

POLITICAL CIRCLE “ZVENO” BETWEEN SOFIA AND BELGRADE 1934-1935*

Abstract: The paper examines the political circle Zveno – a small, but powerful political organization, one of the ruling factors in Bulgaria, after the coup d’etat of 19 May 1934. Based on various sources, the aim of the research is to reveal certain aspects of Zveno’s foreign policy towards the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians (KSCS)/Yugoslavia at a time when revisionist aspirations of the Versailles status-quo in Europe emerged.

Key words: Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, IMRO, Military League/Union, Zveno

The outcome of the Great War completely changed the Old Continent and the destiny of millions of people. The long symphony of “*the European concert*” was replaced by the Treaty of Versailles, which secured the domination of France, Great Britain and their allies in Europe. This new order was guaranteed by a complex mechanism of treaties (Versailles, Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Neuilly-sur-Seine, Trianon, Sevres) and alliances (e.g. the so-called Little Entente, formed by Czechoslovakia, Romania and the KSCS in 1921), that formed a solid barrier against eventual revisionism. However, the confidence of the victorious Allies that the new *status-quo* had no alternative was soon shattered by reality. Led by Mustafa Kemal the Turkish nation won the war against the Greek Kingdom (1919–1922), turning the Treaty of Sevres into a piece of paper.¹ At the same time, in Italy, Benito Mussolini’s fascist movement took power (1922), demonstrating Rome’s increased ambitions to play a role in European affairs – ambitions, which were in contradiction with the Versailles order.² However, the biggest threat to the postwar borders in Europe was National-Socialism founded in Germany in the early 1920s. Adolf Hitler and his followers considered the Versailles Treaty absolutely unacceptable;³ therefore when the Nazis came to power they proclaimed the annulment of the treaty as their primary task. Consequently, several nations defeated in WWI or certain parts of

* This article has been written within the framework of the scholarly project *Serbs and Serbia in the Yugoslav and International Context: Internal Development and Position within European/World Community* (№ 47027), financed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development Republic of Serbia.

1 О. Петрунина, *Греческая нация и государство в XVIII-XX вв.*, Москва, 2010, с. 505–518.

2 J. Burgwyn, *Italian Foreign Policy in the Interwar period 1918–1940*, Greenwood Publishing Group, 1997, pp. 35–56.

3 У. Ширер, *Взлет и падение Третьего Рейха*, Москва, 2003, с. 50–51.

their societies saw extreme political ideas as a means to fight against the new peace system. This trend was quite visible in the Tsardom of Bulgaria.⁴

Bulgaria lost the war, which put the country in a difficult international position (in some cases more complicated than that of Germany).⁵ Sofia was surrounded by hostile countries, clearly demonstrating who the winners in the world conflict were. The only way for Bulgaria to break the diplomatic isolation it was in was to resolve the issues between Sofia and Belgrade – a mandatory condition for the improvement of Bulgarian relations with the major powers France and Great Britain. Therefore the Bulgarian authorities hurried to restore diplomatic relations with its western neighbour, which took place immediately after the signing of the Treaty of Neuilly.⁶ Namely its decrees would be the prism, through which the Bulgarian-Yugoslav “friendship” until April 1941 would be refracted.

During the governance of the Bulgarian Agrarian National Union (1919–1923), led by Aleksandar Stamboliyski, Sofia tried to reconcile with Belgrade, avoiding the Macedonian question and the fate of the Bulgarians in the Vardar part of Macedonia.⁷ This catalyzed a severe conflict between BANU and the Internal Macedonian Revolution Organization (IMRO), which accused Stamboliyski of betrayal. Ultimately, Bulgaria and the KSCS reached political consent – the so-called Niš Convention, which was practically directed against IMRO.⁸ This act was perceived as high treason by a part of Bulgarian society and the military (the Military League/Union) and was one of the prerequisites for the bloody coup d'état of 9 June 1923. As a result Stamboliyski was assassinated by the agents of the Internal Organization and the People's/Democratic Alliance (1923–1926) led by Prof. Aleksandar Tsankov who took power.⁹

The new government in Sofia was looked upon with suspicion by Belgrade.¹⁰ The government of Nicola Pašić saw the political change in Bulgaria as an act against the Niš Convention due to the close ties between the Bulgarian military and the IMRO. The ruling elite in the Kingdom was well aware of this. Of course, the concerns of Belgrade were greatly exaggerated. Bulgaria was not a serious threat to the KSCS. According to the Neuilly peace treaty, the Tsardom was disarmed and the country was in a severe civil conflict. The weakness of Sofia and the strong position of Belgrade in the region were only too visible in the so-called Krstić incident – a *cherchez la femme* scandal, turned by the Kingdom into a political issue, whose solution demeaned the honor of the Bulgarian Army.¹¹

4 Н. Поппетров, В. Божинов, *Национално могъща и обединена България*, С., 2014, с. 20–30.

5 As a state with big potential, Germany succeeded to break the post-war isolation with the Locarno Treaties and cooperation with the Soviet Union. Cf. X. Кисинджър, *Дипломацията*, С., 1997, с. 232–251. For a small nation as Bulgaria such options were unthinkable.

6 Д. Петрова, *Самостоятелното управление на БЗНС 1920–1923*, С., 1988, с. 146.

7 *Ibidem*, с. 151–155, 228–230, 361–363.

8 Ал. Гребенаров, *Легални и тайни организации на македонските бежанци в България 1918–1947*, С., 2006, с. 124–129.

9 Г. Марков, *Парола “Сабя”. Заговорите и превратите на Военния съюз 1919–1936*, С., 1992, с. 39–50.

10 *История на България*, Том IX, С., 2012, с. 222.

11 *Политика*, бр. 5579, 4. XI. 1923; бр. 5580, 5. V. 1923 г. Атенат на г. Крстића нашег војног аташеа у Софији; бр. 5583, 8. XI. 1923 г. Бугарска се извинила; Cf. *История на България...*, с. 223–224.

The events took a turn during the mandate of the so-called Second government of the Democratic Alliance (1926-1931) led by Andrey Lyapchev (who was born in town of Resen, today in the Republic of Macedonia). The new Prime-Minister was connected with the movement of the Bulgarians in Macedonia since the late 19th century.¹² So, searching for a trump against the KSCS/Yugoslavia and being closely committed to the Bulgarian cause in this region, Lyapchev gave his quiet support to the Internal Organization. Its leader Ivan (Vanche) Mihaylov became one of the most important figures in the Tsardom. He was also very influential among the members of the Organization in Vardar Macedonia, which created persistent problems for Belgrade. The murders of General Kovačević and Velimir Prelić, as well as the assassination attempt on Živojin Lazić, showed how powerful the IMRO was.¹³ At the same time, Sofia tried to maintain good relations with Rome hoping that the Italian support (Rome and Belgrade being in a serious political conflict) would help improve the situation of the Bulgarians in Vardar Macedonia.¹⁴

That situation continued until 1931, when the general elections were held in Bulgaria. Rapprochement with Yugoslavia was a priority for the new coalition government of the People's Block (the two major powers in it were BANU "Vrabcha 1" and the Democratic Party). Bulgaria aspired to break the hostile encirclement with the help of Belgrade thus gaining access to the Great Powers on whom its financial and economic development practically depended. Therefore, the authorities in the Tsardom tried to curb the Internal Organization (without any success) and use this as an argument for good neighborly relations with the Kingdom.¹⁵ The peak of this activity was the meeting between Tsar Boris III and King Aleksandar in Belgrade (December 1933), when the Yugoslav ruler tried to convince the Bulgarian Monarch that Bulgaria should join the planned Balkan Entente.¹⁶ However, if Bulgaria joined the future union it would mean acceptance of the Versailles *status-quo*, which was absolutely contrary to Bulgarian aspiration for a revision of the Treaty of Neuilly. Finally, after much diplomatic activity, the Tsardom refused to join to the Balkan Pact, leaving the door open for its ambitions to change the situation in the region.¹⁷

In such political circumstances the "Pro-Yugoslav" political circle *Zveno* was formed.¹⁸ For a second time in the interwar period in Bulgaria (the first one was the coup of 9 June 1923), a group from the so-called national elite founded a political organization and later took power with the support of the military. The circle turned itself into a political facade for a "classical" military junta and it completely

12 В. Божинов, *Андрей Ляпчев*, С., 2006, с. 16-20.

13 *Политика*, бр. 6983, 6. X. 1927, Југославија и Бугарска. Убиство генерала Ковачевића; бр. 7080, 14. I. 1928, Крвави атентат на Велимира Прелића; бр. 7257, 15. VII. 1928, По наредби Ванче Михаилова. For revenge the Belgrade authorities killed Ivan Mihaylov's father and brother. Cf. Ив. Михайлов, *Спомени*. Том III 1924-1934, С., 1997, с. 341-376, 383-403.

14 И. Димитров, *Българо-италиански политически отношения 1922-1943*, С., 1976, с. 121-189.

15 Кр. Манчев, В. Бистрици, *България и нейните съседи*, С., 1978, с. 63-83.

16 Z. Avramovski, *Balkanska Antanta 1934-1940*, Beograd, 1986, s. 87-90.

17 *Ibidem*, s. 111-115.

18 English = Unit, Bulgarian = Звено.

abolished democracy in the country, thus paving the way for authoritarianism. The putschists initiated radical social changes, modifying the entire Bulgarian political and economic life and giving a new direction to Bulgarian foreign policy. One of its aspirations was the improvement of Bulgarian-Yugoslav relations – a very difficult task, having in mind the complex historical remnants between the two nations.

Zveno was founded in 1927 by Dimo Kazasov – a former member of the Social Democratic Party and a minister in the cabinet of Prof. Aleksandar Tzankov. The political circle was formed not as a typical political party but as a group of intellectuals (no more than 300 men), united by the ideas of a political system without parties and a strong state, combined with tendency for centralization and statism.¹⁹ Shortly, the organization grew in strength and attracted those who were disappointed in the traditional parties in the Tzardom.²⁰ Thus, the circle acquired the image of an organization with an anti-democratic face, which united politicians across the whole political spectrum. Viewed through the prism of the era, the aims of Zveno were not new and original. At that time authoritarian/totalitarian trends were popular in Europe. Thus, the political circle was a part of the right wing wave which spread throughout the continent after Mussolini had come to power in Italy.

At the same time, despite the deep anti-communism of the organization, Zveno was not a typical fascist formation. Kazasov admitted in his articles that the doctrine of fascism greatly influenced the members of the circle, but he also reminded the audience of something else. According to Kazasov, Zveno had its own face: “*we are not fascists, we are zvenars*”, wrote the founder of the circle, emphasizing the distinctive character of the organization. Ultimately, Zveno rejected the extreme nationalism in its Bulgarian variant, which was so well represented in all fascist formations in the state.²¹ According to the circle, the old nationalism (the style of the IMRO) belonged to the past and it was one of the biggest problems of Bulgaria and its political system. It isolated the Tsardom from the neighboring countries, which treated Sofia with suspicion. Therefore, the Bulgarian nation had to build “*a new national state*” without a parliament and political parties. In other words, as one of the members of the circle wrote, Zveno was a group of people, who had sympathies for Italian fascism and German National-Socialism, but they were mostly impressed by the “*enlightened authoritarian regime of Salazar*” (without its nationalism) in Portugal.²² In addition, the circle favored states with an anti-Italian (anti-fascism) stance, like France, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. This

19 Д. Казасов, *Видяно и преживяно 1891–1944*, С., 1969, с. 382–384; В. Задгорска, *Кръгът “Звено” 1927–1934*, С., 2008, с. 68–122.

20 Soon after its foundation, Kimon Georgiev – a former minister in the government of Andrey Lyapchev, joined the circle. Georgiev left the cabinet after a scandal, caused by the support of the Bulgarian authorities for the IMRO. The former minister was an eminent opponent of Ivan Mihaylov and a supporter for the subjugation of the Internal Organization. Over time, Georgiev turned into the most important figure of Zveno.

21 Н. Поппетров, *Фашизмът в България*, С., 2008, с. 44.

22 Н. П. Николаев, *Фрагменти от мемоари*, С., 1994, с. 103–104.

stance was paradoxical. Practically, Zveno was the only totalitarian organization in Bulgaria, which declared its intentions for good relations with Belgrade. Why?

Zveno began its political life like most of the right-wing organizations in Bulgaria, who were anti-Serbian/Yugoslav because the Bulgarian society always regarded Belgrade as the one who had conquered old Bulgarian lands. Of course, the biggest issue was Vardar Macedonia and the position of the Bulgarians in the region. According to the circle, after the Great War the authorities in the KSCS/Yugoslavia introduced a regime of terror against the Bulgarians, because every expression *"of Bulgarian feelings [in Vardar Macedonia] is considered as high treason"*. Such a standpoint could have been related to any totalitarian organization in Bulgaria, if Zveno had not introduced a new important moment in the dispute between Sofia and Belgrade. It took the stance that the problems with the western neighbour could be resolved by following *"the path of understanding"*, because these were *"the vital interests of the Bulgarian people and state"*. Zveno knew well that the Bulgarians could hardly accept such ideas, since they considered the Serbs as their most dangerous enemies. Therefore, the circle grounded its position on the following arguments: *"We know that our way is a paradox. But who, with common sense, will prefer provocation as a form of action, when he knows well what the consequences will be for the population [in Vardar Macedonia], which we must protect"*.²³

Such a position sharply distinguished Zveno on the Bulgarian political stage. The difference was so big that the circle was coerced to explain its stance towards the issue. The circle hurried to add that the outstretched hand to Belgrade had its price. Kazasov personally demanded that the KSCS give full rights to *"the Bulgarians from Bitolya, Prilep, Stip, Skopje, Bosilegrad and Tsaribrod (now Dimitrovgrad)"*. This also meant the restoration of Bulgarian schools and churches in these lands (Vardar Macedonia and the Western Outlands – the cities of Tsaribrod and Bosilegrad with their surroundings) and the possibility to openly use the Bulgarian language. Only then the rapprochement between Sofia and Belgrade would be effective.²⁴ Simultaneously, the founder of the circle raised his voice against those *"who sing songs remembering the past"*, which was an obstacle to good relations with the Kingdom. Kazasov wrote that not everyone who wanted peace with Belgrade was a traitor. Only certain circles close to the IMRO voiced these reproaches and it was precisely the Internal Organization that was the barrier, which divided the political elites in the two countries.²⁵

It should be mentioned that Zveno had an interesting stance towards the Organization, based on two major points – the conflicts inside the organization and the balance between the IMRO and the Bulgarian authorities. Regarding the internal conflicts, the sympathies of the circle were on the side of Alexander Protogerov, who was an old functionary of the Organization with many connections among the zvenars.²⁶ Protogerov was a Bulgarian army general (some officers, united in

23 *Звено*, 1928, кн. 14, ст. Пак на западната ни граница.

24 *Звено*, 1928, кн. 30, ст. Италия и Югославия.

25 *Звено*, 1929, кн. 33, ст. София-Белград.

26 *Алманах на българските национални движения след 1878 г.*, С., 2005, с. 343-344. Exactly Protogerov led the squads of the Internal Organization and Bulgarian military forces, which quelled the Toplica insurrection (1917).

the so-called Military League/Union, had close relations with the zvenars) and a high-standing freemason (many members of the circle were freemasons too).²⁷ The general's group was weaker than its opponents in the IMRO, which did not mean it was harmless. It used the same methods as did its adversaries – threats and murders.

Ivan Mihaylov's faction was on the other side. He was the young leader who declared total war against Belgrade, because of the difficult position of the Bulgarians in Vardar Macedonia.²⁸ His group had the tacit support of the Bulgarian authorities during the rule of the cabinet led by Andrey Lyapchev and took advantage of the powerless government of the People's Bloc (1931–1934). This gave a visible vantage to Mihaylov's faction, which became a dominant factor in the Internal Organization. Such a strong position was one of the reasons for the high self-confidence of the group and the conviction that Mihaylov and his men were above the law. Logically, having so much unofficial power, Mihaylov ordered the assassination of Protogerov (1928) and after it had been successfully carried out, he became an undisputable leader of IMRO.²⁹

The second point was more important. In 1930a a highly publicized so-called spy scandal broke out in Bulgaria which shocked the society. A colonel from the Bulgarian army (his name was Konstantin Marinopolski) was accused of spying for the Yugoslav intelligence. Immediately, the IMRO captured the colonel, tortured and murdered him as a traitor to the Bulgarian ideals. But the guilt of Marinopolski was questionable. His tragic destiny shocked the zvenars, who had many friends among the officers' corps. For this reason, Zveno declared its indignation against Mihaylov's group and its methods of handling justice.³⁰ The circle accused the IMRO that its actions were immoral and illegal. The main questions raised in the campaign of the circle against the Internal Organization were why the Bulgarian authorities did nothing to avert the death of Marinopolski and why the government turned a blind eye to IMRO's operations. Zveno's replay was simple – the Bulgarian government did not want (or could not) keep Mihaylov's group under control because the government was too weak. The zvenars thought that only a strong state organization could be a guarantee against formations which put themselves above the law.

Mihaylov replied to the accusation of Zveno accordingly. He sent death threats to Kazasov, Damyan Velchev (the major figure in the Military League and an adherent of Zveno) and K. Georgiev.³¹ This practically meant that the IMRO declared war on the most powerful factor in the Bulgarian politics – the military and their political ally (in this case Zveno). Under these circumstances, the circle and the largest part of the Bulgarian army (more precisely the officers' corps)

27 В. Георгиев, *Масонството в България*, С., 1986, с. 246–247.

28 *Алманах на българските...*, с. 325–326.

29 Ив. Михайлов, *Спомени*, Том IV, С., 1998, с. 217–373. According to Mihaylov, some members of Protogerov's faction were in contact with the Serbian agents in Bulgaria – something unacceptable for the rules of the Internal Organization. Cf. Ив. Михайлов, *Спомени...*, с. 278.

30 Г. Марков, *Парола "Сабя"...*, с. 77–87.

31 *Из личния архив на Кимон Георгиев*, Том I, София, 2005, с. 551; З. Тодоровски, *Политиката на българското правителство на Андрей Ляпчев спрямо ВМРО*. - В: *Андрей Ляпчев. Изкуство, култура, политика*, С., 2006, с. 102.

united against the Internal Organization, which brought them closer to Belgrade. The Kingdom also wanted the destruction of the IMRO, for of its own reason – to stop the armed resistance of the Bulgarians in Vardar Macedonia. So, paradoxically, but quite logically, the Bulgarian military and Zveno, on one hand and the Yugoslav authorities on the other, had a common goal – removing the Internal Organization from the political scene of the Balkans.

Soon, such an option became a reality through the coup, organized by the Military League and Zveno, which took place in Sofia on 19 May 1934. The radical change transformed the entire political life in Bulgaria. Less than a month after the coup, the new authorities prohibited, without any exception, all parties in the Tsardom. The head of the state – Tsar Boris III was isolated, even threatened with dethronement and later with a murder. The constitution was suspended and the parliament was dissolved. The new government, formed by Zveno with the support of the Military League and led by K. Georgiev (a few months before the coup, Dimo Kazasov left Zveno and his position, as a leader, was taken by Georgiev), began to rule by the so-called regulations, which had the effect of laws.³² Thereby, having cleared their way to absolute power, the zvenars and military dealt with the Internal Organization. In time, the long hand of the coup organizers reached the IMRO as well. In just twenty-four hours Mihaylov's mighty fraction was disbanded, its weapons were confiscated and its money was seized by the state. Moreover, all estates of the Internal Organization were nationalized and some members of the academic society, who were in close relations with the IMRO, were fired from the Sofia University. But the heaviest blow was inflicted on the members of the Internal Organization. Many of them were arrested and interned in special camps, while Ivan Mihaylov, who the authorities put on the wanted list, fled abroad.³³

The results of the government activities were achieved faster than the officials expected. The influence of the IMRO in Bulgaria, especially in the region of the town of Petrich, obviously decreased. Thus, K. Georgiev declared at a press conference that the Internal Organization had been completely annihilated.³⁴ Of course, the Prime-Minister spoke about Mihaylov's fraction. The deceased general Protogerov's group of was not prosecuted by the authorities and it fully supported the coup and the new regime.³⁵ Some of the protagonists were even employed in the administration, but in practice, Georgiev was right – the government really managed to erase all traces of the IMRO on Bulgarian territory. This fact was accepted with relief in Belgrade, where the IMRO was considered to be one of the Kingdom's main enemies.

The political events in Bulgaria were followed with great interest in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The official newspaper "Politika" paid great attention to the processes in Bulgaria,³⁶ while the government circles received the news from Sofia with some restraint. The Yugoslav foreign minister Bogoljub Jevtić directly

32 В. Георгиев, *Буржоазните и дребнобуржоазните партии в България 1934-1939*, С., 1971, с. 72-74; В. Simić, *In the Spirit of National Ideology*, Belgrade, 2013, pp. 80-82.

33 *Нови дни*, бр. 20, 16. IX. 1934 г., Бягството на Иван Михайлов.

34 *Нови дни*, бр. 57, 27. X. 1934 г., Важни изявления на м-р-председателя.

35 Ив. Михайлов, *Quo vadis, Bulgaria*, Индианаполис, 1937, с. 15.

36 *Политика*, бр. 9341, 20. V. 1934 г., Државни удар у Бугарској.

asked the Bulgarian ambassador in Belgrade Georgi Kyoseivanov whether the new Bulgarian cabinet would continue to maintain good relations with Belgrade and what the opinion of Tsar Boris on the radical change was.³⁷ These questions showed some reticence, because the Yugoslav side became aware that it was their turn now. With the liquidation of the Internal Organization, Sofia had fulfilled one of the basic conditions of the Kingdom Yugoslavia for the beginning of rapprochement between the two countries. In return, the Bulgarian government expected some concessions from the Yugoslav side. Sofia wanted Belgrade to improve the position of the Bulgarians in Vardar Macedonia, hoping that the Yugoslav political elite would recognize the ethnic reality in the province.

The culmination of Bulgarian expectations was King Alexander's visit to Sofia, which took place in the end of September 1934. The monarch, who was welcomed by a huge crowd in the Bulgarian capital, expressed hope for a radical improvement of the relations.³⁸ During the stay, excellent interrelations between the Bulgarian Tsar and his guest were demonstrated which further encouraged the Bulgarian public that a breakthrough was really possible. In fact, the Yugoslav and Bulgarian side signed several agreements (opening of new border checkpoints, admission of Bulgarian books and newspapers on Yugoslav territory),³⁹ but actually the main issue – Macedonia, was not mentioned.⁴⁰ This gave rise to some disappointment in Sofia, but also hopes that the problem would be solved in the future. These expectations were based on the understanding reached between the two monarchs and the agreements made during the royal visit.

The Bulgarian-Yugoslav rapprochement, however, was halted by the assassination of King Alexander in Marseille.⁴¹ Immediately after the assassination the world learned that the assassin was a Bulgarian – Vlado Chernozemski, who was killed on the spot. Chernozemski was a member of the IMRO and the most dangerous assassin of the Internal Organization.⁴² After receiving the news that a Bulgarian had been involved in the murder of the King, the political elite in Sofia was overcome by anxiety. The ghost of a joint Balkan Pact action against Bulgaria became very real. But the Bulgarian authorities had an important trump in their hands. It was the Bulgarian state who disbanded the IMRO and the arguments that Sofia was behind the assassination did not have an effect.

37 ЦДА, ф. 3К, оп. 12, а. е. 1627, л. 1; ф. 176К, оп. 6, а. е. 2529, л. 59.

38 *Нови дни*, бр. 31, 28. IX. 1934 г., Бляскаво и възторжено посрещане на височайшите гости; *Политика*, бр. 9470, 28. IX. 1934 г., Исторически дани у Софији.

39 *Нови дни*, бр. 34, 1. X. 1934 г., ст. Резултатите от политическите разговори; Кр. Манчев, В. Бистрички, *България и нейните съседи...*, с. 137.

40 Z. Avramovski, *Balkanska Antanta...*, s. 170–172.

41 Г. Марков, *Покушения, насилие и политика в България 1878–1947*, С., 2003, с. 266–280.

42 The real name of Vlado Chernozemski was Velichko Dimitrov Kerin. He was born in the village of Kamenitza, now Velinograd, located in the northern slopes of the Rhodopes. Before assassinating King Alexander, Chernozemski murdered the prominent Bulgarian communist Dimo Hadjidimov and the functionary of the Internal Organization Naum Tomalevski, who was an opponent of Mihaylov inside the IMRO. Chernozemski was also a poet. In 1924, in some of his poems he described his future sacrifice: "O, life give me your winged thunderbolt/and the sacred impulse of the hawk,/to meet my enemy – the tyrant,/to crush his power". Cf. Ив. Михайлов, *Спомени...*, с. 538.

The assassinations of King Alexander froze the rapprochement between Sofia and Belgrade. After the murder of his cousin, Prince-Regent Paul (Pavle) became suspicious of the Bulgarian leaders, especially to the Bulgarian Tsar. The efforts of Zveno for closer relations with Yugoslavia were suddenly cut short. Meanwhile, other important events took place in the Bulgarian capital. The monarch was involved in a complicated power struggle against Zveno. Through skillful political maneuvering, Boris III managed to destroy the Military League, which was the basis of the circle's government. This determined the fate of the Zveno cabinet. On January 22 1935 Georgiev's government was toppled by the Tsar. Gradually, Boris III became the only relevant factor in Bulgarian politics and he continued to seek the support of Belgrade for Bulgarian revisionist demands, directed against Romania and Greece, which finally led to the signing of the Pact of Eternal Friendship in 1937.

Резиме

Др Воин Божинов

Политички круг „Звено“ између Софије и Београда 1934-1935.

| **Кључне речи:** Бугарска, Југославија, ВМРО, Војна лига, Звено

Појава организације „Звено“ на политичкој сцени је симптоматична за ситуацију у Бугарској током тридесетих година XX века, услед разочарања друштва дотадашњим политичким развитком. Звенари су предлагали несвакидашње мере (беспартијски режим, централизацију државног апарата, умањивање краљевске власти) и брзо су стекли знатну популарност а после преврата 19. маја 1934. преузели су кључну улогу у држави. Један од њихових првих задатака на спољнополитичком плану било је побољшање односа са Краљевином Југославијом и елиминација ВМРО, као гаранције добросуседских односа две државе. Из свега тога су произиласиле наде владајућих кругова у Софији да ће Београд признати етничку реалност у Вардарској Македонији и да ће се олакшати положај тамошњег становништва.