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## War, Occupation, and Infrastructural Planning: The Serbian Civil Plan 1941-1944

### Basic Principles of the German Occupation and Collaborationist Government in Serbia

After the military collapse of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in the April War of 1941, a German occupation administration was formed in the area of central Serbia, Banat, and northern Kosovo under the leadership of the Military Commander of Serbia (Militärbefehlshaber in Serbien).<sup>1</sup> The defeat in the April War, the disintegration of the Yugoslav state, and the persecution and suffering of the Serbian population in other territories of the former Yugoslav state had a strong impact on the spirit of the population in occupied Serbia. These circumstances, together with the German attack on the Soviet Union, led to the formation of the resistance movements and the outbreak of the uprising during the summer and autumn of 1941. At one point, the uprising affected almost one third of occupied Serbia with about one million inhabitants, but the Germans suppressed it with brutal punitive measures under which, according to some estimates, around 30,000 inhabitants were killed.<sup>2</sup>

Due to the outbreak of the uprising, in order to strengthen the power of the collaborationist authorities, the government of General Milan Nedić was formed. Although they had different political views, the common attitudes of the supporters of this government were anti-communism, fear for national existence, belief in a coming Nazi victory and the need to side with the winning side. Based on these views, the collaborationists tried, on the one hand, to strengthen their foothold among the population, and on the other hand, to gain greater powers from the occupiers.<sup>3</sup> The government of Milan Nedić vainly wished for a more

<sup>1</sup> Muharem Kreso, *Njemačka okupaciona uprava u Beogradu 1941–1942. Sa osvrtom na centralne okupacione komande i ustanove za Srbiju, Jugoslaviju i Balkan* (Beograd: Istorijski arhiv Beograda, 1979), 70.

<sup>2</sup> Немања Девић, *Партизани у Србији 1941. Ослободилачки или револуционарни рат?* (Београд: Институт за савремену историју, 2021), 142, 303.

<sup>3</sup> Љубинка Шкодрић, “Однос немачког окупатора према домаћим сарадницима у Србији 1941–1944”, in Александар Животић (Ed.), *Ослобођење Београда 1944* (Београд: Институт за новију историју Србије, 2010), 82–94.

favorable status in the Nazi “New Order”, territorial expansion, and a place for Serbia in the Nazi New Europe.<sup>4</sup> These collaborationist plans were not supported by the German authorities, and similar proposals in France and the Netherlands had the same fate.<sup>5</sup> German occupation authorities were mainly interested in the traffic importance of occupied Serbia and its exploitation in terms of labor force, agricultural products, and mineral resources.<sup>6</sup> According to their views, the collaborationist administration had primarily the role of ensuring the peaceful and successful realization of these aspirations.

During 1942, the government of Milan Nedić, encouraged by the collapse of the uprising and the temporary suppression of the resistance movements, and also by the presence of German forces on the fronts, began to design plans and programs of national revival and reconstruction through which Serbia would be included in the Nazi “New Order”. Due to the failure in early 1943 to obtain approval from the German authorities for the organization of a Serbian peasants’ cooperative state,<sup>7</sup> finding other ways to realize this program became even more important. Representatives of the Ministry of Education were active in cooperation on the development of government projects, and the leading figures of this department also worked on the reform of the education system. In parallel with the development of the proposal on the formation of the Serbian peasants’ cooperative state, the Serbian Civil Plan was developed within the Ministry of Education, and was aimed at the development of Serbian society and the state, and the construction of its institutions and infrastructure. It was a characteristic attempt to plan and reorganize the existing infrastructure in wartime conditions.

The Serbian Civil Plan has so far been discussed and analyzed in the works of several scholars (Aleksandar Stojanović, Ljubica Kandić, Branko Petranović, Zlatija Vujanović, Danilo Kilibarda),<sup>8</sup> and special collections of

<sup>4</sup> Бранко Петрановић, “Политичке снаге Србије 1941. и њихове поделе”, *Историјски гласник* 1–2 (1990–1992), 78.

<sup>5</sup> Tim Kirk, “Nazi plans for a new European order and European responses”, in Johannes Dalfinger, Dieter Pohl (Eds.), *A New Nationalist Europe Under Hitler. Concepts of Europe and Transnational Networks in the National Socialist Sphere of Influence, 1933–1945* (New York: Routledge, 2019), 78.

<sup>6</sup> Dušan Lukač, *Treći Rajh i zemlje Jugoistočne Evrope, 1933–1936*, I (Beograd: Vojnoizdavački zavod, 1982), 279.

<sup>7</sup> For more details: Zoran Janjetović, *Collaboration and Fascism Under the Nedić Regime* (Beograd: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 2018), 441–484.

<sup>8</sup> At the time of its creation, and later by some researchers, the name Serbian Cultural Plan was used in addition to the name Serbian Civil Plan, sometimes even both terms coexisted at the same time. In this paper, the name Serbian Civil Plan is used, considering that it features in its key documents and that it has been used by most of the authors who have studied it. This topic was covered in the most detail by Александар Стојановић, *Идеје, политички пројекти и пракса владе Милана Недића* (Београд: Институт за новију историју Србије, 2015); Id., “Srpski civilni/kulturni plan. Geneza i prilog proučavanju”, *Istorija 20. veka* 1 (2012), 89–108; Id., “Историја и историографија у Српском цивилном/културном плану”, *Токови историје* 2 (2012), 112–134; Id., “Пројекат индустријализације земље по Српском цивилном-културном плану 1942–1944”, *Токови историје* 3 (2010), 55–73. This topic was discussed, among others, in the following works: Љубица Кандић, *Историја Правног факултета у*

documents dedicated to this topic have been published.<sup>9</sup> In this paper, the emphasis is on seeing this phenomenon as an attempt to change the infrastructure based on the concept of “path dependence”. Infrastructure is viewed as a broad framework of systems and services that enable the functioning of the economy and society, i.e., as everything that is needed to enable social activities and humane conditions for life.<sup>10</sup> Infrastructure is therefore not just a built system, but a social, cultural, and political achievement, and the main element of the development of a society. It also has political meaning as it symbolizes ways of building trust and achieving modernization. Using the concept of path dependence, which is based on the idea that decisions made in the past persist and determine the further development of institutions, we have endeavored to study the mechanisms that lead to changes in this process and to the planning and construction of new institutions.<sup>11</sup> Attempts to redirect or change the development of institutions often encounter obstacles due to the fact that existing institutions tend to be inert, and the choices made at the time of their planning and construction have an impact on their future development.<sup>12</sup> This inertia of institutions is an obstacle to their functioning and development since, except in crisis conditions, it is difficult to bring about change to their modus operandi once it has been established. During periods of crisis a particular arrangement is adopted, and when that option is chosen it becomes much more difficult to return to the starting point when there were more alternatives. In such conditions, the institutional system is more fluid as ways to get out of the crisis are sought, and after that the established system functions until a new crisis emerges.<sup>13</sup> Mainly, two mechanisms of change can be seen — the first one comes into effect when the benefits given to some groups by certain institutions are reduced, and those groups decide to act and change the institutions; the second comes into effect when new groups arise and establish institutions that will ensure the dominance of their views.<sup>14</sup> The main factors of change are the groups that try to change society and create a new social concept, thus providing the dynamics and goal of the change. In addition, according to the

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*Београду*, III, 1941–1945 (Београд: Завод за уџбенике и наставна средства, 2005); Branko Petranović, *Srbija u Drugom svetskom ratu 1939–1945* (Београд: Vojnoizdavački i novinski centar, 1992); Danilo Kilibarda, “Prosvetno-kulturna politika u Srbiji za vreme II svetskog rata” (doktorska disertacija, Univerzitet u Београду, Факултет политичких наука, 1984); Zlatija Vujanović, “Prosvetna politika u okupiranoj Srbiji 1941–1944” (magistarski rad, Univerzitet u Београду, 1979).

<sup>9</sup> Александар Стојановић (Ed.), *Српски цивилни/културни план владе Милана Недића* (Београд: Институт за новију историју Србије, 2012).

<sup>10</sup> Dirk van Laak, “Infrastructures”, *Docupedia-Zeitgeschichte*, 20.05.2021; [https://docupedia.de/zg/Laak\\_infrastructures\\_v1\\_en\\_2021](https://docupedia.de/zg/Laak_infrastructures_v1_en_2021).

<sup>11</sup> Georg Schreyögg, Jörg Sydow, “Understanding Institutional and Organizational Path Dependences”, in Id. (Eds.), *The Hidden Dynamics of Path Dependence. Institutions and Organizations* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 4.

<sup>12</sup> Ian Greener, “The Potential of Path Dependence in Political Studies”, *Politics* 25:1 (2005), 62.

<sup>13</sup> Dan Breznitz, “Slippery Path of (Mis)Understanding? Historically Based Explanations in Social Science”, in Georg Schreyögg, Jörg Sydow (Eds.), *The Hidden Dynamics of Path Dependence. Institutions and Organizations* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 17.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* 19.

typology of James Mahoney, increased competitive pressures and learning processes, external influences that affect the transformation of the system's needs, the weakening of elites and the strengthening of subordinate groups, as well as changes in the values and personal beliefs of the participants can be observed as mechanisms of change.<sup>15</sup> The Serbian Civil Plan is observed in this paper through a lens that takes into account mechanisms of change such as the weakening of elites and the strengthening of subordinate groups, as well as changes in the values and personal beliefs of the participants.

### The Ministry of Education in Occupied Serbia

The main actor in the design and creation of the Serbian Civil Plan was the Ministry of Education in occupied Serbia, whose leaders, as well as numerous officials, played a leading role in this work. Within the collaborationist administration, the Ministry of Education had the task of organizing the school system and managing the work of schools and teachers. Although during the occupation there was an expansion in the scope of work and organization of this Ministry, the basic characteristics of the inherited system of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia such as centralization, control, and conducting of cultural and educational policy were not abandoned.<sup>16</sup>

Attempts to find respectable persons with more moderate but significantly anti-communist attitudes to head of the Ministry of Education failed due to candidates' milquetoast attitudes in dealing with communism and the Yugoslav legacy in schools. Velibor Jonić,<sup>17</sup> as Minister and Vladimir Velmar-Janković,<sup>18</sup> in the capacity of Assistant Minister, were at the head of this department for most of the occupation. Neither of them, like most of the other leaders in the Ministry of Education, was imposed on this institution from the outside, but had been previously employed and active in the institutions of this department. Both had been elected and appointed to leadership positions as supporters of the policy of cooperation with the occupier. In addition, their political and public lives were filled with controversy and political extremes that culminated in a turn to the political

<sup>15</sup> James Mahoney, "Path dependence in Historical Sociology", *Theory and Society* 29:4 (2000), 517.

<sup>16</sup> For more details: Љубинка Шкодрић, *Министарство просвете и вера у Србију 1941–1944. Судбина институције под окупацијом* (Београд: Архив Србије, 2009).

<sup>17</sup> Velibor Jonić (1892–1946) was a professor at the Military Academy, secretary of the National Defense Association and editor of its magazine, taught Crown Prince Petar II Karađorđević German, translated English literature and was the founder of the publishing and educational cooperative "Iproz". Ibid. 168f.

<sup>18</sup> Vladimir Velmar-Janković (1895–1976) was before the war the head of the Art Department of the Ministry of Education and a prominent writer, author of several plays ("Happiness a.d." [Sr. "Sreća a.d."], "The New" [Sr. "Novi"], "State Enemy No. 3" [Sr. "Državni neprijatelj br. 3"]), short stories ("Boy from Una" [Sr. "Dečak sa Une"]) and the novel ("Ivan Mandušin" [Sr. "Ivan Mandušin"]), as well as the essay "View from Kalemegdan" [Sr. "Pogled sa Kalemegdana"]. Ibid. 173–175.

right wing and fascism. Minister Jonić, as well as Assistant Minister Velmar-Janković, were members of the extreme right-wing movement inclined to fascism — the Yugoslav People's Movement Zbor, with which they parted ways though they retained the same ideological views.<sup>19</sup> During the occupation, they managed an educational reform whose basic principles were based on conservative and patriarchal attitudes. They advocated national and moral transformation based on folk traditions and the rejection of foreign, primarily Western European, cultural influences.<sup>20</sup>

Among the first measures undertaken in order to reform the educational policy was the reform of the University of Belgrade. Despite the resistance offered by university professors, the reform was implemented by the end of 1941 and the University's autonomy was abolished. The previous employment of all university professors was suspended and their re-engagement was to be decided by the Minister of Education based on the political suitability of the university professors and their support for the new authorities.<sup>21</sup>

The reorganization of the Main Education Council as the supreme advisory body in the domain of educational policy was carried out on the basis of ideas about the corporate system and the organization of the class state.<sup>22</sup> The Decree on the Main Education Council, dated May 1942,<sup>23</sup> provided that this body would consist of the Great Education Council as well as working committees that would be in charge of a more detailed elaboration of the principal guidelines adopted by the Great Education Council. Representatives of the education profession became a minority in the composition of the Great Education Council, as it also included representatives of the Serbian Orthodox Church; trade, craft, labor, and cooperative chambers; and various institutes, associations, and organizations — not to mention representatives of the government and the National Service for the Reconstruction of Serbia.<sup>24</sup>

The reform of the University and the Main Education Council changed the organization of these bodies, and they were subordinated to the supreme educational authorities. Persons who could resist the changes were suppressed, and

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<sup>19</sup> On the fascist characteristics of the Zbor movement, see in more detail: Растко Ломпар, *Димитрије Љотић. Учитељ или фарисеј, Збор, хришћанство и верске заједнице 1935–1945* (Београд: Catena mundi, 2021), 37–72.

<sup>20</sup> Љубинка Шкодрић, Драгомир Бонцић, “‘Света кућа васколиког српског народа’ или ‘храм наше националне просвете’. Београдски универзитет у колаборационистичкој штампи 1941–1944”, in Александар Стојановић (Ed.), *Колаборационистичка штампа у Србији 1941–1944* (Београд: Филип Вишњић, 2015), 237–254.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.* 244.

<sup>22</sup> Velibor Jonić's idea was that the Main Education Council should consist of “representatives of all classes, corporations, high educational and scientific institutions”. *Министар просвете говори...* (Београд: с.п., 1941), 22–23.

<sup>23</sup> “Уредба о Главном просветном савету”, *Службене новине*, 15.5.1942, 6.

<sup>24</sup> The number of members of the Great Education Council was doubled compared to the pre-war composition of the Main Education Council and totaled 70 members, of which only 22 were educators. Владета Тешић и др., *Сто година Просветног савета Србије 1880–1980* (Београд: Завод за уџбенике и наставна средства, Просветни савет Социјалистичке Републике Србије, 1980), 140.

persons with moderate views or inclined to cooperate with the occupier were brought to the fore. Despite this, no radical changes were made: a large part of the staff remained the same, and only a redistribution of power was carried out, according to which the most prominent functionaries either found themselves in leading roles or were suppressed. The largest portion of the staff, however, was made up of those who did not stand out, those who avoided public involvement and assumed a passive role.<sup>25</sup> This did not allow for the radical changes necessary to transform the work of institutions and initiate mechanisms of change. Although the elites were somewhat weakened, they were not completely suppressed: only the most prominent among them were, while the majority kept aloof. At the same time, there were no changes in the systems of values and personal beliefs of the participants in these processes.

### Basic Starting Points of the Serbian Civil Plan

Based on the Regulation on the Main Education Council,<sup>26</sup> and the Regulation on the Organization of the Ministry of Education<sup>27</sup> the preparation of the Serbian Civil Plan was entrusted to the Assistant Minister of Education Vladimir Velmar-Janković. He expressed the basic ideas underpinning the need to create such a plan in the works he had produced during the interwar period, and he began pursuing that end from the beginning of the occupation.<sup>28</sup> In December 1942, he took the first concrete steps at a meeting with representatives of Belgrade University, the Serbian Royal Academy, and other cultural and literary institutions. On that occasion, he presented the idea that it was necessary to ascertain the details in certain sectors of the people's lives and, based on those determinations, create a plan for the cooperation of all cultural factors to solve the problems in all sectors.<sup>29</sup> A Working Committee was also formed, which had the role of starting work on the Serbian Civil Plan.

In the spring of 1943, the Working Committee drafted the first and second editions of the Serbian Civil Plan based on reports compiled by university professors. On the basis of this material, Vladimir Velmar-Janković developed the *Preparatory Work for the Serbian Civil Plan [Sr. Predradnje za Srpski civilni plan]*, as well as an explanation of the plan in the framework of two studies:

<sup>25</sup> Dragomir Bondžić, “Serbian intellectual elite in 1941”, in Predrag J. Marković, Bojan B. Dimitrijević (Eds.), *Repeating history 1941/1991? Two break-ups of Yugoslavia as repeated history? Serbian perspectives* (Belgrade: Institute for Contemporary History, 2021), 188.

<sup>26</sup> “Уредба о Главном просветном савету”, *Службене новине*, 15.5.1942, 6.

<sup>27</sup> “Уредба о уређењу Министарства просвете и вера”, *Службене новине*, 9.2.1943, 1.

<sup>28</sup> In Velmar-Janković’s essay *View from Kalemegdan*, there is a chapter “Planned and own”, where he emphasized that the Belgrade man strove for an ordered and directed planned life that would be built on the foundations of justice and freedom and devoid of party influences. He even believed that sympathy for fascism and communism also stemmed from the planned characteristics of these ideologies. Владимир Велмар-Јанковић, *Поглед с Калемегдана. Оглед о београдском човеку* (Београд: Дерета, Библиотека града Београда, 2002), 130.

<sup>29</sup> Military Archives (Vojni arhiv, VA), Nedićeva arhiva (Nda), 35-2-31.

*Starting Points for the State Education Plan within the Serbian Civil Plan [Sr. Polazne tačke za državni prosvetni plan u okviru Srpskog civilnog plana]* and *Paths of Serbian Self-reliance. Considerations with the Serbian Civil Plan [Sr. Putevi srpskog samosnalaženja. Razmatranja uz Srpski civini plan]*. According to Vladimir Velmar-Janković's understanding as expressed in these writings, Serbian life was divided into two "potentials" — the war potential and the civilian potential. The civilian potential would have to be organized within the Serbian Civil Plan, and its problems were classified into four national groups — biological, spiritual, economic, and technical.<sup>30</sup>

The motives for the creation of the Serbian Civil Plan can be seen as a reaction to the interwar crisis and to the military defeat of the Yugoslav state, with all of its attendant consequences, and an attempt to review the previous Yugoslav experience on that basis. When considering the national experience after the First World War, Velmar-Janković pointed out that the Serbian people showed a strong war potential in the past, but that they did not show organizational skills and develop their civilian potential. This is why during peacetime they lost the assets they had gained during the war due to their disorganization and disorientation. Based on these observations, he wanted to create a plan that would ensure national development under the circumstances of an unfavorable geopolitical position. This can also be seen as an attempt to adapt to the German occupation and to be included in the new Nazi Europe, whose success at the time seemed unassailable. Bearing in mind the strong anti-fascism of the population and the experience of the uprising in 1941, Velmar-Janković gave priority to rationality and planning, which he justified by the fact that one could not expect to navigate the European political situation on the basis of feelings alone: one had to approach with a judicious attitude of planned construction instead.<sup>31</sup>

Vladimir Velmar-Janković's presentations and views were dominated by the idea that the Serbian people needed independent national development and a cultural renewal devoid of foreign influences, since in the Yugoslav state the Serbian people did not cope well and their interests were neglected.<sup>32</sup> In order to restore Serbian statehood, he believed that it was necessary to organize and strengthen the national, spiritual, and material powers of the Serbian people and thereby prove that they were capable of managing their own affairs. The basic assumptions upon which the plan was based were that the Serbian people wanted to keep their national foundations grounded on Christianity, Orthodoxy, the spiritual path of St. Sava and the patriarchal understanding of family and social relations. He believed that due to the current circumstances, national development

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<sup>30</sup> Miodrag Zečević, Jovan P. Popović (Eds.), *Dokumenti iz istorije Jugoslavije, II. Državna komisija za utvrđivanje zločina okupatora i njihovih pomagača iz Drugog svetskog rata* (Beograd: Arhiv Jugoslavije, 1998), 123f.

<sup>31</sup> After the Second World War, the practice of planned construction in Yugoslavia was introduced by the communist authorities, following the example of the Soviet Union in creating five-year development plans. Branko Petranović, *Istorija Jugoslavije III, Socijalistička Jugoslavija 1945–1988* (Beograd: Nolit, 1989).

<sup>32</sup> VA-Nda, 35-2-4. "Polazne tačke za državni prosvetni plan u okviru Srpskog civilnog plana".

would have to be planned without the use of armed force and that therefore strict self-discipline and organization were necessary.<sup>33</sup> From the beginning, he tried to suppress potential objections that times of war and occupation were not suitable periods for this kind of undertaking and argued that the plan should present a working basis for a longer period that would extend through times of both war and peace.

Velmar-Janković pointed out that the Serbian Civil Plan had both foreign and domestic political significance. In terms of foreign policy, and in accordance with the collaborationist aspirations of creating a New Serbia within the Nazi “New Order”, it would enable the formation of an organized nation that would have authority and make a constructive contribution to the Balkan, European and world community.<sup>34</sup> On the other hand, at the level of internal politics, the Plan was supposed to become an instrument of individual management, since it was expected to direct the life of each individual from family and schooling to public life, and assign those individuals a specific place in society from birth to death.<sup>35</sup> The plan was supposed to implement the division of the population into those who were “nationally active and constructive” and those who were “parasites and non-national” and avoided submitting to it.

In Velmar-Janković's opinion, it was necessary to effect a reconstruction of Serbian national life, with radical regrouping and concentration of forces that could act through creation rather than political methods, which essentially meant agreeing to the policy of collaborationism. Although he himself considered that “changes are very difficult, but not impossible”, he emphasized that changes were necessary for the survival of the community and that it was therefore necessary to reduce the whole of life “to much simpler and tighter forms”. To that end, he expected Serbian people to become more resilient and responsible, and to renounce material pretensions and personal enjoyment.<sup>36</sup>

Because it was completely new, efforts were made to strengthen its legitimacy by a connection with the goals of the national revolution started by the First Serbian Uprising in 1804.<sup>37</sup> Similar ideas were also attributed to the Serbian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ilija Garašanin, during the creation of *Načertanije* as a foreign and national policy program in the middle of the 19th century, although he was not focused on organizing institutions and

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> VA-Nda, 35-2-5. “Putevi srpskog samosnalaženja. Razmatranja uz Srpski civilni plan”. The original of this text is slightly more extensive than the version published in *Educational newsletter [Sr. Prosvetni glasnik]* (No. 11–12, 1943, 397–415). The unpublished parts mainly refer to the negative experience of Yugoslav unification and the appeals to stop trying to create a state union with Croatia.

<sup>36</sup> He pointed out that this would bring up generations “who will not live from flashy glory and shining heroism, but will turn their sweaty and stressful hard work into their stylish walk-through history”. Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> The creators of the Serbian Civil Plan referred to the fact that similar ideas were expressed at the time of the First Serbian Uprising by the educator and founder of the Great School, Dositej Obradović, and the Metropolitan of Karlovac, Stevan Stratimirović.



building infrastructure.<sup>38</sup> On the other hand, some authors who studied this subject believed that the roots of the Serbian Civil Plan could be found in the activities of the pre-war Serbian Cultural Club, given that its members included Velibor Jonić and Vladimir Velmar-Janković and that the establishment and activities of the Club were based on the idea of Serbian national vulnerability.<sup>39</sup>

The Serbian Civil Plan was not intended to destroy the inherited institutional infrastructure, but to upgrade it and make it more efficient. According to the creators of the Serbian Civil Plan, the previous lack of a plan for the development of society and the construction of its institutions was one of the main causes of the negative experiences in the past, as it led to failures and gaps in cultural development. Vladimir Velmar-Janković cited examples of uneven development of certain institutions that depended on the will of individuals and parties. Based on that, he concluded that nationally important jobs could not depend on the initiative and ambitions of individuals, but that they could be accomplished more fully and in a more organized manner through planning. However, the construction of infrastructure was not only aimed at building various systems and services that enabled the functioning of the economy and society, but it was also intended to be used for the establishment of social control over the population and the most successful possible integration into the Nazi “New Order”.

### Drafting of the Serbian Civil Plan

Apart from Vladimir Velmar-Janković, who was involved in the initiation and organization of the work, members of the Working Committee worked on the Serbian Civil Plan, as well as representatives of the Advisory Board of the University of Belgrade. Within the four sectors that included the Serbian Civil Plan, the problems that needed to be solved were defined and committees were formed to prepare reports on the mentioned problems and analyze the ways and means of solving them. In his November 1943 presentation *Paths of Serbian Self-Reliance. Considerations with the Serbian Civil Plan* Velmar-Janković expounded upon the previous work on the Serbian Civil Plan before the Great Education Council and the general public.<sup>40</sup> On that occasion, he did not come out with the entire list of problems that the Plan was supposed to cover, but estimated that there could be approximately 200 of them in total. He believed that solving them would unite and direct the work of entire generations, and that the leadership of the people could be chosen based on their involvement in the implementation of the plan. The proposed Serbian Civil Plan was accepted by the Great Education Council in its final resolution, solidifying the Plan’s continued support.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> For more details: Радош Љушић, *Књига о Начертанију. Национални и државни програм Кнежевине Србије (1844)* (Београд: Белетра, 2004).

<sup>39</sup> Кандић, *Историја Правног факултета*, 35.

<sup>40</sup> VA, Nda, 35-2-5.

<sup>41</sup> “Дискусија са радне седнице и резолуција”, *Просветни гласник* 11–12 (1943), 489.

Reports on the problems addressed in the Plan as well as a list of committee members, tasks, and guidelines were submitted to the Assistant Minister of Education, mostly in early December 1943.<sup>42</sup> For most of the problems, the institutions that would be in charge of solving them were mentioned. The faculties of the University of Belgrade, i.e. the university professors, carried out all of the work on the plan, except in certain areas in which the engagement of the Serbian Royal Academy or certain scientific institutes was intended.<sup>43</sup> In the reports, the importance and primacy of the national approach in solving problems were particularly emphasized. Even regarding general topics and areas of planning, the authors of the reports emphasized the national importance of the work, and the necessity to take care that “the Serbian sector is not neglected”.<sup>44</sup> Many topics discussed in the Serbian Civil Plan also contained expressions of aspiration towards the restoration of Serbian statehood and increased territorial jurisdiction.

In the biological sector 17 problems were listed and the Faculty of Medicine would hold primary responsibility for resolving them.<sup>45</sup> These issues mostly concerned health care, including protection from certain diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria, and venereal diseases, and the organization of preventive services, which entailed the establishment of health counseling centers and health care systems for mothers, children, students, and teachers, as well as the proper distribution of doctors, hospitals, and other medical institutions in the country. Apart from these practical problems, this sector was also involved in resolving issues concerning the general improvement of the medical profession and the professional development prospects of medical, veterinary, and pharmaceutical personnel. In this respect, a number of other issues fell under the sector’s remit: studying the health pathology of certain regions, examining the nutritional values of foodstuffs, the processing of medicinal plants and medicinal raw materials and the production of drugs, the reorganization of the Main Sanitary Council, the development of a Serbian medical terminology and bibliography, as well as the issues of housing the Veterinary Department and establishing veterinary stations.<sup>46</sup>

The most extensive part of the Serbian Civil Plan was spiritual and included a total of 85 problems related to various fields of humanities, education, culture, law and administration. This sector included the problems of geological, geographical and biological research, climatology, seismology, linguistics, musicology, pedagogy, ethnology, history, art history, archaeology, literary history, librarianship, museology, archival science. The education subsection covered the problems of the types and layout of schools, the suppression of illiteracy, as well as the plans, programs, and textbooks for all types of schools. In this sector, legal sciences were involved with the theoretical problems of creating legal terminology,

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<sup>42</sup> Archives of Yugoslavia (Arhiv Jugoslavije, AJ), Državna komisija za ispitivanje zločina okupatora i njihovih pomagača (110), inv. br. 1776.

<sup>43</sup> VA-Nda, 35-2-7.

<sup>44</sup> AJ-110, Inv. br. 1776.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> For more details on the problems covered by the biological sector of the Serbian Civil Plan: Стојановић, *Идеје, политички пројекти и пракса владе Милана Недића...*, 339–349.

dictionaries, and bibliographies, in addition to addressing questions of the territorial distribution of courts, the independence of judges and state prosecutors, the organization of the judicial staff and archives, administrative reform, reform of civil legislation, and the upkeep of statistics and demographic analysis. In the case of the legal sciences, the plan was initially based on the assumption that legal and political sciences must be deferred, and attention paid to branches that depended to a lesser extent on the development of the political situation. Thus, it was proposed to publish sources for legal history, the study of criminal law, cooperatives, and the implementation of sociological and demographic research.<sup>47</sup> Alongside the numerous other problems considered within this sector, it can be noted that a great deal of attention was devoted to historiography: to the institutional development of historical science and the education of historians, to the issue of studying and publishing historical sources, and to the creation of large historical syntheses, primarily the history of the Serbian people and the Serbian Orthodox Church.<sup>48</sup>

In the economic sector, mainly problems related to the issues of population supply, agricultural production, and administrative and financial regulation were considered. This sector included 37 problems related, among other things, to issues of organization, security, and insurance of work, as well as workers and the population, internal colonization, tax reform, budget issues, loans, international economic agreements, planned agriculture, fruit growing, viticulture and forestry, animal husbandry, agricultural management, the processing of agricultural products, the organization of cooperatives, and the protection of the agricultural minimum. In this area, economic issues were grouped into those that needed to be resolved immediately, such as supply of the population, reduction of state expenditures, and clerical issues, and those that did not. Among the issues that would become relevant immediately after the end of the war were economic agreements with neighbors, the reorientation of agriculture, and land reclamation works, while the issues whose solution would extend over a number of years included afforestation, electrification, and road construction.<sup>49</sup> However, problems involved with the organization of trade in agricultural products were excluded, and this fact was noted as a deficiency of the plan. Reform in this area was needed due to weaknesses in practice that led to uneven prices and unavailability of products or markets.<sup>50</sup>

The technical sector of the Serbian Civil Plan included 30 issues that mainly related to the problems of mining, land reclamation, traffic, electrification, industrialization, urban planning, geodetic service, water supply and sewerage, construction, railways, and the creation of statistical nomenclature, terminology, and marks, in addition to chemical, mining, architectural, and technological

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<sup>47</sup> VA-Nda, 35-3-40. The Faculty of Law even formed a commission to draft a proposal on organizing an intelligence propaganda service, but no data on its work has been preserved. VA-Nda, 44-1-33.

<sup>48</sup> Стојановић, “Историја и историографија у Српском цивилном/културном плану”, 112–134.

<sup>49</sup> AJ-110, Inv.br. 1776.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

research. In order to improve the technical profession and technical work, it was proposed to establish the Supreme Land Technical Council, which would be under the jurisdiction of several ministries, and which, in addition to representatives of the ministries, would consist of experts in the fields of architecture, mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, mining, chemistry, and technology, as well as forestry and agricultural technology. The tasks of the Supreme Land Technical Council would include the coordination of the work of technical institutions and the development of a general technical plan, the development of proposals on the main technical issues in the country, the resolution of such technical issues, the coordination of the work of all bodies of the technical profession, and the discovery and resolution of issues surrounding the reorganization and improvement of the technical professions.<sup>51</sup> Within the technical sector, special attention was paid to the issues of industrialization. In this area, strictly controlled development of the industry was proposed based on the industrial law and a precise plan. This was justified by the dangers posed by the industrialization of an agricultural country, such as Serbia, and the need to curb industrialization that might whittle away at protections established for the benefit of agriculture and the peasantry. It was necessary to develop an industry that would complement agriculture and use its raw materials for processing, and within mining, the nationalization of mines and large factories was also considered.<sup>52</sup>

The final list of problems included in the Serbian Civil Plan amounted to 178.<sup>53</sup> When looking at the areas it included, one can see that it was based upon the professional assessments of experts on the necessary tasks for the further development of individual professions, and the improvement of the existing infrastructure. However, despite realistic assessments of needs, one cannot ignore the ideological coloring of the plan, which was aimed at achieving social control in all areas of life in order to adapt to the occupation and to achieve national development and territorial expansion under these conditions. At the same time, although the assessments of needs were realistic and practical, they were difficult to realize in the current circumstances. Nevertheless, they remained at the level of the ambitious ideas of collaborationist policy in the last years of the war even when German military defeat became increasingly certain. In this way, the Serbian Civil Plan, even though it was created in crisis conditions, could hardly become a mechanism for changing the existing infrastructure, since the circumstances for its implementation were more than unfavorable, and the plan itself was difficult to achieve due to its breadth and ambition.

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<sup>51</sup> *Српски цивилни/културни план владе Милана Недића...*, 383–386.

<sup>52</sup> Стојановић, “Пројекат индустријализације земље по Српском цивилном/културном плану...”, 55–73.

<sup>53</sup> In addition to 169 problems included in four separate sectors, 9 cross-sectoral problems were subsequently included, the subject of which included the activities of several sectors. Stojanović, “Srpski civilni/kulturni plan. Geneza...”, 105.

### Work on Certain Aspects of the Serbian Civil Plan

While certain topics and problems in the Serbian Civil Plan were only mentioned and insufficiently elaborated, others were explained in detail, and voluminous papers were written about them. This second group included a section from the biological sector “Protection of Serbian Blood and Serbian Progeny”. It was one of the controversial parts of the Serbian Civil Plan, since it was largely aimed at achieving social control over the population and related to eugenics, racial selection of offspring, and demographic projection. Within this issue, it was proposed, among other things, to establish eugenics institute at the University and within it to examine the population problems of the environment, as well as genetic studies of Serbian people.<sup>54</sup> In addition, the members of the committee in charge of solving this problem emphasized the need to establish eugenics counseling centers, the Serbian Eugenics Society, the adoption of a Eugenics Law, and the education of public opinion in that direction. Basic guidelines in the work, in addition to the establishment of the aforementioned institutions, included the establishment of measures for the maintenance and repair of the Serbian “somatic and psychological racial type”. The conclusion of this committee, among other things, was that the development of eugenic awareness “is considered everywhere in the world as the most important weapon against racial evils”.<sup>55</sup>

Improvement in the quality and scope of health care, primarily for mothers, newborns, and children, laid out in the biological sector of the Serbian Civil Plan, was based on the idea that children were the future of the nation and that the survival and health of the nation depended on the growth of the population and the health of children.<sup>56</sup> Based on that, the idea of state intervention and the implementation of racial policy was justified. The practice of developed countries was cited as an example, but the eugenic sterilization in the Third Reich, which, as emphasized, did not lead to the racial improvement of the entire nation, was also critically viewed.<sup>57</sup> As a result, more moderate, but systematic measures were proposed, which primarily included a greater scope of health care and the application of hygiene measures, primarily for mothers and children. Among the radical measures that were found in the biological sector of the Serbian Civil Plan was the position that “just as it is in the economy, with every mating, care should be taken to mate only healthy and pure-blooded creatures, so in humans, we should strive for this.” This resulted in the idea that the state initiative should strictly regulate the marriage union, ensuring that a healthy marriage would be achieved, not only by notifications and counseling, but also by mandatory examination of future spouses before marriage. The intervention did not stop at this point: a legal regulation was proposed by which every healthy person would be obliged to marry and start a family, which would condition his employment and

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<sup>54</sup> VA-Nda, 35-2- 43; VA-Nda, 35-2a-40.

<sup>55</sup> VA-Nda, 165-3-13.

<sup>56</sup> VA-Nda, 165-14-3.

<sup>57</sup> *Српски цивилни/културни план владе Милана Недића...*, 177.

state service. Women's employment opportunities should be limited and they should be focused exclusively on the home and family.<sup>58</sup>

Issues of eugenics were also partly present in the spiritual sector of the Serbian Civil Plan, primarily with the topic "Making a racial map of Serbia and Serbian regions", which included an examination of the morphological and physiological characteristics of Serbian racial types and their dependence on inheritance and external influences.<sup>59</sup>

Among the collaborators, a member of the Zbor movement, Dr. Stevan Ivanić, advocated most fiercely for the implementation of racial policy, and he expressed such views publicly, even in the interwar period when he proposed numerous measures of social and hygienic protection and racial and biological selection.<sup>60</sup> He considered the measures provided for in the Serbian Civil Plan to be insufficient, and in a letter to Vladimir Velmar-Janković he discussed in detail certain provisions related to the biological sector. He believed that due to the biological and demographic vulnerability of the Serbian people and the decline in the birth rate, in all the problems covered by the Serbian Civil Plan, a more radical and distinct emphasis on a certain racial and ethnic principle, and its unification with the experiences of national history and national life was needed. He concluded that a greater ideological coloring of the plan and its clearer definition in that sense was necessary, and assessed that the previous work was only a guide, not a path for self-reliance.<sup>61</sup>

Even in the interwar period, supporters of eugenics tried to apply certain racial tests in Yugoslavia, such as measuring the circumference of the skull and the length of certain bones,<sup>62</sup> and the occupation gave them the chance to apply these methods on a larger scale. During 1942 and 1943, the Ministry of Education tried to implement part of the aspirations expressed in the biological sector of the Serbian Civil Plan. To this end, data were collected on students in order to gain insight into their health, social and physical life, and background. At the end of 1942, the Student Data Sheet was introduced for the students of the last two grades of secondary schools. This record included socio-anthropometric measurements and consisted of three groups of data.<sup>63</sup> The first group contained data on the conditions in which the student lived, the financial condition of the family, and family relationships. The second part of the data was filled in with the help of a doctor, and in addition to basic information about health, it included data related to physical constitution, features, skull shape (maximum length and

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid. 179.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. 247.

<sup>60</sup> Vladimir Petrović, Dragomir Bondžić, "Stevan Z. Ivanić", in Marius Turda (Ed.), *The History of East-Central European Eugenics, 1900–1945* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 495f.

<sup>61</sup> VA-Nda, 35-2a-43.

<sup>62</sup> Aleksandar Stojanović, "Eugenics and racial hygiene in theory and political thought of Serbian/Yugoslav extreme right 1918–1944", *Acta historiae medicinae, stomatologiae, pharmaciae, medicinae veterinariae* 34:1 (2018), 18–28.

<sup>63</sup> State Archives of Serbia (Državni arhiv Srbije, AS), Ministarstvo prosvete i vera 1941–1944 (G-3), f.1017, II br. 20186.

width), hair color, eyes, nerve strength. The last part of the list referred to the intellectual abilities and character traits of the students, and at this point it was expected that the teachers would make a judgment about the entire personality of the students.<sup>64</sup> In March 1943, teachers were warned to take care to fill in the data carefully due to their further influence on education.<sup>65</sup> At each high school, it was planned to establish a counseling center for parents that would give recommendations about the future education of students. The same recommendations would be listed in school certificates.<sup>66</sup> However, due to the development of wartime events and irregular classes, the implementation of these recommendations was abandoned.<sup>67</sup>

In the same period, at the end of 1942 and during 1943, the Ministry of Education, in cooperation with the Red Cross, tried to carry out a medical examination of the entire student population and, based on that, fill out a form for everyone called “Number of sick and disease-prone students”.<sup>68</sup> However, the collection of these data was slow due to the difficulties of organizing the medical examination of a large number of students, especially outside of large city centers. The most detailed medical examination was conducted in Belgrade, but the results were the worst for this city, especially in the girls’ schools.<sup>69</sup> In the end, data collection was not fully implemented in this regard either.

In this way, attempts to implement part of the tasks intended in the Serbian Civil Plan faced failure even at the time of its preparation. Despite this, the attempts to achieve social control over the individual intended by the Plan did not stop at the student population, but also included projecting the idea of what the “ideal type of Serbian people” should look like. The Serbian Civil Plan tried to determine a hundred books that such people should read, as well as a standard theater repertoire that would impart to them the “correct” national and cultural development.<sup>70</sup> The ideal type of Serbian people, according to Velmar-Janković, would be comprised of those who imagined and conducted their personal lives not as a private lives, but as a part of national life, who formed their families in the spirit of Serbian community and were satisfied with a little, while preventing “the unmanly upbringing of the Serbian man, and tried to make the life of the Serbian woman regain the forms of patriarchal purity and

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<sup>64</sup> It was necessary to determine what type of personality students belonged to (receptive, actively creative, passive), how able they were to make friends and whether they were easily confused. Among the questions to be answered were the following: “Do they know our folk art and do they like it?; Do they have a developed national feeling or are influenced by foreign doctrines? What are their religious feelings and the cult of the family patron saint celebration? Are they ready to make sacrifices for the sake of their homeland? What are their views of the world and the order in the world? AS-G-3, f. 798.

<sup>65</sup> AS-G-3, f. 636, 23-39-42.

<sup>66</sup> “Извештај о раду Просветног одбора и преглед рада Министарства просвете и вера”, *Просветни гласник* 11–12 (1943), 425.

<sup>67</sup> AS-G-3, f. 1051.

<sup>68</sup> AS-G-3, f. 585, 104-56-42.

<sup>69</sup> AS-G-3, f. 163.

<sup>70</sup> VA-Nda, 35-1-47.

chastity”.<sup>71</sup> The complete subordination of the individual to collective and national interests, unquestioning cooperation with the authorities, the suppression of personal interests, and personal sacrifice were among the most important characteristics of a “constructive Serb” according to Velmar-Janković.<sup>72</sup>

Although the representatives of collaborationist politics represented a new social elite, their numbers and support from the population were not large. That is why they resorted to constructing plans that would put them into a position of political supremacy by changing and rearranging society and infrastructure. By drawing up plans and building new institutions, they tried to ensure the basis of power and the dominance of their own views. Those changes were conceived for the long-term and in detail, and comprehensively aimed at establishing control and shaping individuals. In practice, however, the collaborationists lacked opportunities and funds, as well as wider support, for the realization of such extensive plans. Even when they had the opportunity to realize some part of the plans, they faced failure in the process of reshaping and acquiring the elements needed to realize them.

### Implementation Problems

At the first meeting regarding the drafting of the Serbian Civil Plan, some attendees expressed misunderstanding and doubt about the proposed demands, while strong support was expressed by those intellectuals who had openly supported the collaborationist administration until then.<sup>73</sup> By engaging a large number of university professors, its authors hoped to give the Serbian Civil Plan authority, importance, and the appearance of scientificity, while also presenting the educational policy of the collaborationist authorities as enjoying wide support, first of all, from university professors, especially as it concerned the reform of the University.

The broad scope of the topics that were intended in the plan imposed the need to engage a large number of people to work on them. So, for example, in the biological group alone, which included the smallest number of problems (17), a total of 29 people were engaged in the committees, all of whom were engaged at Belgrade University, and 9 of them were simultaneously involved in the work of several other committees. A large number of committees had similar or closely related topics and, moreover, extremely narrow expertise, so as a result there were a small number of people who could be considered for work in such committees,

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<sup>71</sup> “Путеви српског самосналажења. Расматрања уз Српски цивилни план (говор помоћника министра просвете и вера Владимира Велмар-Јанковића)”, *Просветни гласник* 11–12 (1943), 414.

<sup>72</sup> *Српски цивилни/културни план владе Милана Недића...*, 115.

<sup>73</sup> Some believed that they were expected to carry out propaganda in public, while the supporters of the collaborationist regime believed that agreeing or refusing to cooperate in the development of the Plan revealed who actually sincerely supported the existing administration. *Ibid.* 105–110.



especially when the cooperation of those who were ideologically unacceptable had to be rejected. This led to a situation in which the same persons participated or even managed the work of several committees. In January 1944, the philologist Dragutin Anastasijević complained that he had been appointed as the president of five committees, including even committees whose focus was not under the purview of his expertise, and that he could not be an expert in all of the requisite fields.<sup>74</sup> Professor Dragoljub Arandelović of the Faculty of Law refused to cooperate, turning down the offer to work in two committees of the Serbian Civil Plan.<sup>75</sup>

University professors were the primary creators of the plan and were expected to take charge of its implementation. Since the collaborationist authorities, with the reform of the University in 1941, suppressed and undermined their ideological opponents and any others who could offer possible resistance, the rest of the professors mostly accepted the cooperation. It is difficult to determine to what extent their cooperation was based on coercion and to what extent they voluntarily participated in working on the projects. Most of the contributors were engaged in the reorganized University or were at the head of certain institutions, so on that basis it can be concluded that they were acceptable in the eyes of the collaborationist regime. Although they were often assigned to particular work groups without having been consulted, they accepted these jobs without much evasion or resistance. That cooperation was more easily accepted considering that it was largely non-binding and it was mainly reduced to planning, and since it gave the professors the opportunity to express their views and wishes regarding the development of their own profession. At the same time, it freed them from the obligation of open propaganda in favor of the collaborationist authorities and provided them with the prospect of material compensation and existential security in the difficult material circumstances of the occupation.

During April 1943 the Ministry of Education began to procure reports related to certain issues of the Serbian Civil Plan.<sup>76</sup> The purchase of reports increased at the end of 1943, when most of them were handed over to the Ministry after the meeting of the Great Education Council.<sup>77</sup> At one point in December 1943, 173,000 dinars was paid for the purchase of 9 reports, so Nikola Popović and Veselin Čajkanović, among others, received 19,500 dinars each for reports on the organization of philosophy and on classical philology – a record sum at the time.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> These were the committees that related to the following problems: Creating a biography of Saint Sava, History of the Serbian Church, Sources for the history of the Serbian Church, Creating a dictionary of the Serbian language and Creating a dictionary of the old Serbian language. VA-Nda, 44-1-39.

<sup>75</sup> Стојановић, *Идеје, политички пројекти и пракса владе Милана Недића...*, 335.

<sup>76</sup> At that time, among others, Nikola Radojčić's reports on the needs for the development of general and Serbian history and Lazar Kostić's reports on the state and needs of legal and economic sciences were purchased. AS-G-3, f.152, 13-190-43.

<sup>77</sup> AS-G-3, f. 166, 1-18-44.

<sup>78</sup> AS-G-3, f. 162, 22-117-43.

Milan Nedić publicly welcomed the meeting of the Great Education Council, but did not attend it.<sup>79</sup> After the meeting, Velmar-Janković sent Nedić a report on the Serbian Civil Plan and proposed that, due to the increase in tasks and competences, the Serbian Civil Plan should be brought under an inter-ministerial committee that would manage further work under governmental authority. He also proposed the provision of material resources in the amount of two million dinars per month, which would be used for administrative work related to the Serbian Civil Plan.<sup>80</sup> However, Velmar-Janković never received a response to his request for a reception at Nedić's premises on that occasion.<sup>81</sup> He therefore spoke to Nedić again in the summer of 1944, presenting him again with the state of affairs related to the Serbian Civil Plan.<sup>82</sup> On that occasion, he noted that a significant number of people from the University had been hired to develop the plan, because the University had to be reorganized according to that plan, and also to make a scientific contribution to the plan and prepare future generations for its execution. As Nedić failed to respond, Velmar-Janković continued his work within the previous framework. In order to protect it from the Allied bombing in 1944, he stored the documentation of the Serbian Civil Plan in the safe of the National Bank, where it awaited the end of the war and the occupation.

### Conclusion

War and occupation can be seen as periods of crisis during which it is possible to achieve drastic changes in the work of institutions and the organization of infrastructure, but these are still specific periods during which it is difficult to expect long-term changes that would not be conditioned by the duration of the occupation. The Serbian Civil Plan can be seen as a kind of reaction to wartime suffering, the occupation, and the collapse of the Yugoslav state. Due to the collapse of the state and the suffering of the population, the collaborationists tried to present their activity as a patriotic act of salvation for the nation. However, the pretense of such an act of rescue was negated by the belief in the possibility of progress under the occupation and the desire to make special achievements under such circumstances and carry out social reformation and renewal. The main goal of the Serbian Civil Plan was to achieve cooperation as fully as possible and to fit into the Nazi "New Order". For this reason it was aimed at bringing about the strictly controlled management all spheres of life and imbuing them with the views of the collaborationist authorities, which had failed to realize them with

<sup>79</sup> "Писмо председника владе просветном скупу", *Просветни преглед* 11 (1943), 395f.

<sup>80</sup> Стојановић, *Идеје, политички пројекти и пракса владе Милана Недића...*, 335f.

<sup>81</sup> According to information from Vasilije Marković, Velmar-Janković spoke at the session of the Ministerial Council from 6th to 7th February 1944 about the basic tasks of the Plan and the necessity of its implementation. However, we were unable to find information about this meeting in historical sources. Василије Марковић, *Театри окупиране престонице 1941–1944* (Београд: Завод за уџбенике и наставна средства, 1998), 122.

<sup>82</sup> VA-Nda, 35-2-46.

simpler and more direct methods. Complicated maneuvering, ideological camouflage, and the construction of infrastructure hid much more practical and down-to-earth goals and desires.

The revision of the value system and the construction of the institutional infrastructure based on these new values were supposed to represent turning points in the formation and shaping of a new Serbian society that would support the policy of collaborationism and occupation. In that sense, national reconstruction was unthinkable without the planned construction of institutions that would carry out that reconstruction. Similar attempts at planned construction were continued in the post-war period by the communist authorities. Although there is no evidence of their imitation of the practice of collaborationists and the Serbian Civil Plan, certain segments of these policies were very similar, and a path dependence can also be seen in them.

During the occupation, the construction of institutional infrastructure turned into a process of reshaping the organization of the entire society, especially since, apart from a select few in positions of power, the population did not show support. However, during attempts to implement the plan, obstacles arose in terms of both objective material conditions and insufficient support within the collaborationist structures themselves, stemming from the inherited system and the approaching end of the war conflict. Created as the brainchild of an influential individual who found himself at the very top of the educational administration, the Serbian Civil Plan did not receive the support of the rest of the collaborationist authorities, least of all Prime Minister General Milan Nedić. Although it was supposed to become a mechanism of change that would establish an institutional infrastructure that would correspond to the strictures of the collaborationist authorities, the continuity of the existing infrastructure and the path dependence proved capable of resisting attempts at change. The inherited inertia of institutions resisted such attempts in spite of the presence of mechanisms of change such as the weakening of elites, the strengthening of subordinate groups, and changes in the system of values and personal beliefs of process participants. However, these mechanisms of change weren't strong enough to bring about lasting change.

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