

Maja VEHAR\*  
Ivan SMILJANIĆ\*\*  
i Peter MIKŠA\*\*\*

## SLOVENIAN NEWSPAPERS' VIEWS ON MONTENEGRO IN 1918

**ABSTRACT:** *The paper gives a critical overview of articles in the Slovenian press from 1918, which discussed topics, events and issues relating to Montenegro. As major governmental and political changes took place that year, turning Montenegro from Slovenia's formal military opponent to a member of the new common state, the press also reflected the gradual change in opinions, which nevertheless usually remained loyal to the principles and guidelines of an individual newspaper. The seventeen newspapers analysed mostly discuss the topics of the course of World War I, the territorial policy, the integration of Southern Slavs, Montenegrin foreign policy, and the Montenegrin ruling dynasty. Owing to the chaos of wartime and postwar events, the newspapers were unable to give a more thorough presentation of Montenegrin society and culture; hence, Slovenians could learn more about this aspect of Montenegro mainly from the books issued before the war and after it.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Montenegro, Slovenia, newspapers, Petrović-Njegoš dynasty, Yugoslavism, Kingdom of SCS, Austria-Hungary*

### **Introduction**

With the formation of the Kingdom of Serbians, Croats and Slovenians (SCS), a whole new world opened up for Slovenians. They found themselves in a state system that contained regions with which they had not had much contact or integrations under Austro-Hungarian rule. One of those regions was Montenegro; at the turn of the 20th century, Slovenians were

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\* University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, Department of History.

\*\* Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino, Ljubljana, Slovenija.

\*\*\* University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, Department of History.

able to read about it in books discussing various fields.<sup>1</sup> However, an analysis of these books does not answer the question of how Montenegro was presented to the Slovenian public in 1918. We should take into account that such books were primarily intended for educated readers and not the broad public. For the latter, newspapers were more accessible; in Slovenia, they began to thrive with the development of the political scene. Thus, the Cobiss system<sup>2</sup> contains 237 different Slovenian periodicals from 1918; for a researcher this is too great an obstacle, i.e. an uncontrollable amount of material. All that changed with digitization, which is opening up new research possibilities. One such possibility is the present article, for which the web portal Digitalna knjižnica Slovenije (dLib.si) was used to collect the material.<sup>3</sup> This portal, which has been active since 2005, enables a quick search through a voluminous fonds of digitized Slovenian newspapers and other material, and is regularly added to. All newspapers published before 1945 are freely accessible, whereas younger editions are accessible only in the computer system of the central Slovenian library institution, the National and University Library in Ljubljana, in compliance with the copyright legislation. The portal enables reviewing material by various criteria, such as source, title, period, keywords and author. Using a keyword search, we found 85 relevant articles in seventeen Slovenian periodicals from 1918, which discuss various topics relating to Montenegro. Based on the material obtained this way, we were able to analyse the views of Slovenian newspapers on Montenegro in 1918.

### Newspapers and Characteristics of News Items

In Slovenia, the development of the political scene in the 19th century influenced the development of journalism. The number of newspapers increased and their news-writing style depended on the political party they rep-

<sup>1</sup> Backović, Marko M. *Crna gora pri kraju devetnajstog vijeka*. Beograd: Smiljevo, 1895.  
 Đorđević, Vladan. *Crna gora i Rusija (1784-1814)*. Beograd: Srpska kraljevska akademija, 1914.

*Moře adriatické: Istrie, Dalmacie, Černá hora, Benátky, Pobřeží italské, Korfu*. Praga: Máj, 1911.

Barbulesku, Ilija. *O kulturi u Crnoj gori*. Cetinje: Državna štamparija Kraljevine Crne Gore, 1912.

Pavičević, Mićun Mikaša. *Crnogorski junaci. Knjiga 2*. Cetinje: Njegoš, 1913.

Brdani, B. *Program za ujedinjenje Srbije i Crne Gore*. Krf: Štamparija Slovenskoga Juga, 1917.

Knaflič, Vladimir. *Jugoslavansko vprašanje: politična razmišljanja o priliki balkanske vojne*. Ljubljana: L. Schwentner, 1912.

*Balkanska vojna v karikaturah in pesmih*. Ljubljana: Učiteljska tiskarna, 1913.

Oražen, Ivan. *Med ranjenimi srbskimi brati*. Ljubljana: Sokolska matica, 1913.

*Balkanska vojna*. S. l.: s. n., 1912.

<sup>2</sup> COBISS – Co-operative Online Bibliographic Systems and Services

<sup>3</sup> The portal can be accessed at this link: <http://www.dlib.si/>.

resented.<sup>4</sup> In 1918, they published articles on various topics relating to Montenegro, such as the course of the war, the territorial policy, ideas for and the realization of the integration of Southern Slavs, Montenegrin foreign policy, and the Montenegrin ruling dynasty; less attention was paid to religious topics.<sup>5</sup> The majority of articles were published by the leading newspaper of the Catholic Vseslovenska ljudska stranka (Pan-Slovenian People's Party), the *Slovenec* (18), and by the central newspaper of the liberal Narodna napredna stranka (National Progressive Party), the *Slovenski narod* (16). Only a handful of articles was published in the newspapers *Mariborski delavec*, a political paper that was in favour of the ideas of Jugoslovanska socialno demokratska stranka (Yugoslav Social-Democratic Party, JSDS);<sup>6</sup> *Slovenski učitelj*, a journal intended for pedagogical staff;<sup>7</sup> *Straža*, a newsletter of advocates of political Catholicism in the Slovenian Štajerska region;<sup>8</sup> *Domovina*, a newspaper of Jugoslovanska demokratska stranka (Yugoslav Democratic Party);<sup>9</sup> *Resnica*, a political weekly of Slovenska kmečka stranka (Slovenian Peasants' Party);<sup>10</sup> *Domoljub*, a Catholic popular paper;<sup>11</sup> *Jugoslavi-ja*, a politically independent paper that advocated the ideas of the national socialist programme;<sup>12</sup> and in the newsletter of the Slovenian Social Democrats *Naprej*.<sup>13</sup>

News relating to Montenegro were also published by Slovenian newspapers issued abroad. This topic was given the most attention in *Prosveta* (12), the biggest Slovenian newspaper in the United States of America (USA), which advocated the labour movement and the economic rights of the working class, and which served as a newsletter of Slovenska narodna podporna jednota (Slovenian National Benefit Society).<sup>14</sup> In the USA, events regarding Montenegro were also reported to a smaller extent by *Glasililo K.*

<sup>4</sup> More on the development of Slovenian newspapers in: Amon, Smilja. "Obdobja razvoja slovenskega novinarstva." In: *Poti slovenskega novinarstva – danes in jutri*, edited by Melita Poler Kovačič and Monika Kalin Golob, 53–69. Ljubljana: Fakulteta za družbene vede, 2004; *Enciklopedija Slovenije 2, Ce/Ed*. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 1988, 93–98.

<sup>5</sup> Montenegro was alluded to in only two news items about the Montenegrin Metropolitan Mitrofan greeting King Peter I Karadorđević. *Mariborski delavec*, 11 December 1918, 2; *Slovenec*, 7 December 1918, 1.

<sup>6</sup> *Enciklopedija Slovenije 6, Krek/Marij*. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 1992, 411.

<sup>7</sup> *Enciklopedija Slovenije 12, Slovenska n/Sz*. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 1998, 54.

<sup>8</sup> *Enciklopedija Slovenije 12, Slovenska n/Sz*. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 1998, 335.

<sup>9</sup> *Domovina*, 1 February 1918, 1.

<sup>10</sup> *Enciklopedija Slovenije 10, Pt/Savn*. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 1996, 179.

<sup>11</sup> *Enciklopedija Slovenije 2, Ce/Ed*. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 1988, 308.

<sup>12</sup> *Enciklopedija Slovenije 4, Hac/Kare*. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 1990, 331.

<sup>13</sup> *Enciklopedija Slovenije 7, Marin/Nor*. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 1993, 287.

<sup>14</sup> The largest insurance company of American Slovenians in the USA. Pogačar, Timothy. "Izseljenski tisk v Ameriki v digitalni dobi: slovensko-ameriški časopis Prosveta." *Slavistična revija*, 65/2 (2017), 344.

*S. K. jednote*;<sup>15</sup> *Amerikanski Slovenec*, the first and oldest Slovenian newspaper in the US and the official newsletter of the Slovenian Catholic fraternal benefit society Društvo svete družine (Holy Family Society);<sup>16</sup> *Proletarec*, a workers' paper and the newsletter of Jugoslovanska socialistična zveza (Yugoslav Socialist Federation);<sup>17</sup> the Slovenian workers' paper *Glas naroda*;<sup>18</sup> and *Clevelandska Amerika*, whose views during World War I resembled those of the London Yugoslav Committee, but which later, in the inter-war period, advocated the regime of King Alexander I Karadorđević.<sup>19</sup> Some information was also published by *Edinost*, a political newsletter of the Slovenians in Trieste.<sup>20</sup>

The above-mentioned newspapers wrote about topics relating to Montenegro and the integration of Southern Slavs in accordance with their political orientation. Thus, for example, one of the articles in the liberal newspaper *Slovenski narod* clearly contradicted the fear that the union of Slovenians with other Southern Slavs would bring about the demise of Slovenian literature, culture and the education system, and called it unfounded.<sup>21</sup> The article's author saw the reason for this fear in the fact that Slovenians were “/.../ under the influence of anti-Serbian elements and separated from the Serbians by state borders; furthermore, the corrupted German press strives hard to alienate us, which has resulted in the spreading of outright ungodly opinions about Serbians among our nation.”<sup>22</sup>

In addition to political orientation, the contents of the news were also influenced by the fact that the authors of these articles had not received first-hand information but were merely quoting foreign newspapers. Twenty-two announcements are mentioned as quotes. Their sources varied; some of the articles were quoted directly from French newspapers, while certain French news items were quoted via Switzerland and Amsterdam. They also based their articles on, for instance, the London newspaper *Daily Chronicle*, the Italian *Stampa*, the Belgrade *Samouprava*, and on news from Bern and Vienna. At this point, the question arises as to the reliability and credibility of the news. Some authors doubted the sources they had used to write their reports. Thus, at the end of an article quoted from *Tagespost* the newspaper *Slovenec*

<sup>15</sup> It was published by Kranjsko Slovenska katoliška Jednota (Carniolan Slovenian Catholic Union), which was the first fraternal benefit society in the USA.

<sup>16</sup> Friš, Darko. “Zgodovina časnika Amerikanski Slovenec in “verske vsebine”, ki jih je obravnaval med leti 1881-1931.” *Znanstvena revija* 3/2 (1991), 405–414.

<sup>17</sup> *Enciklopedija Slovenije* 9, *Plo/Ps*. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 1995, 371.

<sup>18</sup> *Enciklopedija Slovenije* 3, *Eg/Hab*. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 1988, 231.

<sup>19</sup> *Enciklopedija Slovenije* 1, *A/Ca*. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 1987, 58.

<sup>20</sup> *Enciklopedija Slovenije* 2, *Ce/Ed*. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 1988, 415.

<sup>21</sup> *Slovenski narod*, 17 December 1918, 1.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*.

stated the following: "As we all know, German reports about their opponents were never reliable; what they wished on their opponents, they reported as facts. This is also the case now."<sup>23</sup> Similar holds true of the news item quoted from *Gazzetta di Venezia*, in which they called the accusations against the Montenegrin dynasty unproven libel.<sup>24</sup> One reason for this distrust of Italian and German newspapers was the pressure exerted by these two countries in Slovenian lands: "The Italians are plundering our towns, banning societies, doing violence to the Yugoslavian nation, while imprudent people are instigating others under the guise of phrases, hollow words to instil their insidious thoughts into the Yugoslavian nation."<sup>25</sup>

### The War

At the start of World War I, Slovenians and Montenegrins found themselves on opposite sides. The former were a part of Austria-Hungary and consequently of the Central Powers, while the latter ended up in the Entente with their independent kingdom. Namely, Montenegro supported Serbia, declared war on Austria-Hungary on 6 August 1914, and King Nikola I Petrović-Njegoš summoned Montenegrins to "a battle for the liberation of Serbdom and Yugoslavism."<sup>26</sup> The initial successes of the Serbian and Montenegrin Army were swayed by the great offensive on Serbia in early October 1915. The Serbian Army decided to retreat to Corfu, while the Montenegrin Army provided cover and continued fighting the Austro-Hungarian Army.<sup>27</sup> When the capture of Cetinje became inevitable, the rest of the army was disbanded and most of the royal family retreated to Shkodër on 9 January 1916. On 19 January, the king also left the capital and retreated to France with a segment of political representatives.<sup>28</sup> On 25 January 1916, a decree was signed on a surrender of weapons – the capitulated Montenegro was occupied by Austria-Hungary.<sup>29</sup>

Newspapers devoted the better part of their announcements to events on the fronts, which is why we also came across war news relating to Mon-

<sup>23</sup> *Slovenec*, 19 November 1918, 2.

<sup>24</sup> *Slovenec*, 20 November 1918, 1.

<sup>25</sup> *Slovenec*, 22 November 1918, 3.

<sup>26</sup> Andrijašević, Živko M. and Šerbo Rastoder. *Istorija Crne gore od najstarijih vremena do 2003*. Podgorica: Centar za izseljenike Crne Gore, 2006, 285.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*, 288.

<sup>28</sup> Morrison, Kenneth. *Montenegro. A Modern History*. London, New York. I. B. Tauris, 2009, 38; Šistek, František. "Tomaš G. Masarik, crnogorsko pitanje i prvi svetski rat." In: *Crna gora u prvom svjetskom ratu*, edited by Dragan Radulović, 169-203. Cetinje, Podgorica: Matica crnogorska, 2015, 180.

<sup>29</sup> Andrijašević, Rastoder, *Istorija Crne gore*, 289.

tenegro while reviewing the newspapers. Besides the Slovenian casualties in Montenegro,<sup>30</sup> Slovenian newspapers from 1918 also covered the shortage among the Montenegrin population. There was already a food shortage in early 1917, and the situation worsened further a year later, when the people were forced to turn directly to the occupying forces for help.<sup>31</sup> The Slovenian newspapers wrote about this very graphically. Thus in March 1918, *Domovina* reported on the poverty and violent bands of robbers: “*Throughout the Yugoslavian regions the hunger and squalor have been blatant for a very long time, and the people there are not only despairing but – dropping like flies. Where are we sailing? Those in Vienna and Budapest have turned a deaf ear to the people’s cries and – they celebrate victories by popping champagne bottles.*”<sup>32</sup> This subject was also topical a few months later, in August 1918, when the Slovenian newspaper *Naprej* reacted to the King’s Office in Cetinje rejecting a report published in the newspaper *Suisse*. In it, the Montenegrin minister claimed that 5000 people had lost their lives in Montenegro due to famine. The writer of the Slovenian article quoted the minister’s vivid description of the people’s distress; in utter squalor, they were allegedly forced to eat bark. The writer expressed his doubts about the king’s denial of the situation.<sup>33</sup> Reports on the famine did not end there; it could even be said that the topic became even more pressing, seeing that the leading liberal daily – *Slovenski narod* – reported on it in October 1918. It informed its readers that Montenegro had turned to Switzerland due to the terrible circumstances.<sup>34</sup>

From October 1918 onward, there was greater media coverage of Montenegrins’ resistance against the Austro-Hungarian Army, in which several towns were liberated, followed by the Allied occupation of Montenegro.<sup>35</sup> The newspapers called the members of the resistance different names: Chetniks,<sup>36</sup> Ustashi,<sup>37</sup> revolutionaries,<sup>38</sup> rebels<sup>39</sup> and members of the resistance.<sup>40</sup> It is evident that some expressions had a more positive/negative connotation than others. Because World War I was drawing to an end and Slo-

<sup>30</sup> *Slovenski učitelj* XIX/2 (1918), 45.

<sup>31</sup> Papović, Dragutin. “Rad austrougarske vlasti na uređenju društvenog života Crne gore 1916–1918.” In: *Crna gora u prvom svjetskom ratu*, edited by Dragan Radulović, 111–169. Cetinje, Podgorica: Matica crnogorska, 2015, 135.

<sup>32</sup> *Domovina*, 8 March 1918, 4.

<sup>33</sup> *Naprej*, 21 August 1918, 2.

<sup>34</sup> *Slovenski narod*, 17 October 1918, 3.

<sup>35</sup> Andrijašević, Rastoder, *Istorija Crne gore*, 292–294.

<sup>36</sup> *Slovenec*, 21 October 1918, 3.

<sup>37</sup> *Domoljub*, 24 October 1918, 443.

<sup>38</sup> *Prosveta*, 31 October 1918, 3.

<sup>39</sup> *Prosveta*, 1 November 1918, 1.

<sup>40</sup> *Clevelandska Amerika*, 30 October 1918, 1.

venians were increasingly looking for possibilities of a continued existence outside of Austria-Hungary, the role of the Danubian Monarchy in Montenegro was in some places presented using expressions with negative connotations, such as oppressors<sup>41</sup> and brutal tyrants.<sup>42</sup> Contrary to this, in some towns the Montenegrin seizure of power was described as usurpation,<sup>43</sup> conquest,<sup>44</sup> capture<sup>45</sup> and even occupation.<sup>46</sup> Consequently, such reports did not focus on Montenegrin attempts to banish Austro-Hungarian authorities, but on Montenegrin violence against the fleeing soldiers: "*The Chetniks are punishing by death all Montenegrin women who had socialized and were intimate with Austrian and Hungarian officers and soldiers. /.../ They have ruthlessly punished by death all heads of municipalities in Montenegro who had been in favour of Austrian administration. The same fate befell the confidants. /.../ In light of this, we are even more justified in fearing for the fate of the retreating army.*"<sup>47</sup> They gave a very graphic description of an event that took place after a Hungarian battalion was captured in Andrijeviča: "*It was a bloody slaughter.*"<sup>48</sup>

### **Ideas for Integrating Southern Slavs and the Realization of a New State**

At the time of World War I, ideas for uniting Southern Slavs were gaining popularity, but they differed as to what the new formations should look like. Individual ideas changed over time and adapted to the current political atmosphere. Several proposals were topical in Slovenia, e.g. the tri-alistic plan (a reorganization of Austria-Hungary into three equal parts: the Austrian, Hungarian and Yugoslavian one); Gregor Žerjav's plan (a Yugoslavian kingdom, divided into three provinces within a confederal Austria-Hungary); the Austro-Marxism of the Social Democrats (the transformation of Austria into a national federation with national territorial units instead of provinces, a bourgeois parliamentary system, social reforms); the Masaryk's proposal (a bourgeois democratic national system led by the intelligentsia; social changes without a revolution); the Revivalists' idea (the breakup of the Habsburg Monarchy and the unification of all Yugoslavian nations in an independent state, unitarism); and Ivan Cankar's opinion (a federal union of

<sup>41</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>42</sup> *Clevelandska Amerika*, 1 November 1918, 1.

<sup>43</sup> *Clevelandska Amerika*, 30 October 1918, 1.

<sup>44</sup> *Prosveta*, 31 October 1918, 3.

<sup>45</sup> *Domoljub*, 24 October 1918, 443.

<sup>46</sup> *Prosveta*, 31 October 1918, 3.

<sup>47</sup> *Slovenec*, 21 October 1918, 3.

<sup>48</sup> Ibidem.

Yugoslavian nations, but not a cultural or linguistic fusion).<sup>49</sup> The May Declaration received the most media attention; it triggered a public mass declaration movement. Its demands – the unification of all Slovenians, Croatians and Serbians in an autonomous state under the sceptre of the Habsburg Monarchy – were surpassed in 1918.<sup>50</sup> As the war was drawing to an end, the circumstances encouraged Slovenian politicians to seek integration possibilities outside of Austria-Hungary.

Montenegro's position differed; before the war, it had been given the chance to taste independence. Its independence was internationally recognized at the Congress of Berlin in 1878; according to Morisson, the plans of King Nikola I Petrović-Njegoš went beyond Montenegro, for he flirted with the Serbian throne and portrayed himself as the natural ruler of the Serbian nation and a representative of Southern Slavs. He supported the aspirations for the unification of Serbians and pan-Slavic ideas as long as they served his ambition to rule. Despite his efforts, the power relations changed with the rise of the Serbian state. Namely, Serbia replaced Montenegro as Russia's leading strategic partner in the Balkans, and the Great Powers recognized it as the new Piedmont of the Balkans. As a result, King Nikola I, who had lost his reputation in the pan-Serb sphere, had to deal with many problems in domestic and foreign policy. Under such circumstances, groups and parties were formed that adopted different stances towards the integration with Serbians and other Southern Slavic nations.<sup>51</sup> Morisson, referring to Mark Thompson, points out yet another factor that influenced the unification of Montenegro and Serbia: "*Serbia's unification with Montenegro became a matter of urgency. Otherwise, after the war, Montenegro and its dynasty would profit from Serbia's loss.*"<sup>52</sup> Thus, according to Morisson, Nikola Pašić continued to advocate the unification,<sup>53</sup> whereas King Nikola I outright rejected that option: "*There can be no mention of any unification. I cannot permit it. ... I say Serbdom shall not be unified, that is just an idea for hotheads.*"<sup>54</sup>

Since Slovenian newspapers often wrote about the developments, most of the news items from 1918 that mentioned Montenegro referred to the

<sup>49</sup> More on the topic in Vodopivec, Peter. "Jugoslovanska ideja v slovenski politiki." In: *Slovenska novejša zgodovina 1848 - 1992*, 1, edited by Jasna Fischer, 43-58. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino, 2005.

<sup>50</sup> Perovšek, Jurij. "Majniška deklaracija in deklaracijsko gibanje." In: *Slovenska novejša zgodovina 1848 - 1992*, 1, edited by Jasna Fischer, 158-162. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino, 2005, 158.

<sup>51</sup> Morrison, Kenneth. *Montenegro. A Modern History*. London, New York. I. B. Tauris, 2009, 29-33.

<sup>52</sup> Thompson, Mark. *A Paper House: The Ending of Yugoslavia*. London: Hutchinson Radius, 1992, 159.

<sup>53</sup> Morrison, *Montenegro*, 41.

<sup>54</sup> Mitrović, Andrej. *Serbia's Great War: 1914-1918*. London: Hurst, 2007, 284.



ideas for Yugoslavian integration in a common state, and later on to the actual integration. At the beginning of the year, newspapers informed Slovenian readers of the reaction to the Corfu Declaration from the king of Montenegro and his cabinet. Thus, *Slovenec* reported that Minister Niko Hajduković opposed the Corfu Declaration (which he called the “*infamous pact*” or “*the worst kind of violence*”)<sup>55</sup> and the Karađorđević dynasty. He believed that a suitable dynasty to rule the Croats, Serbians, Slovenians and Montenegrins was the Petrović-Njegoš dynasty.<sup>56</sup> The newspaper *Resnica* more thoroughly substantiated his negative attitude towards the proposed solution to the Yugoslavian issue: “*It would be imperialism! If such a state were established and given a new king, he could come from no other family than the Petrović one, because that Montenegrin family has a centuries-old history and is nothing like the dynasty that has risen from nothing, e.g. the descendants of Black George.*”<sup>57</sup> He believed that the aim of the campaign for such a Yugoslavian state was to push Montenegro aside and subordinate it, or to take away its independence.<sup>58</sup>

That the latter was the goal of a segment of Montenegrin politicians Slovenian readers learnt from newspapers, which did not report about such intentions objectively. The newspaper *Glas naroda*, for instance, reported that a Montenegrin representative wanted to visit the US President Woodrow Wilson in Washington and get him to support Montenegrins' efforts to attain independence, which sparked protests from 2000 supporters of Yugoslavian unification. The article's author supported the latter and explained that Montenegro belonged to Yugoslavia “*by virtue of its history, language and customs.*”<sup>59</sup> Other newspapers also supported such an interpretation of events, for they viewed the efforts for an independent Montenegro as non-compliance with the Corfu Declaration.<sup>60</sup> There was also a conflict of interest at a conference in Geneva, but Slovenian newspapers made no special mention of Montenegro in that regard. The *Slovenec*, which summed up the *Tagespost* from Graz, merely presented the viewpoints of individual nations. According to the article's author, Serbians clung to the idea of Greater Serbia with a capital in Belgrade, while Croats strove for a Yugoslavian state with a centre in Zagreb. In this context, he also mentioned the Montenegrins, who, according to him, advocated a federal system of autonomous Yugoslavian nations, based in Sarajevo.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>55</sup> *Slovenec*, 16 February 1918, 3–4.

<sup>56</sup> *Slovenec*, 14 February 1918, 2.

<sup>57</sup> *Resnica*, 23 February 1918, 5.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>59</sup> *Glas naroda*, 22 August 1918, 5.

<sup>60</sup> *Prosveta*, 26 August 1918, 3.

<sup>61</sup> *Slovenec*, 19 November 1918, 2.

Slovenian journalistic circles – even those in the USA – were well aware that hanging a Yugoslavian flag above Cetinje would not be an easy task. Thus in early November, *Glas naroda* reported about Montenegro's ambiguous attitude towards the unification. Montenegro was allegedly sending diplomats to allied towns and to the USA, hoping to ensure its independence and individuality, whereas certain Montenegrin leaders spoke of Montenegro's wish to unite. The writer of the article was of the opinion that the people should vote on it, as they had in the case of Croatia and Slovenia.<sup>62</sup> Similar articles can be found in *Prosveta*, in which the writers expressed their opinion that Montenegrins would not give up their dynasty that easily; they offered a solution in the form of the programme of Slovensko republikansko združenje (Slovenian Republican Alliance, SRZ).<sup>63</sup> The newspaper *Clevelandaska Amerika* was of a different opinion; it reported that the majority of Montenegrins living in America supported the unification: "*There are not many Montenegrins in America; however, in the past year they formed 37 branches of Črnogorski odbor za zjedinjenje (Montenegrin Unification Committee). Same as the Serbians, these Montenegrins are fervent supporters of Yugoslavian unification. /.../ On the other hand, the minority that recognizes the king of Montenegro as the ruler and is against the unification is pursuing the same politics among the Montenegrins as the SRZ is pursuing among Slovenians.*"<sup>64</sup> The last two articles clearly show that the information was interpreted differently, in part because of the situation on the Slovenian political scene, where opinions clashed regarding the method and anticipated result of the unification. Such dissension also influenced the news-writing style and the choice of vocabulary. Thus, for example, the writer of an article in *Clevelandaska Amerika* called the opponents of the Yugoslavian Committee adherents of the traitorous king of Montenegro, and the leaders of SRZ naive for "*reproaching the Yugoslavian Committee with monarchism and "royalism"*".<sup>65</sup>

As the war was drawing to an end, and the possibility of unification was becoming more realistic, the newspapers broached the issue of the Montenegrin ruling dynasty. Thus, *Edinost* published the opinion of the former Montenegrin minister Andrija Radović on the unification and dynasty: "*The*

<sup>62</sup> *Glas naroda*, 9 November 1918, 3.

<sup>63</sup> *Prosveta*, 27 July 1918, 2. The establishment of the Slovenian Republican Alliance was brought on by the Chicago Declaration on the unification of all Yugoslavian nations, which was signed in 1917 under the leadership of Etbin Kristan by a group of pro-socialist immigrants. This alliance was joined by all the major Slovenian organizations, and by Croatians and Serbians, which is why it was renamed Jugoslovansko republikansko združenje (Yugoslavian Republican Alliance). It strove for a Yugoslavian republic free of dictatorship. *Enciklopedija Slovenije 1, A/Ca*. Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 1987, 61.

<sup>64</sup> *Clevelandaska Amerika*, 16 August 1918, 2.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibidem*.

*dynasty must by all means subordinate its interests to the interests of the nation. We are not fighting against one dynasty in favour of another, because to us the issue of dynasty is of secondary importance. In our opinion, a dynasty shall last only as long as it serves the welfare of the nation.*"<sup>66</sup> In September and November, the newspapers also started writing about the Montenegrin monarch's opinion on the unification. *Domovina* reported that in one of his letters King Nikola claimed that Montenegro had always aimed at unification.<sup>67</sup> His opinion was starting to lose importance after elections to the National Assembly had been held in Montenegro; the assembly was based at a disused cigarette factory in Podgorica and not in Cetinje, which was considered the heart of the old Montenegro. On 26 November 1918, the assembly announced the unification of Montenegro with Serbia under the Karadorđević dynasty and, consequently, the deposition of the Petrović-Njegoš dynasty.

In connection with the events of November, Slovenian newspapers first covered the king's manifesto, which, according to *Slovenski narod*, went as follows: "*Brothers! It is with greatest joy and enthusiasm that I solemnly declare today – and I am convinced that my entire Montenegrin nation shares my desire – that our Montenegro shall become an integral part of Yugoslavia and that it shall join the Yugoslavian Alliance just as honourably as it had heroically fought for it. It is my wish for us to form an alliance and for us, as brothers, to unite in a federal Yugoslavia, in which each of us shall preserve our rights, our institutions, our religion and our customs, and in which no one shall dominate another. All of us want to be the same on the lap of Mother Yugoslavia, which shall bestow on us the same rights, and to which we all shall have the same obligations. In such a Yugoslavia each one of us shall invest all our efforts in its greatness and in the welfare of the united and cultural nations.*"<sup>68</sup> The *Slovenec*, which quoted the article from *Gazzetta di Venezia*, pointed out that in his manifesto the king had supported a confederacy.<sup>69</sup> As published in *Slovenski narod*, both contradicted the Montenegrin National Assembly, which had agreed on "*full unification with Serbia and other Yugoslavian countries.*"<sup>70</sup>

When reporting on the consent to the unification, different dates were used. The correct date, 26 November 1918, was given in *Slovenec*, which published a detailed description of the event on 29 November.<sup>71</sup> The newspapers that were issued later mentioned different dates. *Glas naroda*, which

<sup>66</sup> *Edinost*, 25 August 1918, 2.

<sup>67</sup> *Domovina*, 20 September 1918, 2.

<sup>68</sup> *Slovenski narod*, 22 November 1918, 3.

<sup>69</sup> *Slovenec*, 20 November 1918, 1.

<sup>70</sup> *Slovenski narod*, 22 November 1918, 3.

<sup>71</sup> *Slovenec*, 29 November 1918, 2.

had received the information through the Czechoslovakian Information Bureau, wrote e.g. that the unification and the dethronement of the king took place on 29 November. The newspapers *Prosveta* and *Domoljub* gave the same date,<sup>72</sup> while *Slovenski narod* published the correct date on 11 December without giving an explanation. So Slovenian readers could better grasp the situation in Montenegro, the same article also published other decisions adopted by the Montenegrin assembly: “1. That the Presidency of the Executive Committee shall temporarily be in charge of administration in the country; 2. That the entire property of former King Nikita shall be confiscated for the benefit of the Montenegrin nation; 3. That the former King Nikita and all members of his dynasty shall be banned from entering Montenegro; and 4. That a special delegation of 18 members of the National Assembly shall immediately head to Belgrade to inform the Serbian government of the decision of the Grand National Assembly regarding the unification with Serbia.”<sup>73</sup> This explanation was not the last news item to cover the unification process; it was followed by news that there had been an attempt to annul the deposition of the dynasty.<sup>74</sup>

### Territorial Policy

Besides the news on the incorporation of Montenegro into the Yugoslavian state, Slovenian newspapers also reported on the envisaged territorial plans after the end of World War I. This topic was discussed in seven articles; most of them primarily explained the scope of the envisaged Yugoslavian or Montenegrin state. For instance, *Slovenec* published the thoughts of Dimitri Rizov, a Bulgarian deputy in Berlin, who believed that Serbia should be “joined by all of Montenegro with Lovčen and all of northwest Albania, as well as Metohija and Kosovo.”<sup>75</sup> He explained why such a solution would be suitable: “This way, Serbia would get an exit to the Adriatic Sea and two maritime ports.”<sup>76</sup> The achievement of that goal mainly depended on Montenegro’s cooperation; in Rizov’s opinion, its people wanted this unification. A similar report was given in *Domoljub*, which identified the biggest obstacle to such a territorial scheme in the Montenegrin king and government that “object most strongly and, furthermore, demand Dalmatia.”<sup>77</sup> The latter was part of another model of territorial division, of which Slovenians readers were

<sup>72</sup> *Prosveta*, 4 December 1918, 1; *Domoljub*, 5 December 1918, 503; *Slovenski narod*, 11 December 1918, 2.

<sup>73</sup> *Slovenski narod*, 11 December 1918, 2.

<sup>74</sup> *Slovenec*, 12 December 1918, 1.

<sup>75</sup> *Slovenec*, 3 January 1918, 3.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>77</sup> *Domoljub*, 21 February 1918, 87.

informed through newspapers. As reported by *Slovenec*, quoting the *Daily Chronicle*, Dalmatia was included in the postwar scope of Montenegro by Niko Hajduković: “*The new Montenegro is to stretch from the Drin River in Albania to the Neretva and Drina rivers, which are to form the northern border towards Herzegovina. The Serbian border should also be changed slightly to the benefit of Montenegro. Dalmatia should be annexed to Montenegro.*”<sup>78</sup> Why? Because that would “*give the Montenegrins a coast, which they are entitled to by natural law!*”<sup>79</sup> According to the reports in the newspaper *Resnica*, British and American politics also wanted such a Montenegro.<sup>80</sup>

A somewhat different plan was published by *Slovenski narod* in October 1918. It quoted the thoughts of the so-called Pan-German E. S. from Trieste on Serbia, Albania and Montenegro. He called Serbia the root of all evil and predicted that “*it will disappear from the map as an autonomous state and will be divided up between Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria; the latter will be given the regions it had obtained in the Balkan War, excluding Sandžak, whereas Austria-Hungary will be given the former Serbia and Sandžak. Montenegro should unite with Old Serbia, Sandžak and northern Albania to the Drin River as the new Kingdom of Serbia. Its king should be Prince Danilo, married to a German woman and controlled by Austria-Hungary as a federal link in the monarchy.*”<sup>81</sup>

Besides the envisaged territorial formations, the reports on the territorial policy also touched upon specific territorial border problems.<sup>82</sup> Thus, the readers of *Proletarec*<sup>83</sup> were familiarized with the issue of Shkodër, which Montenegro had been forced to give up in the Second Balkan War under the pressure of the Great Powers, especially of Austria-Hungary.<sup>84</sup> The newspaper adopted a stance towards this decision by calling it reckless, its advocate Leopold Berchtold a dunce, and the conduct of Austrian representatives at the London Conference swagger.<sup>85</sup> Even though this is by no means a trivial topic, Slovenian newspapers published no other reports on events in Shkodër in 1918.

## Foreign Policy

The unification issue was also related to Montenegro's foreign policy, which was mostly covered by Slovenian newspapers abroad. Despite the fact

<sup>78</sup> *Slovenec*, 14 February 1918, 2.

<sup>79</sup> *Slovenec*, 16 February 1918, 3–4.

<sup>80</sup> *Resnica*, 23 February 1918, 5.

<sup>81</sup> *Slovenski narod*, 7 October 1918, 4.

<sup>82</sup> Stevenson, Francis Seymour. *Istorija Crne gore*. Podgorica: CID, 2001.

<sup>83</sup> *Proletarec*, 3 September 1918, 5.

<sup>84</sup> Morrison, *Montenegro*, 35.

<sup>85</sup> *Proletarec*, 3 September 1918, 5.

that Črnogorski odbor za narodno ujedinjenje (Montenegrin Committee for National Unification) was active in several countries and attended events relating to the unification,<sup>86</sup> its activity was only rarely reported; more attention was placed on the king's activities in that regard. The majority of articles referred to Montenegrin relations with the USA. They were mostly quotes of telegrams exchanged by Wilson and the king of Montenegro. Thus, for example, *Prosveta*<sup>87</sup> and *Glas naroda* published Wilson's reply to the king's letter of congratulation: "*I am firmly convinced that your Majesty and the heroic Montenegrin nation will not be dispirited but that you will have faith in the United States, which will see to it that after the coming victory the independence and right of Montenegro shall be ensured and recognized.*"<sup>88</sup> The writers of the newspaper *Proletarec* were upset not by the reply itself but by how it was interpreted by the Slovenian public: "*Our famous opponents of a monarchical calibre are beating the drum and trumpeting in their newsletters and at their rallies that the American government has recognized the Corfu Declaration.*"<sup>89</sup> According to the writer of the article, the Declaration had envisaged otherwise: "*The Corfu Declaration had abolished the Kingdom of Montenegro and dethroned King Nikita in favour of the Karajorgjević dynasty.*"<sup>90</sup> That they were truly bothered by such statements is evident from their writing style alone: "*It's as clear as day and natural as two times two equals four. /.../ If these declaratory bills had valued their readers as intelligent people, they wouldn't have spun such tales about "recognition", which is outright impossible for the president of the United States.*"<sup>91</sup> At the same time, they pointed out that the American president would not reject a decision on unification.<sup>92</sup> They also elaborately reported on the Montenegrin Envoy Ante Gvozdenović's<sup>93</sup> visit to Washington, stating that he represented the will of the king himself and thus opposed the unification of Yugoslavians.<sup>94</sup> Contacts with the USA remained topical in Slovenian newspapers even after the king had been dethroned, because the king, according to *Prosveta*, saw in President Wilson a chance to preserve his own status and the autonomy of Montenegro.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>86</sup> Vujović, Dimitrije - Dimo. *Ujedinjenje Crne gore i Srbije*. Titograd: Istorijski institut Narodne republike Crne gore, 1962, 230–286.

<sup>87</sup> *Prosveta*, 17 July 1918, 2.

<sup>88</sup> *Glas naroda*, 13 July 1918, 1.

<sup>89</sup> *Proletarec*, 16 July 1918, 2.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>93</sup> *Prosveta*, 26 August 1918, 3.

<sup>94</sup> *Glas naroda*, 22 August 1918, 5.

<sup>95</sup> *Prosveta*, 26 December 1918, 1.

Besides Montenegro's relations with the USA, the newspapers also reported on Montenegro's collaboration with Italy,<sup>96</sup> which did not support the unification (unlike France, Great Britain and the USA) because it had its own interests (the issue of borders on the Adriatic coast).<sup>97</sup> Thus, according to *Slovenski narod*, the Italians used financial and moral resources (aka the Italian intrigue) to try to convince King Nikola to return to Cetinje and take separatist action against the National Assembly's proclamation of unification. The king refused the proposed action;<sup>98</sup> in Italian circles, this resulted in a criticism of Yugoslavism, of the Montenegrin dynasty, and of the nation.<sup>99</sup> In addition to the relations with Italy, Slovenian readers could also read about the loans granted by the Entente to the Serbian and Montenegrin government for continuing the war against the Central Powers. However, their reports vary regarding the amount: *Edinost* reported 670 million francs,<sup>100</sup> whereas *Slovenski narod* had mentioned a sum 100 million lower, but then published a correction a few days later.<sup>101</sup>

### Attitude towards the Montenegrin King and Dynasty

The unification with Serbia marked an end to the reign of the Petrović-Njegoš dynasty over Montenegro. Slovenian newspapers covered its downfall in 1918 in accordance with the change of power that was taking place in Slovenia, and the corresponding change in the perception of "our" and "foreign". Namely, by uniting with the Kingdom of SCS, "our" emperor became "foreign", while the previously "foreign" Serbian king from the Karadorđević dynasty became "our", Slovenian king.<sup>102</sup> This premise imbued all reports on the King of Montenegro Nikola I Petrović-Njegoš, who led Montenegrins for 58 years and who had been proclaimed king on 10 August 1910. The newspaper articles from 1918 familiarized the readers with the basic aspects of his biography;<sup>103</sup> but for the most part, they wrote about his activities in the year in question. In the first half of 1918, the newspapers mostly brought news of where the king of Montenegro was located<sup>104</sup> or what was happening with his family (e.g. the death of Prince Mirko).<sup>105</sup>

<sup>96</sup> *Naprej*, 16 August 1918, 4; *Prosveta*, 10 December 1918, 1.

<sup>97</sup> *Slovenec*, 20 November 1918, 1.

<sup>98</sup> *Slovenski narod*, 19 November 1918, 1.

<sup>99</sup> *Slovenec*, 20 November 1918, 1.

<sup>100</sup> *Edinost*, 14 July 1918, 1.

<sup>101</sup> *Slovenski narod*, 15 July 1918, 2; *Slovenski narod*, 24 July 1918, 3.

<sup>102</sup> More on the topic in: Mikša, Peter. "Yugoslavism written in memorials and denominations in Ljubljana." *Tokovi istorije*, 3 (2018), 33-62.

<sup>103</sup> *Glas naroda*, 3 December 1918, 1.

<sup>104</sup> *Domoljub*, 3 January 1918, 6; *Slovenec*, 14 January 1918, 4; *Slovenec*, 20 February 1918, 1; *Naprej*, 11 May 1918, 2.

<sup>105</sup> *Edinost*, 6 March 1918, 2.

As the unification into a kingdom was approaching, the writers began adopting a stance towards his actions. Announcements started to appear which defended the king of Montenegro<sup>106</sup> or denied the negative allegations in foreign newspapers. Thus, for example, they were critical of the reports in *Gazzetta di Venezia*, which, according to the article's author, attempted to smear the Montenegrin dynasty and portray it as traitorous.<sup>107</sup> The first to adopt a negative stance towards his actions was the newspaper *Clevelandska Amerika*, which declared the king a gaudy, lavish old man, a tyrant ruler and a traitor to his native country, who had shamefully handed Montenegro over to Austrian authorities.<sup>108</sup> A similar opinion of him was published in the newspapers *Slovenec*, *Slovenski narod* and *Naprej*.<sup>109</sup> Their texts also reveal their attitude towards the Montenegrin nation; *Glas naroda*, for instance, called it one of the most isolated nations, which not only respected his patriarchal ruler but also loved him.<sup>110</sup>

In late December 1918, the dethroned king was utterly demonized. *Slovenski narod* namely published an excerpt from the brochure *Le Roi Nicolas et l'union du Monténégro avec la Serbie* in two instalments.<sup>111</sup> The announcements presented the king's sins and the sins of his family. Thus, for example, they highlighted the collaboration of Prince Peter II Petrović-Njegoš with Austrian authorities and his orders to play the Bulgarian anthem and the Austrian imperial anthem. He was also ascribed the exclamation that the new Slovenian concept of *our* deemed controversial: "*Long live the Imperial House of Habsburg!*"<sup>112</sup> No less controversial was the Heir Apparent Danilo, who was reproached with frolicking at the Greek court during the occupation and later with engaging in tacit negotiations with Austria and Germany.<sup>113</sup> In the second instalment, the reproaches mostly concerned the king's indecisive actions during Austrian occupation. Unlike some of the older articles that questioned the reliability and credibility of their sources, the writer of this article never wondered about the truth of the claims he was quoting. In fact, he was convinced that Lazar Mijušković's statement holds true: "*You, Your family and Your court camarilla have brought Montenegro to the brink of utter ruin.*"<sup>114</sup>

<sup>106</sup> *Glas naroda*, 3 December 1918, 1.

<sup>107</sup> *Slovenec*, 20 November 1918, 1.

<sup>108</sup> *Clevelandska Amerika*, 16 August 1918, 2.

<sup>109</sup> *Slovenec*, 23 November 1918, 3; *Slovenski narod*, 17 December 1918, 3; *Naprej*, 21 December 1918, 4.

<sup>110</sup> *Glas naroda*, 3 December 1918, 1.

<sup>111</sup> Spassoyevitch, Yanko. *Le roi Nicolas et l'union de Montenegro avec la Serbie*. Genève: Editions du journal "La Serbie", 1918.

<sup>112</sup> *Slovenski narod*, 27 December 1918, 2.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>114</sup> *Slovenski narod*, 28 December 1918, 2.



## Conclusion

In 1918, Slovenian readers of newspapers were able to learn about events in Montenegro, with which they had not had much contact in the past. Through their own prism, shaped in part by the political orientation of a given newspaper, the newspapers presented the wartime conditions in Montenegro, the developments in Montenegrin foreign and territorial policy, Montenegro's attitude towards the Yugoslavian idea, the unification of the Kingdom of Montenegro with the Kingdom of Serbia, and the fall of the Petrović-Njegoš dynasty. These events led to Slovenians and Montenegrins ending up in the same state system, which they had yet to come to know. Hence, in the years that followed, Slovenians were discovering the world of Montenegro through newspapers. Thus, for example, Slovenian newspapers mentioned the phrase Montenegro more than 600 times in 1919, and almost 1000 times in 1920.<sup>115</sup> Besides newspaper articles, experienced readers could also access literary works, which mostly discussed the events in Montenegro during World War I.<sup>116</sup> Only later were Slovenian readers able to read about other topics, e.g. Montenegrin culture and history,<sup>117</sup> which still falls into the category of getting to know a country indirectly. In conclusion, a new issue has arisen – it would be interesting to find out how Slovenians were exploring Montenegro in the field; what they were drawn to the most; what amazed them; how they travelled across the country; and how their actual visit to Montenegro influenced their preconceptions.

<sup>115</sup>The dLib portal. Accessible at: <http://www.dlib.si/results/?euapi=1&query=%27keywords%3d%C4%8Drna+gora%40OR%40fts%3d%C4%8Drna+gora%27%27&sortDir=ASC&sort=date&pageSize=25> (accessed: 31 January 2019).

<sup>116</sup>Đorđević, Vladan. *Crna gora i Austrija, 1814 - 1894*. Beograd: Srpska kralj. akademija nauka i umetnosti, 1924.

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<sup>117</sup>Karadžić, Vuk Stefanović. *Crna Gora i Boka Kotorska*. Beograd: Srpska književna zadruga, 1922.

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Maja VEHAR, Ivan SMILJANIĆ  
and Peter MIKŠA

## SLOVENIAN NEWSPAPERS' VIEWS ON MONTENEGRO IN 1918

### *Summary*

In the early 20th century, Slovenians were able to get information about Montenegro mostly from studies and texts published in books. Newspapers, which represent the first draft of history, as the famous saying goes, also wrote about this kingdom; they were, of course, more interested in current political, economic and other events. This paper specifically analyses the views of Slovenian newspapers on Montenegro in 1918. That year was an important milestone on a global scale and, of course, also for Slovenians and Montenegrins. They spent most of that year in formally hostile relations, due to Austria-Hungary occupying Montenegro; however, at the end of the year, they ended up united in a new common state of Southern Slavs. The changes that resulted from the changed circumstances are also reflected in Slovenian newspapers, which, despite colossal political changes, usually stayed true to their views and ideals.

The material on which this paper is based comprises over 80 articles from seventeen Slovenian (and emigrant) newspapers. Most of them were published in

the central Slovenian dailies, the conservative *Slovenec* and the liberal *Slovenski narod*. We begin our review by presenting the Slovenian coverage of military events in the Montenegrin part of the Balkan Theatre of World War I; already, we can detect increasingly critical opinions of the role of Austria-Hungary in the occupied kingdom.

The press devoted a great deal of attention to the issue of the integration of Southern Slavs. Since the King of Montenegro Nikola I Petrović-Njegoš naturally wished to preserve his throne and expand his authority to the new state of the Southern Slavs, he was not at all pleased to pass on the primacy and title of the Yugoslavian Piedmont to the neighbouring Kingdom of Serbia, led by the Karađorđević dynasty. Slovenian newspapers reported on the plans and ideas of various political actors regarding the fate of Montenegro; in November, when decisions were being made as to the formation of a common state, they often reported on Montenegrins' support for the Yugoslavian idea. Closely connected to this issue is the coverage of the territorial policy and decision making on the political and diplomatic scene regarding which territories the restored Montenegro would comprise.

The newspapers also discussed Montenegrin foreign policy, focusing in particular on the friendly relations established by King Nikola with the USA, and on the more conflictual relations with Italy, which wanted to increase its influence on the eastern coast of the Adriatic. The conclusion presents the attitude of the Slovenian press towards the Petrović-Njegoš dynasty, which was gradually becoming harsher, more critical and aggressive, accusing its members of treason, tyranny and indecisiveness. These attacks undoubtedly also aimed to inaugurate the Karađorđević dynasty as the only rightful monarchs of the new state.