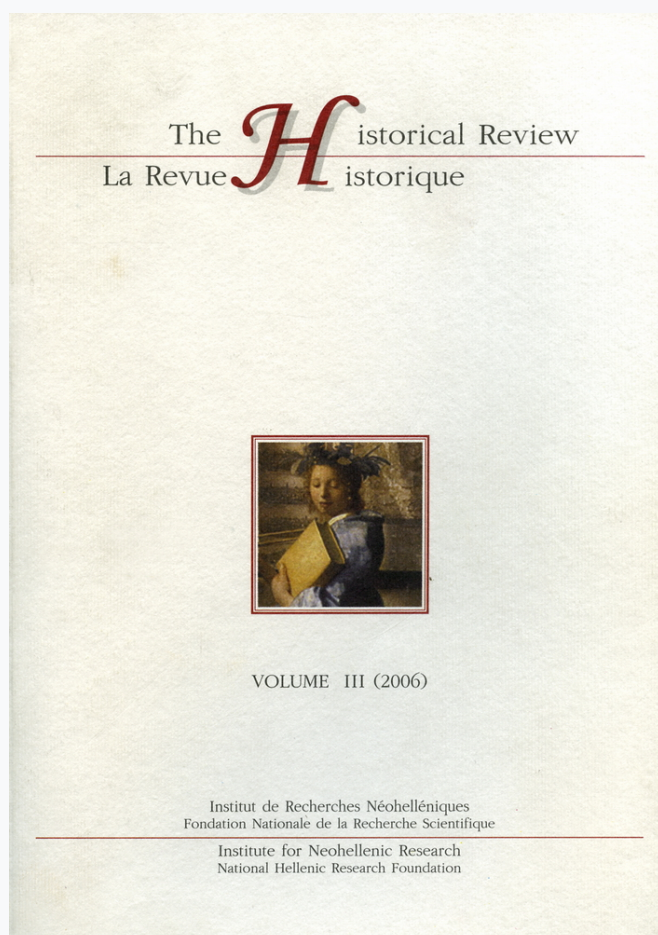


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*Edislav Manetovic*

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## ILIJA GARASANIN: *NACERTANIJE* AND NATIONALISM

*Edislav Manetovic*

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ABSTRACT: This paper analyses the national thought and policies of Ilija Garasanin. Garasanin was the first to write a Serbian national programme, *Nacertanije*, that envisioned an independent Serbian state. His ideas and policies remain highly controversial. While some scholars argue that Garasanin was an inclusive Yugoslavist, others maintain that he was an exclusive Serbian nationalist seeking a Greater Serbia. Both arguments assume that the South Slav nations are pre-modern social phenomena. In contrast, this paper suggests that a modernist perspective of nations and nationalism provides a far more coherent and nuanced interpretation of Garasanin. Garasanin was a Serbian, not a Yugoslav, nationalist. But his nationalism was inclusive not exclusive. Inclusion was a precondition for social stability of the large state he wanted to forge. Garasanin was also illiberal. Establishing a state in a predatory inter-state environment required suppressing individual liberties. Insecurity caused by a Hobbesian world political system structured the content of Garasanin's nationalism.

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### *Introduction*

Ilija Garasanin (1812-1874) is one of the most controversial figures in Serbian and Yugoslavian history. To this day it remains contentious whether his policies and ideas expressed in *Nacertanije* (The Outline), the first Serbian national programme, provided a blueprint for the creation of an inclusive state for the South Slavs or an exclusive Greater Serbia.<sup>1</sup> The fact that Garasanin's

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\* I would like to thank the anonymous reviewer for valuable comments on an earlier version of this article.

<sup>1</sup> There is a long list of scholars debating whether Garasanin was a Yugoslav or a Greater Serbian nationalist. For a comprehensive review of the literature see N. Stancic, "Problem Nacertanija Ilije Garasanina u nasoj historiografiji", *Historijski zbornik* XXI-XXII (1971), pp. 179-196; D. MacKenzie, *Ilija Garasanin: Balkan Bismarck*, Boulder: East European Monographs, 1985, pp. 56-58; R. Ljusic, *Knjiga o Nacertaniju: Nacionalni i drzavni program Knezevine Srbije*, Belgrade: BIGZ, 1993, pp. 18-43. Only few scholars argue that *Nacertanije* was neither a Yugoslavist nor a Greater Serbian programme but simply a Serbian national programme. For this line of argumentation see R. Ljusic, "Ilija Garasanin o srpskoj drzavnosti", in V. Stojancevic (ed.), *Ilija Garasanin*, Belgrade: SANU, 1991, pp. 147-155. An English translation of *Nacertanije* is provided by P. Hehn, "The Origins of Modern Pan-Serbism – The 1844 Nacertanije of Ilija Garasanin: An Analysis and Translation", *East European Quarterly* IX, no. 2 (1975), pp. 158-169.



Ilija Garasanin. Lithograph by Anastas Jovanović, 1852.  
Source: Digital National Library of Serbia.

*Nacertanije* is still vigorously contested is a good indication that it remains salient. It is salient because it implicitly deals with one of the long-lasting challenges facing all modern (and postmodern) societies – how to manage differences.<sup>2</sup>

Much of the scholarly discord about Garasanin's ideas and policies derives from two deeply embedded conceptual issues. The first issue is an explicit or implicit assumption that the South Slav nations are pre-modern social phenomena. The second conceptual issue that obfuscates Garasanin's legacy derives from analysing nationalism without taking into consideration exogenous factors.

Garasanin was a proponent of a big and strong Serbia. However, Serbia's prospective size was not determined by territories which he thought were

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<sup>2</sup> S. K. Pavlowitch, *A History of the Balkans, 1804-1945*, London: Longman, 1999, p. 337.

inhabited by Serbs. The size of the would-be state was determined by what he perceived to be a predatory international environment. Geo-strategic considerations, not Serbdom let alone Yugoslavism, shaped the size of the prospective state. Ensuring the long-term survival of the state in a hostile international environment required extending Serbia's borders. The same considerations were the reason for his inclusive national ideology. Since territorial increase implied absorbing other nations, social stability of the large state required offering them recognition. Garasanin's nationalism was inclusive.

Undoubtedly, recognition was not to be extended to all nations. But this is not a confirmation that Garasanin was an exclusive nationalist. It is perhaps a sign that people that had in subsequent decades formed a distinct national consciousness had not, during Garasanin's time, embraced nationhood as their primary, and often totalising, identity. Garasanin himself symbolises those fluid times. He was the first Serbian statesman to break out of the narrow confines of Sumadijan patriotism and also the first to voice the slogan "The Balkans for the Balkan peoples".<sup>3</sup> But the Balkan "peoples" he saw were not the Balkan nations of subsequent generations.

It is analytically useful to locate Garasanin's *Nacertanije* within the appropriate historical context of South Slav national formation because otherwise one could not understand why his vision managed to attract even his contemporaries from other nations, including from nations he did not recognise. His nationalism, and most probably the nationalism of his contemporaries, is best understood as "recovery of the march – redefinition of the development frontier in favourable (or at least less unequal) terms".<sup>4</sup> That the past that was to be "recovered" was a non-national past is inconsequential because nationalists "invent nations where they do not exist".<sup>5</sup> Today, however, South Slav people know what their nationality is and therefore the strategic direction of the march that was initiated by their ancestors often seems utopian, even contradictory.

Insecurity emanating from a predatory inter-state system did not only frame Garasanin's views on appropriate international relations, but it also structured his views on individual rights. Studies about Garasanin have not yet systematically linked his ideas on individual rights with his ideas on world politics.<sup>6</sup> The relationship was inextricable. While the fulfillment of the two

<sup>3</sup> S. Jovanovic, *Ustavobranitelji i njihova vlada*, Belgrade: BIGZ, 1990 [1912], pp. 430-431. Sumadija is the central region of Serbia. It is still considered Serbia's "heartland".

<sup>4</sup> T. Nairn, *Faces of Nationalism: Janus Revisited*, London: Verso, 1997, p. 50.

<sup>5</sup> E. Gellner, *Thought and Change*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1964, p. 169.

<sup>6</sup> L. Vrkatic, *Pojam i bice srpske nacije*, Novi Sad: Izdavacka knjizarnica Zorana Stojanovica, 2004, p. 109.

universal nationalist principles – national sovereignty and popular sovereignty – required a state, there was a clear hierarchical ordering between the two principles. He deemed that providing popular sovereignty while simultaneously working on establishing a sovereign state was impossible. The impossibility derived from geo-strategic circumstances. Forging a state in an insecure inter-state environment required suppressing factionalism and, hence, illiberal policies. Garasanin's nationalism was *illiberal* and *inclusive*.

External freedom was a precondition for internal freedom while inclusion, not exclusion, was a precondition for social stability. That was how Garasanin resolved the tension between individual and national interests, on the one hand, and between state interests and global structures, on the other.

The content of Garasanin's nationalism does not accord well with the conventional interpretation of nationalism, which asserts that there are two types of nationalism – civic and ethnic. Civic is described as individualistic and inclusive, while ethnic is collectivistic and exclusive. Neither does Garasanin's nationalism accord with what the proponents of the conventional dichotomy claim is the reason for the two types of nationalism. According to the dichotomy the two models derive from differences in social structures, cultures, and/or from *ressentiment*.<sup>7</sup> Garasanin's case indicates that these society-focused (endogenous) explanations need to be supplemented with exogenous factors. Garasanin's nationalism was influenced primarily, albeit not exclusively, by insecurity emanating from a Hobbesian inter-state environment.

Garasanin is an important historical figure because he left a material and an ideational legacy. The former is the centralised state. The latter is his conceptualisation of the first, and still the best-known, Serbian national programme, *Nacertanije*. Although there were earlier programmes that advocated the restoration of the Serbian state, none of them envisioned Serbia as an independent state. It was either conceived as vassal of the Ottoman or of the Habsburg Empires.<sup>8</sup> *Nacertanije* constitutes the ideational framework within which Serbian statehood developed.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Hans Kohn is an early proponent of the dichotomy. H. Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism: A Study in its Origins and Background*, New York: Collier Books, 1967. For a more recent argument see L. Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992. For a critic of the dichotomy see M. Seymour *et. al.*, "Questioning the Ethnic/Civic Dichotomy", in Jocelyne Couture, Kai Nielsen and Michel Seymour (eds), *Rethinking Nationalism*, Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1996, pp. 1-64; R. Brubaker, "Civic and Ethnic Nationalism", in R. Brubaker (ed.), *Ethnicity Without Groups*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006.

<sup>8</sup> Ljusic, *Knjiga o Nacertaniju*, p. 45.

<sup>9</sup> Ljusic, *Knjiga o Nacertaniju*, p. 5.

The first section of this study sets the historical stage for analysing the content of Garasanin's nationalism. The second analyses Garasanin's foreign and domestic policy. It suggests that Garasanin's foreign policy considerations structured his domestic policy and illiberal values. The third section reviews the literature on nationalism and on *Nacertanije*. It argues that, although the scholarship differs as to the content of Garasanin's nationalism, most authors share the view that South Slav nations are a pre-modern social phenomenon. Taking a modernist view of the origin of nations, the final section examines Garasanin's inclusive nationalism by focusing on *Nacertanije*.

### *I. Garasanin in Historical Context*

Garasanin's nationalism reflects wider historical changes taking place on the world scene regarding the source of state legitimacy. The American and the French revolutions put forth the already simmering idea of popular and national sovereignty. It took over one century for this idea to acquire formal international legitimacy and be voiced by Woodrow Wilson. But even then the right to national self-determination was not absolute. It was extended only to European subjects of great empires. Moreover, the viability of the new states was also deemed an important factor. Hence, in his Fourteen Points Wilson noted, *inter alia*, that Serbia had to be given access to the sea.

In the meantime, empires struggled for dominance and stateless nations or nationless peoples were prodded to act or discouraged from acting autonomously. Hence, for example, in 1861 France was signalling that the Ottoman principality of Serbia should take advantage of the Bosnian revolt against the Ottomans to begin a war for independence.<sup>10</sup> In 1866, during the Austro-Prussian war, Prussia and Italy promised Bosnia to Serbia in order to nudge Serbia to its side. France promised that even if Austria defeated Prussia and Italy, France would insist that Bosnia be given to Serbia. In contrast, Russia insisted that Serbia remain neutral.<sup>11</sup> Unlike some great powers, Vienna held that Bosnia and Herzegovina should either remain Turkish or become Austrian.<sup>12</sup>

Ilija Garasanin lived during these times, an era when nationalism and the idea of nation-states was still emerging. He was born in 1812 in the village of Garasi, near the central Serbian city of Kragujevac. His father, a wealthy merchant,

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<sup>10</sup> MacKenzie, *Ilija Garasanin*, p. 247.

<sup>11</sup> MacKenzie, *Ilija Garasanin*, p. 285.

<sup>12</sup> MacKenzie, *Ilija Garasanin*, p. 310.

ensured that Ilija acquired primary education from a private tutor. Then he sent him to the Habsburg town of Zemun to attend a Greek and later a German high school. That was the entire formal education Garasanin received. For early nineteenth-century Serbia Garasanin was considered a well-educated man.

By the time Garasanin finished his education, the *pasalik* [province] of Belgrade had had two uprisings against the Ottomans and was progressively acquiring more autonomy. The process began with the failed First Serbian Uprising (1804-1813) and a much shorter, yet much more successful, Second Uprising (1815).<sup>13</sup> The Second Uprising ended after only a few months when the Sublime Porte and Knez Milos Obrenovic,<sup>14</sup> the leader of the uprising, reached an agreement according to which the Porte proclaimed Milos the supreme *knez*, the *pasalik* of Belgrade acquired some self-rule and, in return, Belgrade recognised the sultan's sovereignty.<sup>15</sup>

Belgrade's newly acquired autonomy created a serious governing problem. The *pasalik* possessed a very rudimentary administrative structure and not even

<sup>13</sup> The social preconditions for the First Serbian Uprising were created by the introduction of the *chiflik* system that transformed the formerly free peasants into virtual serfs. See E. Adanir, "Tradition and Rural Change in Southeastern Europe During Ottoman Rule", in D. Chiriot (ed.), *The Origins of Backwardness in Eastern Europe: Economics and Politics from the Middle Ages Until the Early Twentieth Century*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991, p. 146; L. Stavrianos, *The Balkans, 1815-1914*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963, pp. 20-22. The Uprising began, however, when the janissaries assassinated 72 village headmen (*knez*). The remaining *knezes* were stripped of their status and wealth. Some of them organised the First Uprising. See J. Halpern and E. A. Hammel, "Serbian Society in Karadjordje's Serbia", in B. Kerewsky Halpern and J. Halpern (eds), *Selected Papers on a Serbian Village: Social Structure as Reflected by History, Demography and Oral Tradition*, Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1977, p. 25; D. Jankovic, "Vodji i ucesnici prvog ustanka" in L. Miceta and M. Vucinic (eds), *Srbi i demokratija*, Belgrade: Vidici, 1992, pp. 14-15; L. Stavrianos, *The Balkans since 1453*, New York: New York University Press, 2000, pp. 244-245. The leader of the First Serbian Uprising, Knez Karadjordje Petrovic, became the founder of the first Serbian dynasty, the Karadjordjevic dynasty.

<sup>14</sup> Milos' influence derived from the way he helped end the First Uprising. Namely, when in 1813 most Serbian notables, including Karadjordje, fled Serbia in front of the advancing Ottoman troops, Milos stayed in his *nahija* [region] of Rudnik and surrendered. In return, Milos received two more *nahijas* and the Ottoman ruler of Belgrade proclaimed him his adopted son. See V. Karadzic, "Milos Obrenovic, knjaz Srbije ili gradja za srpsku istoriju nasega vremena", in Dj. Gavella (ed.), *Prvi i drugi srpski ustanak*, Belgrade: Matica srpska, 1969 [1828], p. 261. Milos became the founder of the second Serbian dynasty, the Obrenovic dynasty.

<sup>15</sup> Serbia was allowed to keep the weapons and to hold a national assembly (*skupstina*). Taxes and tribute were to continue to be sent to Constantinople. Stavrianos, *The Balkans*

the semblance of an educated class. Thus, Milos called upon the more educated Serbs from the Habsburg Empire to perform the bureaucratic duties. According to Milos' doctor, "a great thick cloud" of Habsburg Serbs arrived in quest of official functions.<sup>16</sup> By 1821, Serbia had 87 "intellectuals", 52 of whom came from the Habsburg Empire.<sup>17</sup>

Although ruthless toward his subjects, Milos was a capable diplomat and increased Serbia's autonomy *vis-à-vis* the Sublime Porte. The *Hattiserif* [sultan's edict] of 1830 gave Serbia the status of an autonomous principality and recognised Milos Obrenovic as a hereditary prince.<sup>18</sup> Milos used the newly acquired power to further limit Ottoman influence by gradually severing all official contact between the Ottomans and their Christian subjects.<sup>19</sup> The *Hattiserif* of 1833 officially recognised Milos' reforms and *de jure* abolished feudal relations.

Garasanin's education and his father's acquaintance with Prince Milos Obrenovic enabled him to enter state service as a customs officer in 1834. A few months later Prince Milos promoted him to a colonel and placed him in charge of the newly created militia, where he stayed for five years. In 1837 Garasanin also became a member of the Prince's Council, the highest government institution in Serbia.

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since 1453, p. 249. Each *musallim* [a Turkish judge appointed to a certain region] would have by his side one Serbian *knez* and without him the *musallim* could not judge an Orthodox defendant. In Belgrade, twelve Serbian notables, one from each *nahija*, would judge the Orthodox for serious offences such as murder. Hence, the pasha remained in Belgrade and governed the Turks that mostly lived in the cities, while Milos governed the non-Muslim population. Karadzic, "Milos Obrenovic", p. 300.

<sup>16</sup> Quoted in T. Stoianovich, "The Pattern of Serbian Intellectual Evolution, 1830-1880", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* I, no. 3 (1959), p. 243.

<sup>17</sup> M. Ekmecic, *Stvaranje Jugoslavije, 1790-1918*, Belgrade: Prosveta, 1989, p. 441.

<sup>18</sup> The Turkish garrisons were restricted to the frontier fortresses and the taxes to the Porte were to be paid annually in a lump sum. Importantly, the 1830 *Hattiserif* also tried to limit Milos' power with a clause that stipulated that the prince should "administer the domestic affairs of the country in accord with the assembly of Serbian notables". Prince Milos paid no attention to this provision and continued with his autocratic rule. Stavrianos, *The Balkans since 1453*, pp. 250, 252.

<sup>19</sup> In 1831, Milos prohibited the Ottoman *spahis* [cavalry] from directly collecting taxes from the peasants. Henceforth, the Serbian authorities collected taxes and then transferred them to the Ottoman authorities of the principality. The Ottoman authorities in Belgrade then paid each *spahi* his share of revenues. The prince also prohibited unpaid forced labour on private estates, including those of Ottoman landlords. Thus, the Serbian bureaucracy became the only official link between the peasants and the Ottoman authorities.



In 1838, the Sublime Porte gave Serbia the so-called Turkish Constitution, which introduced a separation of powers. Power was divided between the Prince and the State Council, composed of seventeen members elected for life. Two strong factions emerged as a result of this constitutional provision: one oligarchic, the other princely.<sup>20</sup> Until 1858 politics was played out between these two centres of power.

The oligarchs called themselves the Defenders of the Constitution (*Ustavobranitelji*). Garasanin became their most influential member. The Defenders of the Constitution (henceforth, the Defenders) acquired that name because they claimed that they were not opposed to Prince Milos Obrenovic but were simply trying to defend the constitution.<sup>21</sup> Most were livestock traders, merchants, landowners and government officials.<sup>22</sup> “None of the few distinguished individuals who took power in the 1840s owned more than a few hundred acres of land at most, none tried to trace their lineage to noble forbears, none had aristocratic lifestyle, and none were more than barely removed from their peasant background.”<sup>23</sup>

The separation of authority introduced by the Turkish Constitution enabled Garasanin’s rise to influence. For thirty years, not counting three brief retirements from state service,<sup>24</sup> Garasanin had preponderant influence on Serbia’s domestic and/or foreign policy during the reigns of both the Karadjordjevic and Obrenovic dynasties.<sup>25</sup> He was assistant minister of the interior (1842-1843), and then minister of the interior (1843-1852); minister of

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<sup>20</sup> MacKenzie, *Ilija Garasanin*, p. 184.

<sup>21</sup> Jovanovic, *Ustavobranitelji*, p. 25.

<sup>22</sup> Hehn, “The Origins of Modern Pan-Serbism”, p. 153.

<sup>23</sup> G. Stokes, “The Social Origins of East European Politics”, in D. Chirot (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 235.

<sup>24</sup> The first time Garasanin left state service was in 1839, after Prince Mihailo Obrenovic’s forces killed his father and brother, who were prominent participants of an aborted oligarch’s rebellion against the prince. Garasanin fled to Wallachia where he engaged in trade. In 1842, under constant pressure from the oligarchs who were embedded in the State Council, Mihailo abdicated. The Karadjordjevic dynasty replaced the Obrenovic dynasty. That same year Prince Alexander Karadjordjevic appointed Garasanin assistant minister of the interior. One year later, in 1843, at the age of 31 Garasanin became minister of the interior.

<sup>25</sup> Serbia had two royal families, the Karadjordjevic and the Obrenovic dynasties. The former derived its authority from the First Serbian Uprising, the latter from the Second Uprising. Milos Obrenovic ordered the killing of Karadjordje Petrovic on 25 or 26 July 1817. The Karadjordjevs ruled 1804-1813, 1842-1858, 1903-1945. The Obrenovics ruled 1813-1842, 1858-1903. See also notes 11 and 20.

foreign affairs (1852-1853); minister of the interior (1858-1859); prime minister and foreign minister (1861-1867). He was not in state service only between 1853-1857 and 1859-1861. His final retirement came in 1867. However, even after 1867 he influenced Serbian politics.<sup>26</sup>

Garasanin's domestic and foreign policy views and actions should not be separated. If primacy is to be given to one, it was his foreign policy considerations that structured his domestic policies. The link between domestic and foreign policy was best captured by Garasanin himself: "A nation's historical being is preconditioned by a natural necessity of having a state. Without a state a man has neither life nor history. Because of that every human action begins only with a state."<sup>27</sup>

This thought clearly illustrates how he folded two distinct concepts – nation and man – into one. It also portrays the central place a state has for both. Garasanin's concern with acquiring *and* securing state sovereignty for the Serbian nation determined the content of his nationalism. Ultimately, this strategy did make Serbia an international subject, but the population largely remained an object to be acted upon by national élites.

The primacy Garasanin gave to inter-state considerations is most clearly elaborated in his 1844 *Nacertanije*, which he wrote a year after he became minister of the interior. The ideas expressed in it guided Garasanin's policies throughout his career. *Nacertanije* remained secret until 1906.<sup>28</sup> It was known only to a few personal friends of Garasanin, Prince Alexander Karadjordjevic, later to Prince Mihailo Obrenovic, and Garasanin's son.<sup>29</sup> Because it was a secret document it could not have had an impact on national consciousness at the popular level.<sup>30</sup> However, some scholars suggest that from the second half of the nineteenth century to the outbreak of World War I, "leading political groups and social strata in Serbia were thoroughly imbued with the ideas in the *Nacertanije* and differed only in intensity of feeling and political conceptualization".<sup>31</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Ljusic, *Knjiga o Nacertaniju*, p. 130.

<sup>27</sup> Quoted in Vrkatc, *Pojam i bice srpske nacije*, p. 98.

<sup>28</sup> Austria acquired a copy of *Nacertanije* in 1883. The Serbian public was able to read it for the first time in 1906. It was published in *Delo*, a journal close to the Radical Party of Nikola Pasic. Vrkatc, *Pojam i bice srpske nacije*, p. 112.

<sup>29</sup> MacKenzie, *Ilija Garasanin*, p. 56.

<sup>30</sup> R. Ljusic, "Ilija Garasanin o srpskoj drzavnosti", p. 155.

<sup>31</sup> P. Hehn, "Modern Pan-Serbism", p. 157.

## II. *Garasanin's Foreign and Domestic Policy: The State, Statism and Illiberal Nationalism*

In foreign policy, Garasanin was an exponent of *Realpolitik*. As a result his biographer named him "the Balkan Bismarck" (MacKenzie, 1985). His views on international politics were most clearly captured during the 1866 Prusso-Austrian war when Bismarck, Paris and Serbian liberal opposition insisted that Serbia join the Prussian coalition and start a war for independence and unification with Bosnia. Garasanin, however, insisted on neutrality. As always, he was cautious and skeptical. To one of his colleagues who insisted that Serbia align itself with Prussia, Garasanin replied:

You don't know anything! Do you believe that I don't realize that with the aid of the Granicari and Montenegrins, whom we can always count upon, we could defeat the Turks? But who can guarantee that we wouldn't be pulling someone else's chestnuts from the fire? The great powers are now quarreling, but once they reconcile they will finish off with us little ones. I will not go to war against Turkey until I have ironclad guarantees that by such a war we will not be conquering Bosnia for Austria.<sup>32</sup>

He was always skeptical about the intentions of great powers. Serbia had to first and foremost protect its autonomy and only cautiously work to gain independence:

Independence is acquired not by foreign generosity, but by reason and sacrifice. [...] We will always accept [foreign aid] happily if it does not obligate us. We must evaluate carefully foreign advice and promises of material aid offered to us, accepting only that which in our judgment will not hamper our independent action...<sup>33</sup>

Predatory great powers were one reason for prudence, the other was what Clausewitz called the fog of war:

Initiating a war is an easy thing, but extracting oneself from it is a most difficult thing. No one can in advance say where and with how many casualties a war will end. Hence, wisdom requires that all other means must be first exhausted. Only when nothing else helps is it better to go to war than to suffer tyranny and oppression.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Quoted in MacKenzie, *Ilija Garasanin*, p. 283. See also I. Garasanin, *Pisma: Ilije Garasanina Jovanu Marinovicu od 4 jan. 1859 do 29 marta 1874*, Vol. II, Belgrade: Srpska kraljevska akademija, 1931, p. 159.

<sup>33</sup> Quoted in MacKenzie, *Ilija Garasanin*, p. 320.

<sup>34</sup> I. Garasanin, *Pisma: Ilije Garasanina Jovanu Marinovicu od 29 marta 1848 do 31 dec. 1858*, Vol. I, Belgrade: Srpska kraljevska akademija, 1931, pp. 101-102.

Garasanin never initiated a war although he prepared Serbia for a war all along. Hence, the war for Serbia's independence was deferred year after year. Garasanin either thought the alignment of the great powers was unfavourable – as for example after January 1863 when the Franco-Russian entente ended due to the Polish revolt, or when later in 1863 Napoleon III entertained an idea of giving Bosnia and Herzegovina to Austria in return for Austrian cession of Venetia to Italy. At other times Garasanin deferred action because either the relationship between the Balkan peoples was not coordinated well enough or because the interests of the Balkan actors were incompatible.<sup>35</sup> Garasanin died before Serbia acquired independence. However, he and Prince Mihailo succeeded in early 1867 in negotiating the peaceful removal of all Turkish garrisons from Serbia.

In November of 1867 Garasanin retired. He retreated to his house in a village near Belgrade and remained there until his death in June 1874. In his personal correspondence with like-minded officials he continued insisting that the major threat to Serbia came from abroad. Only clear national goals supplemented with an alliance of Balkan peoples could prevent foreign powers from meddling in the region.<sup>36</sup>

Garasanin's domestic politics were statist and illiberal.<sup>37</sup> Garasanin alone was not responsible for the development of a highly centralised Serbian principality. Nonetheless, its centralised form did closely coincide with his illiberal national ideology. His illiberal ideas were not informed by traditional values but derived from concerns elaborated in *Nacertanije*. Those concerns were best captured by Thucydides' famous maxim, "the strong do what they have the power to do and the weak accept what they have to accept".<sup>38</sup> Garasanin was committed to creating a strong Serbian state. Hence, in addition to extending Serbia's borders, which was *Nacertanije*'s central idea, Garasanin also sought to increase Serbia's power by concentrating all human and material resources in the hands of the central government.

Serbia relatively quickly transitioned from being an Ottoman administered province to becoming an indigenously ruled, highly centralised principality.

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<sup>35</sup> MacKenzie, *Ilija Garasanin*, pp. 276-278, 300. On Serbia and the Balkan Alliance System (1860-1868) see M. B. Petrovich, *A History of Modern Serbia, 1804-1918*, Vol. I, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976, pp. 319-330.

<sup>36</sup> Garasanin, *Pisma*, Vol. II, p. 219. See also MacKenzie, *Ilija Garasanin*, p. 376.

<sup>37</sup> Statism is here defined as the domination of the state over individual members of the society and the society as a whole.

<sup>38</sup> Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, London: Penguin Books, 1988, p. 402.

During the transitional period Garasanin was at or near the helm of the government. He consolidated Serbia's police, army and state bureaucracy while he was minister of the interior from 1843 to 1852.<sup>39</sup> By 1846 Serbia had 4200 state bureaucrats. Most of its literate citizens, two percent of the entire population, were employed by the state. While Garasanin was the prime minister (1861-1867), his government was described as a compact team of "hard working" and "meticulous" bureaucrats. The government held local authorities under tight control. According to the Austrian consul to Belgrade, in the 1860s Serbia became the most highly centralised country in Europe.<sup>40</sup>

During the period dominated by the Defenders (1838-1858) and later in the 1860s, some "civil rights, but no political rights were ensured to the citizens. The Prince's autocracy was limited with a resistant centre, but that centre was not to be found in the people, rather that centre was the bureaucracy."<sup>41</sup> The Defenders did however provide legal guarantees for the peasants' property, abolished all constraints on trade, introduced a Civil Code in 1844, organised a separate judiciary, drastically expanded the educational system, and funded higher education abroad, thus laying the foundation for the first native intelligentsia.<sup>42</sup> The Defenders' and Garasanin's long-term impact on Serbia was that they initiated the creation of a new class, the state bureaucrats: "The most coherent institution in [late nineteenth -and early twentieth-century] Serbia, far richer, far more organized, and far better supported by ideological justification than any other social organization..." The Defenders created a strong bureaucracy based on the idea that the educated should administer the state for the benefit of the Serbian nation.<sup>43</sup>

Where did this statist idea come from? According to Svetozar Markovic (1846-1875), one of the first Serbian socialists and the most vigorous critic of Serbia's state-building process, statism was an outcome of a hierarchical ordering of liberties. Ever since the First Serbian Uprising the Serbian élites considered "external liberty", independence, a precondition of "internal liberty", i.e. individual rights. His 1872 book entitled *Srbija na istoku* [Serbia

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<sup>39</sup> MacKenzie, *Ilija Garasanin*, pp. 400-401. According to the 1838 Constitution, the government had only five portfolios. The positions of the prime minister and foreign minister were adjoined. In addition, there were three more ministries: interior, finance and ministry of justice and education.

<sup>40</sup> MacKenzie, *Ilija Garasanin*, p. 243.

<sup>41</sup> Jovanovic, *Ustavobranitelji*, p. 28.

<sup>42</sup> S. K. Pavlowitch, *A History of the Balkans*, pp. 56-57.

<sup>43</sup> Stokes, "The Social Origins", p. 236.

on the East]<sup>44</sup> was almost entirely devoted to explaining the relationship between these two liberties in nineteenth-century Serbia:

I want to put forth a picture to the Serbian people of what the Serbian revolution [the First and the Second Uprisings] brought to them and to simultaneously show what they had but then lost. I also want to tell them what they could have acquired in their state development, but failed to acquire. By doing that I want to awaken those people that are accustomed to think – to think a little and see that “freedom and unity” of the Serbian nation should not mean that pasha is replaced by a “prince” [...], but rather that it should be understood as complete liberation from authority and tyranny, liberation from intellectual and material slavery.<sup>45</sup>

The diffusion of statism, or what Markovic called “the bureaucratic spirit”, was the making of the Defenders. During the rule of the Defenders “the concept of the government and the concept of the state were fused in popular consciousness”. It is true, he continued, that even before Serbia acquired autonomy the people submitted to the Ottomans. But that was a qualitatively different kind of subordination. “[The Turks] had power and the people considered subordination a necessity in light of violence, as something they had to endure as long as they were weaker.”<sup>46</sup> The Ottoman way of life was different, they spoke a different language, they had a different religion, and they considered the Serbian people as their property.<sup>47</sup> In short, “there was a deep social divide between the Serbs and the Turks...”<sup>48</sup> In contrast, starting with the Defenders the people began to be educated in the “bureaucratic spirit”.<sup>49</sup> They were taught “that submission to authorities was a major human and national virtue and a precondition for national happiness”. From that period springs the notion that citizens’ disobedience of the police and students’ disobedience of teachers was a “revolt against state order”.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>44</sup> In January 1872, the newspaper *Radnik* [Worker] began publishing *Srbija na istoku* in the form of short articles. In February 1872, after half of the manuscript was published, the government forced *Radnik* to stop publishing Markovic’s articles. It was published in its entirety in June 1872 but in the Habsburg Empire.

<sup>45</sup> S. Markovic, *Srbija na istoku* in R. Lukic (ed.), *Svetozar Markovic, Celokupna dela*, Vol. VIII, Belgrade: Zavod za udzbenike i nastavna sredstva, 1995, p. 3.

<sup>46</sup> Markovic, *Srbija*, p. 44.

<sup>47</sup> Markovic, *Srbija*, p. 26.

<sup>48</sup> Markovic, *Srbija*, p. 24.

<sup>49</sup> Markovic, *Srbija*, pp. 62-63.

<sup>50</sup> Markovic, *Srbija*, p. 27.

Garasanin's illiberal views were influenced by his analysis of the nation as backward. Widespread illiteracy was not conducive to "internal liberties". When during the 1850s and 1860s liberals kept calling for freedom of the press, ministerial responsibility and greater powers for the Assembly, Garasanin countered by arguing that democratic reforms were "ridiculous for a country of illiterate peasants".<sup>51</sup> Garasanin desired a "permanent and patriotic government". People were a "senseless multitude" only able to shout indiscriminately "Long live!" or "Down with!"<sup>52</sup>

He did not change his views even after retirement. When in 1868 the Regency of Jovan Ristic, the leader of the liberals, began talking about transforming Serbia into a parliamentary monarchy and introducing freedom of the press, Garasanin commented to a friend:

Today what is really good is considered bad. Only things that are different are considered good, no matter what they really are. They want to introduce the people into governance. That is a nice thing in general, thus, it would be nice in our case as well but only if our people had a better understanding of things. Now, all they know is to shout, "Hurrah and long live!"<sup>53</sup>

Nonetheless, he thought about liberal reforms. At times he recommended to his friend Jovan Marinovic that the new "forms" should be abolished, and at other times he was more conciliatory. The Assembly was to be considered a school whose results would be seen in the future.<sup>54</sup>

Social underdevelopment was just one source of his opposition to liberal reforms. His conservative stance was further strengthened by a perception of a threatening international environment that required unity. Factionalism led to disunity and hence opened a window of opportunity for foreign interference. "[T]he spirit of a faction [...] yields to foreign influence," Garasanin

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<sup>51</sup> Quoted in MacKenzie, *Ilija Garasanin*, p. 199. The liberals also wanted annual sessions of the Assembly and to give it control over the budget. The so-called Turkish Constitution had not provided for an Assembly. The Assembly (*Skupstina*) was part of customary law. It met about once in a decade. The Assembly was composed of one popularly elected deputy and a district chief from each of the 68 districts. The elected deputies tended to follow the lead of their district chiefs. MacKenzie, *Ilija Garasanin*, p. 198. The liberals found in the Assembly, as in some other customs, a source of power that could be used to introduce legal reforms.

<sup>52</sup> Quoted in MacKenzie, *Ilija Garasanin*, pp. 244-245.

<sup>53</sup> Garasanin, *Pisma*, Vol. II, pp. 230-231.

<sup>54</sup> Garasanin, *Pisma*, Vol. II, pp. 321, 323.

maintained.<sup>55</sup> This logic informed his thinking regardless of whether the anti-government faction was autocratic or liberal.<sup>56</sup>

Garasanin even worried about factionalism within the Defenders. One instance in 1848 encapsulates his thinking about factionalism and reveals the underlying logic. When the revolutionary turmoil in Europe during 1848 threatened to split the Defenders into those who favoured more aggressive actions for independence and those who opposed going to war, Garasanin defended the latter option. In a letter to a colleague he explained why:

I can see that you disapprove of my patchwork and prefer to tailor anew. However, you lack a skilful tailor. When the old is not patched one can easily remain naked. [...] It is true that there is no justice without truth, but believe me neither is there benefit without reason. When reason does not lead, justice and truth will also break down.

Hence, he continued, "...if you take into consideration external threats and domestic political divisions you will see that I am right."<sup>57</sup> The Defenders, he constantly argued, "can always easily break up, but we are then simultaneously breaking up our strength. Can that be useful?"<sup>58</sup> Reason required unity because unity was a source of strength. Survival in a Hobbesian inter-state system demanded strength. In *Nacertanije* he explained how Serbia could be further strengthened.

### III. *Retrospective Nationalism and Nacertanije*

Garasanin's *Nacertanije* is widely interpreted as either the first blueprint for creating an exclusive Greater Serbia or as a programme of utopian Yugoslavism.<sup>59</sup> While scholars differ as to what type of nationalism Garasanin espoused, almost all assume that by 1844, the year when *Nacertanije* was written, inhabitants of the Balkans had formed national identities.<sup>60</sup> Some try to prove that the nations

<sup>55</sup> Quoted in MacKenzie, *Ilija Garasanin*, p. 31.

<sup>56</sup> See Garasanin, *Pisma*, Vol. I, pp. 3-4, 85-6; MacKenzie, *Ilija Garasanin*, pp. 31, 214, 225.

<sup>57</sup> I. Garasanin, *Prepiska Ilije Garasanina, 1839-1849*, Vol. I, Belgrade: Srpska akademija nauka, 1950, p. 188.

<sup>58</sup> Garasanin, *Prepiska*, p. 148.

<sup>59</sup> For references see note 1.

<sup>60</sup> Most notable exceptions are R. Paxton, "Nationalism and Revolution: A Re-Examination of the Origins of the First Serbian Insurrection, 1804-1807", *East European Quarterly* VI (1972), pp. 337-362; G. Stokes, "The Absence of Nationalism in Serbian Politics Before 1840", *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism* IV, no. 1, (1976/77), pp. 77-90; L. Meriage, "The



of former Yugoslavia date back to pre-modern times, others simply assume that they do. Garasanin was a Serbian, not a Yugoslavist, nationalist. However, he was also an inclusive, as opposed to exclusive, nationalist. This interpretation of Garasanin may seem unlikely primarily to those who reject the notion that nations are a relatively modern social phenomenon.<sup>61</sup>

Many scholars of the Balkans hold that national identities are much older than modernity. Ivo Lederer, for example, noted that long before the nineteenth century “the Serbs, in particular, through the oral tradition of epic poetry and through the Serbian church maintained alive a sense of national feeling”.<sup>62</sup> Ivo Banac, another known historian, argued that in the case of Serbs, Croats and Bulgarians “there is no question that the ability to distinguish between one’s own national community and other national communities was unimpaired, unambiguous, suprasocial, and – one might add – remarkably accurate long before modern nationalism”.<sup>63</sup> Bosniacs, Adil Zulfikarpasic suggested, are descendents of the pre-Ottoman Bogomils who “accepted Islam *en masse* and in a short period of time”.<sup>64</sup>

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First Serbian Uprising (1804-1813): National Revival or a Search for Regional Security”, *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism* IV, no. 2 (1977), pp. 187-205; S. K. Pavlowitch, *A History of the Balkans*, p. 333; S. K. Pavlowitch, *Serbia: The History Behind the Name*, London: Hurst & Company, 2002, p. vii.

<sup>61</sup> The so-called modernist perspective holds that nationalism is largely an outcome of the Enlightenment and/or industrialisation, that it first emerged in Western Europe, that it only slowly spread within those countries to encompass the entire population, and that it was subsequently embraced as an ideational model worth replicating in other areas of the world. See E. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983; B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso, 1992; E. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995. In contrast, the primordialist perspective holds that nations date back to the pre-modern period. See C. Geertz, “The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States”, in C. Geertz (ed.), *Old Societies and New States: The Quest for Modernity in Asia and Africa*, New York: Free Press, 1963, pp. 105-157. Anthony Smith outlines a middle path by distinguishing between ethnic and national identities. He argues that nations are modern but that they have deep ethnic roots. A. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, Cambridge: Blackwell, 1986.

<sup>62</sup> I. Lederer, “Nationalism and the Yugoslavs”, in P. Sugar and I. Lederer (eds), *Nationalism in Eastern Europe*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1969, p. 399.

<sup>63</sup> I. Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993, p. 21.

<sup>64</sup> A. Zulfikarpasic, M. Djilas and N. Gace, *The Bosniak*, London: Hurst & Co., 1994, p. 105.

These primordialist accounts spring from equating national identities with other forms of group identities. Banac, for instance, acknowledges that “the *populus* of medieval Croatia was the nobility, and its nationhood extended as far as the state frontiers”.<sup>65</sup> Obviously the term *populus* – Latin for “the people” – did not have the same meaning in medieval times as it has today when class status plays no role in who can be a Croat. Yet, Banac does not find it problematic to equate the medieval conceptualisation of Croat nationhood with the modern one. Moreover, even if the nobility of medieval Croatia had a national identity, it is not clear that all nobles in Croatia identified with the same nation. The nobility in medieval Croatia was “ethnically” mixed. Many inhabitants of medieval Croatia spoke Hungarian or Italian,<sup>66</sup> and not the Croatian language that, according to Banac, is a defining attribute of nationhood. Language was a fluid cultural trait in the pre-modern period and linguistic diversity coexisted with regional and trans-Balkan functional lingua francas.<sup>67</sup>

An indication that national consciousness hardly pervaded all strata of Croatian society was the nobility’s reaction to the abolition of serfdom in the mid-nineteenth century. Since 1827, when the Hungarian Diet referred to Croatia as a subject Hungarian land, the Croatian nobility lived in constant fear that the Hungarian Diet would abolish feudalism and free the peasants. The nobility of Croatia was not sympathetic to any type of emancipation.<sup>68</sup> Although the nobility comprised four percent of the population of mid-nineteenth-century Croatia and possessed three-quarters of the land,<sup>69</sup> “the Croatian nobles systematically fought the abolition of serfdom under the pretext that they would be too impoverished to pay for hired labor on such small holdings”.<sup>70</sup>

It is far from clear that the Croatian nation was forged before the Croatian national movement. Ante Starcevic (1823-1896), known as the “Father of Croatia” and the leader of the Party of Rights, was the first to conceptualise an integral Croat national ideology and express an aspiration to full national independence from the Habsburg Empire. Starcevic’s nationalism rested on the

<sup>65</sup> Banac, *The National Question*, p. 86.

<sup>66</sup> J. Fine, *The Late Medieval Balkans*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996, p. 22.

<sup>67</sup> P. M. Kitromilides, “‘Balkan Mentality’: History, Legend, Imagination”, *Nations and Nationalism* II, Part 2 (1996), p. 188.

<sup>68</sup> J. Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History: Twice There was a Country*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 44.

<sup>69</sup> Lampe, *Yugoslavia*, p. 44.

<sup>70</sup> V. Dedijer *et. al.*, *History of Yugoslavia*, New York: McGraw Hill, 1974, pp. 285-286.

then popular “state rights” theory, according to which the further back in history a nation can trace its roots, the more legitimate is its claim to the territory. The right over Croatia by supposition belonged to the Croat “political people” as far back as their migration to the Adriatic basin in the sixth century. This “primary acquisition” established the eternal and natural Croat right to the ownership of the land.<sup>71</sup>

Starcevic believed that the Croat nobility had lost all its exclusive rights in favour of the people because the strictly nobles’ responsibility to defend the homeland was transferred to the popularly based standing armies at the beginning of the eighteenth century.<sup>72</sup> What is important here is not the eighteenth-century event to which Starcevic pointed, but Starcevic’s articulation of an idea about a fraternal bond that connected all Croats. His 1871 *Instructions* to party members clearly indicate that the lower classes were still not perceived as equal members of the national community and that he intended to rectify that anomaly: “The peasantry and the lowest class of townspeople on one side, and all the other classes on the other, are two inimical groups in Croatia. Neither of them can achieve anything by itself, but in harmony they are all-powerful. The party will weld those two large groups of people and all their parts together.”<sup>73</sup>

Lederer’s suggestion that Serbian epic poetry and the Serbian Orthodox Church played a crucial role in maintaining Serbian national identity from medieval to modern times also deserves closer scrutiny since it is frequently repeated. The evidence is far from conclusive. In the introduction to an anthology of Serbian patriotic poetry, Zoran Gavrilovic suggested that Serbian Romanticism of the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries bridged the almost three-centuries-long gap and established “continuity” between the fifteenth-century Serbian culture and the modern Serbian culture. It is not clear how much actual continuity there was in this rich oral tradition nor how much this continuity was a creation of the Romantic period.<sup>74</sup> Editors of another collection of poems that were collected in the early nineteenth century raised a similar question and concluded:

It is clear [...] that to a greater or lesser extent, each singing was a compositional and not purely a recitational act, for each singer sang the

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<sup>71</sup> Banac, *The National Question*, pp. 85-86.

<sup>72</sup> Banac, *The National Question*, p. 86.

<sup>73</sup> Quoted in Dedijer et. al., *History of Yugoslavia*, p. 388.

<sup>74</sup> Z. Gavrilovic (ed.), *Antologija srpskog rodoljubivog pesništva, XIV-XX vek*, Belgrade: Rad, 1967, p. 12.

songs differently. So in a certain sense, regardless of the “age” of songs, [the] early nineteenth-century folk songs, all of which, after having passed on from generation to generation, had passed through the minds and memories of their singers and had been reformed according to their tastes or experience and in the vocabulary of their own cultures.<sup>75</sup>

The Serbian Church, as well as other autocephalous Orthodox churches, also poses an interesting problem to scholars of national identities. The mere fact that an independent Serbian Church was established in 1219 does not affirm that a Serbian nation existed then. Orthodoxy’s unity, argues Paschalis Kitromilides, was subverted only after its subjection to the expedients of nineteenth- and twentieth-century nationalism.<sup>76</sup> Indeed, the Church was hostile to Vuk Karadzic’s 1815 grammar of the vernacular Serbian language and his 1818 Serbian dictionary. The Church feared that the vernacular language would turn Serbian loyalties away from Orthodox Russia.<sup>77</sup>

Vuk Karadzic, the first Serbian language reformer, died in Vienna in 1864. He did not live to see the day when in 1868 the vernacular became officially proclaimed the literary language. The government brought his remains to Belgrade in September 1897. “It was a ceremony that was never before seen in Belgrade. [...] Archbishop Mihailo led the dignitaries, the church bells were tolling and fifty priests were chanting. In brief, the entire hierarchy that once [...] despised his [language] reform” was present.<sup>78</sup> The language that the Church embraced until 1868 was Church Slavonic. “What profit have we from a language which, taking our nation as a whole, not one person in ten thousand understands properly and which is foreign to my mother and my sisters?” asked Dositej Obradovic in 1783.<sup>79</sup>

The idea that the Bosnian Muslims are descendants of the medieval Bosnian Christians – the Bogomils – is a no less problematic claim than the one regarding the medieval roots of the Serbian and the Croatian nations. The independent Bosnian Church, which was established in the thirteenth century in schism with Rome, does not seem to have been dualist or Bogomil. It

<sup>75</sup> M. Holton and V. Mihailovich (eds), *Songs of the Serbian People: From the Collections of Vuk Karadzic*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997, pp. 4-5.

<sup>76</sup> See Kitromilides, “‘Balkan Mentality’”.

<sup>77</sup> Holton and Mihailovich, *Songs*, p. 2.

<sup>78</sup> I. Andric, “Vuk, reformator”, in Dj. Gavella (ed.), *Vuk Stef. Karadzic, Prvi i drugi srpski ustanak*, Belgrade: Matica srpska, 1969 [1947], p. 45.

<sup>79</sup> D. Obradovic, *The Life and Adventures of Dimitrije Obradovic Who As a Monk Was Given the Name Dositej/Written and Published by Himself*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1953, p. 134.

retained its basic Catholic theology throughout the Middle Ages and was weakened before the advent of the Ottoman Muslims. Moreover, although the Bosnian Church was under attack from the Vatican and Hungary, Bosnian rulers and nobles of the three Christian denominations were largely indifferent to religious issues; they intermarried and formed alliances as it suited their worldly aims. In time the members of the Bosnian Church converted not only to Islam, but also to Orthodoxy and Catholicism.<sup>80</sup>

The first and the clearest attempt to unite all Bosnian Muslims under a common national ideology came in 1919 in the form of the Yugoslav Muslim Organization (JMO). The Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was established one year before, in 1918. The JMO brought together Muslim landlords and smallholders, Westernised intellectuals and traditionalist *ulema*, bazaar merchants and urban poor. As in the case of Serb and Croat nationalist awakeners, the rhetoric of equality figured prominently among Bosnian Muslim nationalists. Reacting to the government's programme of agrarian reform that jeopardised Bosnian landlords, of whom Muslims made up 91 percent, Sakib Korkut, a leading JMO activist, explicitly called in 1919 upon Muslims of all social standings to unite in protection of their rights: "There are no class differences. Muslim peasant and Muslim landlord feel the same way because neither has become dead to the demands of justice and will not covet other people's property..."<sup>81</sup>

A 1920 editorial in *Pravda* [Justice], JMO's newspaper, implicitly acknowledged that Bosnian Muslims did not yet have a firmly established national consciousness. It explicitly suggested that nationalism was fundamentally a matter of rights; and not just cultural rights, but economic and social ones as well:

The factors that have nowadays acquired the strongest role in nation-forming are no longer religion or language, but economic and social relations – that is material culture in general. [...] Should the Muslims feel that they have had their fair chance at economic development, that they can enjoy the same material culture as the Serbs, they will unconditionally and certainly choose the Serb nationhood. But should they continue to observe, as they have hitherto, that chances at economic development are allotted unequally and that in their inequality they are being equated with the Croats, they will, as before, continue to choose Croat nationality.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Fine, *The Late Medieval Balkans*, pp. 5-9, 11-12.

<sup>81</sup> Banac, *The National Question*, pp. 367-368.

<sup>82</sup> Banac, *The National Question*, p. 374.

Ultimately, Korkut noted, Bosnian Muslims had no other option but to organise on the confessional basis and forge a national consciousness in which Islam played a crucial role:

What did the national revolution [creation of first Yugoslavia in 1918] bring us: fraternal forgiveness or savage retribution? I shall not recount all the murders, robberies, and persecution of Muslims. [...] I shall only note who committed these things: Orthodox Serbs. Some object, noting that Catholic Croats were also persecuted. That is true. But that only proves that the persecution of Muslims was not a result of our "anational" circumstances. We were the victims of religious fanaticism and were, therefore, forced to group ourselves on a religious basis, too.<sup>83</sup>

The preceding brief analysis strongly indicates that much more hard empirical work is required before any conclusive judgments can be made about the medieval origins of Bosniac, Croatian and Serbian national identities.

While the above-reviewed scholarship explicitly tries to date Bosniac, Croatian and Serbian national identity to pre-modern times, the scholarship dealing with Garasanin simply assumes their pre-modern origin. Because of this implicit assumption they argue that Garasanin was either a utopian Yugoslavist who wanted to fuse distinct nations into a new one or a Serbian nationalist who wanted to dominate and/or assimilate other already formed Balkan nations.

The philosopher Mihailo Markovic, a disillusioned Yugoslavist turned Serbian nationalist, asserts that *Nacertanije* is the source of Yugoslavia's demise and the underlying reason for Serbian defeats in the late 1990s. Markovic, a former Partisan and then dissident intellectual with an impeccable reputation as a neo-Marxian internationalist, became in 1990 vice-president of Slobodan Milosevic's Socialist Party of Serbia.<sup>84</sup> For Markovic there were two ideas that predated the creation of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. The first was the Yugoslavist idea that aimed to unite all South Slavs in a single state. The second idea favoured creating a Serbian state that would encompass only Serbs. According to Markovic, the Yugoslav idea was clearly "rooted" in *Nacertanije*.<sup>85</sup> The main problem with the so-called first and the second Yugoslavia was that only Serbs and Montenegrins were willing to forge a new

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<sup>83</sup> Banac, *The National Question*, p. 371.

<sup>84</sup> J. Dragovic-Soso, "Saviours of the Nation": *Serbia's Intellectual Opposition and the Revival of Nationalism*, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002, pp. 238-239.

<sup>85</sup> M. Markovic, "Stvaranje jugoslovenske drzave", in Z. Konstantinovic and S. Pavicevic (eds), *Garasanin: Susreti i vidjenja, 2001*, Kragujevac: Jefimija, 2002, pp. 199-200.

Yugoslav national identity while others “jealously guarded their separate national identities and their so-called ‘historical’ rights”. They joined Yugoslavia for “primarily pragmatic” reasons.<sup>86</sup> Markovic overlooked that favouring a Yugoslavist idea so that all Serbs could live in one state was also pragmatic. This was, after all, his interpretation of why Garasanin embraced Yugoslavism. He noted that Garasanin embraced Yugoslavism because he understood that Serbs could secure their existence in a single political unit only if Serbia liberated all other South Slavs. Markovic concludes that historical experience proved that the ideas expressed in *Nacertanije* were a failure.<sup>87</sup>

Some Serbian scholars who are critical of Serbian nationalism, past or contemporary, also implicitly subscribe to the idea that nations are pre-modern phenomena. Analysing, *inter alia*, Garasanin and *Nacertanije* in a study entitled *The Concept and the Nature of the Serbian Nation*, Lazar Vrkatic tries to answer the following question, “What was it that made the [Serbian] population feel as one nation?” He concludes that it was neither language nor religion but shared mythology.<sup>88</sup> Whether it was mythology or something else is less relevant; what is indicative is that his conclusion implies that during the 1840s, when Garasanin was writing *Nacertanije*, the content of Serbian and Bosniac national consciousness had already been forged. According to Vrkatic, Garasanin held that the state “was the only important attribute of nationhood [...] He did not even see an obstacle for incorporating the Bosnians of Catholic faith into the Serbian nation.”<sup>89</sup> Hence, Vrkatic asserts, “The spirit of Garasanin is the most lethal Serbian weapon; it is lethal for others, but also for themselves.”<sup>90</sup>

Just like Markovic and Vrkatic, Croatian scholars also assume that Serbs and Croats had formed national identities in the 1840s and, most probably, many centuries before. Their decontextualised reading of *Nacertanije* also indicates why *Nacertanije* is so infamous among Serbia’s neighbours.

In 1944, during the last years of World War II when Tito’s multinational Partisan resistance movement was fighting against the Nazi occupiers and their collaborators from all South Slav nations, Petar Simunic wrote *Nacertanije: The Secret Text of Serbian National and Foreign Policy*. The very first paragraph reflects the purpose of the analysis as well as the significance of Garasanin’s

<sup>86</sup> Markovic, “Stvaranje”, p. 201, also pp. 203, 205.

<sup>87</sup> Markovic, “Stvaranje”, p. 206.

<sup>88</sup> Vrkatic, *Pojam i bice srpske nacije*, pp. 117-118.

<sup>89</sup> Vrkatic, *Pojam i bice srpske nacije*, p. 116.

<sup>90</sup> Vrkatic, *Pojam i bice srpske nacije*, p. 253.

*Nacertanije*. 1944 marks one century since Garasanin handed *Nacertanije* to the Serbian Prince, Simunic writes, and since this text “has special significance for Serbian expansionism and Serbian political thought towards the Croats, I am laying down its meaning, content and its guiding thoughts.”<sup>91</sup> Almost five decades later, in 1992, when Serbs and Croats were engaged in a civil war, Simunic’s book was reprinted. In a long forward to the new edition, Mirko Valentic reminds the readers how Garasanin’s *Nacertanije* and Simunic’s interpretation of it was still pertinent for understanding Serbia’s policies towards its neighbours. The work of Petar Simunic, writes Valentic, is being reprinted,

[A]t the time when the Croatian people, after so many centuries, are finally seeing the end of the tunnel. Simunic’s book is still useful because its analysis and its recommendations have not lost any of its relevance. [...] It remains the standard work for understanding the relations between Croatia and Serbia. [...] The genesis of Great Serbian aggression on all non-Serbian lands and peoples was programmatically formed in the 1844 *Nacertanije*...<sup>92</sup>

Ever since *Nacertanije*, the Serbian policy had “ideationally and programmatically” remained the same.<sup>93</sup>

In 1994, a Croatian historian, Damir Agicic, published *The Secret Policy of Serbia in the Nineteenth Century*. Like Simunic and Valentic, Agicic concludes that the:

[G]reater Serbian character of the secret policy conducted by the Serbian political leadership since the mid-nineteenth century is entirely clear when one knows that the ultimate goal was expanding Serbia’s borders, imposing the Serbian dynasty, its legal and political system. Serbia largely succeeded in its intentions after World War I. Serbia tried to achieve something similar later, and is currently still trying to achieve the same goal.<sup>94</sup>

Drawing parallels between nineteenth- and twentieth-century Serbian policies is problematic for it decontextualises policies from their social context. Understanding *Nacertanije* requires placing it in a historical context and in the context of Garasanin’s overall ideas on national and international politics. His views in regard to the national question were not as out of step from historical

<sup>91</sup> P. Simunic, *Nacertanije: Tajni spis srpske nacionalne i vanjske politike*, Zagreb: Globus, 1992 [1944], p. 5.

<sup>92</sup> M. Valentic (ed.), “Predgovor”, in P. Simunic, *Nacertanije*, p. ii.

<sup>93</sup> Valentic, “Predgovor”, p. ii.

<sup>94</sup> D. Agicic, *Tajna politika Srbije u XIX. stoljecu*, Zagreb: AGM, 1994, p. 111.



circumstances as his twentieth-century critics assume. In the mid-nineteenth century nationalist movements were just emerging and placing seeds for nations-to-be. Locating the 1844 *Nacertanije* within the context of a still-emerging sense of national belonging offers a more nuanced understanding of Garasanin and *Nacertanije*. It also explains why the strong centralised principality he managed to forge attracted some South Slavs even during his life.

#### IV. *Nacertanije: Insecurity, Size and Inclusion*

In a letter written four years after *Nacertanije* Garasanin succinctly explained why Serbia had to enlarge its borders. It had little to do with Yugoslavism or Greater Serbian nationalism and much to do with insecurity. Security considerations, in turn, required policies that were inclusive, albeit selectively. Serbia cannot rely on the mercy of others, Garasanin noted. She must “determine her own role”. Although the state of “Serbia will not perfectly secure the nation by unifying with other Slavs, she will have to do it since she cannot secure it otherwise”.<sup>95</sup> This was the underlying idea elaborated in *Nacertanije*.

*Nacertanije* was a revised version of a programme proposed to Garasanin by Paris-based Polish and Czech immigrants. In 1843, Polish émigré leader, Prince Adam Czartoryski, sent a Czech nationalist, Frantisek Zach, to Belgrade as his envoy. Their main aim was to assess the situation in the principality and devise a way to prevent Russian or Austrian influence. These considerations necessitated that Serbia not initiate a war of independence since that could have instigated the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Only Russia and Austria could have benefited from such a situation. Serbia was to restrict herself to coordinating South Slav cooperation for the purpose of forging a South Slav state at some point in the future. Such a state was to obstruct Russia’s southward expansion. Zach conveyed to Garasanin that the South Slavs had three options. They could fall under Russian domination; they could become a Turkish protectorate; or, they could rebel and suffer the consequences of a Russian and/or Austrian intervention.<sup>96</sup> Placing herself at the head of Turkish Slavs, Serbia had to prevent the fragmentation of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>97</sup>

In early 1844 Zach returned to Belgrade and gave Garasanin a document entitled “The Plan”. It was a written version of what Zach conveyed to

<sup>95</sup> Quoted in R. Ljusic, “Ilija Garasanin o srpskoj drzavnosti”, p. 157.

<sup>96</sup> Ekmecic, *Stvaranje Jugoslavije*, p. 366.

<sup>97</sup> MacKenzie, *Ilija Garasanin*, p. 49.

Garasanin in 1843. Garasanin made a number of changes to "The Plan". Most indicative for the purpose of this analysis were three. First, throughout the text he replaced the word "Yugoslav" with "Serb" without "expressly rejecting Zach's assertion that Serbia in its own interest must pursue a Yugoslav policy".<sup>98</sup> Second, he omitted the section on Croatia. Third, he flatly rejected the negative view of Russia. He wrote in *Nacertanije*:

With no one else can Serbia achieve her goal more easily than in agreement with Russia, but only if Russia fully and completely accepts Serbia's conditions, guaranteeing her future in the broadest terms. An alliance between Serbia and Russia would be truly the most natural, but whether it will be achieved depends on Russia, and Serbia would welcome it with open arms, but only if she is convinced that Russia is proposing it sincerely and heartily which can only be the case if she [Russia] renounces her present system [of intervention] and realizes that an alliance with little Serbia is more natural than one with Austria.<sup>99</sup>

He concluded those thoughts on Russia by noting, "Although I doubt that Russia will ever want to honestly ally herself with Serbia, it is imperative to mention this here because it would be of great interest to Serbia..."<sup>100</sup>

The overarching purpose of *Nacertanije* was laid out in the first five introductory paragraphs (19-20).<sup>101</sup> The very first sentence of the text states that, "Serbia must place herself in the ranks of other European states by creating a plan for her future or establishing, so to speak, principles for a long-term domestic policy to which she should firmly adhere." All subsequent recommendations spring from the assessment that Serbia was "small" and that to secure her future she must not remain small. Serbia, Garasanin wrote, could

<sup>98</sup> MacKenzie, *Ilija Garasanin*, p. 55.

<sup>99</sup> I. Garasanin, "Nacertanije" in N. B. Popovic (ed.), *Srpski nacionalni program: dokumenti i misljenja*, Belgrade: DMP and GrafoMark, 2000 [1844], p. 29. This translation was taken from MacKenzie, *Ilija Garasanin*, p. 55.

<sup>100</sup> Garasanin, "Nacertanije", p. 29. Although Garasanin did not elaborate the reason why he held Russia to be Serbia's "most natural" ally, Pan-Slavism does not seem to be the answer. Given his overall concerns with geo-strategy, the most consistent answer seems to be the one he provided in 1867: "One should never believe that Russia desires our progress and strengthening for other motives but only because in us she would find an ally if Europe, which greatly fears Russian advances, should attack her." Thus, he concluded, the long-term relationship between Russia and Europe can be used in Serbia's favour: "With Russia Serbia can protect her interests for a long time but always watching carefully that she [Russia] never interferes with her interests." Quoted in MacKenzie, *Ilija Garasanin*, p. 376.

enlarge herself through an alliance with her neighbours and by incorporating all Serbs into that state:

If Serbia assesses well enough what she is now, in what position she is and who are the peoples that surround her, she will realise that she is very small, that she must not remain in such a condition, and that only through alliance with other neighbouring peoples and with a clear purpose can she ensure her future. The plan and the foundation of Serbian politics derive from this recognition: that she not limit herself to her present borders, but to endeavour to attach to her all the neighbouring Serbian peoples.

The concluding paragraph of the introduction reaffirms that Garasanin's primary goal was strengthening Serbia through enlargement and that this was required because of the Hobbesian international system: "If Serbia does not vividly pursue this policy and, worse still, if she rejects it, she will be buffeted to and fro like a small vessel by alien tempests until finally she will be broken into pieces on some huge reef."

Serbia had to take into consideration three factors in order to successfully achieve these goals: (1) the imminent collapse of the Ottoman Empire; (2) geo-strategic interests of European great powers; and (3) the identity of the population that surrounds her.

The Ottoman Empire must collapse, he held. It will either be partitioned or it will be "rebuilt anew by its Christian inhabitants". Garasanin favoured the latter option. He saw Serbia's thirteenth- and fourteenth-century empire as a "solid and constant historical foundation" upon which a new "Serbian-Slavic Empire" could be built:

It is known from [...] history that the Serbian rulers began to assume the position held by the Greek Empire. They almost succeeded in displacing the collapsing Eastern Roman Empire with a Serbian-Slavic Empire. The Greek Empire's coat-of-arms was even given to Emperor Dusan the Mighty. The arrival of the Turks in the Balkans interrupted this enterprise [...]. Now that the Turkish power is broken and almost destroyed, the same spirit should be revived. [Serbia should] claim its rights anew and continue the interrupted enterprise (21-22).

Garasanin's plans for Serbia were ambitious but not unrealistic, he thought. Geo-strategic interests of France and England were compatible with these goals. Replacement of the Ottoman Empire with a Serbian-Slavic one would be useful for both England and France. Otherwise, if the Ottoman Empire simply disintegrated, Austria and Russia would "easily agree" how to divide the Ottoman lands among themselves. "It is natural that all other powers, under

the leadership of France and England, are opposed to the expansion and enlargement of Russia and Austria." Moscow and Vienna were already working "in every way to forestall and prevent the emergence of another Christian empire in place of the Ottoman". Russia did not want it, because "then, the fond hope and pleasant prospect would disappear for Russia of seizing and holding Constantinople, which has been her most cherished plan since Peter the Great". The Habsburg Empire did not want it because, "Austria would then be in a terrifying danger of losing her South Slavs" (20-22).

Geo-strategic interests of France and England were not a sufficient reason for them to support Serbia's expansion. Serbia had to guarantee to them that she will be "a distinguished and a robust state capable of maintaining herself between Austria and Russia". Serbia also had to justify the plan by invoking her "sacred historical right". This would be useful for two reasons. First, European powers would not be able to interpret Serbia's aspirations "as something novel and unfounded, as a revolution and a coup". Rather, all would have to acknowledge that Serbian aspirations were "grounded in ancient ages". The second reason why invoking historical rights was useful had to do with other South Slavs. "[O]ther South Slavs will easily understand this idea and accept it with joy" too. Since "the memory of the past [is] so vivid [...] among the Slavs of Turkey [...], it is certain that this enterprise will be readily accepted by the people" (22-23).

Finally, the identity of the people that were to be integrated into the prospective empire had to be taken into consideration. "Movement and agitation among the Slavs has already begun." Serbia had to "understand this movement" and define the "role [...] she will have in it" (23). Deciding on appropriate means for implementing Serbia's enlargement required first assessing the condition in which the people residing in the Habsburg and the Ottoman provinces lived. Serbian "agents" were to be sent to assesses the political and military conditions, gather useful information about the population, their feelings, desires and martial spirit. Finally, Garasanin found it important for the Serbian government to know "the attitude of people in each province toward Serbia and their expectations from her, [...] along with what they want from Serbia or why they fear her" (24).<sup>102</sup>

Garasanin did not have a single strategy for all neighbouring provinces. After explaining the global circumstances in which Serbia had to act, he

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<sup>101</sup> All subsequent in-text citations are from Garasanin, "Nacertanije", pp. 19-39.

<sup>102</sup> On the secret network of some 50 agents see D. Stranjakovic, *Srbija Pijemont Juznih Slovena, 1842-1853*, Belgrade: Narodna stamparija, 1932, pp. 13-14.

devoted most of *Nacertanije* to specific regions of the Ottoman and Habsburg empires. He first discussed Bulgaria. The section on Bulgaria is followed by a section entitled “On the policy of Serbia towards Bosnia, Herzegovina, Montenegro and Northern Albania”. The next section is on the Habsburg lands (“Srem, Backa and Banat”), and, lastly, he introduced a brief section on the Czechs (“On Alliance with the Czech Slavs”).<sup>103</sup>

Juxtaposing Garasanin’s thoughts on Bulgaria with those on Bosnia and other South Slav inhabited lands reveals the form of international relations he envisioned for the prospective state. In short, he had a dual strategy: assimilation and alliance. Some peoples’ national identities were to be recognised while others were to be assimilated into the Serbian nation. Enlargement required a combination of approaches. He did not explain the logic behind different strategies. However, the appropriate strategy seems to have depended on whether Garasanin thought a society in question had or did not have a national identity. Hence, the non-national Catholic and Muslim South Slav population was to be assimilated into the Serbian nation. In contrast, the nationally conscious Bulgarian population was recognised as a distinct nation.

Based on what criteria did Garasanin decide whether a certain population had a national identity? One may tentatively conclude that the criteria were based on what he deemed were attributes of a nation – “common origin, and a shared language” (23). As will be noted later, these were the same attributes that the Illyrians and then the Yugoslavists held to define a nation. Aside from this similarity, there was also a crucial difference between them. They believed the South Slavs were one Illyrian/Yugoslavian nation. Garasanin most probably held that they were, or could all become, Serbs. Like the Illyrians and the Yugoslavists, he considered religious differences to be an obstacle to forging a shared national identity. However, since religion was not an attribute of nationality it was not deemed an insurmountable obstacle. Religious differences, the one overarching ascriptive characteristic that created a social cleavage in the region, had to be managed. The solution he found was freedom of religion. Freedom of religion was to be respected in his prospective state.

Before turning his attention to the lands that were in 1918 incorporated into the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, Garasanin devoted six pages out of a twenty-page-long manuscript to Bulgaria. Bulgaria was

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<sup>103</sup> The section on the Czechs is barely half a page long. He noted that the Czechs did not “fall within the scope” of his plan and added, “we must begin making Serbia aware of the Slavs of Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia”. This must be done “very cautiously and wisely so as not to arouse Austria’s suspicions” (39).

important for two reasons: first, because “Bulgaria is the closest of all the Slavic countries to the glorious capital of the Ottoman Empire...”; and, second, because Bulgaria was the country in which Serbian and Russian “influences must primarily and largely come into contact” (29). Hence, given the importance of Bulgaria to both Russian and Serbian imperial interests, the strategy toward Bulgaria necessitated particular attention. Istanbul’s control of Bulgaria was so tight “that a greater effort for its liberation from Turkish yoke is still far away” (30). The Bulgarians had no confidence in their own strength and acted only when nudged by Russia (26). Given that Russian and Serbian interests in Bulgaria were incompatible and that Russian influence in Bulgaria was substantial, Serbia had to act promptly:

If for only a few more years Russia continues acting in Bulgaria the way she has been acting lately, and if Serbia lets her act without doing anything, then Russia will indeed achieve such success that Serbian influence in Bulgaria will become useless [...] Serbia must do something for Bulgaria because love and help need to be mutual (30).

Serbia had to help Bulgaria in the 1840s so that at some future point in time Bulgaria would become a constitutive part of the Serbian-Slavic Empire. Never let Serbia “forget that political friendship may be expected only if we have previously showed and proved our love for a friend” (30).

The “means for establishing Serbian influence” in Bulgaria were described briefly. The overall objective was to reinforce a distinct Bulgarian identity. The means included providing educational services to Bulgarians, strengthening Bulgarian as opposed to Greek clergy, and printing Bulgarian ecclesiastical and secular literature.<sup>104</sup> Hence, although the future empire was not to be known by the Bulgarian name, Garasanin did not see Bulgarian national identity as an obstacle. Rather, preserving Bulgarian national consciousness was his goal.

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<sup>104</sup> Given that the Bulgarians “do not possess educational and pedagogical institutions, Serbia should open her schools to the Bulgarians and grant scholarships to young Bulgarians studying in Serbia”. Given that the Bulgarian clergy was mainly Greek, “and not of Bulgarian nationality, it would be desirable and useful if a certain number of young Bulgarians were trained in theology in Serbia and then returned as priests to their people and homeland”. And thirdly, “Bulgarian liturgical and other religious books, together with other Bulgarian works, should be printed in Serbia...” Finally, in addition to preserving Bulgarian identity, Garasanin envisioned sending “reliable and capable people” in order to “draw the attention of the Bulgarians to Serbia, awakening in them the feelings of friendship toward Serbia and the Serbian government, as well as hopes that Serbia will truly aid their liberation and provide for their welfare” (30-31).

This conclusion is further supported by the ideas he expressed many years later in a somewhat different context. In a “Memoir to Myself” of May 1867, Garasanin expressed his views in regard to the Balkan League – an alliance of Balkan nations which was organised, *inter alia*, by Garasanin in order to overthrow the Ottomans. There he noted that the Bulgarians, Greeks, Romanians and Serbs had to treat each other as equals. In addition to equality, Garasanin noted, those nations also had to make mutual concessions on frontiers just as Italy had sacrificed Savoy and Prussia had abandoned Luxembourg.<sup>105</sup>

That same year, when the envoys of the Bulgarian Voluntary Society approached him with a plan of liberation and unification, Garasanin was even prepared to change the name of the prospective country in order to accommodate their wishes. In 1867 Garasanin and the Serbian government accepted the proposal of the Bulgarian Voluntary Society. According to that programme, “brotherly” Serbian and Bulgarian nations would unite in a state known as the Yugoslavian Empire. The empire would be a dual monarchy with a common ruler, Tsar Mihailo Obrenovic. The two languages would be equal. “Each side will preserve its dialect and because of that, state officials must be from the nation where they serve. [...] All official documents of the Yugoslavian Empire must, without exception, be published in both dialects, the Serbian and the Bulgarian simultaneously.”<sup>106</sup>

The substantive section of *Nacertanije* dealing with Bulgaria is frequently overlooked at peril for those scholars who see in it a Greater Serbia programme that would Serbianise all its inhabitants. Security in the nineteenth century required a large state, an empire, and if creating one necessitated recognising other nations Garasanin was prepared to consider that arrangement. Those scholars who interpret *Nacertanije* as a Yugoslavist multi national project are no less wrong. Garasanin’s ideas on Bosnia and subsequent negotiations with the Illyrians and Yugoslavists indicate that his and their views differed substantially.

Garasanin was most detailed in his treatment of Bosnia. He emphasised that Serbia had to focus “particularly” on Bosnia, Herzegovina, Montenegro, and North Albania (24-25).<sup>107</sup> The reason was that unification with Bosnia was to

<sup>105</sup> MacKenzie, *Ilija Garasanin*, pp. 311-312, 317.

<sup>106</sup> J. Pleterski, *Nacije, Jugoslavia, Revolucija*, Belgrade: Izdavacki centar Komunist, 1985, p. 4. On this and similar earlier plans between Bulgarian organisations and Garasanin see K. Dzambazovski, “Shvatanja Ilije Garasanina o saradnji s Bugarima za oslobodjenje of turske vlasti”, in V. Stojancevic (ed.), *Ilija Garasanin*, Belgrade: SANU, 1991, pp. 319-329.

<sup>107</sup> The region that Garasanin referred to as North Albania is the present-day territory of Kosovo.

be the first, and the most imminent, step toward “general unification of all Serbs and [Ottoman] provinces” (33).

In contrast to Bulgaria, Serbian policy towards Bosnia and Herzegovina had the goal of preventing the emergence of a distinct national identity. He seemed uncertain how to categorise the inhabitants of Bosnia. His uncertainty is apparent from different terms he used. Referring to inhabitants of Bosnia he wrote about the “neighbouring nation” (31); about “two nations” of Catholic and Orthodox faith (without mentioning those of the Islamic faith) (32); about “both parts of the nation residing” in Bosnia, referring again to the Bosnian Orthodox and Catholic population (32); about the principle of “unity of nationalities” that should bind Serbia and Bosnia (33); about “Bosniacs” (*Bosnjaci*) when referring to all Bosnian inhabitants (33, 34, 35, 37).

One can, however, infer with some confidence that he saw all the inhabitants of Bosnia as sharing with the Serbs from Serbia a common origin and language. Given that origin and language defined one’s nationality (23), even if Garasanin did not see all the Bosnian inhabitants having a Serbian national identity, it follows from his membership criteria that with wise Serbian policies they would come to feel as Serbs.

Accomplishing that required adherence to three “basic principles”. Two principles were geared towards attracting the Bosnian population to Serbia. The third was to ensure assimilation of Bosnians into the Serbian nation. His primary concern were Bosnian Catholics, not Bosnian Muslims. Hence, he called for reaching “an agreement about national policy” between the Orthodox and the Catholics. He hoped, however, that eventually Bosnian Muslims would come on board as well. The agreement between the Catholics and the Orthodox was to be established on “the principle of complete freedom of religion”. “This principle,” Garasanin wrote, “will be appreciated and will satisfy all Christians, perhaps it will become accepted by some Muslims as well” (32).

In addition to respecting religious diversity, the principle of “unity of nationalities” also had to guide Serbian policy. What he meant by “unity of nationalities” was that the Principality of Serbia and its “diplomatic representative” had to “protect” and “assist” Bosnians and other Slavs:

Serbia [...] must realise that she is a natural protector of all the Slavs living in Turkey, and that other Slavs will only concede her that right when she takes upon herself the duty of doing and saying something in their name. If Serbia sets bad and unfortunate examples by being indifferent to her neighbours, if she thinks only of herself without caring about the troubles or advancement of others, then they will certainly follow her example and will not listen to her. Thus, harmony and unity would be replaced by distrust, envy and misfortune (33-34).



Garasanin was not only concerned with attracting the population of Bosnia by guaranteeing religious freedoms and offering diplomatic protection to its inhabitants. He showed keen awareness that institutional arrangements were important for shaping national identities.<sup>108</sup> Political unity was to be achieved through a political system that would institute a hereditary monarch. This was the third and final principle of Serbian policy toward Bosnia. "This principle is the very embodiment of state unity. An enduring and permanent state union between Serbia and her neighbours is unthinkable without it" (32). An "inevitable consequence", of not having a hereditary ruler, "would be fragmentation of Serbdom into provincial, small principalities under separate ruling families who would doubtless quickly fall under the sway of foreign influences because there would arise rivalry and envy between them" (32). He did not write explicitly that the hereditary ruler was to be Serbian, but there is little doubt that the monarch of the prospective state was intended to be Serbian.

It is worth noting that pre-unification Bosnia was to have a political arrangement that was diametrically opposed to the one he proposed for the common state. Before unification Bosnia was not to have a single hereditary ruler. The reason was that a Bosnian hereditary ruler would be an obstacle to the future union with Serbia. It was to be recommended to Bosnia, Garasanin wrote, that it institute a "council" composed of "the most important men". The members of the council were not to be elected for life. Although such a government would be "divided and provincial", he noted it would enable "Serbia to eventually bring about a closer union with Bosnia" (33).

A number of "means" would achieve the goal of integrating Bosnia. The main difference between the policies towards Bulgaria and Bosnia was that in Bosnia the "means" were geared towards reinforcing similarities with the Serbs. They ranged from measures such as opening borders in order to facilitate communication between Bosnia and Serbia to accepting young Bosnians into Serbian state service "so that later these officials could apply in their own homeland what they have learned in Serbia" (31, 34). Other measures were specifically crafted to "educate" young Bosnians "in such a manner that their work becomes completely imbued by the redeeming idea of a general unification and great advancement". Hence, Garasanin proposed printing "a short and comprehensive history of Bosnia" and other "patriotic works". Those

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<sup>108</sup> M. B. Petrovich [*A History of Modern Serbia*, p. 320] correctly concludes that neither Garasanin nor other nineteenth-century Serbian politicians "were very clear about the composition or governance of this Yugoslav Empire". However, as I suggest below, a very broad but telling institutional structure can be inferred from his writings.

studies were to be written by a “capable and deeply discerning person”. The history texts on Bosnia were not to omit “the names and glory [...] of several Bosnians who had converted to Muslim faith. It goes without saying,” he went on, “that this history should be written in the spirit of the Slavic nationality and entirely in the spirit of the national unity of Serbs and Bosnians” (34).<sup>109</sup>

Garasanin devoted only two sentences to the Orthodox population of Bosnia, probably because he held that influencing the “Eastern Orthodox Bosniacs” would be least difficult (37). Interestingly, he did suggest that liturgical books and anthologies of popular poems for the Orthodox were to be printed in both Latin and Cyrillic alphabets (34).

The section on Bosnia and Herzegovina also dealt briefly with Northern Albania and with Montenegro. Northern Albania and Montenegro were important because they “hold the keys to the gates of Bosnia and Herzegovina” (38). Union with them was also important for economic, military and national reasons. Since “the entire foreign trade of Serbia is in the hands of Austria”, Serbia had to search for other trade routes. That “distressing affair” necessitated access to the sea. “For the present, the only route possible is the one which leads through Skadar [Scutari] to Ulcinj.” Hence, as a first step Serbia had to appoint a “commercial agent to Ulcinj” (35).

While he elaborated at some length on the economic and the strategic importance of Northern Albania and Montenegro for Serbia, Garasanin seemed least concerned with their identity. He considered them to be Serbs. Given that the commercial agent would be “among a Serbian population”, he wrote, the establishment of the agency would be understood by them as a political act of immeasurable importance. A closer union of the people of those provinces with Serbia would be an easy matter (36).<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Fostering a common nationality was not Garasanin’s only objective. The history books were also intended to counter Austrian influence in Bosnia. Diverting the Catholic population from Austrian influence was of paramount importance. The Franciscan order was best suited for that endeavour. Winning them over “to the idea of the union” necessitated publishing prayer books and hymnals in Belgrade. Approaching the Franciscans in this way would also benefit Serbia’s relationship with Croatia and Dalmatia because they would “procure books that cannot be printed in Austria. This would naturally result in a closer relationship of these lands with Bosnia and Serbia.” Appointing Bosnian friars to the Belgrade Lycée as professors of Latin or some other science and establishing a Catholic chapel in Belgrade would be a further indication of “tolerance” (34-35).

<sup>110</sup> He also suggested that Serbia “offer the Metropolitan of Montenegro a regular annual salary – in this way, for a small price, Serbia will have the friendship of a country which can, at the very least, raise an army of 10,000 mountain soldiers” (38).

The section of *Nacertanije* on Srem, Backa and Banat was barely half a page long and clearly indicated that Garasanin did not want to raise suspicion among the Habsburgs, who ruled those areas. His thoughts on Srem, Backa and Banat – regions that after World War I became parts of Serbia – perhaps best reflect the fine balance Garasanin tried to strike between national ideals and global political constraints. Although he considered them to be the “same with the Serbs of Serbia” because they had the same origin, language, religion, law and customs, his recommendations were very unimposing. “For the present, if nothing else, at least an effort should be made to become acquainted with the most important figures in these provinces and to establish one important newspaper which could, respecting the Hungarian Constitution, be useful to the Serbian cause...” The best Serbia could do was to “keep proving that it is a well organised, strong, just and an enlightened state” (38-39).

The original document submitted to Garasanin by Zach included a section on Croatia. Garasanin left Croatia entirely out of *Nacertanije*. Some suggest that he did so because he did not agree with Zach’s treatment of Croatia as an equal to Serbia. Others argue that the reason was fear of provoking Vienna.<sup>111</sup> Whatever the reason may have been, Garasanin’s subsequent policies toward Croatia indicate that he did not treat Croatia in the same manner he treated Bulgaria. Inhabitants of Croatia, like those of Bosnia, were to be assimilated into the Serbian nation. At that time the nationalist movement in the South Slav lands of the Habsburg Empire was the Illyrian movement (1830-1848). Illyrians envisioned an Illyrian nation that would include both Croats and Serbs.<sup>112</sup> Since an integral Croatian national movement was just emerging, it is not too surprising that Garasanin did not recognise the existence of a Croatian nation.<sup>113</sup>

<sup>111</sup> Ekmecic, *Stvaranje Jugoslavije*, p. 369.

<sup>112</sup> Ljudevit Gaj, the leader of the Illyrian national movement, believed that the Habsburg territories inhabited by the South Slavs were not populated by a homogeneous community. However, while recognising their cultural heterogeneity, Gaj did not hold that Serbs and Croats were yet formed national communities. For instance, although in 1839 he writes: “[A] Serb will never become a Croat..., and the latter can never become a Serb,” he also adds a thought which indicates his Illyrian nationalism: “It is not our intent to abolish the *separate names*, but to only adjoin them under a *common national name*.” Quoted in Lj. Ciric-Bogetic and M. Djordjevic, *Iz politicke istorije jugoslovenskih narod - XIX i XX vek*, Belgrade: Privredni pregled, 1975, p. 8.

<sup>113</sup> The first political party with a Croat national programme was pro-Hungarian and anti-Illyrian. Formed in 1841, the Croato-Hungarian Party had in its programme the suppression of Illyrianism. However, the nationalism of the Croato-Hungarian Party was, as

Until July 1848 Garasanin supported Ljudevit Gaj (1809-1872), the leader of the Illyrians. He supported Gaj not because he shared his national ideals but because Gaj's vision of creating a state for the Illyrians was somewhat compatible with Garasanin's imperial ambitions. In 1848, Garasanin wrote to the president of the State Council about his discussions with Gaj's envoys. He noted that Gaj wanted to create a South Slav kingdom with Serbia as its centre. Garasanin agreed to help Gaj's cause financially because Gaj was a counterbalance to the Ban of Croatia. Gaj's "influence" had to be supported given that the Ban of Croatia did not want to create an independent state but was satisfied with strengthening Croatia's autonomy within the Habsburg Empire.<sup>114</sup> In July 1848, Garasanin terminated his support for Gaj, because Garasanin acquired information suggesting that he was a "Russian man".<sup>115</sup>

In the 1860s, with the demise of Bach's absolutism, the Illyrian ideals reemerged in the guise of the Yugoslav national movement.<sup>116</sup> The Catholic Bishop Josip Juraj Strossmayer (1815-1905), a proponent of Liberal Catholicism,<sup>117</sup> led the Yugoslavist movement.<sup>118</sup> Garasanin's relations with

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the name of the party itself indicates, not yet clearly defined. Lederer, "Nationalism and the Yugoslavs", p. 415. As I suggested earlier, only with Ante Starcevic (1823-1896) and Eugen Kvaternik (1825-1871) were the Croatian interests defined in purely Croatian terms. Tellingly, both men were embittered former Illyrians. Lederer, "Nationalism and the Yugoslavs", p. 420.

<sup>114</sup> Garasanin, *Prepiska*, p. 150.

<sup>115</sup> Garasanin, *Prepiska*, pp. 238-239, 246. It seems, however, that Garasanin was wrong. Gaj was closer to Vienna than to Russia. In 1846 Gaj told the Czech Frantisek Zach that he was cooperating with Metternich and received from him financial support. M. Ekmecic, "Evropska pozadina Nacertanija Ilije Garasanina 1844", in Z. Konstantinovic and S. Pavicevic (eds), *Garasanin: Susreti i vidjenja, 2001*, Kragujevac: Jefimija, 2002, p. 68.

<sup>116</sup> By 1843 Vienna recognised that the Illyrian movement was subverting the monarchy and Metternich outlawed the use of the Illyrian name and symbols. Ciric-Bogetic and Djordjevic, *Iz politicke istorije*, pp. 8-9. The introduction of Bach's absolutism, in 1848, marked the end of the Illyrian movement.

<sup>117</sup> Liberal Catholicism rose with the French Revolution. It marries the idea of Christianity with the idea of social revolution. Among the South Slavs, Liberal Catholicism spread the notion that the Orthodox Christian Church was not an enemy (*dusmanin*) but only an alternative religion. Ekmecic, *Stvaranje Jugoslavije*, pp. 372, 379.

<sup>118</sup> Strossmayer laboured diligently on disseminating Yugoslavism among the Habsburg-governed South Slavs. R. L. Wolff, *The Balkans in Our Time*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974, p. 77. Like Gaj, Strossmayer held that Herder's ideas about "freedom through culture" could be fulfilled if only a single South Slav identity could be created. Lampe, *Yugoslavia*, p. 58.

Strossmayer strongly indicate that he did not hold that Croatia was to be equal to Serbia in any prospective state. It is also clear that Strossmayer ultimately conceded primacy to Serbia.

In 1867, Garasanin and Strossmayer began working on a blueprint for liberating Bosnia. Garasanin and Strossmayer's confidant Oreskovic worked together on a document entitled "Programme of Yugoslav policy proposed by Garasanin to Strossmayer". Oreskovic wrote the draft of the document. Revisions made by Garasanin clearly indicate what type of relations with Croatia Garasanin wanted. In sum, Garasanin's revisions toned down the parts that emphasised equality of Serbs and Croats in the prospective common state. Oreskovic's draft stated that "[t]his state will be organised internally on purely Slav bases, i.e. local administrative autonomy combined with a centralised government in which leading figures from all peoples will participate equally". Garasanin replaced Oreskovic's concrete formulation with a much more open-ended one. The new state was still to be a "federated state", but the statement on equality between the two peoples was crossed out by Garasanin: "Organisation of this state will be left to time and to the participating peoples after liberation is achieved."

Another revision that Garasanin made is just as telling. Garasanin retained Oreskovic's formulation of Serbia's Piedmontist role: "Belgrade, having its independent government and all military resources at its disposal, is the natural centre for diplomatic and military activity." However, Garasanin changed the very next sentence. Originally it read: "Thus [Belgrade] will direct all this work always in agreement with Zagreb." Garasanin revised it by deleting reference to Zagreb. The final version read: "Thus, it [Belgrade] will direct all this work." Strossmayer accepted Garasanin's revisions, which also included a statement that Serbia would annex Bosnia as a first step toward unification.<sup>119</sup>

It is important to note that negotiations with Strossmayer were taking place in 1867, the same year when Garasanin was approached by the Bulgarian Voluntary Society with a plan to create a dual monarchy. That plan Garasanin accepted. Those that claim that Garasanin was a Yugoslavist cannot explain why he rejected Strossmayer's initiative and at the same time accepted the Bulgarian plan. Those that claim that Garasanin was an exclusive Serbian nationalist cannot explain the latter. His behaviour acquires coherence only if we treat Garasanin as a Serbian nationalist, not a Yugoslavist, and as an inclusive, not as an exclusive, nationalist.

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<sup>119</sup> MacKenzie, *Ilija Garasanin*, pp. 307-309.

### *Conclusion*

Both the illiberal and the inclusive aspects of Garasanin's nationalism were inextricably linked with his notion of a predatory world political system. He clearly conceptualised the complex global chessboard and Serbia's place within it. He explained those views in *Nacertanije* and followed the blueprint throughout his three-decades-long engagement in politics. Individual and national interests were structured by a single paramount consideration, the state's security. All other considerations – intra-national or international – were filtered through the prism of inter-state relations.

Security matters required a large Serbia. Size mattered on a continent dominated by large empires. Hence, if achieving a large state required an inclusive *and* a tolerant form of nationalism, Garasanin was ready to embrace it. Inclusion into the Serbian *nation* of the non-national Catholic and Muslim South Slav population required managing religious differences – the one overarching region-wide social cleavage. The solution he found was freedom of religion. In contrast, inclusion into the Serbian *state* of a nationally conscious Bulgarian population required recognition and equality. Whether the nations that Garasanin recognised or did not recognise actually existed in the mid-nineteenth century is indeed an important issue. Resolving it will require clearly distinguishing between nationalism, the ideological movement, and nations, the organisational cultures.<sup>120</sup> Focusing the discussion on that crucial issue should help not only to understand Garasanin but also his legacy, which has stretched out to a very different time.

*John C. Whitehead School of Diplomacy and International Relations,  
Seton Hall University*

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<sup>120</sup> A. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, p. 2.

