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“THE GREATEST FRIEND OF BULGARIA” – MILAN STOJADINOVIĆ IN THE BULGARIAN NEWSPAPER *DNES**

Abstract: Based on primary sources and relevant literature the image of the Yugoslav Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Milan Stojadinović (1935–1939) in Bulgarian press will be analyzed. Special attention will be paid to the central pro-government newspaper *Dnes*. The article will cover three years, from the founding of the newspaper (February 1936) to the fall of Stojadinović (February 1939).

Key words: Milan Stojadinović, Bulgaria, Press, *Dnes*, propaganda

Relations between Bulgaria and Serbia (later Kingdom of Slovenes Croats and Serbs and from 1929 Yugoslavia) were one of the most important issues in the Balkans in the first half of twentieth century. A brief cooperation in the First Balkan War (1912–1913) against Ottoman Empire was followed by conflicts in the Second Balkan War and WWI. After the wars the two countries were once again on opposing sides. While the interest of Yugoslavia was to protect its existing frontiers, Bulgaria attempted to change them. The question of Vardar Macedonia was especially traumatic for Bulgaria which considered it to be its priority foreign policy issue for many years. Only after the regime was changed in 1934 did the policy begin to change.¹ In order to end the country's political isolation, the ruling circles in Bulgaria sought rapprochement with Yugoslavia and its support for the change of borders in the north and south, at the expense of Romania and Greece. Joint efforts of both sides to reach some kind of agreement resulted in the Pact of Eternal Friendship signed on 24th January 1937 in Belgrade.²

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1 More on the internal situation and political struggles for power in Bulgaria during the 1930s: В. Георгиев, *Буржоазните и дребно буржоазните партии в България 1934–1939*, София, 1971; В. Мигев, *Утвърждане на монархофашистката диктатура в България 1934–1936*, София, 1977; И. Димитров, *Българската демократична общественост, фашизмът и войната 1934–1939*, София, 2000; П. Цветков, Н. Поппетров, „Към типологията на политическото развитие на България през 30-те години“, *Исторически преглед*, 2/1990, с. 63–78.

2 Some notable papers on the topics of Bulgarian-Yugoslav relations in the second half of 1930s and Pact of Eternal Friendship: П. Арсов, „Българско-югославския пакт от 1937 г. – балкански Мюнхен“, *ТрВНИИИКМ*, 1961, No. 1, с. 331–345; Ж. Аврамовски, *Balkanske zemlje i velike sile 1935–1937*, Beograd, 1968, str. 237–243; Ж. Аврамовски, *Balkanska Antanta*, Beograd, 1986, str.

The key representative of the new policy of closer cooperation with Bulgaria on the Yugoslav side was the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Milan Stojadinović (1935–1939).³ His policy of “preserving old friendships and creating new ones” was put in motion in the case of Bulgaria. Stojadinović wanted to secure his country’s eastern borders by accepting the Bulgarian offer of a bilateral pact. He saw the pact as one of the milestones of his foreign policy.⁴ On the other side, Bulgaria recognized Stojadinović as the key figure for maintaining good relations between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia and possibly as a strong ally in regards to its territorial claims towards Romania and Greece. The Bulgarian officials were also well aware of Stojadinović’s respectable position in contemporary Europe, especially in Rome and Berlin. Considering all this, they decided to abandon their claims to Vardar Macedonia at least for the time being.⁵ The value of Stojadinović for Bulgarian future plans was clear to his colleague, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria, Georgi Kioseivanov (Георги Кюсеиванов, 1936–1940) who once said: “We made the pact with Stojadinović not Serbia”.⁶

The image of Milan Stojadinović created in the Bulgarian press, primarily in the central pro-government newspaper *Dnes* will be analyzed. Before doing so, I will discuss the following: position of the press in the country, press legislation and the founding and significance of the newspaper *Dnes*. The press was the most powerful tool in the hands of the regimes in Bulgaria in the interwar period. It was the traditional and the most widespread media for informing the masses as well as being the least expensive one. All governments in Bulgaria were well aware that controlling and influencing the press was one of the most important steps towards controlling public opinion. The ruling circles in the country put a lot of effort into controlling the transfer of information in order to control what was to be published in the press. Control was accomplished in various ways from enforcing harsh censorship to resorting to bribery.

The newspaper industry was not as developed in Bulgaria as it was in Western Europe, but it was no less interesting. As illustrated below, one can see the situation at the end of the reviewed period:

250–256; К. Манчев, *Югославия и международните отношения на Балканите 1933–1939*, София, 1989, с. 137–152; Л. Спасов, Цв. Спасова, „Българо- югославският пакт от 24 януари 1937 г. за ‘Нерушим мир и вечно приятелство’“, *ИИВИБА*, 61, 1997, с. 146–157; В. Божинов, „Пакта за ‘Вечно приятелство’ в контекста на българския национален въпрос“, *Токви историје*, 1–2/2008, стр. 38–55; V. Vojinov, „Bulgaria and Yugoslavia on the Eve of the April War“, *Срби и рат у Југославији 1941. године*, Београд, 2014, стр. 189–194.

3 For the latest literature considering Stojadinović one should check anthology *Милан Стојадиновић: политика у време глобалних ломова*, Београд, 2013.

4 М. Stojadinović, *Ni rat, ni pakt*, Rijeka, 1970, стр. 403–408.

5 Божинов, „Пакта за ‘Вечно приятелство’...“, с. 50.

6 Арсов, „Българско-югославският пакт...“, с. 345.

Newspapers and Magazines in Bulgarian in the Second Half of 1930s⁷

Year	Newspapers	Magazines	Total
1936	470	373	843
1937	512	363	875
1938	531	381	912
1939	513	393	906

It is important to note that according to the same statistics, the number of newspapers marked as political was less than 4% (33 in 1936 and barely 22 in 1939). This clearly meant that the regime did not encourage the founding of new political newspapers and as can be seen, some of the already existing newspapers ceased to exist.

Nevertheless, there were several important daily newspapers with a large circulation in Bulgaria during the 1930s and the aforementioned table shows their monthly circulation:

Newspapers in Bulgaria on June 1939⁸

Newspaper	Published	Sold
<i>Utro</i>	2,220,000	1,908,000
<i>Zora</i>	2,172,000	1,904,000
<i>Zarya</i>	735,000	538,000
<i>Dnevnik</i>	661,000	529,000
<i>Dnes</i>	614,000	476,000
<i>Slovo</i>	309,000	240,000
<i>Mir</i>	271,000	197,000

According to the data, we can conclude that in 1939, the key pro-government newspapers *Utro* daily published more than 74.000 copies and *Dnes* more than 20.000 copies.

One of the important events in the development of the press in Bulgaria was the founding of the *Strela* (Arrow) society. It belonged to the Society of Journalists from the Capital (Дружество на столичните журналисти). This society had an exclusive right to distribute journals and periodicals in Sofia and in the provinces. One representative, delegated by the Prime Minister, was a member of the governing body of the society⁹ and this made it easier to spread propaganda to more people in more places. In 1935, the Society had 11.000 subscribers¹⁰ and *Strela* retained its monopolistic position in Bulgaria, even after the Second World War.

One of the characteristics of the Bulgarian press in the 1930s was the small number of journalists employed by the newspapers. The main pro-government

7 Статистически годишник на Българското царство 1939, София, 1940, с. 733.

8 Централен държавен исторически архив [The Central State Historical Archives], (further on in the text CDA), 176k-20-19, Report of *Strela* on 29 July 1939.

9 „Наредба-закон за разпространение на вестниците и периодическите издания“, art. 8, *Държавен вестник*, No. 161, 16. X 1934, с. 2434–2435.

10 CDA, 284k-3-42-30.

papers were *Dnes* and *Utro*, which only had respectively 25 and 18 full time employees. However, the newspaper *Zora* had the largest number of employed journalists 30.¹¹

The Bulgarian press legislation introduced a new registration system for all newspapers which now had to pass a series of inspections prior to distribution and this proved particularly strict. The decree dated 12th June 1934, which had legislative power, ordered that following a period of ten days after its enactment, all newspapers and journals in Bulgaria should be re-registered. A permanent ban was proscribed by the law (Article 2) for those newspapers that would fail to follow this procedure. Editors who attempted to publish newspapers without a permit faced a three year imprisonment term and a fine of 30,000 leva (Article 4).¹²

On 6th April 1938, several decrees were issued on the control of the press. Control was preliminary, which meant that no material could be published before official approval. In order to obtain approval, one would need to provide the following data: name of newspaper, financial sources, name, age, education, birthplace and address of the editor. The eligibility for the position of the editor was precisely prescribed, he had to be a Bulgarian citizen aged 30 or more (for newspapers) and 21 (for magazines), could not be: persons convicted for treason and betrayal, debauchery or corruption, crime against dynasty and for crimes punishable by the "Law for Protection of the State" etc. Sanctions included fines, confiscations and seizures but compared with 1934, there was no imprisonment.¹³ The aim of the ruling class was to financially cripple the power of the opposition press with high fines and taxes. Additional pressure was put on the newspapers by an order dated 15th April 1938, which established supervision and pre-released proofing of all printed materials with a right to ban or stop publication permanently.¹⁴

Soon after the Press Law was passed in Bulgaria in 1934, the first bans on newspapers were imposed and 14 different journals were banned. Four of these were newspapers that supported the communists: *Rabotnik* (Работник, Worker), *Edinstvo* (Единство, Unity), *Zvezda* (Звезда, Star) and *Rabotnicheska Miscal* (Работническа мисъл, Workers' Thought).¹⁵ However, around 120 journals were given permission to be published amongst them were newspapers loyal to the regime as well as some apolitical ones.

At the end of 1935 and beginning of 1936, certain weaknesses in censorship appeared in Bulgaria due to the change of regime and the efforts of the Tsar's circle to find the most appropriate policy for the country. However, after this brief period, press control was strengthened once again and the analysis of the Society of the Capital's Journalists, gives a clear picture of the position the Bulgarian press was in:

1935 – was difficult for journalists due to ongoing censorship, limited employment, unfulfilled promises for terminating censorship; 1936 – partial liberation but only sporadic and unsatisfactory, Kjoseivanov promised less

11 *Ibid.*

12 *Слободата на печата в България*, София, 1992, с. 151.

13 И. Димитров, „Диктатурата и печатът“, *Политическата цензура в България*, Ф. Панаитов (ed.), Варна, 2003, с. 102.

14 Р. Даскалов, *Българското общество 1918-1939*, II, София, 2006, с. 485.

15 *Държавен вестник*, No. 69, 27. VI 1934, с. 1195.

editorial censorship on a few occasions, but instead new, harsher measures against the press were introduced; 1937 – press control regime did not change, it became more strict, not only regarding internal but also external affairs; there was a lack of instructions, no one knew what was permitted and what was not.¹⁶

However, the government did not always succeed in achieving its goals. In 1938, we noted one, not insignificant, victory for the democratic forces in Bulgaria. The Parliament, with a narrow margin, did not vote for loans to be taken in order to buy machines and other equipment for the pro-government newspaper *Dnes*. One of the deputies even said that he would not vote for the newspaper "in the service of propaganda and advocating the aims of the government, with anti-parliamentary and anti-social stance".¹⁷ In this case the remaining opposition was strong enough to block some authoritarian laws, even in Parliament.

In the second half of 1930s, the most influential daily newspapers in the service of state propaganda were: *Dnes* (Днес, Today), *Utro* (Утро, Morning) and *Večer* (Вечер, Evening) and *La Parole Bulgare* (The Bulgarian Word). From 1936–1944, *Dnes* was one of the most important newspapers for state propaganda in Bulgaria. Some of the most notable journalists of the period were its directors like Dino Bozkov (Дино Божков)¹⁸ and the editor in chief Simeon Gruev.¹⁹ The newspaper usually had eight pages, except for the holiday editions which had 12 or sometimes even more. In the first issue of *Dnes*, the main tasks of the newspaper were underscored on the front page:

To start one comprehensive newspaper, which will fill the absence of true and documented facts on state activities and social life in the country and help, in its own way, stabilize life in the country, with the aim of bringing better days to Bulgaria, which has every right to expect them after all its suffering.²⁰

The formulation of helping the country in practice clearly meant helping the government. That was one of the primary tasks of *Dnes* from its beginning until its end. This tendency was clearly stated in 500th issue of the newspaper when in editorial stated that if the government continued with this policy of success in all fields, *Dnes* "would be happy to write about it even in its 5,000th issue".²¹ Later in the 1940s, under Prime Minister Bogdan Filov,²² the newspaper officially became the mouthpiece of the government.

The central part of this paper will focus on the writings of the central Bulgarian pro-government newspaper *Dnes* about the Yugoslav Prime Minister

16 Димитров, „Диктатурата...“, с. 97.

17 *Ibid*, p. 109.

18 Dino Bozkov (1876–1966) – teacher, translator and publisher. He was the author of various publications on religious topics and propagandist of Christian ethics. He was the publisher and director of *Vchera i dnes* (1939–1940) and *Večer* (1939–1940), unofficial newspapers of the Kioseivanov government.

19 Simeon Gruev (1894–1944) – journalist. He worked for several different newspapers like: *Balkanska tribuna*, *Zarya*, *Narod*, *Slovo* and *Makedonia*. Editor in chief of *Vchera i dnes* (1939–1940) and *Dnes* (1939–1940). He disappeared in the first days of communist rule in Bulgaria.

20 *Днес*, No. 1, 3. II 1936, с. 1.

21 *Днес*, No. 500, 30. IX 1937, с. 1.

22 Bogdan Filov (1883–1945) – professor of archeology (1920–1944), dean of University of Sofia (1931–1932) and president of Bulgarian Academy of Science (1937–1944). As a politician, he was Minister of Education (1938–1940), Prime Minister (1940–1943) and regent (1943–1944).

and Minister of Foreign Affairs Milan Stojadinović. The period under review is three years, from the founding of the newspaper in February 1936 to the fall of Stojadinović's government in February 1939, – more than 920 different issues. The general policy of *Dnes* did not differ from other political newspapers in Europe of the time. The main focus was on domestic news and the most important international events. The neighboring countries, such as Yugoslavia, were covered by news that was directly connected with Bulgaria, or indirectly as were the activities of the Balkan Pact and Little Entente. In other cases, only the most important events in the country such as the change of government, the King's birthday and national holidays were reported on the pages of *Dnes*.

Between February 1936 and February 1939 two different phases, can clearly be seen, in the writings of *Dnes* about Yugoslav Prime Minister Stojadinović and I will elaborate that further. In its first months the newspaper printed only a few articles, mostly news on Yugoslavia and its Prime Minister. The only stories that received more attention were the private visit of the Bulgarian monarch Tsar Boris to Belgrade in February and an assassination attempt on Stojadinović in March 1936.²³ The first story was favorable and mostly about the reception the Bulgarian monarch was given in the Yugoslav capital. The second story had more facts without further interpretation – what happened, who were the conspirators and what was the outcome. It is important to mention that during 1936 *Dnes* published several articles on the activity of the opposition parties in Yugoslavia and their stance towards the government. One article reported the speech of Ljubomir Davidović, leader of Democratic Party, who criticized the government using strong language. Furthermore, news about political violence in Croatia was published quite often. Titles like: "Riots in Zagreb", "Two political murders in Croatia" and "Bloodshed in Kerestinac" were published at the end of the March and during April. Those articles did not blame Stojadinović directly but the general impression that Bulgarian readers could get certainly was not good. We should underline that information about government activity was predominant but as mentioned, the activities of the opposition and internal conflicts in the state were also reported.

The change took place at the end of 1936. The two Prime Ministers had several meetings at that time. It is important to mention that all roads from Bulgaria to Western Europe passed through Yugoslavia. In order for the Bulgarian Tsar or Prime Minister to visit that part of Europe he had to pass through Belgrade and that was an opportunity to meet Yugoslav officials. KJoseivanov visited Belgrade on his way back from Geneva in October 1936. Tsar Boris was in Yugoslavia at the beginning of the same year and then again in August. The intentions of the Bulgarian side were made clear in the interview the Prime Minister gave to a Greek newspaper prior to his visit. He stated that basic premises of Bulgarian foreign policy were: "Good relations with the Great powers, friendship with neighbors, especially with Yugoslavia and dedication to the League of Nations".²⁴

Negotiations regarding the future pact continued in November when Stojadinović traveled to Turkey. He met KJoseivanov on the way to Ankara, and

23 On 7th March 1936 member of opposition Damnjan Arnautović (Yugoslav National Party), unsuccessfully tried to kill Stojadinović in Parliament. He and his accomplices were arrested and sentenced.

24 *Днес*, 24. X 1936, c. 2.

then both him and Tsar Boris III on his way back. The Yugoslav Prime Minister received outstanding attention (special train at his disposal, admission to the royal castle in Krichim, hunting with the Tsar at his hunting ground) and the relations between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia became headlines in every newspaper. In *Dnes*, Stojadinović was called: "one of the most educated minds of Yugoslavia", "the greatest friend of Bulgaria", "dearest guest of Bulgaria" and "symbol of rapprochement" between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia and "pillar of two ideas: Peace on Balkans" and "Balkans to the Balkan nations".²⁵ It is true to say that the Yugoslav Prime Minister did not only support the Bulgarian-Yugoslav rapprochement but he actively worked with the Balkan allies to make it possible. Romania and Greece were especially opposed to it at the beginning.²⁶ This visit clearly defined the stance that pro-government newspapers in Bulgaria would take towards Stojadinović and his government in following years. From that moment the Prime Minister of Yugoslavia was seen as a guarantee of good relations between two brotherly nations and possibly a powerful Bulgarian ally in support of its territorial claims towards Romania and Greece.

The most fruitful period for creating Milan Stojadinović's positive image in the Bulgarian press was the celebration of the Pact of Eternal Friendship. Throughout January 1937 articles covering the relations between the two states filled the newspaper. Close to a hundred different articles were published together with many photos of the two country's highest officials. *Dnes* republished not only articles from the Yugoslav and Bulgarian press but also articles from the European press. All of them had one thing in common: they all praised the pact as a significant document for two nations. The pact was presented in the Bulgarian newspapers as an achievement of the greatest importance, not only for the Balkans but also for entire Europe. It was underlined that the idea came from the late Yugoslav king Alexander and the Bulgarian Tsar Boris III and that it was developed and concluded by the current Prime Ministers. The pact was described as "the best possible Christmas gift", "historical act", "most important event in the history of both states", "first light of new Slavic life" etc. Similar coverage was given to the celebrations of the first and second anniversary in 1938 and 1939.

Beyond any doubt, Stojadinović's portraits and photos helped create his positive image in *Dnes*. During the three years under review more than a dozen different profile photographs were published and on each of them the Yugoslav Prime Minister looked powerful and determined. Special prominence was given to photos taken by photographers of *Dnes* during Stojadinović meetings with Bulgarian officials, both at home and abroad. The most interesting were the ones where he was shown walking hand in hand with Kjosievanov and those of cordial greetings at farewells. It was underlined that two prime ministers had been friends even before they became heads of governments. The friendship was dated as going back to the time when Kjosievanov was Bulgarian ambassador in Belgrade (1933–1934).

An exceptional event was the statue of Stojadinović made by the Bulgarian artist Kiril Todorov. The newspapers published a photo of Todorov and Stojadinović beside the statue. In the following interview the Bulgarian artist praised the

25 *Днес*, 3. XI 1936, с. 2.

26 Avramovski, *Balkanska Antanta*, str. 253–256.

Prime Minister as a man “with passion for culture” and as a person who already owned “many great works by Yugoslav and European artist”.²⁷ It is not without importance that the statue of Stojadinović was made during the election campaign in Yugoslavia and that it was used for domestic propaganda purposes. The photos and the story were first published by one of the most important newspapers in Yugoslavia, *Vreme*, practically owned by Stojadinović family. The Prime Minister himself took a personal interest in that specific newspaper and considered it to represent a model newspaper.²⁸

Dnes cooperated with the Yugoslav pro-government press. The celebration of the first anniversary of the Pact of Eternal Friendship on 24th January 1938 is an important example of this cooperation. A special issue of the newspaper on 8 pages was published dealing with Yugoslav-Bulgarian relations, plus articles on the development of Yugoslavia and achievements of Stojadinović’s government. Clearly most of the material was prepared in Belgrade and only translated into Bulgarian. Re-publishing articles taken from Stojadinović’s main propaganda newspapers *Samouprava* and *Vreme* was a frequent form of cooperation between the two newspapers. A good example is: *Dnes* re-published in its issue of 16th August and in the following days most of the special edition articles printed in *Samouprava* published in August 1938 that dealt with Yugoslav-Bulgarian relations. Some Belgrade newspapers were designated as the official voice of the ruling party and government. On the other hand, some articles from *Dnes* were re-published in the pro-government press in Yugoslavia. Furthermore, *Dnes* was cleared by the Yugoslav Central Press Bureau for free import and trade within the country.²⁹

An example of how strong the support of *Dnes* to Stojadinović and his government was, can be seen in its coverage of the Concordat crisis in Yugoslavia during the summer of 1937. The Concordat was signed in 1935 as one of the first acts after Stojadinović took office in June 1935. The agreement with the Catholic Church was prepared by the previous government but the new Prime Minister acted on it, although he delayed submitting it to parliament for ratification for two years. It was strongly opposed by the Serbian Orthodox Church and diverse opposition circles, spanning from the right to the extreme left that led to demonstrations, conflicts and finally to the withdrawal and renunciation of the Concordat.³⁰ Considering the dimensions of the crisis in Yugoslavia at the moment, *Dnes* printed only few articles in those two months. On the 1st July *Dnes* reported that Stojadinović had visited the seriously ill Patriarch Varnava and that they had talked about the Concordat. On 7th July they re-published an article from *The Times* that said that the position of the Serbian Orthodox Church

27 *Днес*, 18. X 1938, с. 8.

28 About Stojadinović relation towards *Vreme* see: М. Јовановић Стоимировић, *Дневник 1936–1941*, Нови Сад, 2000, стр. 404–408.

29 Archive of Yugoslavia (AY), Collection of Central Press Bureau (38), box 88. See also: Б. Симић, *Пропаганда Милана Стојадиновића* [Milan Stojadinović’s Propaganda], Београд, 2007, стр. 91.

30 More about Concordat crisis in Yugoslavia from various literature see: М. Мишовић, *Srpska crkva i Konkordatska kriza*, Београд, 1983; Р. Радић, *Живот у временима: Гаврило Дожич 1881–1950*, Београд, 2006, стр. 156–186.

towards the Concordat was irreconcilable. The same article claimed that the government in Belgrade had made concessions to the Catholic Church but asked in return that it stopped supporting the Croatian Peasant Party.³¹ That was the only neutral article on that issue. When riots broke out *Dnes* not surprisingly chose to support the Yugoslav Prime Minister. The newspaper completely ignored violent street protests that took place on 19th July in Belgrade, later called "Bloody Liturgy (*Krvava litija*)" because a few priests had been injured. The only published articles dealt with the illness and death of Patriarch Varnava. Theories about him being poisoned, popular with the Yugoslav opposition, were never mentioned.

The following month *Dnes* continued to defend Stojadinović. Several articles criticizing the Serbian Orthodox Church and the opposition were published. The decision of Holy Synod to excommunicate the Prime Minister and all Orthodox members of Parliament who had voted for the Concordat was seen "not only as illegal but as a severe violation of both the state and Serbian Orthodox Church constitutions".³² Another article by the *Dnes* correspondent from Belgrade analyzing the situation concluded that "The Serbian Orthodox Church strayed away from its old and traditional tasks. Nowadays it is under political influence and everything it does is connected to politics".³³ Obviously the correspondent was not only influenced by Belgrade's government propaganda but also expressed the already established position of his editorial board in Sofia. Thus the Concordat crisis was summarized in 6th October issue by saying: "Stojadinović's position has just become stronger after the Concordat crisis".³⁴

The following two articles are the most interesting from the propagandistic point of view. The first one was titled "Mr. and Mrs. Stojadinović at Home", published in July 1937 and the second "50th Birthday of Milan Stojadinović" from August 1938. Both are examples of a more personal approach to the Yugoslav Prime Minister. In the first one, the Yugoslav Prime Minister and his wife were presented as "highly cultured people" who had "impeccable taste". It was an unorthodox interview in which the husband and wife talked about gardening, free time activities, favorite literature and the place of women and children in the society. It is interesting to note that Mrs. Stojadinović underlined that a woman's place was "first and foremost in the home".³⁵ The text was illustrated with four different photographs of the spouses in their garden. The second article was a brief biography of Stojadinović and a retrospective of his political career. The tone of the article was very positive and the politics of the Yugoslav Prime Minister were glorified. The article on his birthday was illustrated by a photograph of Stojadinović reading in his cabinet. A similar approach can be seen in the two photographs of Stojadinović taken during his vacation at St Moritz (published on 16th January 1937), one of him wearing a ski suit and the other a photo of his wife and daughter (13th February 1937).

31 *Днес*, 7. VII 1937, с. 2.

32 *Днес*, 16. VIII 1937, с. 3.

33 *Днес*, 18. VIII 1937, с. 2.

34 *Днес*, 16. X 1937, с. 1.

35 *Днес*, 23. VII 1937, с. 6.

It has been said that a picture is worth a thousand words. This is true in the case of image of Milan Stojadinović created in *Dnes*. After the elections in Yugoslavia a caricature was published that clearly backs this up. We can see two peasants, a Bulgarian and a Serbian one watching the plant that represented the Pact of Eternal Friendship which was covered by white ballots cast for Stojadinović. They both happily concluded: "While there is snow like that there is no fear for our plant".³⁶ Once again, in form of caricature, *Dnes* affirmed the constructed image of Stojadinović as the greatest friend of the Bulgarian people and defender of the pact between two states. The author was a regular artist of *Dnes* who signed himself as K. Kamenov.

The image of Stojadinović was constructed even through short stories. One of them is especially interesting. While traveling through Bulgaria the Yugoslav Prime Minister saw a Bulgarian peasant in a beautiful handmade white jacket. Stojadinović asked him how much he would ask for the jacket. Peasant said 120 levas. He was given 500 instead. The scene ended with the happy Bulgarian peasant blessing the Yugoslav Prime Minister.³⁷ This *Dnes* article, illustrated by photos taken on the spot, made Stojadinović looks both noble and generous.

Occasionally *Dnes* offered its readers to judge for themselves the results achieved by Stojadinović and his government. One such occasion was the exhibition of *Italian Portrait through Centuries* that was held in Belgrade from 28th March until 9th May of 1938.³⁸ The newspaper published the advert that offered train tickets to the Yugoslav capital from 17 different Bulgarian cities.³⁹ It was described as "one pleasant and useful trip" but also an opportunity to see what the Yugoslav government had achieved in last few years.⁴⁰ The advert was published in different issues.

There were no signs that things would change any time soon. After the election and Stojadinović's victory with a narrow margin, *Dnes* continued to write positively about the situation in Yugoslavia concluding that the Prime Minister had everything under control.⁴¹ The first comments were that "Stojadinović's election victory opens an even brighter page of good relations, cordial friendship, peaceful and cultural cooperation in the interest of two brotherly nations".⁴²

The change of government that took place in February 1939 in Belgrade was unexpected for the editorial of *Dnes* and its readers. It is clear from the first mentioned demission of Stojadinović that it was unwanted. It covered his meeting with the Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs on the day of his resignation

36 *Dnes*, 15. XII 1938, c. 8.

37 *Dnes*, 2. III 1938, c. 3.

38 L. Carletti, C. Giometti, "Un altro sfallo del 1938': La Mostra del Ritratto Italiano nei secoli a Belgrado", *Atti dell'Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arte*, Tomo CLXVIII (2009–2010), pp. 257–290; B. Simić, „Izložba 'Italijanski portret kroz vekove' u Beogradu 28. mart – 9. maj 1938", *Istorija 20. veka*, 1/2013, str. 23–34.

39 The cheapest one was from Sofia 368 levas and the most expensive one was from Burgas, total 689 levas.

40 *Dnes*, 26. IV 1938, c. 5.

41 Stojadinović's list claimed around 54% while list made of Croatian and Serbian opposition parties claimed 45% of total votes.

42 *Dnes*, 12. XII 1938, c. 1.

expressing no doubt in Stojadinović's long lasting presidency. However, the next day they published the names of the new ministers and the first statement of the new Prime Minister Cvetković. Only after some time did *Dnes* publish its final judgment of Stojadinović and his work. In the editorial article entitled "Government Change in Yugoslavia", the former Prime Minister was described as "careful and competent statesman with a vision, who resolved many internal problems and had significant success in foreign policy". In addition, the following was written:

For us, Bulgarians, Stojadinović's time in office will be remembered as the period of greatest cooperation and most fruitful for the relations of two countries. During his government the foundations were laid that led to the Pact of Eternal Friendship between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. (...) The greatest merit for that fortunate act of brotherly cooperation goes to the two Prime Ministers to whom both states will forever be grateful.⁴³

The author of the article concluded that the next government should continue to follow that policy for the greater good of two nations. In following days *Dnes* published several articles that quoted the statement of the new Yugoslav government that the foreign policy of the country would remain unchanged. One article even claimed that Milan Stojadinović would support his successor.⁴⁴ Those articles were a combination of official Yugoslav statements and Bulgarian newspaper editorial's wishes. Generally, in the months that followed, *Dnes* did not change its stance towards Yugoslavia after Stojadinović's fall from power. However, it did not express the same level of positive language and enthusiasm as it did in the previous period.

Резиме

Др Бојан Симић

„Највећи пријатељ Бугарске” – Милан Стојадиновић у бугарском листу *Днес*

Кључне речи: Милан Стојадиновић, Бугарска, штампа, *Днес*, пропаганда

У раду се анализира писање бугарског централног провладиног листа *Днес* о председнику владе и министру спољних послова Југославије Милану Стојадиновићу од фебруара 1936. до фебруара 1939. године. У овом периоду јасно разликујемо две фазе. Прва, која траје до новембра 1936. и постизања договора о Пакту о вечном пријатељству, потписаном у јануару наредне године, и друга, до краја наведеног периода. У почетној фази, поред текстова о активности југословенске владе и њеног председника, можемо наћи и текстове посвећене активностима опозиције, као и чланке који критикује одређене аспекте друштвеног живота у Југославији.

43 *Днес*, 7. II 1938, с. 1.

44 *Днес*, 14. II 1939, article entitled „Stojadinovic will give support to the new government”. The article was written by *Dnes* correspondent from Belgrade.

Друга фаза, након постизања споразума о пакту, а нарочито након његовог потписивања, одликује се афирмативним и позитивним извештавањима о Југославији, пре свега о самом Стојадиновићу. Схваћен као гарант спровођења споразума од којег је бугарска страна очекивала вишеструке користи, председник југословенске владе приказиван је као далековид државник и способан политичар који води своју земљу путем мира и благостања. Посебно је истицано његово пријатељство са бугарским премијером Кјосеивановим и благонакланост према Бугарској. С друге стране, вести о делатности опозиције у Југославији сведене су на минимум, а у неким осетљивим ситуацијама, као што је била конкордатска криза током лета 1937, њена активност била је потпуно игнорисана. *Днес* је чак објављивао чланке које му је прослеђивала режимска штампа из Београда, који су били потпуно на страни владе и њене политике.

Пад Стојадиновића фебруара 1939. *Днес* је дочекао са изненађењем и жаљењем. Након почетног ћутања, закључено је да би нова владала требало да настави путем који је заједно са бугарским премијером утабао управо Стојадиновић. И у наредном периоду централни провладин лист у Бугарској наставио је са позитивним текстовима о Југославији и њеној влади али не у толикој мери и обиму као до тада.