

first publication

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1 Cf.: Skerlić, Jovan: *Omladina i njena književnost* [Youth and Its Literature], Beograd 1906.

2 Sava Tekelija (1761-1842), a member of the Serbian noble family Popović from Arad, studied engineering in Vienna, and law in Buda, where he earned his doctoral thesis as early as 1786. Besides, he mastered several languages, and was also a flutist. He was active politically as a delegate at the Hungarian Convention in Požun. In 1838, he established the Home for poor Serbian students, later called Tekelium, and was a great patron of other institutions (Matica srpska, Serbian grammar schools in Sremski Karlovci and Novi Sad) as well as individuals (e.g., Vuk Karadžić). Cf.: Kovaček, Božidar: *Tekelijanumske istorije XIX veka* [Nineteenth-century History of Tekelium], Novi Sad: Matica srpska, Budimpešta, Zadužbina Save Tekelije 1997.

3 Cf.: *Ujedinjena omladina srpska i njeno doba 1860-1875. Gradja iz sovjetskih arhiva/Ob'edinennaja serbskaja molodel' i ee vremena 1860-1875. Materialy iz sovjetskih arhivov*, sost. V. N. Kondrat'eva, Novi Sad, Matica srpska, Moskva, Institut slavjanovedenija i balkanistiki Akademije nauk SSSR, 1977; cf. following reports: 67 (Bukurešt, 29 juli/10 avgust 1869), 167 (Beograd, 16/28 april 1873).

4 Cf.: Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Wien, Ministerium des Äusseren, Informationsbüro, B. M. Akten, 1867, Nr. 262, acc. to: Petrović, Nikola: *Istorijsko mesto, uloga i značaj Ujedinjene omladine srpske*, In: Milisavac, Živan (Ed.): *Ujedinjena omladina srpska. Zbornik radova* [Ujedinjena omladina srpska. Collection of Papers]. Novi Sad, Beograd: Matica srpska, Istorijski institut 1968, p. 13.

5 Ibid., p. 14.

Nineteenth-century Serbian political, cultural and artistic life was at the same time signified and signifier of the wider network embodied in the Austrian, Hungarian (later Austro-Hungarian), and Ottoman contexts. In spite of their different natures, they both consisted of smaller, secondary networks due to their multinational community. Therefore, connections among different European areas where Serbs lived made up one of the secondary networks within this general context of the two empires. Since one of the main markers of the Romantic ideology was the national unity that could be achieved either through unique geographical or through cultural (historical, linguistic) space, Serbs could struggle for their national unity only in the latter way since five million Serbs lived mainly outside of Serbia, in Montenegro, Slavonia, Hungary, Croatia, Dalmatia, Herzegovina, Bosnia, Albania, Old Serbia and Macedonia. For that reason, and having in mind circumstances affected by numerous rebellions and liberation wars, the two main discourses of Serbian Romanticism were the discourse of patriotism and the discourse of nationalism, in their manifestations often inseparable. Both discourses will be examined on the paradigmatic example of the *Ujedinjena omladina srpska* [United Serbian Youth] from the semiotic point of view, for the discourse is determined by manifest (ideological and technological models) and immanent levels (structures of communication and signification). Under the influence of revolutionary ideas of 1848, articulated in the spirit of national liberation movements, Serbian school youth proposed similar initiatives. However, because of the impact of European counter-revolutionary movements and a ban on political and social activities of the Serbian people in the Habsburg Monarchy during the period of Alexander Bach, this idea became more prominent only about ten years later, when Bach's activity had ended (in 1859) after the Austrian military defeat in The Battle of Solferino. The Serbian liberal intelligentsia promoted national liberation ideas at the Szent Andre Conference in 1858, when the Liberal Party under Vladimir Jovanović contributed to Miloš and Mihailo Obrenović replaced Aleksandar Karadjordjević on the Serbian throne. After that a new, powerful political group also of liberal political orientation was formed by the Serbs of the Vojvodina, with its leader Svetozar Miletić, and appeared at assemblies in *Sremski Karlovci* (1861, 1864). Miletić's supporters collaborated with the liberal Jovan Djordjević's journal *Srbski dnevnik* [Serbian Diary], spreading their ideas, like in Miletić's own journal *Zastava* [Flag] as well as founding various societies preceding the *United Serbian Youth*.¹ The most important among these was the first society of Serbian pupils and students, *Preodnica* (Predecessor, Pest, 1861) as well as the initiator of the *United Serbian Youth*, the society *Zora* (in Austria it was called *Aurora*, Vienna, 1862). Both societies had the goal of fostering Serbian culture, literature and language via literary and music organizations. The former one was established at Tekelium, the Home of Serbian students by Sava Tekelija in Pest,² and the latter one at Vienna University. During the 1860's, the idea of national liberation and unification was embodied in the motto »Srbi svi i svuda« [»Serbs, all and everywhere«] of the newly established organization of the *United Serbian Youth*. This institution was founded following the example of the similar Italian organization *Giovine Italia* [Young Italy] by Giuseppe Mazzini, with whom they directly collaborated.³

The *United Serbian Youth* was established in 1866 as a national and educational organization, when Serbs in the Habsburg Monarchy received certain civil rights as a consequence of the October Diploma of 1860. Also, at that time Austria had been defeated in a war with Prussia and was forced to make an arrangement with the liberal Hungarian aristocracy to establish a twofold monarchy. The establishment of the *Youth's* institution was defined as an unpleasant surprise by the Austrian police and Ministry of Foreign Affairs,⁴ so that they immediately organized the custody and tried to prevent further activity of the society in collaboration with the police from Pest and Timisoara, the Austrian diplomatic circles in Belgrade, and with the Serbian government. In that way, from the very beginning of the *Omladina's* work, it was obvious that its activity was understood as a political threat for contemporary political establishments, since it was a developed network covering »the territory much broader than any other organization in recent Serbian and Yugoslav history«,⁵ meaning from Cetinje to Budapest, and from Arad to Zadar, and with one aim – to unite Serbian people all over Europe. As a branch of the Liberal Party, the *United Serbian Youth* followed the same program, at first

6 Cf.: *Ujedinjena omladina srpska i njeno doba 1860-1875*. Reports Nos. 111, 121, 127, 128, 129, 130.

7 Both manuscripts of the United Serbian Youth Constitution and printed concert program are preserved in the archive of Matica srpska: Rukopisno odeljenje, Fond »Ujedinjena omladina srpska«, M.11322, M.11406, M.13826.

8 Cf.: Miljković-Katić, Bojana: *Struktura gradskog stanovništva Srbije sredinom XIX veka* [Structure of the Serbian Citizens in the middle of the 19th century]. Beograd: Istorijski institut 2002.

9 *Srbija, političko-ekonomski list* [Serbian political economy journal], III/98, 4/23. VIII 1869.

supporting the politics of the Prince Mihailo Obrenović, and afterwards in opposition to his foreign politics, which was based on diplomatic negotiations instead of direct struggle. Therefore, two streams – bourgeois-liberal and revolutionary-democratic – were formed in opposition to each other and, unfortunately, this conflict caused an official ban six years later by reactionary forces, embodied by the Serbian Regency. The main cause of the conflict was a way of solving of the »Orientalische Frage«. Related to that, *Omladina* was very active in its pursuance to organize an uprising in Bosnia, which was carefully watched by police reports of Austrian, Hungarian, Russian, Serbian governments.⁶

The *United Serbian Youth* was one of many examples of networking among Serbian citizens from various areas by means of the institutionalization of their places of gathering; such were universities, schools, cultural-educational and literary societies as well as choral societies and professional bourgeois associations of merchants, and teachers. In order to accomplish the strongest possible connections among all Serbs within the primary network, the *United Serbian Youth* organized annual meetings as political, cultural and artistic manifestations, including concerts; reading and reciting excerpts from novels, poetry, drama; gymnastics, all performed by numerous literary, music, and choral societies of Serbian youth from Vojvodina and other parts of Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires, confirming its primary communicative role. Thus, the *United Serbian Youth* could be examined as a cross section of the entire system of networks, the very process of networking, taking into consideration the networks of European youth organizations, Serbian institutions from all over Europe, Serbian cultural network spreading from Vienna toward Pest and Novi Sad and Belgrade in the context of culture of the German-speaking countries, the network of institutions inside the *United Serbian Youth*, the network of individual persons who collaborated with it, music networks, networks of literary and philosophy/aesthetical directions and linguistic networks (multilingual communication). The last – linguistic – networks can be illustrated by two examples: one is the Constitution of the organization, written in both Serbian and Hungarian, and the other is the concert program of the Serbian academic choral society *Zora* from Vienna, consisting of Serbian students at the Vienna University, printed in German and Serbian languages.⁷

The first annual meeting of the *United Serbian Youth* took place in 1866 in Novi Sad with the participation of sixteen literary and choral societies. This organization played a very important, even a key role in the political life of Serbs in all mentioned secondary networks, highly developing structures of communication. The stress on the role of structures of communication is a result of the historical circumstances in Serbia. Namely, Serbian intelligentsia lived mainly outside of the country, and the majority of people living in Serbia itself were peasants. A bourgeois class was being formed in the cities under the influence of bourgeois Serbs from Vojvodina.⁸ It was necessary to work hard on the education of common people, which was the part of a wider struggle for national identity. Consequently, Enlightenment ideas were very strongly present in the Romantic period and they were transmitted in the first place via structures of communication.

The motivation and aims of the *United Serbian Youth* are explained in an interesting way showing the presence of Romantic rhetorical Leitthemen in the proclamation of the fourth annual meeting (1869):

Several excellent Serbian younger patriots, enthusiastic about freedom and education, expressed their idea how our dispersed people could establish a literary-educational union, at least of younger generations. This idea has been present among us in different ways... especially since the world war in 1848, when people awoke everywhere and began work harder on their national and human rights. Excellent Serbian sons started establishing youth societies with noble tendency to revive Serbian consciousness everywhere... And exactly in the Spring of 1866, while the enemies made plans that Austria would require (annex) Bosnia and Herzegovina in exchange for Venice that should be given to Italy, at that time youth society *Zora* appeared with their patriotic invitation to all societies and all aware Serbs who have strength to work on education and salvation of their people, in order to come to Novi Sad on Assumption. Like thunder, that invitation flew through all regions where Serbs lived and enthusiastic younger advocates of idea of unifying... made a move to this gathering of all Serbs, the first one after 500 years.⁹

The work of the *United Serbian Youth* can be examined mainly through investigation of their annual meetings. They included considering and reconsidering the constitution, rules, reports

¹⁰ *Zastava*, dodatak [The Flag, appendix] No. 20, Novi Sad 1866.

¹¹ Poziv na pretplatu na list što će izlaziti pod imenom »Mlada Srbadija« [Call for subscription for the journal that will be published under the name *Young Serbs*], Novi Sad 14. 9. 1869. The proclamation was intoned rather dramatically with expression of strong patriotic feelings.

¹² Uredništvo, »Pristup«, Mlada Srbadija, list Ujedinjene omladine srpske za književnost i nauku [Young Serbia, Journal of the United Serbian Youth for Literature and Sciences], Vol. I, No.1, Novi Sad: 15 April 1870.

of the previous year, debates among local councils, and also different boards (for science, literature, economy, art) as well as theater plays, stage music, and concerts. Basic ideological directions of the *USY* – more precisely, nine fundamental paragraphs of the constitution – were defined at the first meeting in August 1866 in Novi Sad:¹⁰

1. The Serbian youth forms a union.
2. Its task is to improve itself, to awaken national life in every respect, supporting the work of the church, school and scholarly societies, and to contribute to improving financial state of common people.
3. The youth will fulfill that aim by studying people, spreading science and art.
4. For that reason, the youth will have their annual meetings and give reports about the results of mentioned studying, about folk literature, society, and finances, and will make farther plans for their actions according to the aims. Annual meetings will take place always in different places.
5. The youth will inform everyone about its work by publishing reports in the herald called *Omladinska zajednica* [Youth Community], where also articles and essays will be published.
6. Spreading science and arts will be fulfilled by publishing popular books on different topics related to the folk life, public lectures, concerts (*besede*), theater plays. There was an additional suggestion that, before all, the United Youth should organize evening schools »in an American way« in order to overcome illiteracy.
7. Every member of the organization promises to be active in his own circle and in accordance with his possibilities.
8. At every meeting a literary and a choral society will be chosen to serve for a year as councils for literary and financial tasks. At the first meeting, Serbian youth society from Vienna University *Zora* and the First Belgrade Choral Society were chosen.
9. Every person or institution who gives the annual contribution for publishing books (2 forints or one ruble) will receive all books published by the *USY* during that year..

Judging by the preserved records and reports, the main committee of the *United Serbian Youth*, consisting of the most distinguished authors, politicians (Laza Kostić, Antonije Hadžić, Jovan Jovanović Zmaj, Vladimir Jovanović, Svetozar Miletić, Svetozar Marković), met often, sometimes even twice or three times per week, working on current jobs (reviewing submitted articles, answering on numerous letters). They also defined special rules according to the actual situation, in collaboration with local committees. Besides, they developed strategies for surmounting different obstacles, such as insufficient number of subscribers to the planned literary magazine *Mlada Srbadija* (Young Serbs, 1870-1872), for instance.¹¹ As it was held in the introductory text of the first issue of this journal, the *United Serbian Youth* fulfilled its aims through its meetings, publications, public unification (as a strategy of networking!), and education.¹²

Until 1871, when Hungarian authorities banned further work of the *United Serbian Youth*, primarily because of their successful struggle for union of Serbs from different countries and areas, annual meetings took place both inside and outside of Serbia (in Novi Sad, Belgrade, Veliki Bečkerek, Kikinda, Novi Sad, Vršac). In that way, every annual meeting represented a network itself, or, a cross-section of the primary network and the secondary ones.

The institutional network was made up of numerous societies, and it may now be reconstructed on the basis of archival documents for the first time, so they require more attention in future research. From its foundation, the *United Serbian Youth* understandably tended to expand the scope of its work and influence and sent an official invitation to numerous institutions. They received answers – many of which are preserved in the *Matica srpska Archive* in Novi Sad – that were sent to the main committee in Novi Sad from Belgrade, Kikinda, Sombor, Pest, Kecskemét, Sentomas, Vienna, Zadar and Berlin. In these and many other cities and towns there worked both local committees, such as the teachers' section from Novi Sad or the music/choral section from Velika Kikinda, and different national societies that had remained mainly unknown until now. Among them are, for instance, Serbian societies in Szeged – *Društvo učeći se Srbalja* [Society of Educated Serbs] (1843-1848, with an interruption in 1843-44), *Sloga* [Harmony] (1863-1868, when the letter was written; the continuation of previous society), in Sentomas the newly-founded *Serbian Youth's Choral Society* (March 1868), in Berlin

¹³ Berlin, 2.4.1868, M.11335.

¹⁴ Zadar, 5.5.1872, M.11423; Szeged, 26. 7. 1868, M.11349.

¹⁵ Šta će biti za vreme Šeste omladinske skupštine u Vršcu [What will happen during the Sixth Youth Meeting in Vršac], Vršac, 1871, M.11423.

the Serbian youth society *Zbor* [Gathering] (October 1867), in Zadar the Serbian youth society *Prvenac* [The First one] (established in 1866 by seminary students).¹³

One more level of networking originates from the previous one, resulting in philosophical-aesthetical linguistic, musical networks. The above-mentioned presence of Enlightenment ideas was very characteristic for Serbian nineteenth-century philosophy and literature, and they had their understandable continuation in positivism or realism, which emerged in Serbia rather early on and retained a strong tradition afterwards. In that way, another determined aim of the youth organization was one more signifier of the socio-political, cultural context of Serbian Romanticism, relying on the Enlightenment principles, i.e., that the »material and intellectual development« of Serbian people should be improved by science. The later ideological division of this organization was based on the two opposite directions (although they were, in a way, connected precisely by the Enlightenment ideas) of romanticism and realism, or idealism and positivism. For that reason, the youth later supported the most significant nineteenth-century Serbian philosopher, representative of realistic/positivistic ideas, Svetozar Marković, who promoted socialist ideas especially at the fifth annual meeting in 1870 Novi Sad.

The reform of the Serbian language as promoted by Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, who published *Srpski riječnik* (Dictionary of Serbian language) in 1818 in Vienna, was a mutual marker of the linguistic network of all Serbian communities, gaining a very important patriotic status, for the official languages in areas where Serbs lived were German and Hungarian. For instance, the *Choral Society* from Subotica sent their telegram to the *United Serbian Youth* with congratulations for their foundation written in Hungarian language. Serbian societies such as *Prvenac* from Zadar or *Sloga* from Szeged, for instance, joined the *United Serbian Youth* in order to keep their national tradition in a context that had made it difficult, and exactly to learn and exercise the Serbian language.¹⁴

Music presentations held during annual meetings and also independent performances also, reflected the fundamental orientation of the *United Serbian Youth*, consisting of educational theatrical plays with music numbers related to rural life, patriotic historical events, and sentimental plays. The repertoire of choral societies was mainly unique, consisting largely of patriotic or folk songs and their arrangements, confirming the importance of the two main discourses of romanticism in the frame of prevailing Enlightenment ideology. The program of the sixth annual meeting in Vršac in 1871 indicates that during the five-day meeting there were performed the theatre play *Narod i velikaši* [People and Aristocrats] by Vladan Djordjević; three theatre plays with music – *Mladost Dositeja Obradovića* [Dositej Obradović's Youth] by Kosta Trifković, *Saćurica i šubara* [Little basket and a fur hat] by Ilija Okrugić Sremac and *Maksim Crnojević* by Laza Kostić; a liturgy, sung by the choir of the Serbian National Theater in Novi Sad; a common concert of all choral societies present with Gavriilo Janković, a singer from Berlin Opera as well as two evening parties.¹⁵

Reading this program as a text in a semiotic sense, it can be said that its ideological, political, cultural implications show the way of networking of individual institutions, their educational and promotional role in Serbian society in general, meaning also outside of Serbia, as well as the socio-political aspect of the activity of choral societies. This was achieved via structures of communication, as is proved by the concept of the program: one theatre play with music dedicated to the most significant representative of Enlightenment, Dositej Obradović, and another one written by the leading Serbian Romantic poet and member of the board of the *United Serbian Youth*, Laza Kostić – the program was obviously thought out in order to promote the ideas of the organization.

As mentioned above, the activity of the *United Serbian Youth* formed and, at the same time, was developed by one more network, embodied in the work of significant individual persons. Among artists, that is, musicians, who collaborated and promoted the youth organization was the first Serbian pianist, Jovanka Stojković, a pupil of Liszt and Dreyschock. She was born in Timisoara, where she had early on accepted the main Serbian Romantic ideological attitudes exactly due to the educational activities of Serbian choral societies, becoming their representative herself not only in Serbian community, but also in European cultural centers. She was a very successful international pianist, performing internationally during the 1880's (in Vienna, Graz, Pest, London as well as Danish and Russian cities, also in Zagreb, Novi Sad, Subotica, Sombor, Vršac, Zemun, Pančevo, Belgrade). Her repertoire was under the influence of her mission: she performed works by Serbian composers, signifiers of both discourses of natio-

