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ESTABLISHMENT AND ORGANISATION OF SERBIAN POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE 19th CENTURY [a]

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Abstract

This paper discusses the chronology of the establishment and organisation of political parties in Serbia during the 1880s. The National Radical Party was established in January 1881 as the first organised political party in Serbia. Two other political parties, the Progressive and the Liberal Party, followed soon after. The establishment of the local committee in Belgrade in early December of 1881 marked the constitution of the National Radical Party. Other local committees were established throughout Serbia immediately after the first one. The local committees represented the basic organisational units of the Progressive Party with the General Committee based in Belgrade. The Statutes of the National Liberal Party, issued on 3/15 March 1883, defined the following bodies: General Committee, local committees, and the Party Meetings.

Key words: national radical party, progressive party, liberal party, general committee, statutes, local committees

ОСНИВАЊЕ И ОРГАНИЗАЦИЈА СРПСКИХ ПОЛИТИЧКИХ СТРАНАКА У 19. ВЕКУ

Апстракт

У раду се говори о историјату оснивања и организације политичких странака у Србији 80-тих година 19. века. Народна радикална странка основана је у јануару 1881. године, као прва организована политичка странка у Србији. Убрзо након оснивања Народне радикалне странке, образоване су још две политичке партије, Напредне и Либерална. Конституисање Народне радикалне странке отпочело је оснивањем месног одбора у Београду почетком децембра 1881. године. Потом је настављено оснивање месних пододбора широм Србије. Основу организације

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Напредне странке чинили су месни одбори, док је седиште Главног одбора странке било у Београду. Статутима Народне либералне странке који су потврђени 3/15. марта 1883. године били су предвиђени следећи органи власти: Главни одбор, месни одбори и Скупови странке.

Кључне речи: Народна радикална, Напредна, Либерална странка, Главни одбор, Статути, месни одбори.

INTRODUCTION

Ideologically speaking, the young Serbian intellectuals studying abroad are considered to have been the initiators of the establishment of political parties in Serbia. The establishment and activities of the Association of Serbian Youth (1848-1851) represent the first signs of liberalism in Serbia. This association advocated the liberal and democratic transformation of the Serbian state. The ideology of political liberalism was introduced by the young and educated intellectuals who studied in the Western European countries – Milovan Janković, Jevrem Grujić, Vladimir Jovanović, Stojan Bošković, Filip Hristić, Đorđe Cenić, and many others who expressed their liberal and democratic ideas at the St. Peter's Day Assembly in 1848. During the Assembly sessions in Kragujevac in 1848, they particularly demanded that greater importance be given to the issues such as freedom of the press, freedom of education and teaching, and higher salaries for teachers. They also demanded that the Assembly convene more frequently and not only with the purpose of resolving local and tax issues. It was also the time when the seeds of the conflict between the two opposing political ideologies, the conservatives and the liberals, were planted. Whereas the liberals demanded political freedom in the Principality of Serbia, the conservatives advocated the rule by decrees and commands, i.e. a police and bureaucratic state. The differences between these two ideologies had already become so great that they could not be surmounted in the following period. The events of 1848 seem to have contributed to a further ideological and political advancement of Serbia in the 19th century. However, it was the St. Andrew's Day Assembly in 1858 that started the Serbian civil revival. The two political groups, the liberals and the conservatives, clearly presented themselves as distinct and separate ideologies during the Assembly sessions. The Party of St. Andrew's Day Assembly, as the liberals named their political group, argued for the regular sessions of the National Assembly, freedom of the press, political responsibility of the ministers, and other civil rights in the domestic policy, and argued against any foreign interference in the domestic issues of the Principality of Serbia in the foreign policy.

The representative system, which was introduced by the 1869 Constitution, created the necessary preconditions for the establishment of the modern political parties. The activities of political leaders, whose principal concern during the elections was to create firm links with their

voters, were facilitated by regular political elections and the fact that the National Assembly obtained legislative powers and functions. After the 1869 Constitution, the liberals organised themselves under the leadership of Jovan Ristić. The establishment of the Young Conservatives' opposition followed very soon. The third political group, the supporters and followers of Svetozar Marković, appeared on the political scene at the same time. The Young Conservatives were the descendants of the conservative Defenders of the Constitution. However, a group of young conservative politicians was inspired by the liberal and democratic ideas, i.e. their conservatism was largely diluted by liberalism. The establishment of political parties in Serbia was significantly influenced by the Assembly elections in October 1874. Several political groups emerged after these elections: St. Andrew's Liberals led by Jevrem Grujić, Ristić's Liberals, Conservatives led by Jovan Marinović, Young Conservatives, and Nationalists as the embryo of the future Radicals. The establishment of political parties was accelerated by the young intellectuals engaged in the publication of the newspaper *Videlo* (*Mirror)* and connected to the Nationalists in the National Assembly (More in: Živanović, 1923, pp. 21-333; Prodanović, 1947, pp. 5-520; Mitrović, 1939, pp. 5-70; Janković, 1941, pp. 5-29; Janković, 1951, pp. 80-230; Janković, 1997, pp. 34-208; Milićević, 2002, pp. 242-253, 285).

THE EMERGENCE OF POLITICAL PARTIES

The Ristić government resigned on 19/31 October 1880, after which the government was constituted by the Young Conservatives, led by Milan Pirocanac (21 October/2 November 1880 – 21 September/3 October 1883). Milan Pirocanac became the Prime Minister of Serbia; Čedomilj Mijatović was the Foreign Affairs Minister until 10/22 October 1881, after which Milan Pirocanac took this office; Milutin Garašanin was the Minister of Internal Affairs; Milan Pirocanac was the Minister of Justice until 10/22 October 1881, after which the office was taken by Dimitrije G. Radović; Čedomilj Mijatović was the Minister of Finance; Stojan Novaković was the Minister of Education and Ecclesiastical Affairs; Milojko Lešjanin was the Minister of Defence until 12/24 February 1882, after which the office was taken by Tihomilj Nikolić; Jevrem P. Gudović was the Minister of Construction until 9/21 March 1882, after which Milutin Garašanin performed this duty until 4/16 January 1883 to be succeeded by Jovan Petrović; and Jevrem P. Gudović, was the Minister of Economy since 18/30 March 1882 (Ljušić, 2005, p. 146). The Young Conservatives and the Radicals acted together against the Liberals. The 'strong' opponents of the Ristić government were generally proposed to take the office. The political affiliations of the candidates, i.e. their inclinations towards either the Young Conservatives

or the Radicals, were of no concern. Nikola Pašić, regardless of the fact that he did not manage to be elected for the government, did not break his alliance with the Young Conservatives since he needed their services in the political struggle against Ristić and his Liberals, whom he considered the greatest enemies. However, determined to avoid any possible confusion and to inform his voters about "who is who in the coalition and what goals they are fighting for", as well as to force the Young Conservatives a priori to keep their promises, Pašić issued a proclamation *To the Friends of the People (Prijateljima naroda)* which was published in *Videlo* on 8/20 November 1880 (Kazimirović, 1990, p. 354). Besides Pašić, the proclamation was also signed by Paja Vuković, Rista Popović, Joca Ž. Jovanović, and Kosta Taušanović. Raša Milošević cited the complete text of the proclamation since it was of the utmost importance for the future political struggle of the Radical Party.

> "The present political and economic situation which befell our nation has forced us to appeal to all those who consider themselves the friends of our people and to express our view of the present situation of our state, as well as of the further actions necessary to improve it, and provide the agreeable circumstances for our people in which to live and develop in the future. The struggle for national rights has been fought among our people for a long time; even though its strength has changed over time, its spirit has never completely vanished from the souls of our people. […] True constitutionalism presupposes that people participate in the executive government and control it, a premise that is missing from our Constitution. […] The ministers abuse their authority of power for two reasons: their selfish and self-obsessed craving for power, on the one hand, and their unlimited authority, on the other hand, granted to them by the incomplete New Constitution, intentionally modified to serve their intentions of ruling Serbia for good. […] Therefore, brothers, advise the people to vote for the experienced fighters for national freedom, for the honest and independent individuals, since it is only them who may restore the freedom of our people, ease the burden, and resolve the intricate international plots that the country has been drawn into; it is only those individuals that are able to give impetus to the inert economy and trade" (Milošević, 1923, pp. 13−18).

The pre-election coalition between the Radicals and the Young Conservatives proved to be justified, since it won them a victory over Ristić's Liberals, who won only seven out of 128 seats in the Parliament (Jovanović, 1990a, p. 47). The victory in the election held on 30 November/12 December 1880 proved that the Young Conservatives no longer needed the alliance with the Radicals. Moreover, despite the joint victory, none of the representatives of the Radical Party managed to enter the government of Milan Pirocanac, i.e. this government remained a single-party government

(Šemjakin, 2008, p. 154). The situation was further aggravated by Prince Milan Obrenović, who refused to proclaim Nikola Pašić Vice-President of the National Assembly, even though he ranked second according to the number of votes. Aleksa Popović, a member of the Young Conservatives, received 141 votes, Nikola Pašić received 134 votes, and Milan Kujundžić received 128 votes in the elections for the President of the Assembly. Aleksa Popović was elected President of the Assembly and Milan Kujundžić Vice-President by King's decree. The Assembly elected Marko Petrović, Milan Žunjić, Rista Popović, Nikola Krupežević, Ljubomir Molerović, and Lazar Petrović as its secretaries (Shorthand minutes of the National Assembly meeting, 1880/1881, 1881, pp. 14-16). The first National Assembly session began with a royal speech that emphasised the good relations with the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. This was followed by the issues of the commercial contract and building of the railway, expected to have been completed in three years. "The necessity and responsibility of the state to build the railway – the necessity to retain a balanced state budget [...] it all demands additional financial requirements from the people". The issues of the internal affairs included the discussion on the improvement of education, payment of requisitions, passing of a new law on judges, freedom of the press "which will eliminate bureaucratic barriers to a free expression of thoughts", a law on municipalities, societies, and associations, and finally, the change of the Constitution with the purpose of creating a better functioning representative system (Ibid, pp. 17-19). The Committee, comprising 15 deputies, was elected to compose the official National Assembly address: Milan Kujundžić, Nikola Pašić, Miloš Glišić, Sima Nestorović, Paja Vuković, Marko Petrović, Đoka Pavlović, Uroš Knežević, Milan Milićević, Steva Popović, Dimitrije Dimitrijević, Milan Đurić, Novak Milošević, Đoka Nešić, and Pera Velimirović. The address was composed shortly afterwards and delivered to the National Assembly on 6/18 January 1881 without much debate (Ibid, pp. 20-24). Milan Pirićanac stated in his *Notes (Beleške)* that "the aspirations of the future Radicals to disintegrate the Assembly for their own self-centred reasons" could be sensed in the Committee itself (Pirićanac, 2004, p. 25). However, the address was unanimously adopted. The principle of equal representation was still respected by both Radical and Progressive Party representatives in certain Parliament committees. Therefore, the majority of the Committee of Finance, for instance, was comprised of the representatives of the Radical Party presided over by Nikola Pašić. The Radical Party representatives were also members of the Committee of Adjustment.

Such minor compromises on the part of the Progressive Party representatives were not sufficient to please the Radicals, who started the publication of their political party newspaper *Samouprava* on 8/20 January 1881, where they presented their political platform (Radenić, 1988, p. 247). The publication of *Samouprava* bewildered both the Young

Conservatives and Prince Milan Obrenović. The Radical Party platform was signed by 38 Radical deputies in the Assembly and "as many of their sympathisers", a total of 76 Parliament members that represented the majority in the National Assembly (Kazimirović, 1990, p. 361). The article published in the issue of *Samouprava* on 8/20January 1881 contained the signatures of 38 members of the Parliament with a note that they were supported by "38 of their fellow Parliament members". The platform was also signed by a clergyman, Mihailo Smiljanić, whose name was omitted by an oversight (Krestić and Ljušić, 1991, p. 106; Radenić, 1988, p. 248−249). The Prime Minister, Milan Pirićanac, commanded that "deputy clubs be summoned separately in order to determine whether the Government had the majority or not". Pirićanac stated that the club of the Young Conservatives confirmed that the Government possessed a two-third majority in the Assembly and that "the Ministry remained intact" (Pirićanac, 2004, p. 25). Finally, the Progressive Party club was joined by 117 deputies, among which were also the Radicals, S. Nikolajević, K. Mesarević, M. Valtrović, and L. Dokić, out of a total of 160 deputies in the Assembly (Janković, 1997, p. 261). The following question arises: Whence did the change in the deputies' inclination derive, since they initially supported the Radical platform only to later join the Progressive Party?

Slobodan Jovanović states that Milan Pirićanac threatened to resign unless "more deputies join the Progressive Party than the Radical Party" (Jovanović, 1990a, p. 50). Milan Đ. Milićević reveals that 103 deputies joined the Progressive Party club on 10/22 January 1881, with two more following suit the following day (Archives of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, No. 9327, 1881, pp. 1501−1502). However, Pera Todorović offers different facts. He emphasises that out of 38 deputies who signed the Radical platform, only a few joined the Progressive Party immediately: Nikola Krupežević, Marko Bogdanović, a clergyman, Đorđe M. Topuzović, and Aca Milenković; Veljko Odalović joined the Progressive Party a year later, whereas Miloš Glišić and S. Obradović never signed the Radical platform in the first place. Nearly half of the 38 deputies who signed the Radical platform and whose names were never publicised joined the Progressive Party, so there remained only about 19 to 20 deputies: "Thus, the Radical Party group lost its majority. This was caused by a resolute and firm attitude of the Government on one hand, and by irresolute and moderate behaviour of the Radicals on the other hand" (Todorović, 1991, p. 89; Janković, 1997, p. 261).

This is how Milan Đ. Milićević commented on the publication of *Samouprava*:

> "It just happened that the newspaper *Samouprava* came out of print on 8 January 1881, which proved the amount of honesty and measure that our brothers, the Radicals, had. Not consulting us, ignoring our platform, they demanded that we take responsibility

> for their own platform. This raised a storm that could do no good to any of the parties. Yet, last night, respecting Kujundžić's and my proposition, the assembly gathered at Krstić's place elected a committee that would find a solution to this unfortunate situation" (Ibid, p. 1500).

ADOPTION OF THE PROGRAM AND STATUTES

The National Radical Party platform specified that the goal of the Government should be "the welfare and freedom of the people and the independence and liberation of the country, as well as the unification of all the lands inhabited by the Serbs". A request was made for a new Constitution that would grant free elections, universal suffrage, dismissal of the Government's deputies, i.e. that only the elected deputies may be the members of the Assembly and that the Assembly be granted complete legislative power. The new Constitution was expected to grant the freedom of the press, the freedom of association and meetings, local self-government, and personal and property safety (Krestić and Ljušić, 1991, pp. 101,104). Two days after *Samouprava* and the Radical Party platform had been published, the Progressive Party formed its club on 10/22 January 1881. The party named itself "Progressive Party, or the group of people aspiring to progress". Miloš Glišić was elected president, Žunjić and Kaljević were elected vice-presidents, while Ljubomir Stanojević and Nikola Krupežević, a clergyman, were elected secretaries of this club (Ibid, pp. 1501-1502). Milan Đ. Milićević outlined the main points of the Progressive Party politics, which were adopted at the meeting of the Progressive Party representatives in Belgrade on 13/25 January 1881 (Ibid, p. 1502). The nine points defined that meeting as an assembly of the Progressive Party deputies who had signed its programme and whose main task was to "hold their meetings with the purpose of discussing and reaching a consensus in advance over any issue that either has already been presented to the Assembly or has been expected to be presented in the future". The managing board comprised 12 members, whose task was to prepare the questions and issues to be discussed at the Party meetings. This association was allowed to form alliances with associations, i.e. clubs of other political parties, "whose ideas are based on the principles of legality, freedom, and progress". The members of the managing board of the Progressive Party were: Miloš Glišić, the president, Milan Žunjić and Ljubomir Kaljević as the vice-presidents, Nikola Krupežević and Ljubomir Stanojević as secretaries, and Dimitrije Dimitrijević, Đorđe Pavlović, Mlan Đ. Milićević, Uroš Knežević, Kosta Mesarović, Stojan Pavlović, and Vasiljko Cvetanović as members (The Progressive Party Meeting, *Videlo*, No.11, from 18/30 January 1881). Political parties used Liberal laws on the freedom of the press and freedom of association in

order to strengthen their party organisation. The Assembly adopted the Law on the freedom of the press on 28 March/9 April 1881. The fact that the Law was unanimously adopted had been unprecedented in the history of the Serbian parliamentary system up to that point (Radenić, 1988, p. 254). Publishing a newspaper no longer required a permit from the police, only a written application that a paper editor and the owner had to submit to the government (Articles 5 and 6). The government had the authority to forbid the publication of a certain newspaper only on the assumption that the paper in question advocated a coup d'état or published disrespectful remarks against the ruler or his family. If that was the case, the police were obligated to surrender the newspaper to the court of law within the period of 24 hours, which had the power to make a decision concerning the prohibition of the newspaper (Article 10). A compulsory resident registration with the police, the citizenship of Serbia, and the pertaining civil rights were the prerequisites for the distribution of newspapers and other printed press releases (Article 14). The author of the newspaper article was solely responsible for any typographical errors, which meant that the idea of a collective liability did not exist at all. However, in case that the identity of the author was not known, it was the editor who assumed full liability. Yet, if neither the author nor the editor were known, the printer was the one liable. The Law presupposed liability even for those who distributed newspapers, in case the identities of the author, the editor, or the printer could not be determined (Article 31). Newspaper errors of any kind were under the jurisdiction of the court, not the police (Article 33) (Shorthand minutes of the National Assembly meeting in the years 1880/1881, Book 1-2, 1881, pp. 979−993; A Collection of Laws and Regulations of the Principality of Serbia issued from 18/30 August 1880 till 26 June/8 July 1881, book 36, 1881, pp. 249−264; Archives of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, No. 34, hereinafter: JR). This Law represented the ultimate achievement concerning the freedom of the press in the early 1880s (Stojičić, 1980, p. 141).

Milutin Garašanin, Minister of Internal Affairs, presented a proposition of the Law on Association on 23 January/4 February 1881. "The Law on Association in Serbia has been a long-felt need. Therefore, it is with great honour that the Minister of Internal Affairs proposes to the National Assembly the Project of the Law on Association". Having expressed a positive stand, the legislative committee proposed that the National Assembly adopt this law. "The freedom of the press, which led to the freedom of thought and speech, ought to be followed by the freedom of association and meetings, since those two forms of freedom are interconnected" (Archives of Serbia, National Assembly Fund, F1-334/81). Article 1 of this Law granted the right of free association to all citizens of Serbia. Non-political associations were only required to notify the authorised police forces about their goals and did not need a permit

from the government (Articles 2-5). Political associations, on the other hand, were required to submit the regulations (statutes), "the objectives, and the names of the founding members" and of the representatives of the association to the local authorities, whereas the Minister was obligated to make a decision concerning the submitted statutes of the political parties within 15 days (Articles 6-8). Secret associations were prohibited (Article 11). The Government was authorised to have its delegates present at the meetings of political associations and societies (Article 14). Any violation of the aforementioned articles was sanctioned with a financial penalty. For instance, the presence of armed persons at a meeting of a political association presupposed a fine of 100 dinars (Article 24) (Shorthand minutes of the National Assembly meetings for the years 1880/1881, Book 2, pp. 2126−2135; Archives of Serbia, National Assembly Fund, F2-233/81, Law on Association). This is how Slobodan Jovanović analysed the significance of these legal regulations:

> "The passing of these Progressive Party laws showed how no other political party had been capable of understanding the common people better up to then. [...] Devoid of the freedom of the press and association, the opposition could only hold clandestine meetings, agitating furtively and stealthily" (Jovanović, 1990b, p. 34).

The Liberals first founded a political association with a non-political name, *Society for the Support of Serbian Literature*, on 17/29 September 1881. Alimpije Vasiljević was elected head of the *Society*. In October 1881, the Liberals started a newspaper *Srpska nezavisnost* (Serbian Independence) in which their platform was published (Krestić and Ljušić, 1991, p. 123; Janković, 1941, p. 34). The regulations and rules of the *Society* were drafted in July 1881 and approved by Jevrem P Gudović, the Minister of Construction and the Ministry of Finance representative, in accordance with the Article 38 of the Commercial Law, on 14/26 July 1881. The *Society* was based in Belgrade, but Article 3 entailed the foundation of local divisions with the objective of improving the *Society*. This association had its own assets of 60,000 dinars divided into a thousand sixty-dinar-worth shares (Article 5). The shareholders with at least ten shares were considered the founders of the *Society* (Article 7). The main bodies were the Founding Committee and the Managing Board, while all shareholders represented the general body (Article 17). The meetings of all shareholders, comprising the general body of the association, were annually held. The general body meeting was authorised to: 1) accept the annual report delivered by the Managing Board; 2) control the Managing Board and decide about the division of the income; 3) elect the members of the Managing Board; 4) accept the propositions of the Founding Committee and individual members – shareholders; and 5) modify and introduce amendments to the regulations and rules (Article 24). The regulations became effective upon the approval by

the Minister of Finance (Article 31) (Archives of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, No.14556/592a, pp. 1-12). The platform of this political party prophesied the freedom of work, which contributed to the word National being added to its name.

> "The party will not advocate violence, but a free, undisturbed and reasonable social development." Jovan Ristić emphasised three main points of this programme: the unification of the Serbian people "within their genuine ethnographic borders and the constitutional reconstruction of the country". In his opinion, "the Liberals' principles were not based on abrupt actions, nor were the Liberals tempted to participate in demagogic agitation" (Krestić and Ljušić, 1991, p. 126). This represented the final stage in the formation and establishment of the major political groups, whose platforms had already been clearly stated and known. Political groups were born out of their mutual conflicts and occasional alliances "in the National Assembly and out of it" (Perović, 2008, p. 140).

The Radical Party exhibited the highest efficiency in the issues of the party organisation and operation since the Radicals were the first to acknowledge the importance of good organisation for the further advancement and development of the political parties. A good organisation was expected to gather the political party supporters, introduce and exercise the party discipline, not only during the elections but on all occasions, and establish the party solidarity, i.e. the principle of mutual support among the members "for better or for worse, to put it informally" (Janković, 1997, p. 343). Pera Todorović was mostly praised for the establishment of the Radical Party. Todorović was forced to leave Serbia after the court trial and verdict concerning the issue with the Red Banner (Crveno barjače) from Kragujevac in 1876, and returned in December 1880.[1] Upon his arrival in Belgrade, Todorović participated in the activities connected to the party platform and the publication of the party newspaper *Samouprava*.

> "The moment he arrived in Belgrade, we started working on the platform which was to form a new, young Radical party, a reflection of the future Serbia. Simultaneously, all the measures were taken to start a newspaper of the new party that would be its symbolic flag, with the purpose of informing people about the principles and programme of the party" (Todorović, 1997, pp. 118-119).

[1] The author of Todorović's biography, Velizar Ninčić, states that Pera Todorović returned to Belgrade on Christmas Eve in 1880. "He remained a rebel, but a rebel of a different kind. He was now a sophisticated revolutionary of the civil bearing" (Ninčić, 1956, p. 68).

The meetings dedicated to the preparation of the Radical Party platform were held in a bungalow on Kalemegdan in which Nikola Pašić lived. "Necessary actions were taken to accelerate the establishment of a new and well-organised political party with a pronounced party discipline" (Todorović, 1997, p. 118-119).

The Radicals organised the party meeting on 8/20 November 1881. It was a private meeting since the Radical Party had not been officially approved yet. All the participants were sent invitations, whereas those who were unable to attend the meeting sent their opinions and suggestions concerning the party organisation in writing. One day prior to the meeting, Pera Todorović wrote the article *Let us organise*, which was published in *Samouprava* on 7/19 November 1881. He encouraged the Radicals to get organised:

> "Organisation is everything, chaos is a weakness. [...] Let us organise so that we may preserve the little freedom we already have and that we may increase it. [...] Let us organise so that we may modify and change the Constitution in the spirit of democracy and thus, once and for all, resolve the issues of political freedoms and turn to the main and basic task: the welfare and enlightenment of our people (Let us organise, Samouprava, No. 133, from 7 /19 November 1881).

The Radical Party statutes were prepared and introduced on 15/27 November 1881. They were submitted to the City Council of Belgrade by the Temporary General Committee, presided over by Nikola Pašić, on 15/27 November 1881. The Minister of Internal Affairs, Milutin Garašanin, approved the statutes on 20 November/2 December 1881. "The submitted regulations contain nothing that opposes the effective laws; therefore, the Minister of Internal Affairs approves the rules and regulations of the association of the Serbian National Radical Party in accordance with Article 8 of the Law on Association, enacted on 1/13 April of the current year". The statutes defined the following bodies: the General Committee, as the main body of the party, and local committees. The Annual General Meeting, whose members were the delegated representatives from the local committees, was the major governing body. The local committees with fewer than 50 members delegated one deputy for the General Meeting, those with 50 to 100 members had two delegates, while those with more than 100 members had one additional delegate. The General Committee was represented by five of its members at the Annual General Meeting. The General Meeting acted as "the supreme party representative". It decided about modifications and amendments of the party programme, the budget, and local committees' propositions. It was authorised to elect the members of the General Committee and to manage the party in between two sessions.

The General Committee executed the decisions of the General Meeting and prepared the party annual report, as well as the propositions to be discussed at the General Meeting. Its duties included: party discipline, i.e. regularity in the actions of the local committees, resolution of the party conflicts, and election of candidates for the National Assembly deputies. The General Committee had ten members and six deputy members. It held regular monthly sessions, and, upon request from the president of the General Committee or three of its members, it could hold an extraordinary session. The local committees had a president and four to eight members, depending on the committee size and the local needs, they elected their own members independently, executed the decisions of the General Committee and local meetings, and had the authority to "recruit new members, manage the local budget, library, and other assets, participate in the publication of newspapers and books, and, in general, initiate all the activities aimed at achieving the postulated goal of the party". Any citizen of Serbia who accepted the party platform and principles had the opportunity to become its member, whereas the party recruitment was done by the local committees that decided about the membership. A membership fee was not to be less than half a dinar and "was to be paid twice a year in advance". New members were issued a receipt by the local committees, which served as a membership card. The statutes were signed by the members of the Temporary General Committee: Nikola Pašić, Svetomir Nikolajević, professor Giga Geršić, professor Paja K. Mijailović, Kosta S. Taušanović, a secretary of the Ministry of Finance, Pera Todorović, an author and the editor of *Rad*, Andra Nikolić, a grammar school teacher, Stevan A. Stevanović, a merchant, Svetozar Milosavljević, a teacher at the Belgrade Grammar School, and Mijailo Čikadija, a merchant (Krestić and Ljušić, 1991, pp. 131-138).

The Radical Party spread its influence among the people by founding the local committees. The members of the General Committee worked incessantly. In the autumn of 1881, Pera Todorović was tirelessly travelling throughout Serbia, managing to "visit forty-three towns in forty-two days" (Perović, 1983, p. 70). During that foray, Todorović clarified the party statutes, encouraged the founding of the local party committees, thus laying the foundations of the Radical Party organisation among the people (Jovanović, 1990b, p. 183). Milan Đ. Milićević commented on this rapid growth of the Radical Party: "The Radical opposition has spread all over the country" (Archives of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, No. 9327, p. 1623). The Radicals managed to found the local committees in most of the Serbian towns by the end of 1881.[2] The

[2] Pera Todorović states that the Radical agitators used to say to common people and peasants who were afraid to enter the party: "Look, brother, the Government approved

General Committee decided at the session held on 5/17 July 1882 that the first General Meeting of the party be held in Kragujevac from 26 July/7 August to 28 July/9 August 1882 (Archives of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, No. 9777). It was at this meeting, held at "Ilina voda" public fountain in Kragujevac, that the National Radical Party finalised its organisation. The platform and statute were adopted and the first General Committee was elected. The members of the General Committee were: Nikola Pašić, Pera Todorović, Raša Milošević, Kosta Taušanović, Giga Geršić, Svetomir Nikolajević, Svetozar Milosavljević, Steva Stevanović, and Jovan Joška Simić, while their deputies were: Jovan Ćaja, Stojan M. Protić, Kosta Borisavljević, and Milan Banković. Nikola Pašić, president of the Radical deputies club, was elected President of the General Committee. Raša Milošević stated that Nikola Pašić "had become the pivotal point and the centre of the Radical opposition and the general Radical idea as early as in 1878" (Illustrated Radical almanac: Resources for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the National Radical Party and Political History of Serbia, Book 1, 1924, p. 55). The agenda of the meeting included: 1) the report of the General Committee activities and the general party report and 2) the adoption of new measures to be taken to strengthen the party (Živanović, 1924, p. 214). The delegates from the local committees, National Assembly deputies, and party guests attended the meeting. Nikola Pašić was elected president of the meeting, while Ranko Tajsić from Dragačevo and Dimitrije Kasić from Resava were elected vice-presidents. This Annual Assembly of the Radical Party elected Aca Stojanović from Knjaževac, Pera Maksimović, a lawyer from Smederevo, and Stevan Milićević and Miloš Jovanović from Požega as secretaries. Nine councillors were elected to supervise the activities of the General Committee, the local committees and the editorial board of *Samouprava*, and to review the suggestions submitted to the meeting (Trifunović, 1995, p. 103). The meeting was also attended by a number of 500 local committee delegates and guests (Samouprava, No. 112, 1882). The President of the party, Nikola Pašić, delivered his speech in defence of national sovereignty, since "no nation in Europe deserves more sovereignty than the Serbian nation. No other state was founded by the common people themselves. The common peasants liberated this country from the Turkish slavery.

> „[...] It is the peasants and common people who founded this state for the king to rule, who persist in supporting it in their sweat and toil, who guard it with their lives and property, who improve it with their knowledge and experience" (Minutes from the First General Assembly of the National Radical Party, Belgrade, 1882, pp. 12−13).

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it". According to his testimony, "it so happened that already by the end of 1881 a network of our local committees was created all over Serbia" (Todorović, 1991, p. 91).

The next speaker was Pera Todorović, who clarified the party platform to the audience. His performance captivated the president of the party Nikola Pašić (Milić, 2006: 198). Slobodan Jovanović testifies that Todorović "spoke all day, breaking only for lunch, which lifted him to the unprecedented heights of oratory skill in the Serbian language" (Jovanović, 1990b, p. 185; Perović, 1983, p. 71; Ninčić, 1956, pp. 84-85). Moreover, county committees were to be founded to facilitate the process of carrying out the decisions made by the General Committee of the party. That was the reason why the General Committee notified the local committee in Aleksinac in writing on 15/27 September 1882 about the necessity of founding county committees, "which will be closely linked to the local committees and the General Committee". The letter appealed to the local committees and party members who had not yet founded county committees to do that at their earliest convenience.

> "Many of our local committees and members of our party understood the significance of the Meeting concluding decision and went on to found county committees; however, there are still other local committees and our comrades who have not yet accomplished this duty". The importance of a good party organisation is further explained: "because it is when the pre-election struggle begins [...] or when the common people are summoned to express their opinions that the real results of party activities are clearly shown" (Archives of Serbia, Personal fund of Milutin Garašanin, hereinafter MG, p. 276).

The amount of the membership fee was also a matter of discussion at the General Meeting. A renown Radical deputy from Dragačevo, Ranko Tajsić, submitted his proposition at the fourth meeting of the General Assembly that the underprivileged members, who could not pay the full amount of 3 dinars for their membership, should be granted the right to pay only 1.5 dinars a year. In his opinion, this principle would induce a great number of not so well-off citizens to enter the party. This proposition was supported by Pera Todorović. Upon the proposition of the president Nikola Pašić, the General Meeting decided "to pass this proposition to the General Committee for discussion, and later, in due time, to the Minister for the approval. Otherwise, the situation would not change" (Minutes from the First General Assembly of the National Radical Party, pp. 180−183). The General Meeting of the Radical Party was held without any incidents. The Radicals had every reason to be satisfied since they succeeded in organising the party on the whole territory of the country. The success of the Kragujevac meeting increased the self-confidence of the party members who believed that they would achieve success in the next elections despite the fact that the government opposed them. The Radicals used to say: "the Progressives drew in the king into their party, we drew in the people; the struggle between the king and the people will inevitably show that the people are stronger" (Jovanović, 1984, p. 69-70).

The Progressive Party was organised on the principle of committees existing in every town in Serbia "wherever the citizens are willing to adopt their platform and act according to it". Local committees were to be founded across the country, while the General Committee was based in Belgrade. Local committees were elected annually and they informed the General Committee about the most important party issues. The General Committee "was responsible for the statements and information given by the local committees and, for its part, it informed the citizens about important phenomena and issues of the public life". The Progressive Party deputies formed a club or a 'society' at the Assembly, which was granted all the rights and obligations of the General Committee. The party was not a centrally organised entity, since its Book of Rules[3] stated how the local committees were exclusively responsible for their membership and meetings (Krestić and Ljušić, 1991, pp. 111−113). Aćim Čumić was initially elected president of the General Committee, but he resigned because Garašanin and Pirońanac disagreed. The Assembly elected Mihailo Pavlović president of the General Committee on 23 October/4 November (Archives of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, No. 9327, Book XI, pp. 1558-1559). Unlike the Radicals, the Progressives were far away from organising their party. They held their party meetings mostly in small towns, while they avoided rural areas in which the Radicals had the majority support (Jovanović, 1984, p. 15).

Driven by the growing demands from the Liberals in the provinces, Jovan Ristić worked intensively on the organisational issues of the party during 1882. A delegate from a provincial office, Marko Vujičić, sent a letter to the General Assembly of the *Society for the Support of Serbian Literature* on 10/22 October 1882, in which he suggested that "a programme named 'National Liberal Party Platform' be drawn up and publicly presented". In his opinion, the main reason why the Liberals were in a difficult position lay in the fact that "the party lacked both organisation and a transparent, written and printed political platform" (Archives of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, JR, VIII/6, No. 219). The members of the Loznica office suggested to the General Committee to prepare the project of the National Liberal Party. "A committee composed of selected party members ought to be formed in order to discuss and prepare the project of the National Liberal Party platform" (Ibid, No. 221). The Liberals organised themselves into a political party at the party meeting held in Belgrade on 17/29 October 1882. The meeting was attended by

[3] The Progressive Party Book of Rules and Regulations was approved by the Minister of Internal Affairs, Milutin Garašanin on 18/30 September 1881. The organisation of the provincial offices ensued. "The General Committee emphasised in the circular letter that the parties represented branches of a big political tree. Without them, the social life would be stifled" (Krestić and Ljušić, 1991, p. 117).

400 delegates of the party from all parts of the country. Alimpije Vasiljević delivered the opening speech, on which occasion he said that "the party does have its platform" but that it should be made to suit the current situation in the country. Živan Živanović supported his opinion that the party had its platform, and that the only concern was the organisation of the party. Živanović passed his proposition that the "Founding Committee, previous and current management of the party" be entrusted with the organisation of the party. Jovan Avakumović said that the meeting should discuss the programme of the party, not just its organisation. He proposed that the committee in charge of the party organisation decide about the potential alterations in the platform (Srpska nezavisnost, No. 151, 28 October/9 November 1882). Jovan Ristić, president of the General Committee, greeted the general Meeting of the *Society for the Support of Serbian Literature:*

> "I have been honoured to greet this regular General Meeting of our society as I did last year, when I greeted our extraordinary General Meeting, attended by a great number of our followers, when the *Society* was unanimously formed". According to Ristić, the goal of the meeting was to analyse the political situation in the country and inform the members of the party about it "since it is undeniable that our notifications have influenced the public opinion" (Archives of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, VIII/6, No. 220).

Ristić answered three questions posed to him: about the relationship between the *Society for the Support of Serbian Literature* and the newly organised political party, and about the party platform and its organisation. Replying to the first question, Ristić agreed with the opinion expressed by delegate Totunović from the Niš office that the *Society* should remain active since, besides providing the resources for the party publications, it protected the party from frequent political changes in the country, primarily from a potential change of the Law on Political Association from 1881. The law that referred to the *Society* was not the Law on Association from 1881, but the Commercial Law, which treated the *Society* as a non-political, shareholding association. Ristić was not convinced that the Law on Association would last for a long time, which is why he insisted that the *Society for the Support of Serbian Literature* should remain active. As regards the organisation of the party, Ristić suggested the founding of a special committee, whose task would be to formulate "the rules concerning regular meetings and informing the members of the National Liberal Party in Belgrade as well as in the province". Acknowledging the contemporary political situation, Ristić did not insist on a new platform, but rather on the amendments (Srpska nezavisnost, No. 151, 28 October/9 November 1882). The committee that cooperated with Ristić on drawing up the project of the "National Liberal Party Statute" was elected at the meeting. Besides Ristić,

the members of this committee were: Radivoje Milojković, Vladimir Vujović, Stojan Veljković, Dimitrije Matić, Alimpije Vasiljević, Milovan Spasić, Stojan Bošković, Vladimir Jovanović, Jovan Avakumović, Jakov Tucaković, Stojan Marković, Jovan Bošković, Marko Marković, Svetozar Karapešić, Kosta Alković, Đorđe Ćorović, Protosinđel Nikanor, and Nikola S. Jovanović (Archives of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, JR, VIII/6, No. 222). This project was later posted to all the branches and offices of the party for further discussion and analysis, and the eventual approval of the proposed statute. The office from Požarevac, for instance, sent their consent with no objections (Ibid, No. 226), while the members of the Čačak office suggested that the National Liberal Party should found its own printing press in which promotional materials, newspapers, books, brochures, and booklets could be printed (Ibid, No. 227). The Negotin office suggested an amendment to Article 2 of the Statute which would state that anyone who was a patriot "regardless of their religion and nation" could become a member of the party. This would cause a rapid growth of the party membership, since "a great number of people from all over the world who cherish these principles and respect the objectives of the party can enter our party" (Ibid, No. 233). The statute committee did not adopt any of the suggestions sent from the local offices. The statutes were submitted to the City Council of Belgrade on 18 February/1 March 1883, and were approved by the Minister of Internal Affairs on 3/15 March 1883 (Ibid, No. 243). A Temporary General Committee was founded to manage the party affairs until the General Meeting. The members were: Jovan Ristić, Radivoje Milojković, Alimpije Vasiljević, Jakov Tucaković, Jovan Đ. Avakumović, Svetozar Karapešić, Vladislav Vujović, Dimitrije Matić, Vladimir Jovanović, Milovan Spasić, Marko M. Marković, Stojan Marković, Jovan Bošković, Protosinđel Nikanor, Đorđe Ž. Đorđević, Kosta Alković, Stojan Bošković, and Simo R. Paranos (Krestić and Ljušić, 1991, p. 147).

The statutes of the National Liberal Party defined the following bodies: General Committee, local committees, and Party Meetings. Local committees executed the decisions of the General Committee and "resolved local issues at their local meetings". The General Committee decided about the founding of the local committees upon the proposition by at least ten of the members of the National Liberal Party. A local committee was composed of five to seven members and three deputy members. It was responsible for the retention of the party discipline, i.e. ensuring that every party member accomplished their party duties regularly, for the suggestions to the General Committee concerning the cases of the expulsion from the party, for the correspondence with the General Committee, for propositions for the General Meeting and local meetings, and for delegating the candidates for the National Assembly deputies. The General Committee was "the main representative of the National Liberal Party" and was based in Belgrade. It was composed of 12 members and six deputy members. They were

elected at the Annual General Meeting. The General Committee was the main managing body of the party that controlled the local committees in their activities that were expected to be done in accordance with the party platform and principles. It organised public meetings and gatherings, resolved conflicts arising among the local committees, and deposed certain members of the local committees or the entire local committees.

The General Meeting represented the party, decided about its platform, approved its budget, analysed the work of the General Committee, and elected its members. All regular members of the party and local committees' delegates had the right to vote at the General Meeting. The statutes of the party also defined the local meetings, whose tasks were: election of the local committee members, control of the local budget, and suggestions given to the General Meeting for consideration. The members of the *Society for the Support of Serbian Literature* were considered to be the regular members of the Liberal Party who were requested to pay a monthly fee of half a dinar (Krestić and Ljušić, 1991, p. 139−141).

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ОСНИВАЊЕ И ОРГАНИЗАЦИЈА СРПСКИХ ПОЛИТИЧКИХ СТРАНАКА У 19. ВЕКУ

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Резиме

Уставом из 1869. године стекли су се неопходни политички предуслови за образовање и организовање модерних политичких странака. Почетком 1881. године појавиле су се три политичке странке: Народна радикална, Напредна и Либерална. До тог периода посланици у Народној скупштини су углавном наступали индивидуално, а после 1881. године иступају у складу са страначким програмом, поштујући страначку дисциплину. У погледу организације и њиховог функционисања најдаље су отишли радикали, јер су схватили да је организација од велике важности за успешно функционисање и развитак политичких странака. Нема сумње да су либерални закони о слободи штампе и слободи збора и удруживања из 1881. године у великој мери омогућили политичким странкама да ојачају своју страначку организацију. Више се није тражила дозвола полицијских власти за издавање новина већ је било довољно да уредник и власник листа поднесу писмену пријаву властима. На плану политичких слобода ови закони су представљали крајњи домет, јер више од тога се није могло остварити на почетку 80-тих година 19. века. Може се слободно рећи да су ови напредњачки закони васкрсли снагу Радикалне странке. Најзаслужнији за организовање Радикалне странке био је Пера Тодоровић. Организацијом коју је он предводио било је предвиђено стварање низа хијерархијских организационих јединица, почев од месних одбора у сваком малом месту, па преко среских и окружних, до Главног одбора као највишег органа Странке. Када је у питању организација друге две политичке странке може се рећи да су и оне донеле своје статуте у којима су предвиделе организацију веома сличну радикалској. Међутим, оне никад нису могле окупити толики број чланова као што их је имала Радикална странка.