

**ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF POLITICAL PARTIES  
IN SERBIA AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON POLITICAL LIFE  
IN THE PERIOD 1804-1918**

*UDC 329 (497.11) "1804/1918"*

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**Abstract.** *Formally speaking, political parties were formed only in 1881. However, they had been active in practice since the First Serbian Uprising. This article describes the development of political parties, their organization, and their mutual confrontations in the struggle for power. One clearly notices that the instability of the Serbian political scene started with the formation of the early political parties and has remained with us to the present day.*

**Key words:** *parties, constitution, government.*

INTRODUCTION

Political parties are one of the most important political factors today and, undoubtedly, modern politics cannot be considered as a whole without understanding the role of political parties in the life of a state. Some believe that political parties have always been present in states, even that they existed in the primeval human community, where parties were made up of individual tribal chiefs, and then of the supporters of Caesar and Pompei, Guelphs and Ghibellines, political clubs during the French revolution, etc. However, the impression is that such an all-inclusive definition of political parties would be too broad. One may say that the origins of political parties in today's sense of the word could be traced in Europe only around mid 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Formally viewed, in Serbia, political parties became bearers of political life only in 1881. This is the year in which the Radical Party was formed. By then, there had been no political parties with written programs, party statutes, and organizational structure. Practically, though, the party life started in the years of the beginning of the modern Serbian state, during the First Serbian Uprising (1804). Yet, although there were no formal political parties, this does not entail there were no political struggles. Political conflicts had started during the reign of Karadjordje and continued into the age of Milos. The struggle

against Milos ended in the victory of those who managed to limit his power (known as the Defenders of the Constitution<sup>1</sup>). However, by 1881, political life had been led by reputable individuals or groups. Only in this year did one witness the emergence of organized forces fighting for power in order to implement their party programs.

Development of political parties can be analyzed through four periods:

- the period of Karadjordje and Milos (1804-1838)
- the period of Defenders of the Constitution (1838-1858)
- the period of Mihailo and Milan Obrenovic (1858-1881)
- the period of the struggle of the Radical Party for people's freedoms (1881-1918)

#### POLITICAL LIFE IN SERBIA DURING THE REIGN OF KARADJORDJE AND MILOS OBRENOVIC (1804-1838)

In this early period of political development in Serbia, during the reign of Karadjordje and Milos, politics was the responsibility of prominent individuals, and then of groups of people vouching for new directions in the interior organization of the state.

The Ottoman Empire was divided into provinces, known as pashaluks, governed by pashas. Each pashaluk was further divided into administrative units, nahias. Apart from this official Turkish organization, there was also the popular organization of nahias into domains governed by the prince in coordination with the people's assembly of the domain. The princes were responsible to Turkish authorities for all affairs conferred upon them by the Turkish administration.

By the First Serbian Uprising there had been no dukes in the administration of the country. Dukes came to the frontline in times of war, because they initiated the uprising against the Turks. In this uprising, dukes started governing nahias, which consisted of a number of domains.

In the early phase of the First Serbian Uprising, nothing changed in the administration of the territories now ruled by the insurgents. The only difference was that now dukes governed the nahias, instead of the old Turkish qadis and vizier's assistants. Under the Turks, civilian and military authorities were separated. During the uprising, all power was held on to by military commanders, because, in times of war, as a rule, military authorities are superior to civilian ones. However, this condition persevered after the end of the uprising. From the beginning of the uprising there was a tendency of the dukes to become independent from Karadjordje. All along, supreme power was in Karadjordje's hands, and this was not at all denied by anyone. However, when after the uprising the liberated Serbia was to be strengthened and supreme authority defined, the dukes became Karadjordje's open enemies, as they wished to retain all power in their provinces. Such two conflicting tendencies were slowing down the establishment of a unified state. To suppress the self-will of Karadjordje and the dukes, a Soviet was founded in 1805, which was meant to be used as a central administrative office. However, as is the case with any state body with no force behind it, the Soviet was virtually powerless in preventing the willfulness of the dukes who wanted to prevent Karadjordje from grabbing supreme power. On

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<sup>1</sup> Originally: *ustavobranitelji*, cf. Constitutionalists (translator's remark).

the other hand, wishing to weaken the dukes, Karadjordje planned to reduce their territories. Karadjordje did manage to make this plan come true in the case of Jakov Nenadovic, after which the dukes responded to such a move.

The final phase of the struggle between Karadjordje and the dukes began in 1811. There was a conspiracy against Karadjordje led by Jakov Nenadovic, Milenko Stojkovic, and Petar Dobrnjac. Learning of the conspiracy, Karadjordje intended to abolish major duchies and reorganize them, where he would be proclaimed supreme ruler. However, even though circumstances seemed to be in his favour, Karadjordje failed to impose his will in the 1811 Assembly of the Dukes, and, among other things, managed to install the position of the Head Minister<sup>2</sup>, whom he appointed. This Assembly also abolished duchies within nahias, by making a number of dukes govern in one nahia. This way petty dukes governed small parts of the territory, and could not exert any significant influence.

The division into centralists and separatists, a long-lasting model in the development of Serbian political practice, can be traced back to the beginning of the Second Serbian Uprising. Milos Obrenovic opposed Karadjordje's centralism and even took part in the conspiracy against Karadjordje, along with Milenko Stojkovic, Petar Dobrnjac, and Jakov Nenadovic. However, having grabbed supreme power, Milos turned into a centralist. While Karadjordje governed Serbia purged of Turks, Milos had Turks in his cities, and they posed a constant threat.

The Second Serbian Uprising ended in negotiations and treaty concluded by Milos and Marasli Pasha, defining that in each fortress and sanjak, and in each central location in nahias, there would be one pasha's assistant and one Serbian duke, who would reach an agreement when judging in any litigation between a Serb and a Turk, or between two Christians. In Belgrade, a Supreme Court – Office would be established, comprising only Serbs. Each village would have its duke. Therefore, power was divided between the Serbs and the Turks.

Milos' policy was such that he used all diplomatic means to make Istanbul acknowledge Serbia's independence and secure his heirs to succeed the Serbian throne.

Especially shocking to Serbia was the year 1817, when Karadjordje returned to the country which he had left after his uprising was crushed in 1813. Even when Karadjordje was assassinated, and his supporters marginalized, instability of government in Serbia did not end, although in this process Milos' power augmented. In 1817, Milos called the assembly of clerical officials, reputable dukes and serfs, who elected him prince with the right to hereditary succession. However, this did not result in a stabilization of internal political affairs. First, there was the desire of other leaders of the uprising and reputable individuals to become supreme leaders, which is why the country was constantly shaken by rebellion and conspiracy.

Milos was ultimately allowed hereditary princehood in the 1830 Sultan's Edict, although this Edict contained some provisions favouring Milos' opponents. After the second Edict, of 1833, Milos himself started considering reforms in Serbia, so that it could become an organized country. This required written laws.

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<sup>2</sup> Originally *popocitelj* (translator's remark).

On Sretenje<sup>3</sup> 1835, Milos installed his Constitution, which introduced many novelties to Serbia, but was in many ways difficult to understand<sup>4</sup>. Many rights that originally lay sole with Milos were now transferred to the State Council, which meant there was a division of power between the Prince and the Council. However, the National Assembly was also instituted, a third political factor that was very important for the development of Serbian parliamentarism. However, this Constitution did not last long, as it was discontinued on 17 March 1835, because Turkey, Russia, and Austria opposed it.

Only three years later, again through a Sultan's Edict, Turkey passed the law (constitution) on administration in Serbia, which was proclaimed in 1839. This Constitution rejected all democratic institutions originally defined in the Sretenje Constitution. It established a State Council, whose members had permanent, life-long positions, and this resulted in a dualism of power.

Milos' opponents were never at ease. The Serbian opposition kept growing, and its supporters were mainly recruited from public administrators, who became a powerful and influential force in the state. The breakup between Milos and his opponents started when they wanted to limit Milos' power. Milos believed that Serbia would become independent only if he did not share his power with anyone. Serbia owed him its independence and elevation to the level of a full-fledged state.

In 1839, Milos renounced the throne in favour of his minor son Milan, who soon died, so that the throne was eventually taken by Milos' younger son, Mihailo, who did not stay in power for long, either.

#### THE PERIOD OF DEFENDERS OF THE CONSTITUTION (1838-1858)

The most responsible for Milos' renunciation of the throne were his opponents. They required that the Constitution be adopted, such that it should limit the prince's absolute power. When the Constitution was passed, these people put their ideas to practice as members of the Council. This group was led by Vucic, Petronijevic, Stojan and Aleksa Simic, Milutin and Ilija Garasanin. They took the credit for Serbia's 1838 Constitution – hence the name of the group, 'Defenders of the Constitution'. They attempted to overthrow Mihailo in all possible ways, which they eventually did in 1842, when Aleksandar Karadjordjevic was appointed new prince. Essentially, nothing change in Serbia's policy, either national or foreign. The only thing was that now centralism was embodied by Aleksandar, where the separatists had turned into defenders of the constitution.

Defenders of the Constitution exerted their full influence only upon the rise of Aleksandar Karadjordjevic to power. Leaders of the constitutionalists were not educated people, but people of the common folk, warriors and rebels. However, they had behind them a new, young generation, stern opponents of Milos' absolutism. The regime of the Con-

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<sup>3</sup> An Orthodox Christian holiday celebrated on the 40<sup>th</sup> day after Christmas, i.e. on 15<sup>th</sup> February (translator's remark).

<sup>4</sup> Although Sretenje Constitution was never enacted, it was important as it rose awareness of the need to establish a constitutional system in the Serbian Principedom, as an autonomous province within the Ottoman Empire.

stitution Defenders paid a lot of attention to developing administrative staff. As the 1833 Constitution did not prescribe a parliament, the Prince and the Council shared power, where the Council was a purely administrative and bureaucratic institution.

The struggle between the Prince and the Council resulted in the emergence of two parties in the fifties – the party that supported the Prince and represented the government, and the party of the Council, which was in opposition. The peak of the conflict between the Prince and the Council was the revelation of Tenka's conspiracy whose intention was to assassinate the Prince. The crisis that emerged from this plot eventually ended at the expense of Aleksandar, because the new Council President was now Toma Vucic, who managed to reorganize the Council with Ilija Garasanin, and secure more authority for this institution than before. Although there was a seeming reconciliation between the King on one side, and Vucic and Garasanin on the other, the idea to overthrow the Prince was there all the time, and there was a means to put it to practice: by calling the Assembly. Supporters of the Obrenovic dynasty managed to win over the population to support the call of the Assembly where the policy of Prince Aleksandar would be criticized. They were backed by young intellectuals educated abroad, the liberals, who played the key role in toppling Aleksandar. The Act on the National Assembly was passed in 1858, and it defined that members of parliament would be elected by the people. Results of municipal elections did not favour the Prince because the Assembly was mainly filled with supporters of the Obrenovic family. In this Assembly of St. Andrew's Day, as it came to be called, Aleksandar Karadjordjevic was overthrown, and Prince Milos Obrenovic returned to the throne. With Aleksandar's loss of power, the Defenders of the Constitution regime also fell, because this regime had been embodied by the Council. Yet, the Assembly now gained more importance than the Council.

#### POLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCES DURING THE REIGN OF MIHAILO AND MILAN OBRENOVIC (1858-1881)

At St Andrew's Day Assembly, two ideologies were clearly visible. They would clash in state administration and ultimately result in the foundation of the first political parties in this country. The conservatives, the party of the Council, represented the remnants of the old bureaucratic regime, and they fought for changes on the throne, but not for any change in state policy. The liberals introduced a new spirit, new conceptions into politics. They allied with supporters of the Obrenovic dynasty and Milos was thankful to them for his reinstatement on the throne. Having returned to Serbia, Milos planned to abolish the Constitution, disband the Council, and bring his people into the administration. However, thanks to the liberals, who were afraid that Milos should again become despotic, he did not exceed the limits, but conducted his policies gradually. Still, since Milos wanted to have his own Assembly, that would directly put to progress all his ideas, an open clash between him and the liberals broke out. This situation was used by the conservatives to start attacking the liberals in public. In the two years of his second reign, Milos craftily balanced between the liberals and the conservatives.

After Prince Milos died in 1860, the central person behind the gathering of the liberals and the conservatives was Prince Mihailo.

Having risen to power, Prince Mihailo found quarrelsome parties and turbulent atmosphere. His view of state administration did not include cooperation with the parties, but rather resolute settlement with them. For this clash, he needed the support of all nation, which is why Mihailo was trying to find the way to reconcile the differences between the liberals and the conservatives. However, neither group agreed with his policy, because the liberals supported the National Assembly, and the conservatives vouched for the Council. This is why Mihailo aimed to pass new legislation, in order to reduce the competences of both bodies. However, it is obvious that the political views of the conservatives were much closer to him, so that he quickly gave up on the idea to reconcile the two groups. Although Prince Mihailo became surrounded with conservative politicians, one cannot deny the development of liberal ideas in Serbia in this period. One should also recall his tendency to impose a personal regime. Like Milos, he was a supporter of strong power, kept totally in his own hands. Yet, as a sophisticated and educated ruler, raised in the west, he started developing the regime of enlightened absolutism. Reducing the importance of the Council and Assembly, Mihailo disarmed both the conservatives and the liberals. For this reason, the liberals were forced to work outside the Assembly, which hosted none of their representatives. They appeared in public through the press, where they criticized the government and attempted to topple Mihailo's regime.

Mihailo justified all actions against his political opponents by means of his foreign policy goal – the final independence of Serbia. He was close to starting a war against Turkey, as he rejected the diplomatic alternatives. Spiritually, Mihailo's war plans were supported by the United Serbian Youth. This organization was favoured by the Prince with regard to foreign policy. However, in interior policy, Mihailo was wary of them, because they expressed advanced, modern views which he did not find acceptable. He was afraid that this group would fall under the influence of the liberals, which is what eventually happened.

After the assassination of Prince Mihailo in 1868, it was the underage Prince Milan Obrenovic that came to the Serbian throne. The Assembly appointed three viceroys – Milivoje Blaznavac, Jovan Ristic, and Jovan Gavrilovic. Having risen to power, the viceroys faced with unsettled political circumstances. On the one hand, there were the conservatives, vouching for a continuation of Prince Mihailo's policy, and on there were the liberals, who advocated that the Assembly should be given legislative power, that the Ministers should be accountable, and the press free. Due to some of their concessions to the liberals, the conservatives did not support the viceroys' policy. The liberals did support this policy, but not without reservations.

Although there were no grounds for that in the Constitution in effect at the time, the viceroys decided to proclaim the new Constitution. It was adopted in 1869, and its creator was Jovan Ristic. This Constitution was deemed much more liberal than its 1838 predecessor. It did not introduce a parliamentary system, however, but conferred all power to the Government. The conservatives and liberals were at odds with regard to this Constitution, too. The conservatives saw it as a major concession and act of courtship to the liberals. The liberals saw it as the embodiment of the political program they had supported back at the St. Andrew's Day Assembly, and greeted the act because this was the first Constitution that Serbia proclaimed independently, i.e. the first one that was not imposed by Istanbul. By the way, the liberals were in an interesting position here – in the beginning, they provided support and added their own flavour to the viceroy regime, but when

the viceroys strengthened their position, they imposed a true dictatorship and were more willing to cooperate with the conservatives in practice.

In this period, a new political movement emerged, such that it would later become a powerful political organization – that of Svetozar Markovic. Markovic criticized the liberals and their program, as it was purely political. The socialists accentuated the economic and social programs and blamed the bureaucratic regime for the difficult economic conditions in the nation. They advocated the termination of the bureaucratic system through decentralization of government. The liberals responded, criticizing Markovic that he had no national program or sentiment.

It is noticeable that already towards the end of the viceroy period in Serbia, the background for the foundation of the principal political parties was made, those parties that would govern the country by 1918. Already then, political ideas were becoming clearer, so that, by the time of the proclamation of the Prince's legal age in 1872, a clear division between political groups had been made. The division into conservatives and liberals was clear, and socialists were emerging too, where their most reputed proponents would soon form the radicals. When he came to the throne, Prince Milan made the conservative Jovan Marinovic Prime Minister. This Government had problems cooperating with the liberal Assembly. For this reason, Marinovic called elections in 1874, where he intended to get the Assembly in which the conservatives would comprise the majority. However, the liberals once again won. Marinovic made an alliance with the old liberals Stavca Mihailovic and Jevrem Grujic, but, as he was constantly contested by the liberals, he finally retreated, where the new Government was made, headed by Acim Cumic. When this Government fell, too, the third conservative Government was appointed, with Danilo Stefanovic as Prime Minister. In the time of this Government, a group of MPs for the first time decided to use filibuster against the Government (as done by the conservatives, who occasionally retreated from parliamentary sessions). This was the strongest reason for the dissolution of the Assembly, where a new election was called. The liberals won this election again, so that a purely liberal Government was finally made. New in the Assembly were the MPs from the group led by Adam Bogosavljevic, who tried to make a farmers' ideology with socialist elements. Then the Government was formed, led by Stevca Mihailovic – it was a liberal government which remained in office by 1878.

At that time, an uprising broke out in Herzegovina, which created a belligerent sentiment in Serbia. The liberals, proponents of national politics, were in favour of the war. The conservatives opposed the war. The radicals vouched for the war, on certain terms. Prince Milan was afraid of the war. Yet, unable to resist the pressure, he eventually decided to declare war.

The first war was waged in 1876, over Turkish refusal to allow Serbia and Montenegro to administer Bosnia and Herzegovina after the turmoil in Herzegovina. In this war, Serbia was defeated.

The second war (1877/1878), waged by Serbia and Russia against Turkey, significantly changed the political scene in Serbia. This war, too, progressed under the command of the liberal Government of Stevca Mihailovic. After Serbia declared independence, Stevca Mihailovic resigned, and the Government was taken over by Jovan Ristic, who now faced difficult circumstances in the country after the war.

In foreign policy, it turned out that Russia did not quite consider Serbia its principal ally. This is why Serbia came closer to Vienna. In interior policy, the country witnessed

the advancement of political forces that were very hostile to the Prince. After the 1878 parliamentary election, the liberals won the majority of seats again, but now numerous leaders of the opposition also entered the Assembly. Two strong opposition groups were there – the radicals, who sent to the Assembly their leader, Nikola Pašić, and the conservatives (now known as the Progressive Party<sup>5</sup>). Disillusionment in the people grew, the reputation of the liberals dwindled, and the radicals and conservatives were rising. The Government was changed. The conservative Milan Piročanac became Prime Minister and called the election in 1880. In this election, the liberals were utterly defeated. However, what followed was a dispute between the Radicals and the Progressives, who had participated in the election in an informal coalition. The rift peaked over the appointment of the Deputy Speaker of the Assembly.

#### THE RADICAL PARTY AND ITS STRUGGLE FOR PEOPLE'S FREEDOMS (1881-1914)

Although the Radicals appeared in the election together with the Progressives, their leader Nikola Pašić was not allowed the position of Assembly Deputy Speaker. For this reason, the Radicals now became open opposition to the regime.

In January 1881, the radical paper "Self-Government" came out. It contained the program of the People's Radical Party.<sup>6</sup> From this program, one concludes that the Radicals diverged from the socialist ideas of Svetozar Marković, and insisted on political, rather than economic issues. Two days after the Radicals, the Progressives also published their program in the journal "Daylight". In the program, this party vouched for a monarchy and dynasty, freedom of speech and writing, personal security, etc. The advantage of the Progressives lay in the fact they could implement their program immediately, while the Radicals were yet to spread among the population, found their central board in Belgrade and local boards inside the country. As Progressives did not have supporters in the population to strengthen their policy, they put in a lot of effort to purge the administration of officials who did not support them.

During the peak of the personal and political clash between the Prince, later King (1882) Milan and the Radicals, the Progressives became ever more identified with the ruler's policy. This would turn out devastating for them, especially after 1903. Although in our national history the role of the Progressive Party is mostly interpreted as negative, one should have in mind that this party actually passed many acts which would significantly democratize political life.

The Radicals suffered a grave defeat after Timok Insurrection. This event had all superficial characteristics of an insurgency, even though it was not actually one. As it happened, the authorities ordered that guns should be collected from the people's army. The intention was to replace the old guns and distribute new ones. However, the Radicals interpreted this action as a prospective coup d'état. Thus, some people resisted this action, and the tendency soon picked up. In this situation, one could clearly delineate two ideas – the idea of the Radicals to make a farmers' state, and the idea to preserve the bureaucratic

<sup>5</sup> Originally, *naprednjaci*, those who advance (translator's remark).

<sup>6</sup> Mitrović Živan, *Serbian Political Parties [Srpske političke stranke]*, Belgrade, 1939, pp. 72



system, supported by King Milan. Eventually, Timok Uprising was crushed. It remains unclear whether the Radicals truly started it, but it is certain that such an outcome worsened their position. When the Assembly in which the Radicals prevailed was dissolved, an election was held in 1884, where the Progressives rose to power. However, only two years later, the Radicals won the majority in the new election, which, however, did not result in the change of Government, because the Progressives secured their majority via appointed representatives. The first Radical Government would be made only in 1888, and its leader would be Sava Grujic.

Although it had been practically active since the St. Andrew's Day Assembly, the third political party of this period, the People's Liberal Party, was formally constituted on 17 September 1881. The official title was the Association for the Promotion of Serbian Literature. It was led by Jovan Ristic, who was always suppressed because the central position in Serbia was occupied by Nikola Pasic, leader of the most powerful party. Politically and economically, the liberals wished to strengthen the state, advance civil freedoms and the constitutional system. In terms of organization, the Liberal Party was poorly organized under Jovan Ristic, because he was a bureaucrat – as such, he opposed massive actions and believed in using diplomatic means in political struggle.

During the reign of the Radicals, the 1888 Constitution was passed. At the time, it was considered the most democratic constitution in Europe. It added to the popularity of King Milan with the people, but also allowed him a way to step down from the throne. Indeed, the Constitution prescribed that the King should renounce the throne and appoint viceroys who would reign on behalf of his minor son Aleksandar. The King appointed Jovan Ristic, Kosta Protic, and Jovan Belimarkovic viceroys. The viceroys could not evade the Radicals – they did not favour this party, but, as the Radicals were the strongest, they conferred government upon them. Thus in Serbia, in the period 1889-1892 there was a purely Radical Government.

The young King Aleksandar did not put up with the viceroys for too long. On 1 April 1893 he performed a coup and declared himself legally aged. The Radicals were pleased with such an act. Aleksandar brought the Radicals to power, actually those among them whom he selected. Therefore, the Government was now headed by his former educator, Dr. Laza Dokic, and after parliamentary elections, the Radicals won the majority of seats once again.

Due to the increasing self-rule of the Radical Party, dissatisfaction spread throughout Serbia. Thus, on 9 May 1894, the King abolished the modern 1888 Constitution and reinstated the one adopted in 1869. This move made the Liberals and Progressives rejoice because it showed that the relations between the Radicals and the King were not so good, and that the Radical Party was in crisis. From that moment, on to the assassination of the King and Queen, Serbia was politically unstable. Starting from 1894, King Aleksandar opted for 'neutral' Governments – in other words, he established a personal regime.

In 1901, the King imposed the Constitution, but did not reinstate the 1888 act. However, pressured by the opposition, he suspended this Constitution within 45 minutes. During this time, he abolished the Act on the Election of Members of Parliament, the Act on Municipalities, and Act on the Press. After 45 minutes, the Constitution was reinstated.

After the assassination of King Aleksandar and Queen Draga (on 29 May 1903), the Karadjordjevic dynasty rose to power again. This marked Serbia's entrance into the era of democracy and parliamentary life. King Petar all along remained above the parties, and he paid due attention to the proper functioning of parliamentary life in the country. The

Radicals were the most organized party entering the new democratic system. The Liberals and Progressives had lost much vigour during the Obrenovic era, but they still had numerous prominent persons in their leadership.

For a while, there was also an Independent Radical Party – the Independents (the left-wing of the Radical Party). However, in 1903, this party united with the old Radical Party.

A Liberal Party wing formed the National Party in 1904. Their leader was Stojan Ribarac. At the same time, there was the Liberal Democratic Party, led by Dr. Vojislav Veljkovic. These two parties eventually united and made the National Party.

The Progressives disbanded their party in 1897. However, their prominent officials kept running for elections and entering the National Assembly.

Apart from these parties, there was another organization preserving the party life of the 19<sup>th</sup> century – the Serbian Social Democratic Party, founded in 1903. The program of this party did not much differ from the programs of European socialists. Since there was almost no working class in Serbia, the Socialists gathered supporters among small craftsmen, impoverished farmers, and intellectuals.

After 1903 there were attempts at forming some other parties – the Serbian National Peasants' Concord, the Economic Party, the Conservative Party.

One notices that political parties replaced one another in Serbian governments after 1903. However, the Radicals remained in government for the longest total period. Tacitly, this period is considered the golden age not only of the Serbian state, but also of Serbian culture, first of all literature.

#### CONCLUSION

This overview of the origins and development of political parties in Serbia from 1804 to 1918 provides only a simplified image of a complex period and processes inherent to it. This was an age of fight for the liberation of Serbia from the Turkish occupation, but also the transformation of a semi-feudal system into early forms of civil society. For this reason, one should have in mind that it was not possible, either quickly or easily, to transform a traditional set of values and customs that had long worked in village communities into a unified state, regulated by legal norms and organized on the basis of widely accepted political and legal principles.

## **NASTANAK I RAZVOJ POLITIČKIH STRANAKA U SRBIJI I NJIHOV UTICAJ NA POLITIČKI ŽIVOT U PERIODU OD 1804. DO 1918. GODINE**

**Aleksandra Ilić**

*Formalno posmatrano političke partije su formirane tek 1881. godine. Ali u praksi one postoje još od Prvog srpskog ustanka. Ovaj članak prati razvoj političkih stranaka, njihovu organizaciju kao i njihova međusobna sukobljavanja i saradnju u borbi za vlast. Ono što se jasno može uočiti je nestabilnost političke scene u Srbiji još od nastanka političkih stranaka pa sve do današnjih dana.*

Ključne reči: *stranke, ustav, vlada.*