, we should alert the Greek government, through our chargé d'affaires in Athens, to the incorrect conduct of its consul."²⁹

During the summer of 1894, at the request of Foreign Minister Sima Lozanić, Slobodan Jovanović made an inspection tour of all Serbian consulates in the Ottoman Empire.³⁰

The same tour had been made by the previous Propaganda chiefs, Vladimir Karić (1887, 1889) and Mihailo Ristić (June-August 1892).³¹ Lozanić instructed Jovanović to follow Ristić's itinerary. Slobodan Jovanović set off on 6/18 July, after the return of King Alexander from Constantinople, and returned on 9/21 August 1894. His tour lasted thirty-three days.³²

Upon his return, he drew up a comprehensive report with a detailed analysis of schools, teachers, churches, bookshops, municipalities, the Ottoman administration, Greek metropolitans, foreign consuls, Bulgarian bishops, and specified who believed "our opponents" were in each area.³³

He analysed the arguments for and against the relocation of the consulate from Priština to Mitrovica and the reasons for the divisions among the Serb population in Priština. He wrote that the Serbs were "benumbed" by violence. He explained the strategic importance of Skopje and gave a progress report on the project of establishing connections between the consulates and of creating a network of Serbian schools. He emphasized that the best job had been done during the consulship of Vladimir Karić in Skopje. He wrote that Serbian schools in the area of the Bitola Consulate were not working and that Bulgarian teachers were teaching the children to sing disdainful songs about the Serbian custom of celebrating the family patron saint's day (*slava*), a custom that was particularly targeted by Bulgarian propaganda. He also pointed to the propaganda of the Bulgarian Catholic Church (Thessaloniki), which operated under the auspices of Austria-Hungary and France.³⁴ He evaluated the performance of the Serbian diplomats and some agents. He gave his opinion

²⁹ AS, MID – PP, 1894, 523, I, Sessions of the Education Board, May 21 / June 2, 1894; 1/13 November 1894.

³⁰ AS, MID – PP, 1894, 240.

³¹ Before the establishment of the consulate, similar trips were made by Panta Srečković, Miloš Milojević and Jevrem Velimirović. Vladimir Karić published a travelogue about his journey from Constantinople to Belgrade (1887), under the pseudonym V. Crnojević (Constantinople, Sveta Gora, Thessaloniki. *Putnička crtica s beleškama o narodnoj propagandi na istoku*, Beograd 1889). Branislav Nušić's report on his trip to Shkodra in: Miloš Jagodić, "Report of Branislav Nušić on a trip from Priština to Shkodra in 1894", *Mixed materials* (Miscellanea) 31, 2010, p. 259-279.

³² AS, MID – PP, 1894, 240, p. no. 1273, 1275, S. Jovanović to Minister S. Lozanić, Belgrade, 10/22. August 1894.

³³ AS, MID – PP, 1894, 240, pp no. 1787, 1273. The report ended 16/28. August 1894. years. Adopted ("received") 4/16. October 1894 (p. no. 1970, 1781).

³⁴ About Bulgarian unions, Catholic propaganda and Catholic missions in Thessaloniki, as well as the weak progress of Protestant propaganda (English-American propaganda). I. Ivanić, *Iz crkvene istorije Srba u Turskoj u XVI II i XIX veku*, Beograd, 1902, p. 32-64.

about Greek bishops, Ottoman administrators and foreign consuls (especially Russian) and about the proposals submitted by the consuls. He found the belief (held by, among others, some diplomats) mistaken and naïve that the representatives of the Russian state in the Balkans acted on their own; rather, they, regardless of their personal sympathies, acted on the instructions of their headquarters.³⁵

The influence of ex-King Milan on King Alexander had caused Serbia to lose the sympathies of Russian diplomacy,³⁶ but in late 1894 Russia changed her policy, deciding to support Serbia. The political orientation of relying on Russia would be also be pursued by the Novaković government, which took office in mid-1895. Slobodan Jovanović, as chief of the Propaganda, secretary of the Educational Committee and close friend of the chargé d'affaires of the Serbian Legation in St. Petersburg, Pavle Marinković, witnessed the first step in the change of Russian policy and participated in confidential communication between the Serbian Legation in St. Petersburg and its Foreign Ministry.³⁷ Apart from exchanging official dispatches, Jovanović and Marinković maintained private correspondence, as did Jovanović and Mihailo Ristić. Marinković also wrote to Stojan Novaković. These correspondences have partially survived. At the time when Alimpije Vasiljević was to be succeeded by Lt.-Col. Milan Mihailović at the post of Serbian minister in St. Petersburg, Pavle Marinković was chargé d'affaires. At the same time, the then minister of the economy and former foreign minister Sima Lozanić also acted for the interior minister Milan M. Bogićević (from 2/14 December 1894). Marinković's report submitted to Lozanić (28 December/8 January) contained information which in Jovanović's opinion (in a letter to Ristić) might be "a starting point of a radical change in our propaganda".³⁸ Given the change of Russian policy, it seems reasonable to assume that the transmission of the information during the absence of M. Bogićević (a relative of King Alexander and supporter of his pro-Austrian politics) was not an accident. On the back of Marinković's letter (4/16 January 1895) is the instruction that it be delivered to the Educational Committee (confidential no. 29; pp [propaganda] no. 116/95) as well as a note by Slobodan Jovanović about the opinion of the Committee. Marinković reported on his

³⁵ Report of Slobodan Jovanović, IG, 208.

³⁶ S. Jovanović, "Pavle Marinković", [in:] SD 11, 283. Type for example letter from the Russian minister inostranih dela Girs (Nikolai Karlovich Geers) on the occasion of the return of King Milan to the country in: I. Przić, "The first government of George S. Simić", *Srpski književni glasnik* 13/1 (September 16, 1924), p. 127.

³⁷ SN, May 28 / June 9, 1894. S. Jovanović, "Pavle Marinković", 283; M. Vojvodić, "Novaković and Russia", [in:] Stojan Novaković, p. 113-138.

³⁸ AS, MID - PP, 1895, 142, Izveštaji Poslanstva u Petrogradu, pov. no. 107, Pavle Marinković, Chargé d'Affaires, Simo Lozanić, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs (Petrograd, 20 May / 1 June); ASANU, ZMR, 14243, 4100, S. Jovanovic, M. Ristic, Belgrade, January [after Christmas] 1895.

conversation with a very influential political figure in Russia, K. Pobedonostsev, chief procurator of the Holy Synod, concerning the election of the Ecumenical patriarch. Pobedonostsev criticized the Ecumenical Patriarchate because “instead of serving Orthodoxy, it serves Greek nationality and takes orders from Athens”.³⁹ He also pointed to Russia’s problem with Greeks in Russia:

“The schismatics,⁴⁰ to whom our Greeks are quite close, can cause a schism here at any time. You know Filipov [Tertii Ivanovich Filipov]? Well, he’s more a Greek than the patriarch himself. They wouldn’t allow any measures against the Greek Church.⁴¹ So, we still keep quiet and know everything, and we keep quiet because we cannot do anything officially for fear of being refused, because today Russia is not in such a position [emperor Alexander III had only just died].⁴² But, if we can’t do anything officially, we can try to help you with advice and in various other ways. Mr Nelidov [Aleksandr Ivanovich, Russian ambassador to Constantinople] has already taken various steps. Have you met with Mr Shishkin [Nikolai Pavlovich, deputy to the ailing foreign minister Nikolai Giers]?⁴³ He’ll tell you that Nelidov has been adequately instructed, and you’ll best be helped through him.”⁴⁴

Marinković also remarked in his letter that Pobedonostsev, when speaking about Orthodox Slavs, usually meant Bulgarians. Although Bulgarian émigrés were very “enterprising and maintain contacts”, they were increasingly disliked in the Foreign Ministry.⁴⁵ Shishkin confirmed that Russian ambassador in Constantinople Nelidov had been instructed to be of assistance to the Serbian minister, but that the latter should play the leading role. Nelidov, who had pro-

³⁹ AS, MID - PP, 1895, 142, pov. no. 107, P. Marinkovic, S. Lozanić, Petrograd, December 28, 1894 / January 8, 1895. Marinković wrote down the words of the interlocutor immediately after the conversation.

⁴⁰ It refers to Russian schismatics (Old Believers) who did not accept the reforms of Patriarch Nikon (17th century). They are baptized with two fingers, etc.

⁴¹ At the beginning of the 19th century, Serbian representatives complained about Russian Greeks in the Russian state administration, starting with K. K. Rodofinikin (who had a long and successful career as the head of the Asian department and deputy minister in the Russian Foreign Ministry) and are looking to be replaced by "real" Russians. See S. Novakovic, “Patriarchate of Constantinople”, p. 346 [437].

⁴² Tsar Nicholas II had just ascended the throne, after the death of Tsar Alexander III (October 20 / November 1, 1894).

⁴³ Shishkin became the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Empire of Russia in 1896.

⁴⁴ AS, MID - PP, 1895, 142, pov. no. 107, Reports of the Embassy in Petrograd, P. Маринковић S. Lozanić, Petrograd, December 28, 1894 / January 8, 1895. Nelidov and early (1891) had instructions to help the Serbian side: "Nelidov has had an order to help us in this since last spring" (S. Novaković V. Karić, Ca rigrad, 15/27 March 1891). See M. Vojvodić, SNVK, 536.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

Bulgarian leanings,⁴⁶ was now instructed to represent Serbian interests. Of course, the political situation in Bulgaria should also be taken into account.

The Educational Committee commended Marinković and expressed their opinion that the Legation in Constantinople should be informed of Russia's support. Reliance on Russia was in agreement with the assessments of Stojan Novaković, according to whose instructions the Propaganda in fact operated. Instructions of the foreign minister to the new minister in Constantinople, Lt.-Col. Milan Mihailović, were laid down (20 January/1 February 1895) based on the recommendations of the Committee.⁴⁷ Among the priorities were the demand to the Ecumenical Patriarchate to introduce Slavic liturgy at least in the eparchies where Slavs made up a majority of the population and to provide the same protection for Serbian schools as already extended to Greek schools. A third priority was the question of Serbian bishops. Given this message from St Petersburg, the Educational Committee recommended that from then on the Legation in Constantinople and the consulates should turn to Russian diplomatic missions which had been instructed by their headquarters to be of assistance to Serbian diplomacy. The political orientation towards Russia was, of course, received with little enthusiasm in pro-Austrian circles.⁴⁸

From 1885 Austria-Hungary had been directing the aspirations of the Progressive governments towards Macedonia, but it was Macedonia that eventually became the reason for a pro-Russian turn in the Progressives' foreign policy (the Novaković government). This context seems to explain the reasons for the attempts, after the change of Russian policy (in the months before the Novaković government took office), to dissolve the Educational Division (first half of 1895). The events that followed may be used as a striking example of the influence of the great powers on the political struggle fought in the administration of the Kingdom of Serbia. In the five years that Jovanović worked in the Foreign Ministry (20 August/1 September 1892–11/23 July 1897) Serbia had eight governments, seven prime ministers and seven interior ministers (Simić served twice as prime minister and minister). When he first joined the Foreign Ministry, and then while he served in Constantinople, director of the Foreign Ministry was Milovan Dj. Milovanović (1899–92, 1893–94). In early 1895 Milovanović was succeeded by Ivan Pavlović, for a while

⁴⁶ "In his time, the Russian embassy in Constantinople seems to have been the main Bulgarian propaganda agency in Turkey, its branches Russian consulates in Macedonia, and its headquarters the Asian Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in St. Petersburg, headed by Ivan Alekseevich Zinoviev, the late Russian ambassador. in Constantinople." See K. Hristić, "Thessaloniki Memories (1889-1890)", Records 195.

⁴⁷ AS, MID - PP, 1895, 142, Report of the Embassy in Petrograd, Concept of a letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Petrograd ambassador, Lieutenant Colonel Milan Mihailović (Belgrade, January 20 / February 1, 1895).

⁴⁸ See analysis of political relations that enabled the success of Novaković's policy in: S. Jovanović, *Government*, p. 305-309.

simultaneously chargé d'affaires in London.⁴⁹ At the time when the new foreign minister, Milan M. Bogićević served as minister in Berlin, Ivan Pavlović was (2nd class) secretary of the Berlin Legation. Slobodan Jovanović wrote to Ristić informing him of the new situation in the Ministry. Jovanović was transferred by decree from Belgrade to the Consulate General in Skopje. It seemed like Pavlović wanted to punish Jovanović for a personal conflict between them. In the end Jovanović was not transferred to Sjøpje, but he was relieved of his post as chief of the Educational Division of the Political Department and transferred to the Administrative Department. He was replaced by Miloško Veselinović, vice-consul in Skopje at the time, who thus remained in Belgrade after his leave of absence ended. Although relieved of his post in the Educational Division, Jovanović remained secretary of the Educational Committee. He suspected that Pavlović had ulterior motives for stirring up conflict. In a letter to Ristić, he stated his belief that Pavlović wanted to use the personal conflict to conceal a more serious plan, “to shut down this [Propaganda] division altogether”: “So that you don’t think this is a fairy tale, I’ll tell you that he has already drawn up a document to that effect. He’s only waiting for the minister to sign it.”⁵⁰

Obviously, Pavlović did not have the authority to shut down a department of the Foreign Ministry on his own: “The department is being shut down by the same [minister] Bogićević who (you of all people know that) in a report he submitted as minister in Vienna gave the idea to start work in Macedonia. What do you make of it?”⁵¹

Jovanović informed Ristić of the steps he had taken to prevent the Department from being shut down. Based on the minutes of the meeting of the Educational Committee of 23 May/4 June 1895 prepared by Jovanović, the Committee decided to invite Minister Bogićević to meet with the members of the Committee (“at a time of his own choosing”) in order that they might best exchange opinions on all important propaganda issues.⁵² The surviving minutes of the Committee meetings make no mention of such a meeting ever taking place.

The Progressive government led by Stojan Novaković took office on 25 June/7 July 1895. Dimitrije Marinković, father of Pavle Marinković, was appointed interior minister, General Dragutin Franasović, minister of defence, and Ljubomir Kovačević, minister of education. Ivan Pavlović was relieved of

⁴⁹ SN (March 21 / April 2, 1895).

⁵⁰ ASANU, ZMR, 14243, 4109, S. Jovanović, M. Ristic, Belgrade (undated), 1895.

⁵¹ Slobodan Jovanović thinks of M. Bogićević's letter to M. Garašanin, Vienna 10/22. February 1885. S. Jovanović, *Vlada*, 92, fn. 2. M. Ristic, "Report [1893]", 40-41; ASANU, ZMR, 14243, 4109, S. Jovanović, M. Ristic, Belgrade (no date), March / April 1895.

⁵² AS, MID-PP, 1896, 434, Minutes from the meeting of the Education Board (May 23 / June 4, 1895).

his post as director of the Foreign Ministry and appointed as consul general in Thessaloniki (4/16 October 1895).

During his premiership, Stojan Novaković “did not limit himself to the affairs of his Ministry; instead, he took upon his shoulders the burden of entire government”. Since he did appoint neither director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs nor chief of the Political Department, he himself, alongside his two secretaries, Slobodan Jovanović and Dragomir M. Janković, and one civil servant, Dr Miloš M. Petronijević, performed the tasks of the Political and Educational departments.

In foreign policy, Novaković was focused mostly on the Macedonian question and propaganda affairs, and Jovanović was perfectly acquainted with the operation of the Propaganda. Jovanović was in the know of the most delicate and confidential political matters, such as telegrams exchanged by King Milan and Stojan Novaković at the time of their conflict, which were not entered in the official records but were kept by Novaković.⁵³

Jovanović noted that many of those who served in Macedonia believed that no cooperation was possible “either with Turks or with Greeks”. It was heard on a daily basis in the Ministry that “a fist should be shaken” at the Turks. Vladimir Karić and Mihailo Ristić believed that cooperation with the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Greeks generally on suppressing Bulgarian influence was unviable. The minister in Constantinople, Vladan Djordjević, also believed it impossible to cooperate with the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Karić proposed a rapprochement with the Bulgarians. Milovan Milovanović and Svetislav Simić also believed that cooperation with the Bulgarians was possible. Ristić held that the Serbian interests should be furthered through direct understandings with the Ottoman government.

Stojan Novaković, however, held that it was possible to deal with the Ottoman government and the Ecumenical Patriarchate simultaneously. He was a man who did everything thoroughly, patiently, gradually and judiciously: “There were questions that Novaković had raised as early as the 1880s, while serving as minister in Constantinople, and did not see them resolved until the 90s, while serving as foreign minister.”⁵⁴ Patience was vitally important because, as Jovanović claimed, the Ottomans and Greeks were masters of stalling.

Given that the Macedonian question was the focus of Serbia’s foreign policy at the time Novaković served as minister in Constantinople and later on when he headed the Educational Department, his reliance on a department focused primarily on the Macedonian question was quite understandable. It was while he served in Constantinople (1886–91) that he became aware that nothing could be achieved on one’s own, without the support of the great powers, and

⁵³ S. Jovanović, *Vlada*, 291, fn. 1.

⁵⁴ S. Jovanović, “Stojan Novaković”, p. 132.

that only Russia among them “was relatively willing to support our national effort”. Slobodan Jovanović pointed out that “this explains why he, as prime minister, relied on Russia”.

Novaković seized the opportunity when the Ottoman Empire ran into trouble in the context of the Armenian question. Since the Greek bishop in Prizren passed away at that time, “Novaković managed to obtain from the Patriarchate the appointment of a Serbian bishop in part owing to the Sublime Porte and in part to Russia’s intervention”.⁵⁵

Novaković’s objective was for the Ottoman Empire to recognize the existence of the Serbian nationality in all three Macedonian vilayets by recognizing the Serbian Church. The idea was to get the Ecumenical Patriarchate to agree to the appointment of Serbian bishops in some eparchies:

“To make an arrangement to this effect with the Patriarchate through the mediation of the Porte which would more or less coerce the Patriarchate into it; to maintain good relations with Bulgaria, but without losing the Porte’s trust over it, which we need more than we need Bulgarian friendship; to choose Russia as the pivot of that diplomatic game, she was held in high regard by the Patriarchate, was dreaded by the Porte and, after the fall of Stambolov, has been regaining influence in Sofia.”⁵⁶

Jovanović testifies that it was only after that success that it became clear “that Serbian bishops could be appointed through diplomatic channels, too, without schism or mobilization”.

The results of Novaković’s efforts became evident “only later, under other governments”. For instance, Novaković’s government did not manage to resolve the question of the Bishopric of Skopje, “nevertheless, it gave fresh momentum to it”. The succeeding Simić government put into practice Novaković’s views on all “questions that had been raised under his government (schools and textbooks, Bishopric of Skopje, Monastery of Hilandar, the Dečani question, school textbooks)”.

Summing up the operation of the Propaganda in his later book on the reign of King Alexander Obrenović, Jovanović concludes that the Society of St Sava and the Foreign Ministry embodied two different methods – idealistic and realistic. Under the Radical governments, the Society of St Sava was completely excluded from propaganda activities (and, besides, it had a bad reputation with the Ottoman authorities). Propaganda became monopolized by the Foreign Ministry: “Our propaganda became bureaucratized; it was conducted by civil servants more or less unsupervised by the public, because such bureaucratic

⁵⁵ S. Jovanović, “Stojan Novaković”, p. 126. Ref. position J. M. Jovanovic that “only the Russians are safe, very slow, but safe”, [in:] *Southern Serbia*, p. 82, 132.

⁵⁶ On Novaković’s government: S. Jovanović, “Stojan Novaković”, p. 131, 133-141; “Progressive Government”, [in:] *Government*, p. 288-329. See also J. M. Jovanović, “Novaković in Diplomacy”, p. 164.

propaganda had to be carefully kept hidden as a state secret. For all its secrecy, our propaganda had nothing rebellious about it. It fought for schools and bishops, and did it using strictly legal means, and even being overly considerate and correct to the sultan and his government.”⁵⁷

At the time Jovanović was at the head of the propaganda service, it did not yet have the character it would assume at the beginning of comitadji action. An organized Serbian comitadji action in Macedonia began after such action had been launched by the Bulgarians. It began in response to Albanian (Turkish) and Bulgarian action.⁵⁸ The organization “Serbian Defence” (*Srpska odbrana*), under the auspices of which the armed action was almost exclusively conducted, was (from 1905) controlled by a special organ of the Foreign Ministry, the Supreme Committee.⁵⁹ The armed action in the Ottoman-held areas of the Balkans had its final outcome in the Balkan Wars, followed by the First World War which, at the very beginning, had the character of a continuation of the Balkan Wars.

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⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ About the groups that crossed from Serbia to Turkey from 1897 to 1901 and their connections with the governor of the city of Belgrade, Risto Bademlić (originating from an old Armenian family). M. Jagodić, „Srpske čete u Makedoni ji 1897-1901. godine“, [in:] *Uprisings and rebellions of Serbs in Turkey in the XIX century*, collection of papers (on the occasion of 170 years since the outbreak of the Nis revolt), ed. R. Videnović, Faculty of Philosophy Niš, 2012, 111-130. About the Serbian Chetnik action: V. Ilić, *Srpska četnička akcija 1903-1912*, Beograd: Ecolibri, 2006 Eds. S. Rajić, Aleksandar Obrenović, Belgrade: SKZ, 2011, 270-271. On the organization of Chetnik detachments during the government of General Dimitrija and Cincar-Markovic see: S. Rajić, *Aleksandar Obrenović*, 389, fn. 23.

⁵⁹ "Supreme Board S. O, Belgrade, June 21 / July 4, 1905“, [in:] *Documents on the Foreign Policy of the Kingdom of Serbia 1903-1914*, 2, Appendix 1, Organization Serbian Defense 1903-1905 (ed. Lj. Aleksić-Peković), Belgrade: SASA, 2008 (hereinafter: DSPKS), 478-481; DSPKS, Appendix 2 [2007], 727.

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