

Slobodan Jovanović

Life
Work
Times



Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts







SERBIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND ARTS

SLOBODAN JOVANOVIĆ: LIFE, WORK, TIMES
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 150th ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BIRTH

Publisher

Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts
Knez Mihailova 35, Belgrade

Acting publisher

Academician Vladimir S. Kostić

Editor-in-chief

Academician Marko Anđelković

Editors of publication

Academician Kosta Čavoški
Academician Aleksandar Kostić

Cover design

Dragana Lacmanović-Lekić

Selection of pictorial contributions

Boris Milosavljević

English translation

Jelena Mitrić
Tatjana Čosović
Tanja Ružin Ivanović

Proofreading and editing

Jelena Mitrić

Prepress

Dosije Studio, Belgrade

Printing

Planeta print, Belgrade

Print run: 500 copies

ISBN 978-86-7025-828-0

© Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 2019.

The publication was financially supported by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia and Dunav Insurance Company.

SLOBODAN JOVANOVIĆ
LIFE, WORK, TIMES

ON THE OCCASION OF THE 150th ANNIVERSARY
OF HIS BIRTH



SERBIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND ARTS

CONTENTS

7 | Editor's foreword

SLOBODAN JOVANOVIĆ: LIFE AND WORK

- 13 | Boris Milosavljević, *Slobodan Jovanović*
229 | Boris Milosavljević, *Jovanović's Theory of the State*
267 | Ratko Marković, *Slobodan Jovanović and Constitutional Law*
303 | Mira Radojević, *Contribution of Slobodan Jovanović to the Study of National History of the 19th and the First Half of the 20th Century*
315 | Milo Lompar, *Slobodan Jovanović and Literature*
327 | Remarks
367 | Abbreviations

CORRESPONDENCE

- 371 | Boris Milosavljević, *From Slobodan Jovanović's Correspondence*

CHARTERS, DECREES, DECORATIONS

- 405 | Boris Milosavljević, *Charters, Decrees, Decorations, Medals, Documents*

SLOBODAN JOVANOVIĆ: BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 429 | Svetlana Simonović-Mandić, Marina Ninić, Boris Milosavljević, *Slobodan Jovanović's Bibliography*

EDITOR'S FOREWORD

The monograph on Slobodan Jovanović (1869–1958), published on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of his birth, represents a unique account of his life, scientific work, society and the times in which he lived. Jovanović's work and his personality have always attracted the attention of the general public. The work he left behind is remarkably voluminous and versatile. It should be noted that a great number of his works was not included in the volumes of his collected works that have been published to date. Slobodan Jovanović worked as a university professor at the Faculty of Law in Belgrade for over forty years. He performed the duties of the dean of the Faculty of Law and the rector of the University of Belgrade. He was the president of the Serbian Royal Academy, legal expert at the Paris Peace Conference, president of the Commission for drafting the Constitution of the new state in 1920, president of the Serbian Cultural Club, president and vice-president of the Ministerial Council of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. In view of the duties he performed, social and political activities represent an important part of the picture of this great scientist of ours. As the president of the Serbian Cultural Club and the pivotal personage of the Serbian people he was delegated to assume the responsibilities of the second vice-president of the Ministerial Council in the government of 27 March 1941. He was the president and vice-president of the government in the country and later in exile. He died in emigration in London in the late 1958, almost a hundred years since his father Vladimir Jovanović, one of the leading Serbian Liberals, had first arrived in the British capital as a political emigrant. Even though Slobodan Jovanović advocated parliamentary bicameral multiparty system, he had never participated in party politics. However, he took part in state politics, as Jovan Dučić wrote in 1942: "Slobodan Jovanović has never been a member of a party, a member of government, or a participant in any plot. He always kept himself at a distance from ruling politics, and yet for this very reason he stood close to its side, as its yardstick, its judge, and its state prosecutor. He used to be called 'the conscience of the Serbian people'. He was not a political person, but a statesman: always at the helm, and from there always taking in sweeping views that lie ahead of him." In the aftermath of the war, Slobodan Jovanović was convicted at the political trial organized by the new communist rule in Belgrade in 1946. His personality and work were expelled from the educational system and scientific circles and consigned to oblivion. He was rehabilitated in 2007.

This monograph first presents the biography of Slobodan Jovanović including the chronologically presented works that can be said to represent the milestones of his scientific develop-

ment, as well as his own theoretical viewpoints. Subsequently, the individual chapters trace the scientific areas he dealt with and scientific achievements he accomplished. The account starts with his theory of the state related to the subject he had taught, that is, General and Special Constitutional Law. It is followed by an account of the special legislation, that is, constitutional law, and an assessment of Slobodan Jovanović as a constitutional-legislative writer. The books in which he interpreted the constitutions of the Kingdom of Serbia and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (Vidovdan Constitution) are analyzed and reviewed. The following part of the monograph is devoted to the historiography of Slobodan Jovanović, to the multi-volume political history of Serbia of the 19th century, which is often justifiably regarded as his best-known work. If his other works to do with national history are also taken into account, it can be seen that he encompassed a period from the late 18th to mid-20th century. The subsequent part of the monograph deals with Jovanović as a literary scholar and critic. Special praise is given to his sophisticated language and well-known Belgrade literary style. The final part of the monograph contains Jovanović's bibliography.

With a view to making the text of the monograph easier to read, all footnotes, that is, notes, are to be found at the back of the book.

We thank all the authors for the texts published in the monograph dedicated to the 150th anniversary of the birth of our renowned scientist Slobodan Jovanović.

Kosta Čavoški and Aleksandar Kostić

CONTRIBUTION OF SLOBODAN JOVANOVIĆ TO THE STUDY OF NATIONAL HISTORY OF THE 19th AND THE FIRST HALF OF THE 20th CENTURY

Mira RADOJEVIĆ
Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade

When in late 1939, contrary to his will, celebrations were held to mark the seventieth anniversary of the birth of Slobodan Jovanović, an illustrious professor of the Faculty of Law,⁹⁴⁰ unarguably the greatest scientific authority among the Serbian people of the time, on a par with Stojan Novaković and Jovan Cvijić, the ceremony was magnified by numerous daily newspapers and magazines: *Politika*, *Pravda*, *Izraz*, *Pregled*, *Letopis Matice srpske* and many others. For the most part, those were the papers popular with the Serbs, seeing that subsequent to the founding of Banate of Croatia tensions in Serbian-Croatian relations had reached frightening proportions, and the celebrant as the president of Serbian Cultural Club and a critic of the Cvetković-Maček Agreement was considered to be a leader of the “Greater Serbian nationalism”. Soon after, in January and February 1940, *Srpski književni glasnik* (*Serbian Literary Herald*), a magazine to both of whose series Slobodan Jovanović gave invaluable contribution,⁹⁴¹ joined in the celebrations.

What stood out from the multitude of accounts, viewpoints and testimonies published on that occasion was the greeting of *Politika*, whose editors pointed out that the name of Slobodan Jovanović represented the “pride and glory for the Serbian people“ as well as for the “Yugoslav country”, written “at the summit of our science and at the summit of our literature”, and engraved “at the highest peak of our





Isidora Sekulić (1877–1958), writer,
member of the Serbian Academy
of Sciences and Arts

culture to date”. At the same time, it was pointed out that he was “an indefatigable worker” and “an incredibly modest person”.⁹⁴² And the most of other authors of similar occasional pieces wrote in the same vein.⁹⁴³ There were also attempts at a deeper, excessive pathos devoid of the evaluation of the multidisciplinary scientific achievements of Slobodan Jovanović, whose works to date, irrespective of their main specialized focus, were oftentimes intertwined, heralding a far later tendency of historians to enrich their investigations with findings from younger and much less developed scientific fields, such as sociology and psychology. This applied even more to the field of law or literature, especially with respect to the professorial work of Slobodan Jovanović at the Faculty of Law or his decades-long interest in the history of literature.

Driven by such intentions, the editorial board of *Politika* had engaged Vladimir Ćorović to write what he thinks about Slobodan Jovanović as a historian, Đorđe Tasić to write about him as a jurist, Jovan Đorđević to write about him as a sociologist, Ilija Pržić to write about him as a professor, and Isidora Sekulić to write about him as a writer.⁹⁴⁴ Even though each of the above-mentioned accounts was significant in itself, and even though, taken together, they should have formed some sort of a unified whole, the reflections of Isidora Sekulić sparked great curiosity, which was partly due to the fact that the cultural public knew that at times she was not in the best relations with Slobodan Jovanović.⁹⁴⁵ Apart from that, the expert view of Vladimir Ćorović has been remembered, despite decades that have since gone by.

Having written how Serbian historiography of the 19th century began to develop “very nicely”, as the accounts of the unbridled force of the First Serbian Uprising had already been written by Vuk Karadžić and archpriest Matija Nenadović, in a very realistic, eloquent, vibrant and first-hand vein, Vladimir Ćorović added that in recording past events they were soon joined by Leopold Ranke, and a century later by Stojan Novaković, Milenko Vukićević, Mihailo Gavrilović, Živan Živanović, Grgur Jakšić, Dragoslav Stranjaković and other Serbian historians. The one who, as he pointed out, for a number of reasons stood “far apart” from all of them was Slobodan Jovanović. Since Stojan Novaković “treated that time period, just like everything else, with great

Historians (from left to right): Vasilj Popović, Viktor Novak, Stanoje Stanojević, Vladimir Ćorović (the photo taken by an unknown author, around 1930, LSASA F-XVI)



erudition, but without any zest”. The turbulent times depicted in *The Resurrection of Serbia*, which were literally brimming with people and events, were portrayed by him with equal coolness and tranquility as in the history of Prilep or the area of Strumica. Mihailo Gavrilović took the world by surprise [...] with his unusual studiousness and a wealth of new material, but he was considerably suffering from epic expansiveness, while Milenko Vukićević sometimes simply harped on. In his work, Živan Živanović actually presented a history and apology of the liberal party rather than a history of Serbia from St. Andrew’s Assembly to the May Overthrow.” By comparison, Slobodan Jovanović was more versatile and comprehensive in his topics, covering “the entire history of Serbia from the Defenders of the Constitution to the Assassination of king Alexander Obrenović, that is, the period of 1842–1903. Apart from that, he produced several separate studies of legal and political figures of his time, of Jovan Hadžić, Ilija Garašanin, Svetozar Marković, Pera Todorović, Stojan Novaković, Milovan Milovanović.” Even though a great part of the aforementioned subjects and time periods had already been studied by Jovan Ristić and Vladan Đorđević, as writers and prominent Serbian statesmen, Vladimir Ćorović would conclude that there was a huge difference between them, particularly between Jovan Ristić and Slobodan Jovanović. Vladan Đorđević could not withstand “earnest criticism”, and Jovan Ristić was “rigid, reserved, with a hint of complacency”, as well as prone “as a seasoned bureaucrat [...] to communicate through documents”.

Having given such a harsh judgement of a number of distinguished historians of the 19th century, Vladimir Ćorović ranked Slobodan Jovanović above all others, explaining why he considered him to be the most talented and deserving. In his own words, Slobodan Jovanović “did history like it had never been done before”. As a man of “exquisite erudition and refined and incisive spirit, he was looking for what was relevant in events and actions, without dwelling on pointless trivialities. But he pursued the relevant all the way through, submitting to his strict scrutiny both sides of the issue. Knowing that people carry events just as much as the events carry them along, Jovanović applied his boundless curiosity and his outstanding perceptiveness in his incessant striving to capture the fundamental features of the main protagonists and thereby interpret the

motives and turn of events in certain actions. His historical portraits are full of vitality and leave a deep impression on a reader's mind. By working in this manner, Mr Jovanović had been totally immersed in the dynamic element. In his historical writings there are more dramatic elements than there are to be found in many pieces of our theatrical production. It would suffice to read, for instance, that scene when king Milan wants to abdicate in the aftermath of the Serbian-Bulgarian war, or when he visits Pera Todorović in prison. In those passages one can hear the voice not only of a historian but also of an excellent writer, of a man who can feel things, who knows how to see them, shed light on them and make them come to life. His portrait of Dr Mihailo Vujić, the president of the Fusionist government of king Alexander Obrenović, does not take up more than one page of 28 lines, but it leaves nothing more to be said. The image is so alive, faithful and authentic. Describing the scene in which, upon the arrival of Montenegrin prince Nikola, Jovan Ristić entered a reserved box at the theatre, alone, as the whole theatre hall had been full, cold and pale in the face, stiff as a board, haughty and ceremonious, displaying all his medals, Mr Jovanović rendered it with such immediacy that it unravels before our eyes just like a personal experience. In writing about Skerlić as a historian Mr Jovanović accurately noted that he included collective rather than individual psychology in the description of certain personages. With him it is the other way around only in that respect, throughout his historical work.”

Finally, in conclusion of his analysis of the historiographic works of Slobodan Jovanović, Vladimir Ćorović affirmed that they are particularly characterized by the fact that “they look as if they were made in one breath”, since their author is “in supreme control over the material, old and new alike, which is carefully selected and very copious”. What is more, “not a single writing of his” and “not in a single moment” could it be sensed “that he was carried away by the material”, which often happened to domestic historians, regardless of what generation they belonged to. “In developing his ideas”, Slobodan Jovanović did not present them as a “mere observer”, but sometimes cut into them like “the sharpest of razors”, “a superior mind who can spot not only weaknesses and errors, but also inconsistencies, and dissemblance, as well as petty and selfish motives”, acting in the spirit of “natural intellectual scepticism and dialecticism”.

In addition to all aforementioned historiographical capacities and intellectual merits, Vladimir Ćorović pointed out that the narrative style of Slobodan Jovanović “represents not only an exception but a true enjoyment”. “What a difference in conciseness, immediacy and vitality between him and, for instance, Mihailo Gavrilović, who was schooled in France and paid great attention to how he writes”, he almost cried out. “Jovanović’s precision borders on virtuosity. If Vuk and archpriest Matija created the patterns of folk prose, it goes to Mr Jovanović’s greatest credit that he, without much effort, forged Serbian modern intellectual style.”⁹⁴⁶

Greater praise, on the part of a historian who himself was a great expert in the 19th and early 20th century, could hardly have been given, all the more so because Vladimir Ćorović did not balk at the challenge of putting Slobodan Jovanović, a jurist by professional education, up against the most distinguished representatives of Serbian historical science and even to put him before them.⁹⁴⁷ He was not at all alone in this opinion, for it was shared by a majority of his contemporaries who dealt with the study of the past or traced the development of the national historiography.⁹⁴⁸

Slobodan Jovanović had up to then already published the majority of his works to do with the national history of the 19th century, having dealt with it for as many as 40 years: *Serbian-Bulgarian War* (Belgrade, 1901), *Svetozar Marković* (Belgrade, 1903), *Political and Legislative Discussions*, 1 (Belgrade, 1908), *Political and Legislative Discussions*, 2 (Belgrade, 1910), *Defenders of the Constitution and their Government /1838–1858/* (Belgrade, 1912), *Ljubomir Nedić* (Zagreb, 1921), *Second Reign of Miloš and Mihailo* (Belgrade, 1923), *Reign of Milan Obrenović*, 1–2 (Belgrade, 1926–1927), *Reign of Alexander Obrenović*, 1–2 (Belgrade, 1929, 1931), *From Our History and Literature* (Belgrade, 1931), *Yugoslav Thought in the Past and Future* (Belgrade, 1940), etc. Apart from that, there were the enlarged new editions of his studies of Svetozar Marković (Belgrade, 1920) as well as the reign of the defenders of the constitution (Belgrade, 1925), and from 1932 to 1940 the Publishing Bookshop of Geca Kon published his collected works, whose 17 volumes comprise all papers to do with national and general history, including the books *Leaders of the French Revolution*, *From the History of Political Doctrines*, *The State, England, France, Germany 1815–1914*, and others. Some of these papers, like the particularly striking and often praised essay on Ljubomir Nedić, written on the island of Corfu in 1917, had originally been published in instalments in the current periodical press.⁹⁴⁹

The selection of topics and issues he wrote about in the pre-war period indicated that Slobodan Jovanović rather opted for the 19th century, “fleeing” from the present-day era due to a lack of time distance as well as to a grounded assumption that the liking he displayed for Lieutenant Dragutin Dimitrijević Apis during his stay in Corfu in World War I caused discontent on the part of Alexander Karađorđević and Nikola Pašić. In the opinion of Dragoljub Jovanović, with whom he used to “exchange thoughts” and who read all his works in detail, Slobodan Jovanović did not like to write about his contemporaries, except for Ljubomir Nedić and “he almost never dealt with the Karađorđević dynasty, while he gave the Obrenović’s a thorough treatment”. Besides, in their conversations he divided the Karađorđević’s into “strong and weak ones”, thinking that the former referred to Karađorđe and king Alexander, to whom he acknowledged the capacity to run foreign but not internal affairs. In prince Alexander, king Peter and prince Pavle, however, he did not see any traits that would qualify them as “strong people”.⁹⁵⁰

Many other experts on Slobodan Jovanović also noticed the historiographical incongruity between his interest in newly-formed Serbian dynasties and certain historical periods, which affected the general view that he gave the greatest contribution to the study of the 19th century. Since he wrote only a number of smaller papers on the subject of the first decades of the renewal of Serbian statehood, devoted to the historiographical work of Mihailo Gavrilović, Miloš Obrenović, Filip Višnjić, Vuk Karadžić, as well as to the debate of Stojan Novaković on constitutional-legislative matters of Karađorđe’s times, and finally to a more voluminous study *Karađorđe and his Dukes* (Belgrade, 1938), Radovan Samardžić came to a conclusion that he could not find the time to “focus” on the issues of the Serbian revolution of 1804 and the foundation of an autonomous Serbian principality. According to this view, they were not compatible with predominantly legislative and political views of Slobodan Jovanović in relation to history, with respect to the fact that it seems he was “more interested in the regular functioning of the state than in its formation in turbulent times.”⁹⁵¹ The most evident result of his interest in the internal development of the Serbian

state, its external political relations and human destinies, resulting from his viewpoint that his studies should have a political and legislative rather than a historical character, is represented by the publication of the aforementioned several voluminous monographs and essays, which – presenting an account of the history of Serbia from 1838 to 1903 in a methodologically and stylistically standardized manner – comprise a unified whole.⁹⁵²

Among the works Slobodan Jovanović wrote concerning the first half of the 20th century there is a notable absence of those focusing on the whole reign of king Peter and king Alexander Karađorđević, as well as his heir. Consequently, apart from the invaluable book *Constitutional Law of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes* (Belgrade, 1924), there are no other studies of greater scope. Apart from the fact that its problematics belongs to the science of the law, this book contains an exhaustive analysis of the formation of the state, the sovereignty of the Constituent Assembly, draft constitution, suffrage, parliamentary rules of procedure, division of power, the king's prerogatives and the legal position of its subjects, which makes it indispensable for understanding political relations in the kingdom of Yugoslavia, as stipulated by the tenets of Vidovdan Constitution. Besides, a number of separate discursive papers that Slobodan Jovanović published in the period between the two world wars in *Srpski književni glasnik*, *Arhiv za pravne i društvene nauke* (*Archives of Jurisprudence and the Humanities*), *Nova Evropa* and other magazines, in his dealing with current political issues, demonstrate his critical attitude towards an often brutal violation of democratic principles, incompatible with full-fledged parliamentarism. In that context the comments on passing the decree known as „Obznana“ (“Announcement”) and on banning the political activities of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia were of vital importance.⁹⁵³

The criticism of Obznana certainly could not have been interpreted as siding with an exclusively leftist ideology, especially as in the complete political-legislative and historiographical works of Slobodan Jovanović, as well as in his later political affiliations, one could clearly discern liberal and up to a certain point even conservative affinities.



Protests in Belgrade against Obznana (the Announcement), 1920

It could not be considered as a historiographical paper either, but it is definitely a significant historical source testifying to a commotion that Obznana had caused among the advocates of political freedom, and also one of the first indicators of Slobodan Jovanović's attitude towards a non-democratic government and the ruler who supported it.⁹⁵⁴ Apart from that, he firmly denied having written the king Alexander's manifesto of January 6, as many had thought.⁹⁵⁵

Without abandoning the scientific interest in the history of the 19th century, Slobodan Jovanović concerned himself with the first half of the 20th century incomparably more after the end of World War I, when his "real" emigrant life in London began. Writing about the events, people and situations from that period was made easier on the one hand by the fact that his knowledge and impressions related to them had been relatively fresh, and more difficult on the other due to a lack of many books, permanent loss of certain documents and closure of the archival institutions for contemporary research.⁹⁵⁶ Not succumbing to those obstacles, the first paper he devoted himself to was about recording the events from March 27, 1941 to naming Ivan Šubašić as government mandator on June 1, 1944. As he approached it not only as a participant and witness of the events, but also as a historian, these writings cannot be considered either as memoirs in the strict sense, or as a historiographical work. In the words of Radoje L. Knežević, in whose care were the notes upon their completion, the "freshness of the mind" and memory of Slobodan Jovanović, at the age of 76, "were the stuff of legend". Nevertheless, "in order to check on his memories, he would go over the most important documents prior to writing certain chapters. He decided to start editing while the trial of General Mihailović, in which he was one of the accused in absence, was still being conducted."⁹⁵⁷

On *Notes on Problems and Individuals, 1941–1944* he had been working incessantly, writing by hand, "from the first to the last line", and submitting each of the 12 chapters in total as soon as he had finished them to Radoje L. Knežević, who in 1947 transferred them to be kept in the USA and who was left to collect them under one general title. According to the author's "legacy", "they were not to



Dušan Simović, King Petar II and Radoje L. Knežević

be given to anyone to be read, or to be published until the conditions he specified had been met". As his conditions were fully observed, the manuscript "had been lying in repository for almost three decades" and was first published in London in 1976 by the Association of Serbian Expatriate Writers and Artists. Its scope was relatively small because it seemed to Slobodan Jovanović as a historian "that it is still too early to attempt at producing an all-encompassing, detailed picture. A great part of what we survived just before and during the war is still blurred. Memoires of the most responsible participants on the British and American side were still in initial phases. The archives of the most relevant warring sides were still inaccessible: the process of selection and sifting through the documents had not even begun yet [...] On the other hand, Jovanović had to take his advanced age into consideration. Thus, he opted for what seemed to him possible to be done immediately. He cast a sweeping look at all the great problems to do with Yugoslavia in the period between 1941–1944. All of those problems were the ones in whose resolution, by the power of his position and his unrivalled personal authority, he was to play a role to a greater or lesser extent. That undertaking was completed by Jovanović with a steady hand. He was governed solely by the determination to tell the truth, as he had experienced it, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."⁹⁵⁸

Accustomed to a continual, disciplined work, Slobodan Jovanović dedicated himself in the same period to revise the already written and up to 1941 published essays on historical personages and his contemporaries, as well as to starting to write some new ones, about the people he either had never written about before or had only given a cursory mention within larger studies. Thereby emerged a series of portraits of distinguished Serbs mostly from the 20th century, but also of those whose life and work served as a bridge between the new era and the previous century.

According to the date of origin, the earliest essays, started at the time of World War I and its aftermath, and later enlarged several times, were dedicated to Ljubomir Nedić (1917, 1920, 1931), Stojan Novaković (1917, 1921), Uroš Petrović (1926, 1931), Jovan Skerlić (1926, 1931, 1934), and Milovan Milovanović (1937, 1958). The writing of others, except for some shorter overviews, represented completely new papers on Vladimir Jovanović (1948), Pavle Marinković (1948), Bogdan Popović (1948), Dragutin Dimitrijević Apis (1948–1949) and Nikola Pašić (1953–1957).

Together with those published until the outbreak of World War II, these essays were published during 1961 and 1962 in *Glas kanadskih Srba (The Voice of Canadian Serbs)*, whose editor was Radoje L. Knežević, and later in six separate numbers, only to appear – owing to the same follower and friend of Slobodan Jovanović – in the book *My Contemporaries* (Windsor, 1962). That book, however, did not comprise all the texts of Slobodan Jovanović about the people he had known and whose lives he considered worthy of recording for posterity. What was left out were several dozens of shorter texts, written for different occasions, and published mainly in the interwar Yugoslav and post-war Serbian emigrant periodicals. They were jointly republished in Volume 11 of the *Collected Works of Slobodan Jovanović*.

By writing these portraits, Slobodan Jovanović showed in innumerable details that he did not only know well the mentality of Serbian people but also the psychology of an individual, creating real little master-pieces. Apart from that, he indirectly probed some for different reasons

sensitive issues regarding which his contemporaries and also historians of his time yearned to hear his opinion. Several times, for instance, it was pointed out that Slobodan Jovanović avoided overtly expressing his opinion of king Alexander Karađorđević. However, in the essay on Dragutin Dimitrijević Apis, with whom he had been very close during World War I, he did not hide that he did not believe in the claim of the alleged attempted assassination of the prince regent, which served as a reason for starting a lawsuit. Having said that all the plots of the lieutenant Apis had been “devilishly bold” but successful, he voiced his doubts as to the alleged attempted murder, planned in such a “sloppy” manner, with no chance of success.

“It made me wonder that Apis”, he wrote, “who knew how to deal with people, did not manage to preserve the friendship of the heir apparent to the throne, which he had first had in the greatest degree. Apis replied in words to the following effect: ‘Alexander is a Karađorđević, and the Karađorđević’s are incapable of making friends. He does not appreciate anyone’s friendship: a dog can more easily remember the good deed one has done unto him. It is not loyalty that he demands from people, but sycophancy, and I am not a sycophant. I have presented to the dynasty sufficient proof of my loyalty. If I am asked to pull off the heir’s boots too – very well, but I do not want and cannot do it! [...] Watching him so heavy and corpulent, it dawned on me that ingratiating choreography would have been morally just as much as physically impossible for him.

After a long while, when we had already been in Corfu, I had an opportunity to speak to the heir apparent about his relations with Apis. He mentioned some of his aberrations, which did not seem so gross. He also mentioned certain tips, which were perhaps more likely than those aberrations to have an impact [...] I did not get an impression that Alexander was most offended by the fact that Apis was not a sycophant. That notion undoubtedly played a part, but it was not the main point. He was disconcerted above all by the fact that Apis enjoyed such popularity among the officers that reduced even his importance as an heir to the throne [...] This feeling of humiliation was bound up with feelings of insecurity and fear. Apis had in his past a murder of a king



Dragutin Dimitrijević Apis (1876–1917)

and of an heir to the throne. Alexander could not know what might have happened to him unless he got rid of Apis. In any case, his ill will towards Apis was much more complex than Apis had taken it to be.”⁹⁵⁹

By creating scenes and giving historiographical explanations of this sort, Slobodan Jovanović painted the portraits of individuals, as well as of people from their closer circle, offering to the reader plausible explanations for even the most excruciating crises.

His work in emigration includes many other texts of versatile content and purpose: from the political articles devoted to the affairs in Yugoslavia, the world and emigration, across the paper *On Totalitarianism* (Paris, 1952), to a posthumously published study *A Contribution to the Study of the Serbian National Character* (Windsor, 1964), labelled as “testamentary.”⁹⁶⁰ Even though many of these writings cannot be considered historiographical in the strict sense, virtually all researchers and analysts of the works of Slobodan Jovanović agree that due to the complexity and tackling numerous issues it is often impossible to define its primary character, since the “matter is intertwined”, but also that most of them contain a certain historiographical contribution. Moreover, it is impossible not to be overawed by the fact that Slobodan Jovanović was involved in science for the whole six decades, that as a historian he spanned two centuries and moved across European and national history, without losing interest in the subjects of his research even at the most advanced age.⁹⁶¹

Contemplating upon such uniqueness, Kosta St. Pavlović, chief of staff of Slobodan Jovanović in two of his government mandates and the secretary general of Yugoslav People’s Committee in Emigration (1946–1958), recorded that personal sentiments of the elderly scientist spanned the period ranging from mid-1974 until late 1958 or, viewed in relation to events in history, the events ranging from the return of prince Mihailo Obrenović from Constantinople up to the election of general Charles de Gaulle as the president of the Republic of France. “What came out of his mouth was experience, directly or indirectly acquired, of a hundred and twenty-five years. From his father Vladimir Jovanović he could hear firsthand about the events that had taken place between 1833 and 1922, and get to know people of that time through his eyes. Throughout his life, he observed the events himself and, through his freedom-loving eyes, watched the people.” In thus established historical vertical axis, his father and him together, from 1833 to 1958, were, except for Karadžorđe, contemporaries of all the rulers: from the first reign of Miloš Obrenović to Josip Broz Tito. One could view their knowledge of European history and European historical personages in the same manner. When we consider Russia,



Kosta St. Pavlović, chief of the cabinet of Slobodan Jovanović (ACCHPF)

for instance, it was the period from Nicholas I (1796–1855) to Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev. Thus, it is hardly surprising that among those they had known, directly or indirectly, were people “from all walks of life”: “from great statesmen to hotheads, fantasists, madmen and criminals, from the enlightened absolutists to parliamentary rulers, from ‘Eastern despots’ to present-day totalitarians”. This is because he knew Mazzini and Bakunin through his father, with whom Vladimir Jovanović had carried on a correspondence. “He personally experienced heavy regimes of king Milan and king Alexander Obrenović, democratic and parliamentary reign of king Peter I, partially non-parliamentarian and personal regime of king Alexander I, Regency, short reign of king Peter II over a country that did not have any of the three elements which are constitutive of a state: neither a territory, nor the people, or the power. He lived to see a whole series of revolutions: bolshevik in Russia, fascist in Italy, nazi in Germany, legionary in Romania, and the forcibly imposed communist one in Yugoslavia.” During his ninety-year lifetime, Serbia took part in seven wars: Serbian–Turkish during Great Eastern crisis, Serbian–Bulgarian in 1885, two Balkan wars and two world wars.⁹⁶²

When such a great life experience is enriched with systematic, planned education, acquired in Serbia and abroad, study of foreign languages, careful selection of literature, economizing with the time so as not to spend it in vain, astonishing self-discipline and self-control, extraordinary mental capacities, multiple giftedness and a lively interest in the past just as much as in the present moment and the world around him, one can at least approximately discern the reasons underlying a bibliography whose proportions are almost the size of a smaller library.

However, given that in 1946 Slobodan Jovanović was sentenced in absence to twenty years in prison with enforced labour, loss of political and certain civil rights for the duration of ten years, confiscation of his whole property and the loss of citizenship, the Serbian people had largely been deprived of his enormous and versatile work.⁹⁶³ According to the testimony of Dragoljub Jovanović, “in public libraries his works had long stood the other way around and been inaccessible to the public, so as to prevent people from becoming scandalized”. However, as soon as in 1956, when the Faculty of Law set up a ceremonial academy dedicated to the executed professor Đorđe Tasić, his former dean, a young sociologist Radomir Lukić, citing the scientific contribution of other great professors, was so bold as to point out the name of Slobodan Jovanović as a “juridical and sociological value”.⁹⁶⁴ Apart from that, if some of the books were hard to obtain or had been put aside, from better supplied libraries, especially the seminary ones, it was impossible to wipe out the immensely rich Serbian and interwar Yugoslav periodical press, whose permanent or temporary contributor he had been. All the more, Danilo Basta remembered that in the mid-sixties, when he entered his studies, “no one, fortunately, prohibited borrowing the books of Slobodan Jovanović from the library of the Faculty of Law, or their free purchase in Belgrade antique shops”.⁹⁶⁵ At roughly the same time, in 1963, in the edition *Serbian Literature in 100 Books*, published by Matica srpska and Srpska književna zadruga, and with the foreword, selection and editorship of Živorad Stojković, the book *Portraits from More Recent Serbian Literature* were published. Although the next two attempts, made in 1970 and 1985, were unsuccessful,⁹⁶⁶ Slobodan Jovanović had been inexorably coming back to his people and

the history of their culture through his work, up until 1990–1991, which saw the publication of a new edition of his collected works, edited by Radovan Samardžić and Živorad Stojković. Over the last decades, there were a number of increasingly more complete bibliographies of the works of Slobodan Jovanović, whose authors were Ilija Pržić (1935), Kosta St. Pavlović (1954 and 1959), Milana Đurđulov (1990), Staniša Vojnović (2005) and Dobrilo Aranitović (2010).⁹⁶⁷

Along with these ambitious scientific and specialized activities, initiated by contemporary historians and other scientists, a more systematic analyses of the complete scientific works of Slobodan Jovanović were carried out, resumed where his contemporaries had left off and studied from different angles, depending on the professional affiliation of the researcher. Danilo Basta, for instance, in his book decided on five essays, focusing on Slobodan Jovanović as a historian of political ideas, theoretician of the state and law, analyst of totalitarianism, interpreter of Serbian national character and sociologist. Although he took interest in his other “characters”, particularly in his literary and historiographical work, he thought they should be dealt with by historians of literature and historiographers. When historiography is in question, over the last twenty years a number of valuable polemics and essays have been released, whose authors are Radovan Samardžić, Milorad Ekmečić, Boris Milosavljević and others.⁹⁶⁸ The fact that they belong to different generations testifies to a continual interest in this problematics, but one can also notice another line of continuity there. There is a universal agreement that the contribution of Slobodan Jovanović to the understanding of the 19th and the first half of the 20th century is of inestimable importance, particularly his comprehensive studies comprising the period from 1838 to 1903, investigations of the constitutional development of the kingdom of Yugoslavia at the time of its formation and a great collection of portraits, whose literary merits can also be deemed as valuable literary works. At the same time, no one has denied the great erudition of Slobodan Jovanović, whose broad education, branching out into a number of related fields, had been conducive to sweeping methodological strokes and a profound knowledge of both prolonged historical processes and individual details and characters. Finally, just like the contemporaries of Slobodan Jovanović, even his successors could not help being impressed by the originality and superiority of his style, whose seeming simplicity had been the result of persevering study and effort, until eventually a superficial irony and a devastating opulence of a stylized language bring the past to life, and bring the historiographical work closer to literature. Furthermore, there is a notable lack of powerful emotions, not uncommon for other historians, which helped Slobodan Jovanović, when it was necessary, to reason even about the most difficult problems with “a cool head” or, as Milan Grol recorded, “with an abstraction of a school seminary”, weighing up the events “as if he had taken the perspective of a hundred years and dealt with a foreign people”. “Slobodan”, he concluded after one conversation in emigration, “says that [...] when he enters his courtyard and locks the door behind him, he enters it liberated from and oblivious to everything”.⁹⁶⁹ With the exception of, perhaps, his books and immersing himself in bygone times, which keep turning back with unimaginable force to the present-day era.

Translated by Tanja Ružin Ivanović