

SERBIAN NATIONALISM AND THE QUESTION OF UNION WITH CROATIA IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY*

The purpose of this paper is to analyze and explain the policy of the Serbian government and the views of some prominent Serbs toward the problem of the liberation and unification of the Serbian lands together with the relevant issue of the union of the Serbs with the Croats (and the Slovenes) in one state under the aegis of Jugoslavism. The burden of this paper is that given the conditions which prevailed in Serbia and Croatia and considering the general political and diplomatic situation in Europe, Serbia's policy was normal and logical.

On December 1, 1918, the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes came into being. This represented the culmination of the hopes and dreams of the 19th century idealists who were positively convinced that in the modern era these three Slavic peoples not only should, but must, be united in one common independent state. In their opinion those factors in their history which had divided them for a millenium—such as religion, culture, alphabets, customs, traditions, standards, and even language—could be overcome and would be supplanted by the miraculous formula of 19th century Jugoslavism. They believed that the principle of self-determination was both just and right. It would bring an end to foreign rule and domination and it would ensure lasting peace and tranquility in an area of the world which had seldom enjoyed such rewards. All that was necessary was that the peoples concerned be given the opportunity to demonstrate the wisdom of their convictions. What is equally important is that these views were shared by distinguished public figures and scholars abroad—Henry Wicham Steed and R. W. Seton - Watson in England, Ernest Denis and Emile Haumant in France and Robert J. Kerner in the United States. These Yugoslav and foreign idealists prepared the ground for the formation of the new state while the First World War

* This paper was read before the Institute for Balkan Studies, Thessalonike, on March 27, 1961.

created the conditions in which their goal could be realized. Yet in the period between the wars the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes did not live in peace and harmony, their antagonisms did not recede and the Second World War brought out all the latent violent nationalistic feelings among the Serbs and Croats.

There are many reasons put forth to explain the difficulties of the new state. One of the most prominent is the charge that the new South Slav state was nothing more than a highly centralized Serbian state in which the Croats and Slovenes were relegated to a secondary status. The proponents of this thesis argue that the responsible Serbian officials in the 19th century never wanted a Yugoslav state, but merely wished to create a Greater Serbia. They are convinced that the policies of the Serbian government and the statements and actions of prominent Serbs justify this judgement. Let us, therefore, examine this question.

Our problem begins not in the 19th century, but in the Middle Ages. In the 14th century, during the reign of Tsar Dušan, Serbia had become a great nation. Some hoped that Serbia might even supplant the Byzantine empire. These hopes and aspirations came to an abrupt end with the defeat of the Serbian forces by the Turkish army at the Battle of Kosovo in 1389. Thereafter Serbia fell under Ottoman domination for almost five centuries and was isolated from the great changes wrought by the Renaissance, Reformation, Enlightenment and Industrial Revolution. Nevertheless, during this era the concept of the nation and the state was preserved through the Patriarchate of Peć, which assumed many of the functions of the defunct Serbian government¹. The traditions and history of the great medieval empire were preserved through the songs of the village bard with his *gusla*. Thus together the church and the oral traditions of Serbian folklore kept alive the spirit of the Serbian people and their history. In the nineteenth century with the gradual breakup of the Ottoman empire the Serbian leaders formulated their aims for the future with this historic tradition in mind. Their goal became the achievement of complete and total independence from foreign domination and the unification of all Serbs in one Orthodox state. The immediate enemy was the Turk, the more formidable adversary was the Austrian and the Magyar. These fundamental ideas were succinctly formulated in 1844 by Ilija Garašanin, the Serbian foreign minister. In a secret report called *Načert-*

1. The role of the Serbian church in the Ottoman era is discussed in Ladislav Hadrovics *L'église serbe sous la domination turque* (Paris, 1947). See also Jean Mousset *La Serbie et son église (1830 - 1904)*, (Paris, 1938).

tanije, prepared for the guidance of his prince, Alexander Karadjordjević, Garašanin set forth the long range goals for Serbia in the following terms :

The Serbian state, which has already had a fortunate beginning, but which must expand and become powerful, has its firm origin and basis in the Serbian empire of the 13th and 14th centuries and in the rich and glorious Serbian history. From this history, it is known that the Serbian tsars had begun to wrest power from the Greek empire and soon would have brought about its end and in place of the ruined Eastern-Roman empire they would have replaced it and erected a Serbian Slavic empire. Tsar Dušan the Great had already received the emblem of the Greek empire. The arrival of the Turks interrupted this change and barred this development for a long time, but now, because, so to speak, the power of the Turks is broken and shattered, that same spirit must manifest itself, it must anew seek its rights and it must begin anew the interrupted task.

This foundation and these bases for the reconstruction of the Serbian empire therefore must now all be cleared and freed from ruins and rubble and they must be brought into perspective; and thus on this firm and permanent historical basis a new construction must again be undertaken and resumed. By this means, this undertaking will receive in the eyes of all peoples and even governments inescapable importance and great value; because then we Serbs will emerge before the world as the real successors of our great forefathers. We are not creating anything new, we are only resurrecting our fatherland. Thus our present period will not be without bonds with the past but it will constitute an interdependent, integral and organized whole; therefore Serbia, her people and her national life remain under the protection of inviolable historic rights. One cannot claim that our objective is something new, baseless, that it is revolutionary and subversive; instead everyone must admit that it is politically necessary, that it was founded in ancient times and that it has its root in the former state and national life of the Serbs, whose root is only putting forth new branches and is beginning to bloom anew².

Having stated in general terms Serbia's goal, Garašanin then outlined the steps by which this was to be achieved. He paid special attention to Bosnia, Hercegovina, Montenegro and Northern Albania as well as Srem, Bačka and the Banat. These were the areas which he regarded as being

2. Dragoslav Stranjaković "Kako je postalo Garašaninovo 'Načertanije'", *Spomenik XCI, Srpska Kraljevska Akademija*, (Belgrade, 1939), pp. 77 - 78. This article also contains the draft programs of Czartoryski and Zah, upon which Garašanin based his report.

predominantly inhabited by the Serbs and it was these lands which were to comprise the new Serbian state.

The views which Garašanin expressed were those of the ruling and influential class in Serbia in the middle of the 19th century. Whereas Serbia had been a nation of peasants since the 16th century, when her nobility disappeared, in the 19th century, she, like her neighbors, began to develop a small middle class composed of governmental officials, a few artisans, merchants and traders and some intellectuals such as Dositej Obradović and Vuk Stefanović Karadžić. By the second half of the century this class had grown in size, it became the champion of parliamentary constitutionalism and it espoused the ideals of European liberalism. Soon political parties emerged—the Liberals, Progressives and Radicals³. Their leadership came from the middle class, but they all sought the support of the peasantry, which was enfranchised.

It was the middle class which fostered the growth and spread of Serbian nationalism. By 1830 Serbia had once again become a political reality and her former greatness seemed within reach of restoration. The full resources of the nation were to be mustered to secure this goal. Serbian literature in the era of romanticism extolled the virtues of Serbia's past and her heroes. The Serbian Orthodox church, although no longer having the decisive role it enjoyed in the Ottoman era, rallied the citizenry behind the nation in each crisis. More important it provided the bond which united the Serbs still under foreign domination to Serbia proper⁴. An examination of the history books used in Serbian schools perhaps reveals most clearly the education of the young Serb in his country's history, traditions, literature, customs, glories and heroes. There was no positive emphasis upon South Slav history, traditions or unity⁵. In fact, Serbia's Slavic neighbors

3. Jaša Prodanović *Istorija političkih stranaka i struja u Srbiji* (Belgrade, 1947). More important for a study of this subject are the major works by Slobodan Jovanović *Ustavobranitelji i njihova vlada 1838 - 1858; Druga vlada Miloša i Mihaila 1858 - 1868; Vlada Aleksandra Obrenovića*, 3 vols.; *Vlada Milana Obrenovića*, 3 vols.

4. Although the Serbs within the Habsburg domains were under the control of the Metropolitanate at Sremski Karlovci, which was founded in 1713, the Habsburgs never succeeded in dividing the Serbs on a religious basis. See Mousset, *op. cit.* and Charles Jelavich "Some aspects of Serbian religious development in the eighteenth century" *Church History*, XXIII: 2, (June, 1954), pp. 3 - 11.

5. Many examples could be cited for this point but one need only compare the 1902 - 1904, 1912 and 1914 editions of Milenko M. Vukičević *Istorija srpskoga naroda za srednje škole* (Belgrade) to see how the author treated the problem of

came into Serbian history books only when they were at war with Serbia or conflicted with the Serbs in other matters, such as through the Catholic church. The young Serb was taught that his neighbors were his adversaries, not his allies. Nothing was to be done to jeopardize the realization of the goal set forth in the Middle Ages.

In the half century before the World War, perhaps the decisive role in Serbian politics was played by the Serbian army. Steeped in the tradition of the hajduk and četnik, who fought the Turk at every turn, the Serbian army had one purpose only—to liberate the lands claimed by the Serbs which were still under foreign domination. The army developed a high esprit de corps; it was imbued with Serbian history and traditions. It did not understand the subtleties of South Slav political ideologies such as Jugoslavism which to it seemed a direct threat to the cause of Serbia. It never favored the Yugoslav idea as it was understood in Zagreb. No politician or monarch could ignore the influence of this group. The fact that Alexander Obrenović did, and indirectly also Franz Ferdinand, cost each his life.

Although it is always dangerous to attribute unanimity of feeling or action to any people or nation, the evidence today strongly confirms that the Serbian nation—the government, the church, the middle class, the political parties, the peasantry and the army—acted as one in seeking to achieve the national goal. By 1914 all could look back with pride and satisfaction to their achievements in the preceding hundred years.

At the beginning of the century Serbia as a nation was lost in Ottoman history and Belgrade was merely the seat of a Turkish pashaluk. The century ended with Belgrade the capital of a large Balkan state. As a nation the Serbs had come to play not only a leading role in Balkan affairs, but even the Great Powers were required to take into consideration Serbia, her policies and her influence, as Garašanin had foreseen. The other achievements of the century were impressive. Political parties were formed and they helped to introduce and to defend the 19th century liberal constitutional parliamentary system. Alongside of the completely rural peasant economy grew an infant but important capitalistic system. Serbian literature became more cosmopolitan in character. Belgrade not only was the capital of the most prominent Slavic state, but it had become also a cultural and intellectual center for the Balkan Slavs. In short, no Serb could look back on the 19th century with anything but pride and

South Slav cooperation and plans for unification. Vukičević's books were officially approved by the Serbian Ministry of Education for use in the schools.

satisfaction. Once again Serbia was a living reality. The significance of these achievements and their importance to the nation was understood by Serbia's statesmen—Garašanin, Ristić and, in particular, Nikola Pašić.

At the same time that Serbia made this spectacular progress, she was confronted by the problem of Yugoslavism, which represented a direct challenge to Serbian nationalism and Serbia's aspirations. Historically Yugoslavism and Yugoslavia were mere expressions. They came into prominence in the 19th century largely as a result of the Croatian literary-political Illyrian movement. In simple terms, Yugoslavism was a concept based on the premise that the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes—and for a brief time even the Bulgars were included—were historically one nation in the same sense that the Germans or the Italians comprised one nation. The fact that each of the South Slav peoples had indeed had a unique and separate history for over a millenium was not regarded as a problem of such magnitude that it could not be overcome. Yugoslavism was a form of 19th century nationalism which sought to bring together peoples with vastly different histories, cultures, traditions, religions and beliefs on the basis of their common Slavic origin and language⁶.

Prior to 1914 Yugoslavism did not enjoy wide popular support. Although in the few years before the war, more people became interested in the concept, it remained, nevertheless, almost exclusively a middle-class, intellectual movement. Moreover, the largest number of adherents were found in Croatia, although a number of prominent men in Serbia also advocated Yugoslav unity. By and large, it is possible to say that Yugoslavism was a Croatian program and was the Croatian intellectuals' answer to so-called Greater Serbianism.

The appearance of the Yugoslav idea immediately posed a problem to Serbia. To accept this ideal at best meant to compromise the historic meaning and essence of the Serbian nation. It could even mean that Serbia would be relegated to a secondary role within such a new state and in the Balkans. The Croatian proponents of Yugoslavism strongly advocated a federalized decentralized state, which corresponded to their historic tradition, whereas the Serbs had developed a strongly centralized state. These factors plus those stemming from their religious and cultural differences caused responsible Serbs to consider with reservations the ideal of Yugoslavism.

6. Several general works on Yugoslavism are of interest - Vladimir Ćorović *Istorija Jugoslavije* (Belgrade, 1933); Viktor Novak *Antologija Jugoslavenske misli i narodnog jedinstva* (Belgrade, 1930); and, Ferdo Šišić *Jugoslovenska misao* (Belgrade, 1937).

The Serbian attitude was also influenced by the lack of unity within the Croats. If there had been the same degree of unanimity for Yugoslavism within the Croats, who sponsored this concept, as there was among the Serbs for the attainment of their national goal, the Serbs undoubtedly could have looked with more sympathy and understanding on the Yugoslav ideal. Although the Catholic Bishop of Croatia, Josip Juraj Strossmayer, tirelessly and devotedly worked to bridge the religious differences between the Croats and Serbs, his co-religionist in Bosnia, Bishop Stadler, in opposition championed vigorous anti-Orthodox and anti-Serbian views. Strossmayer's closest collaborator, Franjo Rački, was in a sense the intellectual father of Yugoslavism, but his contemporary Ante Starčević, the leader of the Party of the Right, championed a form of Greater Croatianism and stated that "In Serbia live the most noble part of the Croatian people"⁷. Before the war, the Serbo-Croatian coalition advocated and worked for Serbo-Croatian cooperation within the Dual Monarchy, but at the same time Josip Frank and his Party of the Pure Right rejected any cooperation or union with the Serbs and sought instead a permanent alliance of the Croats with Vienna. There were also always Croats, albeit decreasingly in numbers, who were pro-Magyar and who wished to retain the ties with Budapest. Men like Stadler and Frank not only rejected any idea of a union with the Serbs, but they hated the Serbs and all that Serbia represented. Since these groups did have a following among a significant portion of the Croatian population, their views did not cause Serbian officialdom to look with any great enthusiasm on the Yugoslav ideal. And, of course, by their statements and actions, these groups provoked further their ideological counterparts among the Serbs.

If one compares the political achievements of the Serbs and Croats in the 19th century, the contrast is also revealing. As already indicated, the Serbs had transformed themselves from the rajah to a significant position in the Balkans on the eve of the war. On the other hand, since 1790 the Croats had failed to make corresponding gains in the political field. In fact, relatively speaking, they retrogressed during this era. By stressing the doctrine of historic rights, they could never quite break completely their psychological and political ties with the Austrians and Magyars. From the point of view of Yugoslavism, some of their most prominent leaders compromised themselves. Ljudevit Gaj, the founder of the Illyrian movement, which gave birth to Yugoslavism eventually was in

7. Vaso Bogdanov *Historija političkih stranaka u hrvatskoj od prvih stranačkih grupiranja do 1918* (Zagreb, 1958), p. 747.

the pay of Vienna; and Ban Jelačić remained loyal to the dynasty in the revolution of 1848 - 1849. In the 1860s Croats worked with the Magyars against Vienna and received as their reward the ill-fated Croatian-Magyar Ausgleich of 1868. For a brief period even the Serbo - Croat coalition believed that it could find a basis for cooperation with Budapest.

Finally there was the problem of Bosnia - Hercegovina, which many contend is the crux of the modern Serbo - Croat antagonism. There is no need to discuss the merits and issues of this problem. Both the Serbs and Croats claimed these lands. To the Serbs the question of Bosnia - Hercegovina was not one between them and the Croats, but first between them and the Turks and after 1878 with the Habsburgs. These were their lands and they were to be incorporated within the Serbian state, whether it be an independent ethnically exclusive Serbian state, or a Yugoslav state. Even those Serbs who supported the concept of Yugoslavism in principle, such as Jovan Cvijić and Jovan Skerlić, only saw Bosnia - Hercegovina as part of the Serbian nation and state. The Serbian case was presented most clearly in 1895 by Milovan Milovanović, who served as Serbia's foreign minister during the Bosnian crisis of 1908 - 1909. Milovanović wrote ;

Let us state openly and without reservation that to us Serbs it really never came to mind that it might ever be necessary to show that Bosnia - Hercegovina are Serbian lands. For us Serbs that is one of those obvious truths which it is not necessary to prove, which would be humorous to prove, because it glistens in its self-evidence. Prove that Bosnia - Hercegovina are Serbian! Why don't you ask that we Serbs from the Šumadija prove that we are Serbs, that the Bavarians and Wüttembergers are Germans, that Parisians and Orleanists are French! . . . No . . . Bosnia - Hercegovina are not Croatian lands⁸.

To the Croats, on the other hand, the issue was not with the Turks or the Habsburgs but with the Serbs. Even the Croatian advocates of

8. Milovan Milovanović *Srbi i Hrvati* (Belgrade, 1895), pp. vii. Equally impressive is the open letter to Professor Šišić of Zagreb by his contemporary in Belgrade, Professor Stanoje Stanojević, published in *Narod* in Bosnia in 1909. Stanojević discussed Serbia's claims to Bosnia and concluded by stating: "It is known to you, friend, that I am, as you are also, an enthusiastic friend of Serbo-Croatian unity and cooperation, and you also know that I shared these views when it was not popular to stress this. But I say to you in the name of all friends of Serbo-Croatian unity, that there can be no friendship among us at the expense of Bosnia - Hercegovina". L. von Südland (Pilar) *Južnoslavensko pitanje* (Zagreb, 1943), p. 361.

Jugoslavism saw these lands as part of the Croatian domains. There was no meeting of the minds or compromise on this major problem⁹.

In spite of all these factors, the belief that the Serbs and Croats should and could live in a common state found adherents among the Serbs. Dositej Obradović in the 18th century was the first to stress this point with conviction. By the beginning of the 20th century a generation of Serbs had grown up—almost exclusively members of the intelligentsia—as for instance Jovan Cvijić the geographer, Jovan Skerlić the literary historian and critic, and Stojan Novaković the historian—who saw merit in a union with the Croats and other South Slavs. However, they never abandoned their belief in and support of the traditional Serbian concepts and ideals. They were convinced that with good will these could be protected, preserved and even strengthened within a South Slav state.

Consequently, responsible Serbian statesmen at least had to take the ideas of Yugoslav nationalism into consideration even if they did not always accept them. The first to meet the issue was Garašanin. Thus, while his *Načertanije* is primarily devoted to plans for the unification of those lands he regarded as Serbian, from his subsequent actions, especially during the period of Serbo-Croatian cooperation in the revolution of 1848-1849, and in the 1860s when he served Prince Mihailo, it is evident that he was thinking in broader terms. However, one cannot be certain that his views were Yugoslav in concept and nature¹⁰.

The real issue, however, was the position of Serbia within a new South Slav state. Would it be founded upon the Yugoslav basis of federalism and political equality of its component parts or would it be the annexation of Croatia and Slovenia by the Serbian state? Professor Vaso Čubrilović of the University of Belgrade in his excellent book *Politička misao u Srbiji XIX veka*¹¹ states clearly how the leading statesmen believed that Serbia was bound to be the center of any large South Slav state. This was determined by Serbia's geographic location, her status as

9. In Südländ, *op. cit.* there is a good analysis of the extreme Croatian claims to Bosnia - Hercegovina.

10. Whereas many regard Garašanin as the architect of the Greater Serbian program, this view is not shared by all scholars. See especially Dragoslav Stranjaković *Srbija pijemont Južnih Slavena 1842 - 1853* (Belgrade, 1932), pp. 1 - 61; "Jugoslavenski nacionalni i državni program kneževine Srbije iz 1844" *Glasnik istoriskog društva* (Novi Sad, 1931) IV, 392 - 418; and, Vojislav Vučković, "Učešće Hrvata u pripremi, Garašaninovog Načertanija" *Jugoslavenska revija za međjunaroano pravo* (Belgrade, 1954) 1 : 3, pp. 44 - 58.

11. (Belgrade, 1958).

an independent state and the fact that she was in a position to lead the new state. It is interesting to note that in the 1860s Prince Mihailo and Mihailo Polit-Desančić, the two outstanding advocates of Balkan federation, also saw Serbia as the center of such a union.

For the practical statesmen, such as Garašanin and Pašić, any form of union with the South Slavs of the Dual Monarchy was fraught with danger. It was one matter to be bold and aggressive toward the decrepit and crumbling Ottoman empire; even the Great Powers were for its destruction if they could only agree on its partition. It was an entirely different matter to challenge the Dual Monarchy as the concept of Jugoslavism implied. Austria-Hungary was one of the major powers. Its existence was accepted by the Great Powers. In fact it was not until the summer of 1918 that the Entente states gave their approval for its destruction. Even Tsarist Russia, who was Serbia's closest ally, only gave strong support for the union of those lands regarded as ethnically Serbian and Orthodox.

Serbia's statesmen and diplomats were for the most part able, practical men. They had been schooled in the tradition of 19th century *Realpolitik*. They all saw Austria-Hungary and not Turkey as their principal enemy. To challenge the Dual Monarchy in behalf of Jugoslavism in view of the attitude of the Great Powers toward the existence of the Monarchy, the lack of unanimity among the Croats for Jugoslavism, the outright hostility of many Croats towards Serbia and the Serbs, the apprehension which the Serbian church felt toward cooperation with the Catholic Croats, the lack of interest in the Serbian army for Jugoslavism—all these considerations were powerful arguments against the aspirations of the pro-Jugoslav Serbs.

The war, however, brought all these problems into the open. Serbia had the choice of seeking the ethnic union of all the Serbs, or of a South Slav union. In the last analysis the decision rested not in Belgrade or Zagreb, but with the Western powers. As an allied power, Serbia's destiny was tied to their fortunes. If they emerged victorious, she could expect compensation, which meant at least the attainment of a union of all the Serbian lands. As long as the Allies retained their benevolent attitude toward the existence of the Dual Monarchy, prudence and *Realpolitik* advised that Serbia do likewise. If the Allies lost, Serbia and the other South Slavs would also lose and then the Serbian and Yugoslav plans would become meaningless.

The man most responsible for the Serbian decisions on these issues was Nikola Pašić, modern Serbia's most famous and most controversial

statesman. His policy during the war has come under very severe criticism, especially from those who accept the interpretation of Milada Paulova in her well-known work *Jugoslavenski Odbor*¹². In it she argues that Pašić did not work for a Yugoslav solution of the South Slav problem and that his declarations in behalf of this program came only after excessive pressure was brought to bear upon him either from his fellow Serbs, the Yugoslav Committee in exile or the Allies. In 1956, however, Ante Mandić, in his book, *Fragments za istoriju ujedinjenja* produced a document dated September 21, 1914 in which Pašić informed his ambassador in Russia that if the Allies emerged victorious, Serbia would expect the union of all the South Slav lands with the Serbs. The only exception concerned Istria, which he believed should be divided with Italy, if she should join the war against the Dual Monarchy¹³. This statement precedes by about two and one half months the first public declaration of December 7, 1914 from Niš in which the Serbian government, through Prince Regent Alexander, openly called for the destruction of the Austro-Hungarian empire and the union of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in one independent united state¹⁴. Hitherto it had been assumed that this was the first time that the Serbian government had taken a stand on this issue and then only because of the intense pressure exerted upon it by pro-Yugoslav Serbs and members of the Yugoslav Committee.

However, when in 1918 the Allies sought a separate peace with Austria-Hungary and the policy of the Allies called for the preservation of the Habsburg empire, Pašić in his famous telegram to his ambassador in Washington, Mihajlović, reverted back to Serbia's goal of seeking at least Bosnia-Herzegovina for Serbia¹⁵. Being an old, experienced, shrewd diplomat, he was prepared for every eventuality.

Although Pašić obviously changed his position for tactical reasons, the question thus remains of his real attitude toward the Yugoslav problem. Professor Čubrilović contends that Pašić indeed was for the creation of a Yugoslav state. He rejects the contention still maintained by many "that Nikola Pašić was against the formation of a Yugoslav state and was for a Greater Serbia. From the facts set forth, it can be seen that from the beginning he (Pašić) was clearly for the fact that Serbia must work for

12. (Zagreb, 1925).

13. (Zagreb, 1956), p. 107.

14. Ferdo Šišić *Dokumenti o postanku Kraljevine Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca, 1914-1919* (Zagreb, 1920), p. 10.

15. Paulova, *op. cit.*, pp. 397-398.

the creation of a Yugoslav state"¹⁶. But as Professor Čubrilović admits, there still was the key issue of what would be the political, administrative organization of the new state. Thus Čubrilović does recognize that Pašić believed that Serbia should lead and control the new Yugoslav state. After all, this was the only condition under which the majority of the Serbian middle class, the Army, the bureaucracy and indeed the church and the electorate would accept such a state.

In his reaction to the Geneva Declaration of 1918, in which the basis for the new state was discussed by representatives of Serbia and the Yugoslav Committee in exile, Pašić clearly revealed that although he could be for a Yugoslavia, he could never abandon Serbia and her ideals. In his telegram to Stojan Protić explaining his own actions, Pašić stated: "that many Serbs sided with Trumbić (the President of the Yugoslav Committee) at the expense of the Serbian name and blood, (Serbs) who for various unknown reasons more gladly agreed to ally themselves with Yugoslavia than to side with Serbia and thus in this manner revealed a tendency that they wished to weaken and isolate Serbia"¹⁷. It is not possible to say more about Pašić's views on this subject. His private papers have never been published; the government documents for his entire tenure in office are not open to scholars; and, no scholarly book covering his career has been written. What evidence is available confirms the fact that Pašić did accept in principle the concept of a union of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, but he never agreed that Serbia's role should not be paramount. In his views Serbia would have to control and dominate the state if there was to be a union¹⁸.

Yet when the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes came into being on December 1, 1918, it was not primarily the result of the actions of either the Serbian government or the Yugoslav Committee, although their contributions cannot be discounted or minimized, but chiefly due to factors which developed during the war and over which the Serbs,

16. Čubrilović, *op. cit.*, p. 460.

17. Paulova, *op. cit.*, p. 569. For a discussion of the Geneva conference see Bogdan Krizman "Ženevska konferencija o ujedinjenja 1918 godine" *Istoriški Glasnik* (Belgrade, 1958), no. 1-2, pp. 1-32.

18. The importance of Pašić in the formation of Yugoslavia is also reflected in the works which have been published in recent years on the war period. See especially Dragovan Šepić *Supilo Diplomat* (Zagreb, 1961), 275 pp.; Milan Marjanović *Londonski ugovor iz godine 1915* (Zagreb, 1960), 469 pp.; Srdjan Budisavljević *Stvaranje države Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca* (Zagreb, 1958), 192 pp.; Mandić *op. cit.*

Croats and Slovenes had no control. Among the most important reasons were the following: 1, Habsburg excesses in the South Slav lands during the war; 2, the decision of the Allies to adopt the principle of self-determination, thereby dooming the Habsburg empire; 3, the Bolshevik revolution which caused Serbia to lose the support of Tsarist Russia and thereby made the Serbian government more amenable to South Slav unification¹⁹; 4, the economic and political dislocation caused by the war in the South Slav lands; and, 5, from the Croatian and Slovenian point of view, the threat to Dalmatia and the other Croatian lands by the advance of Italian forces at the end of the war. Thus the concept of Yugoslavism was sponsored by the Croatian intellectuals, it found acceptance among some of their colleagues in Serbia and Slovenia as well as abroad, it received indifferent support from the Serbian government, but the final realization of the South Slav state was the result of *Realpolitik* and not *Idealpolitik*.

One may thus say that the Serbs as a nation were by tradition bound to bring about the liberation and unification of all the Serbs. The government, the church, the army, the middle class, the intellectuals and the peasants all found a common bond in this goal. Even the pro-Yugoslav Serbs—Skerlić, Cvijić and Novaković—never abandoned this aim. Serbia was prosperous and effective; a Yugoslavia was at best a nebulous and uncertain entity. The union with the Croats and Slovenes within the concept of Yugoslavism contained uncertainties and hazards not found in an ethnically united Serbian state. By 1914 even most Croats were not enthusiastic for a Yugoslavia. Moreover the Serbian government worked only for the union of the lands claimed as being Serbian, as long as there appeared to be no possibility of the collapse of Austria - Hungary. When this did become a probability, Serbia accepted the formation of a South Slav state, but one which it could dominate and rule.

If the Serbian government erred in its policy, it was on December 1, 1918 when it agreed to join the Croats and Slovenes in a common state knowing that the others wanted a federalized state in which Serbia would not be dominant, but would be equal to the other component parts. The Serbs were not prepared to enter such a union. As Garašanin

19. The significance of the Russian revolution for the South Slavs of the Dual Monarchy is presented in Dragovan Šepić "Oktobarska revolucija i Jugoslavenko pitanje u Austro - Ugarskoj 1917/18" *Historijski Zbornik*, XI - XII (1958 - 59) pp. 1 - 47.

had pointed out in 1844, Serbia assumed that she was destined to have and to play the dominant role in the Balkans be it in an independent Serbian state or in union with the other South Slavs.

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