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## **Господар смрти као Свечовек: пројекције елитних филозофских токова у српском стрипу и популарној култури 1930–их**

The Master of Death as the All–Man: Projections of elite philosophical trends in Serbian comics and popular culture in the 1930s

### **Abstract**

Among many philosophically and artistically challenging themes of comics in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in the late 1930s — popular entertainment exported from Belgrade into a dozen of European countries — one of the dominating was the new world war. It spontaneously took on various forms, from documentary and pseudorealistic, through technologically sophisticated and futurofantastic, to metaphysical and transcendental. A special place in the microgenre occupies the Belgrade superhero series „The Master of Death” (Gospodar smrti, November 1939 — May 1940), whose author was the then young comic artist George/Yuri Lobachev (Ђорђе Лобачев), a Russian born and raised in Serbian culture, founder of some comic strip genres. Unlike openly militaristic spirit reflected in the contemporary popular culture of Europe and the United States, the images of the world conflict in the comics of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, a country not yet recovered from The Great War, were most often oriented towards the world peace and universal values. This attitude in the Serbian entertainment industry was a direct intellectual reflection of the fusion of the philosophy of life of Henri Bergson and other European thinkers with the ideas of the classical Serbian tradition and theology, which led to a new philosophical direction in the 1920s and 1930s —

Svetosavlje („Saint Sava’s Way”) embodied in the works of Justin Popović, Nikolaj Velimirović, Miloš N. Đurić, and others, whose ambition was to achieve cosmopolitan values through autochthonous national forms. Belgrade comic book superheroes and antiheroes — so different from contemporary American models — through peacemaking attitude, science fiction, and mystic ethical fantasy were bringing a unique concept, in which Dostoyevsky’s All-Man (Serbian: Svečovek, Russian: Vsechelovek) shows himself as not so far away of Tesla’s Man — the Automaton of the Universe.

**Keywords:** ideas in comics, anti-militarism, superheroes, Svetosavlje/ Saint Sava’s Way, Serbian culture, Russian émigré culture

**Кључне речи:** стрипске идеје, антимилиитаризам, суперјунаци, светосавље, српска култура, руска емигрантска култура

„Death has spread its wings over Europe. War broke out and obscure clouds full of death and horror began to haunt Europe. Innocent residents left their homes and families to become food to cannon and rifle barrels. Mr. Horror reigned over the fertile fields and eternally smoky factory chimneys.

Armored fortresses with the deadliest weapons of the twentieth century began to sail the seas... Human freedom was restricted, and trade followed the path of extinction.

Armored bombers started to dominate the free European sky.

Meanwhile, on fronts, not caring for the gunfire that was sowing death ...a strange personality was walking... The wounded, who fell in the skirmish, were bandaged by eerie hands ...” — „The Master of Death”, comic strip series, beginning, 1939.

The slender man with fluttering cape, broad-brimmed hat, with holes for eyes and skull instead face, walked the European battlefields seeking unfortunate, wounded soldiers, surrounded by ground and air orgies of state-of-art artillery guns and military aircrafts.

These were some of the most spectacular pages of the world comics through which, in November 1939, readers of the comic strip magazine *Mikijevo carstvo* (*Mickey’s empire*) in Belgrade — the residents of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, country with only two more years of future — faced a distinctive kind of war comics and fantasy. The story of „The Master of Death”

was different from the imported works of the same genre to which they have been accustomed for half a decade. It corresponded with the daily reality of the planet in November 1939, when another Great War entered the third month, gaining new forms: from the submarine warfare in the Atlantic, through the imposing of the Star of David on the sleeves of Jews, to Poland's withdrawal into underground statehood through the formation of the Union of Armed Struggle (later known as Home Army).

The creator was the then young Serbian Russian Yuri Lobachev (1909–2002), in historical perspective now considered the most influential Eastern European comics author.

### **„The Master of Death” as part of popular science fiction**

Lobachev made the science fiction comic series about an unusual superhero, one of the most famous in Yugoslav comics, on a soil that had an understanding for the otherworldly. Serbia within a later united Yugoslavia, due to previous colonial subjugation, was a space of long-delayed modernization, but when it started it was intense, thanks to the new freedom, the introduction of the latest technologies as well as because of students sent from Belgrade to the best European and international schools.

At the end of the 19th century, science fiction in Serbia became as natural as internationally important Serbian epic poems or fairy tales, drawing strength from its own soil, from the European West and East, the new power of United States of America, but also from the Far East, as well. From the Serbian mentality and culture came the civilizational–philosophical and not only technological visions of Nikola Tesla; probably the first world science fiction drama „After a Million Years” by Dragutin Ilić (1899);<sup>1</sup> an simultaneous and direct reception of early American science fiction that was sometimes translated into Serbian in the 1920s only a few weeks after its American premiere (from *Amazing Stories* edited by the father of American science fiction culture, Hugo Gernsback, a friend of Tesla and Windsor McKay, creator of „Little Nemo in Slumberland”)<sup>2</sup>. At the same time a local blend of avant-garde art and science fiction was born. All this, along with the underground flow of esotericism, was a good basis for

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<sup>1</sup> Zoran Živković. „Ilić, Dragutin”, *Enciklopedija naučne fantastike*, tom I (Beograd: Prosveta, 1990), 295–296.

<sup>2</sup> Miodrag Milovanović. *Srpska naučna fantastika* (Beograd: Everest Media, 2016), 57.

the flourishing of the autochthonous domestic science fiction genre in the comics of the 1930s and 1940s.

Additionally, Lobachev, as a Russian, knew Russian and Soviet science fiction very well, and it could be expected that he would respond in an autochthonous way to world trends that advocated the need for a *Übermensch* in the 1930s, Nietzschean, totalitarian or Superman type.

The series „The Master of Death” was originally published in 1939–1940 in *Mikijevo carstvo*, a Belgrade entertainment magazine that indebted European culture many comics masterpieces, thanks to editing by the pioneer of Balkan film and comics Milutin V. Ignjačević, and one of the key popular novels writers and graphic novels scriptwriters in Europe, Branko Vidić. After publishing in installments a page long, twice a week, all four episodes of „The Master of Death” were rerun in separate comic books in *Plavi zabavnik* in 1940. Interest was renewed in 1980 at the beginning of the end of the Tito’s communist regime in Yugoslavia.

### **A paper spectacle in four narrations<sup>3</sup>**

#### **The Master of Death I**

Lobachev’s trip to France was the immediate catalyst for the creation of the series. In the case of the Russian spirit, the pan-European view of the world usually had a French accent, and Lobachev was no exception. As a child of a diplomat, and later as an artist, culture and media professional, he was educated and brought up in French culture, with a fluent knowledge of a language that was almost native to the Lobachev family, as well as Serbian. Lobachev, for example, was among the first in the world to adapt Jules Verne into comics: *Les Enfants du capitaine Grant* (English: *In Search of the Castaways*) and *Michel Strogoff* (English: *Michael Strogoff*).

With his wife Yelizaveta, Lobachev first visited Paris in July 1939, as an already experienced and accepted professional — illustrator, cartoonist and comic strip artist aged 30. But Paris in 1939 was not the one from the time of the *La Belle Époque*, but a city with still fresh experiences of the First World War, the Great Depression, and preparations for a new Great War that will come to the West in a few months.

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<sup>3</sup> This chapter repeats some of the views from the annotated edition of Lobachev's collected works: Zoran Stefanović: Anotacije za strip *Gospodar Smrti*, Lobačev: *Sabrana dela 2: Princeza Ru i Gospodar Smrti* (Beograd: Makondo, 2019), 192, 210, 226, 242.

There is also one important nuance in the domain of popular culture: Paris was then the main conduit of American comics in Europe, not only through European editions of American daily newspapers, but also through a new form of comics magazines. Just like Belgrade has been doing for half of a decade<sup>4</sup>, Paris connected the entire Western Hemisphere through comics, first from 1934 and by translating American comics in *Le Journal de Mickey*, and from 1939 by translating Serbian–Russian comics from the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Many of the comics that were a hit in France at that difficult time were Yugoslav, even though the audience thought they were American<sup>5</sup>. One of them is the work of Lobachev himself, „Princess Thanit” (1938), which later in French culture received the epithet „the most surrealist comic created so far”<sup>6</sup>.

At the end of the summer of 1939, returning by train via the Third Reich, a superpower at its apex, Lobachev, under the ominous impressions, began his anti–war series, the future „The Master of Death”<sup>7</sup>. The artist had a correct notion that the World War would reach Yugoslavia as well, no matter how much one part of the Balkans was still in a state of illusory neutrality. The Kingdom found itself in an impossible position: on one hand it was a natural ethno–cultural whole, but on the other it was also a civilizational–geopolitical conglomerate of Slavic variants of Orthodox Christianity, Roman Catholicism and Islam, influenced by minorities of German, Hungarian, Italian, Albanian and Jewish origin...

Lobachev avoided the Yugoslav reality in this comic, he had an universal world ambition. With the exposition about the dark destiny of the aristocratic lineage, the author joined the popular Gothic genre whose European and even world zenith was then the Belgrade series „Countess Margot” by Konstantin Kuznetsov, popular also in France (for which there is an legend in Serbian publishing that the series is haunted, because its publication is announcing for decades shutdown of each publishing house).

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<sup>4</sup> Zdravko Zupan. „The Golden Age of Serbian comics, Belgrade Comic Art 1935–1941”. *International Journal of Comic Art* (2000): 90–101.

<sup>5</sup> Zoran Stefanović. „La fiançailles longue durée: La symbiose entre la Serbie et la France au l’art de la bande dessinée: le fait significatif”, in: *A suivre...: 3 générations d’auteurs de la bande dessinée contemporaine serbe*, catalogue d’exposition, (Belgrade — Novi Sad: Institute français & l’Association des auteurs de bande–dessinée de Serbie, 2013), 21–28.

<sup>6</sup> « Cette bande dessinée peu connue est certainement la plus surréaliste produite à ce jour. » —Pierre Strinati. «Bandés dessinées et surréalisme», *Giff–Wiff*, N°15, septembre 1965, 29–31.

<sup>7</sup> Đorđe Lobačev. *Kad se Volga ulivala u Savu: Moj životni roman* (Beograd: Prosveta, 1997), 93–96.

The beginning of „Countess Margo” and „The Master of Death” looks like the same world: the dark castles of Western and Central Europe, a fairy tale of royal man and poor young woman, transgression upon fiancée–wife, the curse upon families... But here the similarities stop.

The term „The Master of Death” is often found at that time, for example as the stage name of the athlete–strongman Slavko Barta or the title of the film with actor Fred Solm. But the epithet came from Christianity, where it refers to the Lord, the giver of life. Lobachev points out that His child, the Man, must not turn his head away, being obliged to compassion and protection over the needy, so that their lives do not cease prematurely and in vain. However, in Belgrade, which was then heavily influenced by Asian and the world’s esoteric, we must also take other connotations: for example, the Indian deity Yama is the Master of Death, as the first person who died, and then became responsible for the death realms and sentences.

By the date in the comic („August 7, 1939”), readers knew that it was their time and that they were witnessing some kind of parallel reality. Although the comics claimed to be entertainment („A series of the world’s most magnificent novels and works of art!”), the daily newspapers carried headlines identical to fiction: „Unmanned planes and death balloons: What a French writer claims to have seen in Germany” (*Vreme* daily, 2. 1. 1933, article about a book by journalist Jean *Bardanne*); reported about military exercises against air attack, and advertised manuals for housewives concerning personal protection in case of bombing of Belgrade — what happened in 1941 by the Germans, and was regularly repeated by the Anglo–American Allies by the end of the war.

In the graphic novel, our hero Reginald of *Bardan* (sic) stoically accepts the medieval curse and willfully goes to the war, in order to atone for the ancestral sins. In addition to the greedy rich businessman who produce and sell death, a partner type appears here which is also taken from life into art: a sociopathic (mad) scientist who produces tools of destruction. „I hate humanity... I want to destroy it, because it had no mercy on me either...” or „Should I have regard for humanity!?!... It robbed me of what was dearest to me... It aroused my hatred and deserved my revenge... Once upon a time... I was a doctor... I trusted people... I believed in good.”

And the scientist’s revenge on humanity are microbes — biological weapons as everyday reality of our time. The scientist’s surprise was touching when he realized the simple business truth: „Deadly microbes can be produced without me!”

The graphic novel is a dark poem about scientific and technological ways of killing and destruction. Here, Lobachev returns to Tesla's secret weapon — the rays of death, which he showed half a decade earlier in the beginner's comic „Death Ray” (Zrak smrti, 1935), loosely inspired novel by Alexei Tolstoy, *The Garin Death Ray* (1926), a distinctly Teslian fiction.

In the fate of the mentally destroyed scientist, we can see the Russian motif (often discreetly present in Lobachev's works): the children of scientist — son—soldier and daughter—nurse — died in the First World War, and ethnic attribution can be given through uniforms and fashion from the 1910s. By the way, the love interest of the hero is the spy Tania, later happily discovered as the scientist's granddaughter, but she resembles Lobachev's previous heroine, the Blonde Adventuress (Plava pustolovka), which indicates that some elements can be treated as part of the same fictional world (author's favorite method).

It was clear to the readers that the Master of Death, one of the three main masked vigilantes of the Golden Age of Serbian comics, has something special, original. When his fiancée dies on the very day of the wedding, our hero does not respond to the tragic fateful punishment for the sins of his ancestors with anger and revenge, because he knows whose justice it is. And indeed: he *takes his cross with him* and patiently goes to atone for his and others' sins. That heroism is different from the American model of the righteous—avenger, and here we meet the traditional Slavic, Serbian and Orthodox model imprinted in modern superheroism, which we will address later.

## **The Master of Death 2: The Secret of the Papyrus**

In the second episode, our hero, while telling his beloved one about the curse, confronts the spirit of the cursed burned girl, and, under the threat of 12 more generations to be cursed, she does not allow Reginald to talk further, but calls him to action, because the horror of war is gaining momentum and threatens to destroy the Western civilization and Humanity itself.

The Winter War between the Soviet Union and Finland began on November 30, 1939, during the creation of this story, and gave the episode a clear documentary background. The story has a spectacular sci-fi ending, and the cold wave that devours Europe here is perhaps one of the first cases of the planet's rapid freezing in pop culture in general, according to the model similar to Roland Emmerich's *The Day After Tomorrow* movie (2004). The futuristic aesthetics of war machines gives a counterpoint to the beauty of nature, which are both strong visual sides

of Lobachev's world. People become mere footnotes in this magnitude of the disintegration of normality.

The gothic atmosphere is confirmed by the active participation of the ghosts in our world, and because of the ancient Egyptian finale and the Scottish castle, we see that the motifs from „Princess Thanit” return to our artist, as a deeper spiritual compulsion.

The episode also features one of the most beautiful lettering in Serbian comics, probably the work of the artist's brother-in-law Valerian Apukhtin, Yelizaveta's brother, the son of the imperial general — first prominent „letter artists” in Belgrade comics.

### **The Master of Death 3: A Mysterious Adventure**

„Listen, I will reveal to you the secret of the manuscript... But that secret is not a secret, because it is studied by countless scientists ... Time and space can be managed...”

The third episode shows again that esotericism, although hidden here as harmless fantasies, was an ingrained world phenomenon of that time. The story is also a contribution to the role of Belgrade in the hidden global currents, where mystics and visionaries of the world future — Nicholas Roerich and Dimitrije Mitrović — had a certain influence on the elite and even the state leadership.

In the comic, the ancient knowledge about climate manipulation is written in ancient Egyptian papyri, but over the time it comes to Europe where it is hidden, and not in some ordinary place. Lobachev's connects climate weapons with the Russian milieu and protagonists such as Alexander Nevsky and an Orthodox hermit in the icy desert, which deserves further examination because of the concept of Moscow as the „Third Rome” (ideological motif came from medieval Serbia, by the way), but also because of the correct premonition of climate as the weapon of the future, including today's Russian technology.

The colossal dimensions of the artificial destruction shown here — Teslian in the core and hitherto rare in comics — are again reminiscent of an Emmerich film, this time *2012* (2012). The author uses again the motif of expansiveness of the yellow race already seen in his series „The Death Ray” (*Zrak smrti*, 1935) and „The White Spirit” (*Beli duh*, 1938), but now the Orientals are related to the ancient knowledge of the climate control, which gives an interesting tone to present news stories of the melted Arctic.



If we exclude the unusual genre mixture of science fiction, fantasy and eclectic esotericism, we see that the artist prophesied the technological, climatic and geopolitical elements of our time. „The Master of Death” thus took on the artistic role of cognitive and psychological defense against the Tofflerian Future Shock, according to the model that Bogdan Trocha assessed as a creative „laboratory”:

„(...) speculative fiction may have several basic literary realizations. Each time, however, the dominant anthropological perspective that will be present in them will be important. Like Coleridge’s myth or imagination, it may lead not only to the creation of new models of reality, but also to testing their consequences in a literary laboratory. This is all the more important because the faith in industrial utopias has passed away and the pace of civilization changes and potential threats connected with them is increasing. Thus, speculative fiction can become a plane on which the predicted future states of things are tested for rationalization and evaluation. By creating potential worlds, fiction opens up a literary opportunity to test their consequences before they appear”<sup>8</sup>.

Evolutionary function of art does not have to be exhausted here, for it can reveal its origin in Transcendentals through the mental and intuitive processes:

„Thus, literature using fantastic imagery can use imagery for purely aesthetic purposes. It can also use them to speculate about the future of man, civilization and the world in general. Finally, it can also combine imaginative elements with religious symbols, referring to the spiritual condition of contemporary man”<sup>9</sup>.

#### **The Master of Death 4: Death Plane**

Again, the motif of otherworldly fantasies, of airplanes, but also of Paris, which the artist visited a few months earlier and which still haunts him for a reason: France will be attacked by Germany during the publication of this comic. Lobachev is also a master here to show the sea

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<sup>8</sup> Bogdan Trocha. „Speculative Fiction for the Future of Man and Civilization”. *Future Human Image*, 12. (2019), 106.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

with warships, air battles and battlefields of various meridians. A special sense for military technology, for aesthetics of the great theatre of battles, developed in him as a boy on the Thessaloniki front in the Great War, while he accompanied his father, consul.

The spectacularity of the series does not subside, but, despite the results and the response from the audience, „The Master of Death” ends here — with the cursed one’s happiness found again and, symbolically, Scottish (British?) — Russian marriage.

Namely, it was already time of the cult Belgrade magazine *Politikin Zabavnik*, which started a year earlier, in February 1939 (being published to this day), where the artist was one of the founders. Lobachev leaves *Mikijevo carstvo*, entering new challenges and the highest quality part of his opus, but also feeling the dark shadows of the coming age.

„The gloomy, dark tone did not, however, represent the final chord of Lobachev’s opus —The Master of Death is followed by The Wizard of Oz and, a little later, Biberče / Peppercorn Boy/, where the author returns to the magical, innocent world of childhood — but for those who can read between the lines, it anticipates the character of the time to come. And not only anticipates, but also portrays. Because, indeed, if one looks carefully, and if life has taught the man anything, one will have to admit that there is more ‘pain of the century’ in the Master of Death, the atmosphere of war tragedy and horror, than in most newspaper reports from that time. Once again, therefore, in this example, it is confirmed that comics are the Art of the Essence, firmly rooted in time”<sup>10</sup>.

These words of Žika Bogdanović, the polyhistor and founder of the Serbian comics theory, additionally remind us of the fundamental importance of comics for culture, but also what „Uncle George” gave it heartily and heroically.

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<sup>10</sup> Bogdanović, Žika. „Đorđe Lobačev ili Detinjstvo ponovo pronađeno” /ogled/, *Čardak ni na nebu ni na zemlji: Rađanje i život beogradskog stripa 1934–1941*, (Beograd: Izdavačka zadužbina „Ateneum” i „Informatika” AD, 2006), 41. Originally published: „Đorđe Lobačev ili Detinjstvo koje ne prestaje”, *Pegaz*, br. 1–2, (Beograd: 1974), 15.

## **The question of superheroes: masked righteous people from Belgrade**

The magazine in which „The Master of Death” appeared was home to all the main masked vigilantes of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. In *Mikijevo carstvo* magazine, Serbian screenwriter Branko Vidić began series „Zigomar”, with the young Russian artist Nikolay Navoyev (May 28, 1939), and the series „Lord Warwick — Black Mask” with another Russian artist Sergey Solovyov (March 3, 1940). Was Vidić also the scriptwriter of „The Master of Death”? Was there perhaps a dime novel of the same name, in sequels, again by Vidić? Or was he, as the editor, at least an advisor or script doctor? We do not know, despite some indications and a certain type of familiar narrative „signature”, that remains an open question. After all, Lobachev himself had an innate gift for elegant storytelling.

The superheroes of Belgrade, Serbian–Russian and Slavic comics were sometimes inspired by their American relatives, such as the world–dominant „The Phantom” by Lee Falk and Ray Moore (1936)<sup>11</sup>, because American newspaper comic strips were regularly translated in Europe. (American comic books were rarely translated in Yugoslavia of that time, with limited appearance of Superman /in U.S.A. 1938; in Yugoslavia 1939/ but not of Batman /1939/ at all.)

However, Serbian comics were sometimes completely opposite in meaning comparing to their American counterparts: above all, the Belgrade spirit was not satisfied with the superhumans being righteous for no reason or being avengers.

The most iconic part of Reginald Bardan masked appearance was the head–skull, but he is not the first or the only one. The Japanese comic book character Ōgon Bat, conceived in 1931, was originally from Atlantis and was sent 10,000 years in the future, into our timeline, to fight evil forces, but he has superhuman strength, inviolability and the power to fly. Another example of a head–skull is the heroine of the American comics, the Fantomah, created in 1940 as the protector of the jungle, also with supernatural powers. Her face turns into a blue skull when she protects her ecosystem in adventures around a fictional world full of bizarreness, in which the heroine flies, turns objects into other objects, changes people into other shapes, etc.

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<sup>11</sup> Zoran Stefanović. „Duh se vratio iz senke: O Rejmondu S. Muru, najnepoznatijem slavnom crtaču (svih vremena)”, (in) Fok, Li, Rej Mur & Vilson Mekoj. *Fantom. Knj. 2, 1942–1945*. (Beograd: Beli put i Makondo, 2015), 5–13.

There are no such aestheticizations in „The Master of Death”, and the hero himself does not have supernatural abilities, although the supernatural regularly visits him. The mask is simply a skull, frightening, but there is also something empathetic and touching in the physique, movements, and atmosphere of this hero under a cape and hat.

### **Biographical basis of self-awareness**

Today's entrenched perception depicts Lobachev as the creator of the soft and romantic style, both visually and narratively, moving only in the sphere of entertainment, which could indicate a certain type of cultural and social naivety, escapism, and lack of understanding of the world. It is deeply wrong.

Apart from the fact that the sensitive Lobachev experienced the Great War as a child, he grew up in Serbia — a country that lost a third of its population (almost 2/3 of men) in the First World War, and which in the light of the coming war re-examined the differences between loyalty, patriotism, nationalism and chauvinism.

Behind the elegance of Lobachev's visual and narrative expression, we feel the deepest philosophical confrontation with darkness, the abyss over which human existence hovers, and not only in that particular era. The dark tone is felt behind the lovely images of his fairy tales and comedies, and it is often completely open in his adventures, crime stories, and especially science fiction comics. In these stories, spectacle and entertainment are just a lure for the reader, a means of accentuating tragedy and finding mentally acceptable ways for human being to understand ontic and transcendent truths.

For all of us that have encountered Lobachev, he remains a standard of innate pleasantness and spontaneity, but he was also the man for whom Žika Bogdanović said: „Self-consciousness without arrogance and understanding without vanity”. Faraway of any naivety, Lobachev has accumulated life experience and knowledge enough for many destinies. The family origins was noble, father Pavel studied at four universities (three graduated: Eastern languages, Law, and Music academy at the cello and flute department; also studied Archeology) and was a high-ranking Russian diplomat in the dangerous Balkans. As a boy, Yuri was cruelly left without a homeland, raised as an orphan during the reconstruction of a devastated country, matured during Great Depression, but still managing to gain a high and broad education.

Even later, his work as an artist, cartoonist and commercial artist was always connected to the most vibrant currents of social reality. In addition to comic stories, in the most dramatic years

of humanity, in the 1930s and 1940s and later, Lobachev was also a professional political cartoonist (thus, an analyst), technical editor and designer of daily newspapers, often a journalist, photo-reporter and translator, which also means that he was exceptionally informed about world and domestic matters, being sometimes their direct participant.

His intellectual capacity was also wide: in addition to classical family education, he studied art history at Belgrade's Faculty of Philosophy with elite professors, but for decades he also most intimately collaborated with the flagships of Serbian culture, avant-garde, political analytics, media and elite cultural currents. Most important were Dušan Duda Timotijević before the Second World War, Boško Tokin during the war, Ljubiša Bata Vukadinović in both periods, and Stanislav Vinaver after the war.

Let us also keep in mind discreet but inevitable direct connections with secret societies, resistance movements and various secret services in the risky Balkan terrain.

### **Lobachev after the Master of Death**

„The Master of Death” a vision of the spectacular suicide path of the Humanity, did not continue after the fourth episode. It is doubtful if it was feasible at all, concerning the fact that our hero has already found the redemption of the cursed family through his own pure love.

At this point, Lobachev apparently changed his analytical attitude, going into regression in the form of the mentioned children's fantasy „The Wizard of Oz”, in the weeks before the German attack on Yugoslavia in 1941, and after that during the German occupation of Serbia in the form of a pure fairy tale, such as „Biberče” („Peppercorn boy”, 1942). But the change of tone was of an ideatic nature, and not just caused by market demands. With „The Master of Death”, all analytics and dilemmas end, the rite of passage to the present is over and the author begins to show only the deepest archetypes to his audience — teaching them how to act in order to survive the daily darkness. Bogdanović also pointed this out:

"It is instructive to look, once again, in that light, at the last two pre-war Lobachev comics, The Wizard of Oz and Peppercorn Boy. Did they, indeed, mean only a lovely, bucolic return to the 'magical, innocent world of childhood'? If, as it is quite possible, we 'read' them as literary parables, they will unequivocally appear in a new 'key': we will see both the Wizard of Oz and Peppercorn Boy as clear metaphors of the

imperative defense of a world based on the principles of Humanity and Beauty, again threatened by the oncoming, reckless forces of Darkness. Freedom and Virtue, therefore, are bitterly tempted even in the magical world of fairy tales, or especially in it; because the magical world of fairy tales is just a mirror of our fears, longings and, not infrequently, painful hopes, which will contribute to finally growing up and, perhaps, maturing as human beings”<sup>12</sup>.

In Belgrade occupied by Germans, Lobachev was employed as an illustrator for family magazines, but at the same time he was a member of a resistance movement (the Union of Soviet Patriots) having secret missions to 1944, when he went to the front lines as an interpreter of the Soviet Army. New temptations came during the conflict of Stalin’s USSR and Tito’s Yugoslavia: he was expelled from Yugoslavia to Romania with his family, and only after 1956 they were allowed to go into the land of the ancestors, now without the name of Russia.

Like his protagonist the Master of Death, Lobachev was not spiritually broken even in the greatest temptations — and the archives of the secret services will show how complex the temptations were and related to the most important historical events. He adhered to his youth ideals, which he spread through his works, under the guise of fun and unpretentious adventures, wise parables.

### **Today’s perception**

„The Master of Death” left a great impression on several generations of readers. The best interpretations were given to us by Žika Bogdanović. Scriptwriter Svetozar Obradović says that this was the first comic he noticed as a child, and movie director Goran Marković ranks this work among the most impressive childhood readings. Thanks to the editor Brana Nikolić, the writer of these lines, Stefanović, also read „The Master of Death” as a boy, four decades after the premiere, and readily joins the assessments of his older colleagues.

The series was reprinted at a critical moment for SFR Yugoslavia, in March–May 1980 (the days of the dying of the lifelong communist president Josip Broz Tito), thanks to the tireless artist and editor Brana Nikolić in an entertaining comics magazine for the widest audience, *Eks Almanah*. Three episodes were published then (1, 2 and 4), side by side with American

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<sup>12</sup> Bogdanović, 2006, 41. Originally: 1974, 15.

superheroes and French intellectual comics, and also later in 1989, in a special issue of one of the first scholar journals of comics studies in the world, *Pegaz, the review for history and the theory of comics and visual media that are expressed graphically*, edited by Žika Bogdanović (it is being published since 1974). Only in 2019, on the 80th anniversary of the premiere, the series was completely reprinted, digitally restored, in the second volume of collected works by Yuri Lobachev, in the original Cyrillic script, including the third episode which was skipped in the 1980s, either due to unavailability of material or possible political self-censorship due to Orthodox and Russian motives.

We have a basis for understanding this comic through various researches: philosophical–anthropological interpretation was given by Žika Bogdanović<sup>13</sup>, Nikolić offered the series as a valuable for the widest younger audience<sup>14</sup>, the most important historiographical framework was given by Zdravko Zupan<sup>15</sup>, it was introduced to the American audience by Slobodan Ivkov<sup>16</sup>, and Aleksandar Zograf /Saša Rakezić/ placed it in the framework of other superheroes of the Golden age of Serbian comics, giving it a privileged place in pop culture<sup>17</sup>.

Prof. Irina Antanasijević carried out a gigantic mission of researching the dark places in the biographies of Serbian Russians, and she finally returned them to the framework of Russian culture to which they belong together with Serbian, finding their places in genre niches<sup>18</sup>. Zoran Stefanović studied the series primarily as the editor of Lobachev's collected works, but also as a

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<sup>13</sup> Bogdanović, 2006. Originally: 1974.

<sup>14</sup> Brana Nikolić. „Gospodar smrti”, *Eks almanah*, 214 (18. 3. 1980): 24.

<sup>15</sup> As the main researcher of Lobachev's work, Zupan published several texts in periodicals on this topic, as well as a lot of data in monographs. For example: Slavko Draginčić i Zdravko Zupan. *Istorija jugoslovenskog stripa 1* (Novi Sad: Forum, 1986); Zdravko Zupan. *Vek stripa u Srbiji*, (Pančevo: Kulturni centar — Galerija savremene umetnosti, 2007); Živojin Tamburić, Zdravko Zupan & Zoran Stefanović, with foreword by Paul Gravett. *The Comics We Loved: Selection of 20th Century Comics and Creators from the Region of Former Yugoslavia* (Belgrade: Omnibus, 2011), 124... The long-awaited monograph is in print: Zdravko Zupan. *Lobačev: Čardak i na nebu i na zemlji* (Beograd: Modesti stripovi i Makondo, 2020).

<sup>16</sup> Ivkov, Slobodan. „Đorđe Lobačev”, *The World Encyclopedia of Comics*, ed. by Maurice Horn, (Broomall: Chelsea House, 1999), 488–489.

<sup>17</sup> Saša Rakezić. „Maskirani pravедnici u Srbiji tridesetih”, <http://www.aleksandarzograf.com/writes/Maskirani-pravednici-u-Srbiji-tridesetih.html> (s. a.)

<sup>18</sup> Irina Antanasijević. „Supergeroi v ruskom komikse Korolevstva Jugoslaviya”, *Izotekst*, (Sbornik materialov II Konferencii issledovatelet risovannyh istoriy 17 — 19 maya 2017) (Moskva, 2017), 5–24.

Irina Antanasijević. *Russkiy komiks korolevstva Jugoslaviya* (Sankt–Petersburg: Skifiya, 2018).

Irina Antanasijević et al. *Ruski strip Kraljevine Jugoslavije, Katalog izložbe*. (Moskva–Beograd: Društvo za očuvanje nasleđa ruske emigracije Arhiv „Altera”, 2018).

Irina Antanasijević et al. *Rusi u Srbiji: Pavle i Đorđe Lobačov, diplomata i slikar, Katalog izložbe*. (Moskva–Beograd: Društvo za očuvanja nasleđa ruske emigracije Arhiv Altera, Beograd i Dom ruske dijaspore „Aleksandar Solženjicin”, 2020).

researcher interested in the archetypal and transmedial aspects of Lobachev's opus which, together with Vidić's, lies in the formative core of the *Belgrade model of transmedial narration*<sup>19</sup>. The series was critically acclaimed as the apex of its era<sup>20</sup>.

From the point of view of comics studies, but also with recently available reprints, „The Master of Death” is only now beginning to show its true meaning in the culture of its time. Now we can place this touching work in the correct framework of the author's biography, the history of the early superhero genre in the world, but even more: to comprehend where this work corresponds to the deepest spiritual and philosophical currents of his time.

### **Slavic and Serbian response to the Philosophy of Life**

„I swear by the living God and the graves of my parents that my entire life from now on will be dedicated to the good of Humanity, helping the weak and unfortunate and destroying Evil in the world... So God help me.” — „The Master of Death”, I/2, 1939.

After stoically accepting the death of his fiancée, a fate he did not deserve, Reginald of Bardan, now The Master of Death goes to the battlefields to save and heal the wounded on both sides. But this was not an unusual act for the readers, because seven years later they had already seen it as a moral model, an open ideological manifesto — and that by Mickey Mouse, more precisely by his Serbian cousin — Mika Miš.

Namely, in 1932, less than four years after the appearance of Mickey Mouse in the film and less than two in American comic strips, a Serbian screenwriter and a Russian cartoonist under pseudonyms began a long story „Adventures of Mika Miš” in the Belgrade entertainment newspaper *Veseli četvrtak (Happy Thursday)*<sup>21</sup>.

This expansion of the fictional world (according to the Marie–Laure Ryan's model)<sup>22</sup> and the monomythic hero journey of Mickey Mouse was almost unseen until then, making this comic

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<sup>19</sup> Stefanović, Zoran. „Bajka srpska, čarobni napitak rusko–američki: preobražaj Baš–Čelika iz folklora u strip i film”, *Slovenski folklor i književna fantastika*, Sastanak slavista u Vukove dane, Tršić, 27–29. 9. 2019. In print, 2020.

<sup>20</sup> „Đorđe Lobačev (1909–2002): Gospodar smrti (The Master of Death)” in: Tamburić, Zupan and Stefanović, 2011, 124.

<sup>21</sup> Reprinted as a collection: Šenšin — M. S. — Kovačević — Lazić. *Doživljaji Mike Miša*, ed. Zdravko Zupan, Zlatno doba, specijalni broj (Novi Sad — Beograd — Pančevo: Komiko — Kulturni centar Pančeva, 2014).

<sup>22</sup> Marie–Laure Ryan. *Possible Worlds, Artificial Intelligence and Narrative Theory* (Indiana University, 1991).



a world curiosity. The very moment we are interested in comes after Mika's arrival in Europe with a group of black friends and an ostrich, where he visited France, Germany and the Soviet Union („Russian land", under the walls of the „Holy Kremlin", where he hung out with the Bolshevik commissar on Red Square, reminiscent of Trotsky), and after Siberia, they found themselves in the Far East, in the war between China and Japan, which lasted briefly in 1932 because of Manchuria. Mika immediately becomes involved in the fully documentary reality of the war, as the Master of Death later did.

71. Mika grasps the task eagerly  
around the severely wounded,  
he did not ask who was who:  
he takes out of the mess  
both the Chinese and the Japanese  
healing the wounded place<sup>23</sup>.

This was a manifest political and moral act, fully conscious, as such we found more in this story, made as a continuous several months of fun with surreal events. The story stands at the beginning of the modern Serbian and Yugoslav comics and its way towards shaking off of juvenile bans and returning of the criticism of reality in comics. This indeed was an intention, but also something much more serious, because we find a proof in a close example:

78 The Japanese man offers him a rifle  
scolding all Chinese:  
„Fight alongside us, Mika!"  
But Mika smiles slightly,  
he will not sin his soul:  
„Every man is my brother!"<sup>24</sup>

Mika's last sentence is well known from another, elite context, and we perceive here a significant cultural discovery. For familiar with Serbian and world circumstances of the 1930s, the series itself was already quite unusual, and especially it was Mika's participation in real geopolitical and diplomatic circumstances.

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<sup>23</sup>Kovačević et al, 1932/2014.

<sup>24</sup> Kovačević et al,1932/2014.

And the circumstances in the most powerful parts of the world were militaristic, although justified by universalism and the „higher goals” of chauvinistic, racist, communist, religious and liberal–market („progressive”) ideologies. Aggressiveness (which saw itself as a heroism) determined popular culture and art of that time, which thereby had essentially expansive, military and proselytic tone, even in the worlds of imagination<sup>25</sup>.

The Kingdom of Yugoslavia was Eurasia in a nutshell, torn apart by ideological extremes. A country with unhealed wounds of the Great War, stretched from one side between the need for unitarism, self–development and independence, and, on the other hand, faced with an unholy coalition of imported bolshevism that has partnered with the separatist–profascist Roman Catholic and Muslim movements, whose collective goal was the demise of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

That is why contemporaries could interpret Mickey’s position only as a manifest ideology, and not as a simple expression of generic humanity, which is not revolutionary in local culture (because it is one of the two formative and binding concepts of Serbian folk culture: *čojstvo i junaštvo* = humanity and valor).

The information about the authors who hid behind the pseudonyms of the series about Belgrade Mickey Mouse reveals new dimensions of Serbian and Slavic interwar culture, both popular and elite. Strip initially drew immigrant Ivan Shenshin (1897–1944), a descendant of the Russian elite, soldier of the White movement in the Russian civil war. The script was written by Božidar Kovačević (1902–1990), avant–garde author in the youth, noted for his cosmic sensibility and expressionist fiction, even controversial — in the story „Revenge of Western Science” from 1922, he shows how a Serbian scientist in order to confirm theories of closeness of humans and apes, fertilizes an Ape female in Australia<sup>26</sup> — and in the later history of Serbian culture, he is remembered as a distinguished writer, pedagogue and cultural worker, a former educator of the underage Yugoslav heir to the throne Peter II Karađorđević.

It is the presence of Kovačević that, for the first time in the history of Serbian and Slavic culture, gives us the key to a capital phenomenon.

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<sup>25</sup> Dejan Ajdačić „Ideološke projekcije u slovenskim naučnofantastičnim književnostima”, *Slovenska naučna fantastika*, zbornik, eds. Dejan Ajdačić & Bojan Jović (Beograd: Institut za književnost i umetnost, 2011), 343–382.

<sup>26</sup> Milovanović, 2016, 48–49.

When we look at who actually imagined, created, edited, ordered and distributed Belgrade comics, dime novels and other products of popular culture, we find that they are elite names of Serbian and Yugoslav culture, art, science, avant-garde and society. They worked creatively in a unique mental and narrative model that we titled the *Belgrade model of transmedial storytelling*<sup>27</sup> and which influenced the entire sphere of culture and society.

It is important what they ideologically and philosophically incorporated in their works, including comics, particularly those flanking the years between „The Adventures of Mickey Mouse”(1932) and „The Master of Death” (1940).

In the concise book of truly capital significance for the history of ideas in Serbian and Slavic cultures *Svetosavlje i filozofija života: Skica za aktuelizaciju međuratne rasprave o ideji svetosavlja (Retractatio)* (2019) professor and philosopher Bogoljub Šijaković<sup>28</sup> after almost a hundred years of a collective „structural amnesia”, presented a distinct Serbian philosophical movement — to which Božidar Kovačević belongs, and indirectly artists like Lobachev — above the divisions into left and right, theistic and atheistic, natural and technological. After the ideological ban on studying that movement in Socialist Yugoslavia, a movement that was anti-fascist and anti-militarist, but also anti-liberal and anti-communist, we are now being convinced of the „authenticity of the opinion that pretended to be an epochal Serbian, Yugoslav and all-Slavic critique of European culture, humanism and nihilism in the collapse after the Great War”, as Šijaković said<sup>29</sup>.

This movement of international importance combined impulses from world and domestic culture. Philosophy of Life by Henri Bergson; Historiosophy of Oswald Spengler or even his predecessors like Russian Slavophiles; Slavic mission of holly brothers Cyril and Methodius which was based on the inherited right of every culture for its own local form — all of that were connected with the local cultural and mystical layers of Serbian spiritual being: the remnants of archaic Indo-European religion which in the Middle Ages turned into „Kosovo oath”, and in

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<sup>27</sup> Zoran Stefanović. „U potrazi sa papirnim Holivudom”, (in) Antanasijević, Irina et al. *Ruski strip Kraljevine Jugoslavije, Katalog izložbe* (Moskva–Beograd: Društvo za očuvanje nasleđa ruske emigracije Arhiv „Alter”, 2018), 243–244.

<sup>28</sup> Bogoljub Šijaković. *Svetosavlje i filozofija života: Skica za aktuelizaciju međuratne rasprave o ideji svetosavlja (Retractatio)*, (Novi Sad: Pravoslavna reč, 2019). Unofficial translation of the title: *Svetosavlje /Saint Sava's way/ and the Philosophy of Life: A Sketch for the Re-Actualization of the Interwar Debate on the Idea of Svetosavlje (Retractatio)*.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 9,

Yugoslavia in the Vidovdan cult of the new nationalism (which requires that the *moral choice* is normative, even at the cost of life), but also blending with fine civilizational nuances in learning of the first Serbian Archbishop — reformer and the Enlightener Sava Nemanjić (12th century) who managed to find ideological and cultural balance for Serbian–style Christianity, to be at the same time universal and domestic — both progressive and conservative.

Among the main representatives of various Serbian variants of the Philosophy of Life, intuitionism, critique of the spiritual crisis of Western culture, Svetosavlje and similar currents, Šijaković identifies philosophers such as Nikolaj Velimirović, Dimitrije Mitrinović, Vladimir Vujić, Miloš Đurić, Momčilo Selesković, Prvoš Slankamenac, Ksenija Atanasijević, Filip Medić, Dušan Stojanović, Justin Popović, Dimitrije Najdanović and others... They were influenced mainly by Henri Bergson (1859–1941), understood by some younger Serbs as „liberator of the human spirit and creator of the philosophy of the future”, and Oswald Spengler (1880–1936), but also by so many various thinkers such as Rudolf Eucken, Hermann Keyserling, Jean–Marie Guyau, Maurice Maeterlinck, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Vladimir Solovyov, Vasily Rozanov, Nikolai Berdyaev...<sup>30</sup> Šijaković says „From them, Serbian philosophers took over the critique of rationalism and metaphysics, the critique of technique and politics in the analysis of the spiritual crisis of time, and the critique of Western culture in general”. He points out: „The focus of interest were the philosophy of culture, problems of ethics and aesthetics, philosophy of history, as well as issues of concrete life in the national cultural and political context, which obliges everything to action and not just contemplation”<sup>31</sup>. Šijaković reminds that they were following Guyau’s notion „that ethics, religion and aesthetics historically develop from the life instinct (vitalism) contained in the overall being”<sup>32</sup>.

This is a radical rupture of young philosophers, such as Miloš Đurić at the time, with the Neo–Kantianism (notions of Cohen, Natorp, Cassirer, Windelband, even Husserl), all with the

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<sup>30</sup> Full list in Šijaković, p. 19: Rudolf Eucken (1846–1926), Hermann Alexander Graf Keyserling (1880–1946), Richard Müller–Freienfels (1882–1949), Eduard Spranger (1882–1963), Hans Freyer (1887–1969), Alfred Fouillée (1838–1912), Jean–Marie Guyau (1854–1888), Maurice Maeterlinck (1862–1949), Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky (1821–1881), Vladimir Sergeyevich Solovyov (1853–1900), Vasily Vasilievich Rozanov (1856–1919), Nikolai Alexandrovich Berdyaev (1874–1948), William James (1842–1910), John Dewey (1859–1952), Ferdinand Canning Scott Schiller (1864–1937), Benedetto Croce (1866–1952).

<sup>31</sup> Šijaković, 20.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

aspiration that philosophy must be saved from the „ice pole of rigid abstractions in frozen formally–static philosophies”<sup>33</sup>.

Đurić says in 1925: „The Philosophy of Life takes Science only as an emanation of Life, as a construction of the Spirit that serves its purposes. The intellect, as an organ of Science, does not lose its validity, but loses its dominant position in Gnoseology (...), it does not dominate, but life dominates it...”<sup>34</sup> or „In addition to logic, we want to emphasize the logos, ... in addition to abstract laws there is *creative content*, in addition to the concept there are *entelechy* and *meaning*, in addition to the mathematics of the dialectical process there is *free creative initiative*”<sup>35</sup>.

According to them, Slavs have the potential to realize this ideal, so Đurić considers the cultural mission of the Slavs: can the Slavs unite East (Ethics) and West (Technology) in a „higher cultural synthesis”?<sup>36</sup> Šijaković sublimates: „Just as returning to the mythical enables the experience of the original and the archaic, so the national should take us to the universal.”<sup>37</sup>

This was also a kind of response to the German study *The Spirit of the Eastern Church, different from the Western Church*<sup>38</sup> by Carl Gustav Adolf Harnack (1851–1930), but also on Hegel’s view (G. W. F. Hegel, 1770–1831) that Slavs have no role in history.

Serbs — hypercritical towards themselves, state, fatherland, descendants, ancestors, and being representatives of norm of Kingdom of Heaven, concept of Proto–Indo–European roots — created a nationalism that is different from modern nationalism that idolizes bureaucratic behemoth state created in Western Europe of the 18th century. This local philosophy proposes Serbian, Yugoslav and Slavic (as well as other) nationalism with a desire to make a noble

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<sup>33</sup> Miloš Đurić, „Anri Bergzon ili filosofija stvaranja”, *Misao* III, knj. V (1921) sv. 7, 481–488; sv. 8, 574–583 = M. Đurić, *Izabrana dela*, tom II: *Kulturna istorija i rani filosofski spisi* (Beograd: Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva 1997), 272–283: 273. After Šijaković, 25.

<sup>34</sup> Miloš Đurić, Mit o sunčevoj sestri ili poznato i nepoznato u mitskoj filosofiji, *Živa filosofija* sv. 1, Beograd 1925, 7 = M. Đurić, *Izabrana dela*, tom II: *kulturna istorija i rani filosofski spisi* (Beograd: Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva 1997), 144172: 146. After Šijaković, 27.

<sup>35</sup> Miloš Đurić, *Problemi filosofije kulture* (Beograd: Izdanje Knjižarnice Rajkovića i Ćukovića, 1929) = M. Đurić, *Izabrana dela*, tom II: *Kulturna istorija i rani filosofski spisi* (Beograd: Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva 1997), 381–489: 489. After Šijaković, 29.

<sup>36</sup> Miloš Đurić, „Kulturna misija Slovena”, *Srpski književni glasnik*, n. s. knj. XI (1924) br. 7, 523–530; br. 8, 605–612 = M. Đurić, *Izabrana dela*, tom II: *Kulturna istorija i rani filosofski spisi* (Beograd: Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva 1997), 256–268. After Šijaković, 29.

<sup>37</sup> Šijaković, 29.

<sup>38</sup> Adolf Harnack, „Der Geist der morgenländischen Kirche im Unterschied von der abendländischen”, *SPAW*, Berlin 1913, Bd. 1, 157–183. After Šijaković, 31.

contribution to universal culture — with a strong attitude towards its own origins but strictly anti-racist and anti-chauvinistic; brave in actions but anti-extremist; mystical but not religiously exclusive; turned to social progress but anti-capitalist; collective but anti-totalitarian; scientifically-cosmically defined but with attention to the integrity of living individual and biological communities, etc.

This is a completely distinct, albeit poorly studied, spiritual movement in Europe and in its scope harmoniously worked Serbs, Yugoslav oriented South Slavs, Russians, Jews, and other nations; believers and atheists, democratically oriented people across the political spectrum. That included openly leftist and not especially religious Lobachev, who in his mature years opted for a fatherland that was no longer Russian Empire but the Soviet Union.

Šijaković stresses that this phenomenon has cultural characteristics of classicism, which is „a reception and transformation of classical Greek culture as a characteristic feature of Serbian culture”<sup>39</sup>.

Ambitions were a universal and not ethnophiletic at all (ethnophilia is a heresy in Orthodox Christian theology). Unlike most of powerful ideological and religious systems of that time, Serbian theology, after Nikolaj Velimirović, should have a „non-exclusive and wide-spread spirit and love for all peoples”<sup>40</sup>.

Šijaković says: „as opposed to internationalism and globalism, in which national identity is sacrificed for the sake of some abstract society (‘humanity’, ‘Europeanism’, ‘Yugoslavism’) that is actually produced and imposed by global power structures, the original, cultivated and ennobled national identity should be rehabilitated, as a cultural and spiritual category, so that it does not contain imperial pretensions, to be imposed on others”<sup>41</sup>.

Najdanović, at the celebration of St. Sava’s Day in The Fourth Male Grammar School in Belgrade in 1935 stands out that St. Sava’s *cultural nationalism* „a priori rejected any notion of racial and biological sense of a nation, a nation as blood group, which would emerged historically as a conquering rapacity”, but essential was that „our Balkan fate, our philosophy of culture and history in all its splendid awesomeness, as religion, ethics, philosophy and art, are

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<sup>39</sup> Šijaković, 155.

<sup>40</sup> Nikolaj Velimirović, „Nacionalizam Svetoga Save”, *Pravoslavlje*, god. II, br. 45 (1935) 102–109.

<sup>41</sup> Šijaković, 56.

inexplicable without Sava's Christianity"<sup>42</sup>. Najdanović advocates that the Svetosavlje should be opposed to „natiolatry”, „racial–biological notion of the people”, „anti–Orthodox, raw, and cruel nationalism”<sup>43</sup>.

In behavior of the Master of Death we see also a confirmation of the attitude of Miloš Crnjanski that, for Sava Nemanjić „the highest precepts for a human are altruism and a sense of compassion...”<sup>44</sup>.

That Svetosavlje has a universal and normative panhumanistic sense we also see in the words of Vladan Popović:

„Our centuries–old experience is that Svetosavlje as a concept is nothing but the concept of advocating for moral order, for legality in a climate of freedom, but not in our usual sense of the word, but the advocating for satisfying all those needs that are organically related to our needs of body and spirit.” (...) „*The notion of Svetosavlje in our country is nothing but the notion of our devotion to the moral structure of the world, in the depths of which lies the moral beauty and innocence of goodness. /Our italics. Z. S./* There is also faith in the possibility of improvement, but also helping others to improve themselves. The pragmatic–sociological emphasis in this experience is not nationalism, but an example of patience, tolerance, commitment, and sacrifice to the extreme limits of the victim's rationality, or to the point where rationality itself begins to be questioned; because the moral order must be defended. (...) That is why we are loyal to the Svetosavlje, because its root is in this universality from which came the most beautiful traditions in our way of life, which is progressively spreading around the world today; but, on the other hand, nationalism also has its deep justification, it protects us from

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<sup>42</sup> Dimitrije Najdanović, „Smisao i snaga naše istorije”, odštampano iz *Izveštaja Četvrte muške realne gimnazije u Beograduza 1934–35. šk. godinu*, Beograd 1935 = *Filosofija istorije Imanuela Hermana Fihtea i drugi spisi iz filosofije, bogoslovlja i književnosti* (Beograd: Jasen, Fond istine o Srbima, 2003), 153–167., 2003, 423–431: 430. After Šijaković, 60.

<sup>43</sup> After Šijaković, 141.

<sup>44</sup> Miloš Crnjanski, „Sveti Sava”, *Vreme*, god. XII, br. 3617 (27. I 1932) 5 = M. Crnjanski, *Sveti Sava, Dnevnik o Čarnojeviću, Pripovedna proza* (Beograd: Štampar Makarije, Podgorica: Oktoih, 2008), 115.

‘uniformity’, ‘the establishment of universal hegemony of some great power or group of powers’...”<sup>45</sup>.

This attitude in the healthiest part of Serbian culture remained constant even during and after the experience of religiously motivated and fratricidal genocide that Serbs, accompanied with Jews and Roma, experienced in the Second World War by the Croatian Ustashas and their allies.

In his WW II sermons, Ava Justin Popović wishes for a civilization in which „man will not be underestimated, mutilated, beheaded, mechanized, robotized for the interest of the class, nor for the interest of the nation, nor for the interest of the state, nor for the interest of culture, nor for the interest of civilization, nor for the interest of science, nor for the interest of religion”. He envisages social model „in which the person and society complete and support each other”, „a society that represents and truly is a single organism”<sup>46</sup>.

Here we see the approach and criticism of Western civilization similar to Roman Catholic theologian Henri de Lubac (1896–1991), and works from his book *Le Drame de l’humanisme athée* (Paris 1944).

Also, through his *theohumanism*, Ava emphasizes „faith and love, fasting and prayer, meekness and modesty, mercy and kindness, hope and suffering, justice and truth.” „Realized, these virtues give a holy man. And that means: a perfect and complete man.”

Ava Justin explicitly says about the human individual: „endowed with a divine soul, he represents in a small world of all heavenly values. In that is the divine majesty, and the divine inviolability of his personality. (...) Therefore, every man is our brother, our immortal brother, because every man has the image of God in his soul. And thus it has an eternal, divine value, therefore no man should be considered as a material, a mean, a tool. Even the most insignificant person represents absolute value”<sup>47</sup>. He repeats this as one of the main principles of Saint Sava’s

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<sup>45</sup> Vladan Popović, „Svetosavlje, nacionalizam i sekularizacija našeg društva”, *Teološki pogledi*, god. I, br. 6 (1968) 373–401: 401. After Šijaković, 127.

<sup>46</sup> Dr. Justin Sp. Popović, *Svetosavlje kao filozofija života*, Srpska religiozna biblioteka Svečanik knj. 11, München: Iskra 1953. = Prepodobni Otac Justin, *Sabrana dela*, knj. 4: *Pravoslavna Crkva i ekumenizam / Svetosavlje kao filozofija života* (Beograd, 2001), 171–267: 229.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*, 186.



way of education: "3) an enlightened man sees in every man his immortal brother and eternal brother"<sup>48</sup>.

These words of the clergyman Ava Justin are identical to the words of Kovačević's Mickey Mouse!

But Mika smiles slightly,  
he would not sin his soul:  
„Every man is my brother!”

This closes the full circle of a culture — which feels itself not only as Serbian, but also as sincerely Slavic, European and global — in which even the highest ranked philosophers, theologians and artists speak and act in accordance with literally the same words and actions as we saw in the comics with Mika Miš and the Master of Death. That was the culture determined for the highest, heavenly values in beastly times, a culture for which art and entertainment served to enrich and liberate individual, and not for simple propaganda.

Šijaković, as a counterweight to today's post-communist *amnesia of Serbian culture*, highlights this in pre-war philosophical movement:

„This authentic notion was not provincial, no matter how much it was a reflection of the epochal ideas of Europe and the West and the East (Philosophy of Life, Slavophilia). The critique of humanism as essentialist anthropologism, although it was not a Serbian invention, was not only a connection to European thought flows but it was also an opposition to the idea of the *Übermensch*, by advocating theohumanism and the idea of the All-Man. (...) Especially today, for functional reasons, a structural amnesia is imposed as the extinguishing of selected points in memory. It is transferred from power structures to historical science, literature, art, 'theory', in which systemic damage in memory (*damnatio in memoria*) is performed — deformation, manipulation and annulment of memory and remembrance"<sup>49</sup>.

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 264.

<sup>49</sup> Šijaković, 177.

## **Conclusion: a hidden being of Slavic popular culture**

By carefully examining the realias, we see that the roots of the most vital part of the interwar Serbian culture (even today) are completely different from what the regime's interpretation suggested to us during the communism in the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia. Pop culture and the entertainment industry were the integral part of the major intellectual and spiritual aspirations, and always were in touch with reality. It is moving to see how this phenomenon relies on the very deepest psychological foundations of Serbian, Slovenian and Indo-European metaphysical sense — existence defined in prehistory „for the Kingdom of Heaven, not of the Earth”.

Two years after „The Master of Death”, when the war came to Yugoslavia in 1941, each of these cultural workers showed their commitment and action, thus risking their lives.

Each of the protagonists in this movement suffered interruption of his personal development in the Second World War, and ironically they had to seek survival not in the desired Serbian or Slavic model of society, but in other, foreign models, forced to participate on the side of various movements and within various social frames: eventually losing in the Yugoslav royalist movement, escaping to Anglo-American capitalist oriented democracy, being in quisling collaboration with the German occupying forces, living willingly and unwillingly with the communist illegal movements, and later inside the totalitarian Stalin's Soviet Union or semi-totalitarian Tito's Yugoslavia. Some of them ended life in exile because they had false indictment filed in socialist Yugoslavia.

\*\*\*

In all aspects, „The Master of Death” features main points from the *Orientalive Topography of the Ideas* of the interwar Svetosavlje, as classified by Prof. Šijaković<sup>50</sup>. We see that the main pillars of this spirit were manifestly inserted into his work by Lobachev (moderate leftist), just as his associate from *Politika* daily newspapers Božidar Kovačević seven years earlier did in „The adventures of Mika Miš”, just like most other main artists did, discreetly and in aestheticized manner. „The Master of Death” is the crowning proof of how popular culture has applied in the form of entertainment a specific ideas of All-Man, Svetosavlje, and concepts of national emancipation by Slavic enlighteners Cyril and Methodius. This series is another

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<sup>50</sup> Šijaković, 135–183.

evidence that a thorough revision of the history of culture and ideas of Serbs and related peoples is needed.

If we understand the whole field of popular culture — its World — as an entity, one ultimate *Gesamtkunstwerk*, a total work of art, then we are obliged to accept the most popular phenomena as something more than a mere reflection of fashion, market, entertainment or ideology. The foundations of today's most popular phenomena are ideologically and anthropologically serious, metaphysical and transcendent, just as if it were an elite, religious or folklore culture.

Such research model is emerging now in popular culture studies and in it the most obvious phenomena, forms once despised, will reveal its true face. Methodologically speaking, it is necessary to combine inner world of an artistic work with documentary realities (history and biography), but also with the deepest spiritual currents of the era.

This is especially important for comics, visual narration, an ancient art form of high penetrability and communication with all kinds of the audience. Of great importance in it remains the Serbian Russian Yuri Lobachev — the most influential Eastern European author, who participated in the 1930s in the founding of modern European comics and even invented some genres in graphic novels — in the domain of Serbian epics and folklore (hence, Slavic and Indo-European), the golden age of Serbian Middle Ages, or uprisings against the Turkish occupation, with numerous fantasy and adventure works for children and youth.

\*\*\*\*

In terms of cultural anthropology and history of ideas remains, therefore, a wide field of research of forms in which old phenomena gain new impetus with the help of modernist tools: masked avant-garde, technologized science fiction and visual storytelling as a means of entering all minds.

In „The Master of Death” we get one more proof that models in popular culture of the Serbs, Russians and other Slavs have their indigenous component, even when they are designed or inspired by the most convincing and the most influential role models from Western Europe or the United States. That is why it is possible that Yuri Lobachev, literally the Yugoslav comic strip artist with the highest affinity for American culture, gave the most autochthonous model.

While the military spirit was strong in the pop-culture of Europe and the United States in the 1930s and the 1940s, there was an exception, ethical oasis of Belgrade and a part of Serbian

culture within the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the country still not restored since Great War, where the picture of the coming world conflict in comics was most often oriented toward peace and universal values.

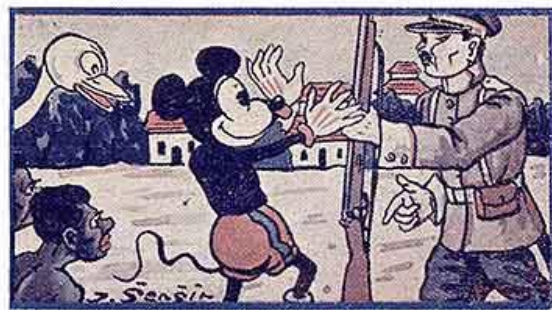
We have seen that the entertainment industry at least partly reflected the merging of the Philosophy of Life of Henri Bergson and other European thinkers with the ideas of Serbian national tradition and theology, which led to a movement whose ambition was to realize cosmopolitan ideals through national ones.

Belgrade's comic superheroes and antiheroes — different from contemporary American models — through a peaceful attitude, science fiction and mystical ethical fantasy bring a unique concept in which Dostoevsky's All-Man shows himself only as the other side of Tesla's Man — the Automaton of the Universe.



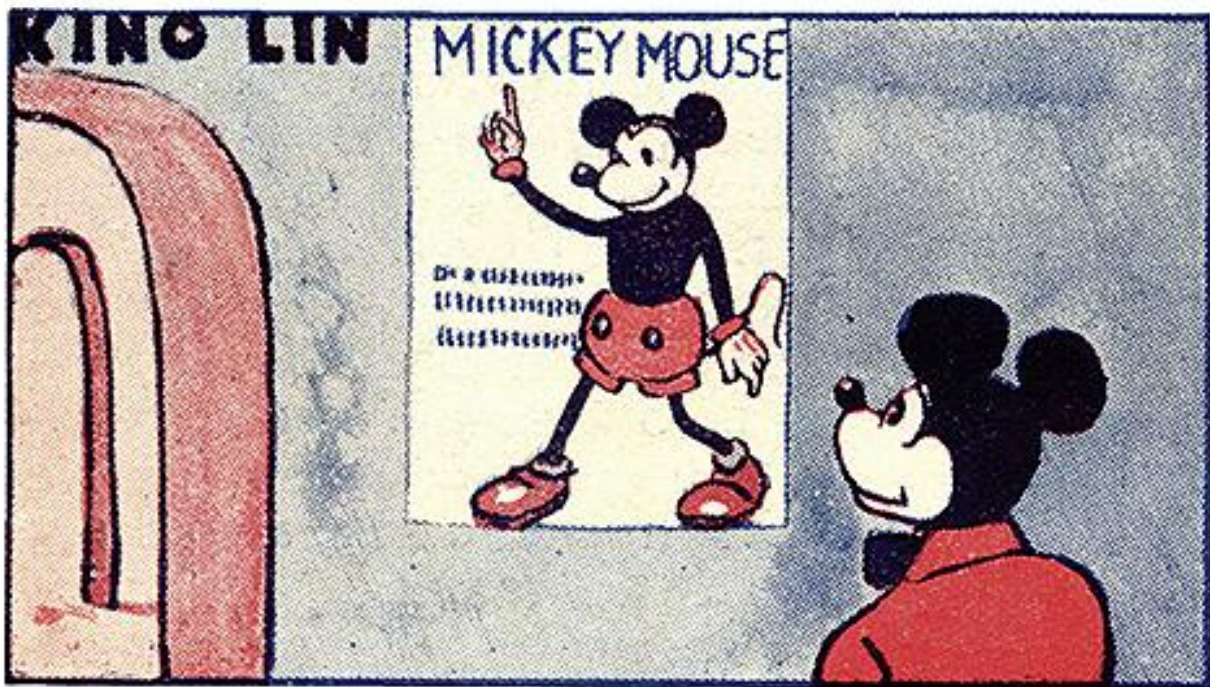
77

К'о муња је Мика пао  
и дружини миг је дао  
да изгину тобож сви,  
а после се лепо дигли  
и на поток с нојем стигли,  
брат му перу рањени.



78

Јапанац му пушку нуди  
и Кинезе притом куди:  
„С нама, Мико, хајд' у бој!“  
Ал' Мика се благо смеши,  
неће душу он да греш:  
„Сваки човек брат је мој!“



267    Одједанпут Мика стаде,  
поглед му на излог паде, —  
пред њима је биоскоп.  
Мики-Маус се данас даје,  
око њега Црнци граје  
а Јапанац биче: „Стоп!“

# Господар смрти



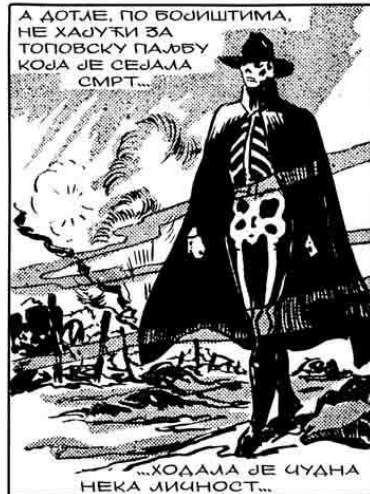
СМРТ ЈЕ РАШИРИЛА СВОЈА КРИЛА НАД ЕВРОПОМ РАТ ЈЕ БУКНУО И НАД ЕВРОПОМ СУ СЕ СТАЛИ ПРЕГОНИТИ МУТНИ ОБЛАЦИ ПУНИ СМРТИ И СТРАХОТА, НЕВНИ СТАНОВНИЦИ НАПУСТИШЕ ДОМОВЕ И ПОРОДИЦЕ ДА ПОСТАЊУ ХРАНА ТОПОВСКИМ И ПУШЧАНИМ ЦЕВИМА, ГОСПОДИН УЖАС ЗАЦАРИО ЈЕ НАД ПЛОДНИМ ЊИВАМА И ВЕЧИТО ЗАДИМЉЕНИМ ДИМЉАЦИМА ФАБРИКА...



МОРИМА ПОЧЕШЕ ДА ПЛОВЕ ОКЛОПЉЕНЕ ТВРЂАВЕ, НАОРУЖАНЕ НАЈУБИЛАСКИЈИМ ОРУЏИМА ДВАДЕСЕТОГ ВЕКА... СЛОБОДА ЛУДСКА БИ ОГРАНИЧЕНА, А ТРГОВИНА СЕ УПУТИ СТАЗОМ ИЗУМИРАЊА



ГЛОБОДНИМ ЕВРОПСКИМ НЕБОМ ЗАГОСПОДАРИШЕ ОКЛОПЉЕНИ БОМБАРДЕРИ...



А ДОТЛЕ, ПО БОЈИШТИМА, НЕ ХАЈУТИ ЗА ТОПОВСКУ ПАЉБУ КОЈА ЈЕ СЕЈАЛА СМРТ...

...ХОДАМА ЈЕ ЧУДНА НЕКА ЛИЧНОСТ...



...РАЊЕНИКЕ, ПАЛЕ У ОКРШАЈУ, ПРЕВИДАЈЕ СУ ЈЕЗИВЕ РУКЕ...



...И ЗАПАЈАДЕ ИХ СПАСОНОСНИМ ГУТЉАЈИМА ВОДЕ, СПАСАВАЈУКИ ЊИХОВЕ ЖИВОТЕ...



ЗА ТО ВРЕМЕ У ДОМОВИМА РАТНИКА...

БОЖЕ!... САЧУВАЈ НАМ ТАТУ И ДАЈ ДА НАМ СЕ ЖИВ ВРАТИ...



ДОКЛЕ ЋЕ СЕ ЛУДИ МЕЂУ СОБОМ УБИЈАТИ... ВАЈДА НА СВЕТУ НЕ ЛЕКНИ ПРОКЛЕСТВО ДВАДЕСЕТОГ КОЛЕНА КАО НА МЕНИ,

# ГОСПОДАРИ ЕШРЦИ



ДОК РАТ БЕСНИ НАД  
ЕВРОПОМ ПОБОЈИШУ  
ЛУТА ПРОКЛЕТНИК  
КОЈИ ЖЕЛКО ДОВЕДИ  
ДЕШИМА ДА СРЕРЕ ПРОК-  
ЛЕТО ТВО СА РОДА СВОГА  
ОН ТИ МАШЕ РАЂЕНИЦИ  
МА НЕ ОБЗИРУЈИ СЕ И  
НАРОДНОСТ ЊЕГОВЕ  
РУКЕ СИНЕ САМО  
ДОБРАТА ОНИ  
ПИТАНА КОЈИ СЕ  
УСТАРИ КО  
БОРИ, ЊЕТА НЕ  
ИНТЕРЕСУ ЈЕ НАРОД-  
НОСТ НИ ПРИПАД-  
НОСТ... ДОБРО  
ИЗБИЈА ИЗ  
СВИХ ЊЕГОВИХ  
ДЕЛА...

4



ДВАНАЕСТОГ ДАНА  
РАТНИХ ОПЕРАЦИЈА  
ЈОШ ЈЕДНА  
ЖРТВА... ГДЕ  
СУ ОНА  
СРЕТНА  
ВРЕМЕ...  
НА КАДА  
СУ СЕ ЈУДИ  
БОРИЛИ СТРЕ-  
ЛАМА И МАСЕ-  
ВИМА! МОРАМ  
ПОМОЋИ  
ОВОМ  
ЈАДНИКУ.



МОЖДА ЈЕ ЈОШ ЖИВ!  
ТРЕБА ГА СПАСТИ  
ДОК ГА ПЛАМЕН  
НИЈЕ ПРОГУТАО.

МАМО  
ДОЛГ  
ШЕ



НИЈЕ ЈЕ... ЊЕГОВ ДРУГ ЈЕ  
ИЗГОРЕО, БАР ЈЕДНОГ  
ДА СПАСЕМ, МОЖ-  
ДА ЋУ ОБИМ  
ИЗБРИСА-  
ТИ ЈЕДНО  
СЛОВО  
ПРОКЛЕТ-  
СТВА...



СМРТИ, ВЕЋ СИ ТУ, БОЈЕ ДА  
СИ... УХВА... ТИ... ЈА... САМ ГОРА...  
У... АМСТ... ОН... ТЕ... ПРОД... А...  
СМ... Р... Т... МИ... ИИ... ОН... И...  
ЉУ... ДИ... СТРАШ... А... Н...  
ПРО... ОРУ... Ж...  
...ДА... УМ...



СВЕЖА ХУМКО, ЗАКЛИЊЕМ  
СЕ ЦРНОМ ЗЕМЉОМ И  
БОЖИМ ДА ЋУ РЕШИТИ  
ТАЈНУ, КОЈА МИ ЈЕ ПО-  
ВЕРЕНА У НЕПОТПУНОСТИ  
ТИ, СРЕТНИ НЕСРЕТНИ-  
СЕ, КОЈИ ЛЕЖИШ У  
ОВОМ ХЛАДНОМ  
ГРОБУ, ПОСИВАЈ  
МИРНО ВЕЧИТИМ  
СНОМ!



ИСТОВРЕМЕНО, У  
ЈЕДНОМ МИСТЕРИОЗ-  
НОМ ЛАБОРАТОРИЈУМУ  
НЕКИ ЧОВЕК РАДИО  
ЈЕ НА ПРОНАМАСКУ  
ПОМОЋУ КОЈА РЕШО  
ГРОЗНИЈОМ СМРТУ  
ТАМАНИТИ СВЕТА...



ТЕШКО ЧОВЕКАНСТВУ...  
МОЈА ОСВЕТА  
ЋЕ ГА СТИТИ... САМО РАДИ,  
СТАРСЕ, ПА  
ЋЕ СВЕТА  
СТЕЊАТИ ПОД  
УДАРЦИМА НАШЕГ  
ОРУЖЈА,

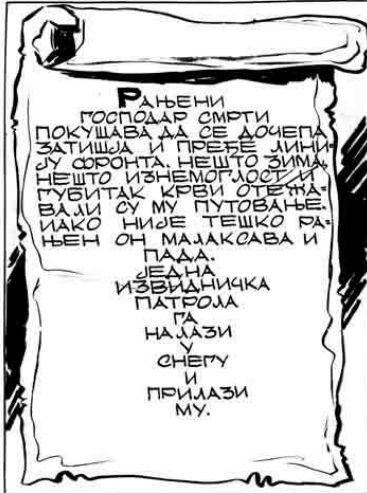
ТИ РЕШ ИМА-  
ТИ ОСВЕТУ А  
ЈА ЗЛАТО... ЗЛАТО, ПОМОЋУ  
КОГА СЕ ГОСПОДАРИ  
СВЕТОМ...

# ГОСПОДАР СМРТИ



СМРТ!

ЗАР НЕ ВИДИШ  
ДА ЈЕ МАСКИРАН?  
И РАЊЕН... НИЈЕ  
ЧОВЕК КАО ЈА  
И ТИ...



РАЊЕНИ  
ГОСПОДАР СМРТИ  
ПОКУШАВА ДА СЕ ДОЧЕПА  
ЗАТИШЉА И ПРЕБЕ ЛИНИ  
ОУ СФРОНТА. НЕШТО ЗИМА,  
НЕШТО ИЗНЕМОГЛОСТ И  
ГУБИТАК КРВИ ОТЕЖА  
ВАЈИ СУ МУ ПУТОВАЊЕ.  
ИАКО НИЈЕ ТЕШКО РА-  
ЊЕН ОН МАЈАКСАВА И  
ПАДА.  
ЈЕДНА  
ИЗВИДНИЧКА  
ПАТРОЛА  
ГА  
НАЈАЗИ  
СНЕГУ  
И  
ПРИЛАЗИ  
МУ.



ИМА ЛИ ТЕЖИЊУ  
КАО И ОСТАЛИ ЈУДИ?...

НАРАВНО... ЧОВЕК  
ЈЕ, САМО НЕ ЗНАМ  
ЗАШТО СЕ ОВАКО  
МАСКИРАО... ПО...  
НЕКЕМО ГА...



ЧУЈЕШ ЛИ ШТО?...

ЧИНИ МИ СЕ  
ДА ЗУЈИ  
АВИОН...

С МУКОМ СУ ВОЈНИЦИ НОСИ-  
ЛИ РАЊЕНИКА ПРЕКО СНЕ-  
ГА И ЗАВЕЈАНИХ ПОЉА...



НЕБУТИМ ЈЕ АВИЈАТИЧАР ПРИ  
МЕТИО ПАТРОЛУ...

КО ЈЕ ОНО?... ЧЕКАЈ  
ДА ИМ ПОШАЉЕМ  
НЕКОЛИКО МЕТАКА...



ДА ВИДИМ ДА ЛИ  
МЕ БУКА И ОКО ЈОШ  
МЕ УВЕК СЛУШЕ...



МИТРА БЕЗ ЈЕ ЗАКЛОКОТАО...



КОЛИКО ЛИ ЛЕЖИМ ОВАЕ?...  
АХ... САД СЕ СЕКАМ ОВЕГА...  
ОВИ ЈУДИ СУ МЕ ПОВЕЛИ  
СОБОМ, А САДА... САДА СУ ОНИ  
МРТВИ... ОСЕГАМ ДА МИ ЈЕ  
КРАД...

ПОСЈЕ ИЗВЕШНОР ВРЕМЕ-  
НА ПРОКЉЕТНИК ЈЕ ЗА ТРЕ-  
НУТАК ДОШАО СВЕСТИ...



А Онда га је изнемоглост  
обхрваља и он је поново пао.  
Ветар и вежавица  
брисали су преко снежних  
поља, сејући смрт и отраву...  
Трагедија се ближила  
Крају...



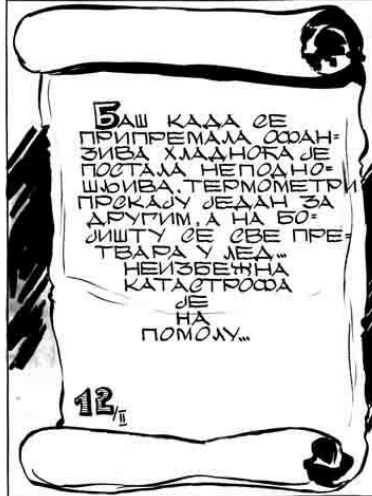


# ГОСПОДАРИ ЕШРТИ



СТРАХОТА... КОЛИКО ПОКАЗУЈЕ ТЕРМОМЕТАР?

ЗАР НЕ ВИДИШ ДА ЈЕ ПРОШЛО ГОТОВО КАТАСТРОФА!



БАШ КАДА СЕ ПРИПРЕМАЛА ОФАНЗИВА ХЛАДНОГА ЈЕ ПОСТАЛА НЕПОДНОШЛИВА. ТЕРМОМЕТРИ ПРЕКАЈУ ЈЕДАН ЗА ДРУГИМ, А НА 50° ЖИШТУ СЕ СВЕ ПРЕТВАРА У ЛЕД... НЕИЗБЕЖНА КАТАСТРОФА ЈЕ НА ПОМОЛУ...

12



ЛИНИЈА СМОРТА ЈЕ ОПУСТАЛА, А СВЕ СЕ ПРЕТВОРИЛО У ЛЕД... ХИЉАДЕ ЈУДИ ГУБЕ ЖИВОТЕ...



НЕСРЕКНИ ВОЈНИЦИ, ОСТАВЉЕНИ НЕВРЕМЕНУ НА МИЛОСТ И НЕМИЛОСТ, СМРЗАВАЈУ СЕ НА СВОМ ПОХОДУ...

СВЕ СЕ ПРЕТВАРАЛО У ЛЕДЕНЕ КИПОВЕ КОЈИ СУ КАО ФАНТОМИ НИЦАЛИ ПО СНЕЖНОЈ ПУСТИЊИ...



БОРНА КОЛА, СПРЕМНА ДА СЕЈУ СМРТ, ПОСТАЈЕ СУ ГРОБНИЦЕ ОНИХ НЕСРЕКНИКА, КОЈИ СУ ПО ТУБОЈ ЗАПОВЕСТИ ПОШЛИ ДА СЕЈУ СМРТ УБИЈАЈУКИ ЈУДЕ...



ЧАК НИ ОНИ У ФЕДЕРАЛНОЈ ШТАБУ НИСУ БИЛИ ПОШТЕБЕНИ. ЛЕД И ЗИМА СУ ПУСТОШИЛИ, ОСТАВЉАЈУКИ СМРЗНУТЕ МЕШЕВЕ...



А У СТРАНИМ ЗЕМЉАМА... ТЕМПЕРАТУРА ЈЕ У СТАЛНОМ ОПАДАЊУ... ЛЕДЕНИ ТАЛАС СЕ СВЕ ВИШЕ ШИРИ А СТАНОВНИШТВО НЕКА СЕ ЕВАКУИШЕ КАЈУГУ...



МЕТЕРОЛОЗИ НИСУ БИЛИ У СТАЊУ ДА ОБЈАСНЕ ОВУ КАТАСТРОФАЛНУ ХЛАДНОГУ... И МАСЕ НАРОДА СУ НАПУСТАЛЕ СВОЈЕ ДОМОВЕ И ХИТАЛЕ ПРЕМА ЈУГУ...



...АЛИ, СТРАХОВИТИ ТАЛАС ХЛАДНОГЕ ШИРИ СЕ ГРОЗНОМОРНОМ БРЗИНОМ... ЧИТАВИ КАРАВАНИ ИЗБЕГЛИЦА СЕ ЛЕДЕ, А ХИЉАДЕ И ХИЉАДЕ ЈУДИ НАЛАЗЕ СМРТ ПОД ЛЕДЕНИМ ПОКРОВОМ...

ЛЕДЕНА СМРТ КОСЛА ЈЕ СВЕ ПРЕД СОБОМ...

# ГОСПОДИН ГЕШТА

ДОК СЕ НА ФРОНТУ СВЕ СМРЗАВА  
У ПОЗАДИНИ СЕ КУЉУ ПЛАНОВИ  
ЗА НОВЕ БИТКЕ... УВИЛАККИ  
РАТ СЕ СВЕ ВИШЕ ШИРИ  
И РАСПЛАМКУЈЕ...



СТРАХОВИТИ ТАЛАС  
ХЛАДНОКЕ ПУСТОШИ  
НА БОЈНИМ ПОЈОШИ...  
ЈУДИ СЕ СМРЗАВАЈУ,  
ЧИТАВЕ КОЛОНЕ НА-  
ЛАЗЕ СМРТ У ЛЕДУ  
И СНЕЖНИМ СМЕТО-  
ВИМА... ТЕРМОМЕТРИ  
СУ ПОПУЦАЛИ, А  
СТРАВИЧНА СМРТ  
РАШИРИЛА ЈЕ КРИЛА  
ИЗНАД БОЈНИХ  
ЛИНИЈА...  
А ЈУДИ ИПАК НЕ  
МИРУЈУ...

13/II

ФЛОТА СЕ СПРЕМА  
ЗА ПРЕСУДНУ БИТКУ...



ЕНО ДИМА... ТО ЈЕ  
СИГУРНО НЕПРИЈАТЕЉ-  
СКА ФЛОТА... СВИ  
НА СВОЈА  
МЕСТА...

УСКОРО СУ ОКЛОПНЕ ТВРЂАВЕ  
БИЛЕ НА ДОМАКУ ЈЕДНЕ  
ДРУГИХ... И АРТИЛЈЕРИЈА  
И АВИАЦИЈА БИЛЕ  
СУ СПРЕМНЕ...



АЛИ ДО БИТКЕ НИЈЕ  
ДОШЛО...

ЈЕР СУ СЕ НА ВИДИКУ  
ПОЈАВИЛИ ЈЕДЕНИ  
БРЕГОВИ, А ТЕРМО-  
МЕТАР ПОЧИЊЕ  
НАГЛО ДА  
ПАДА...

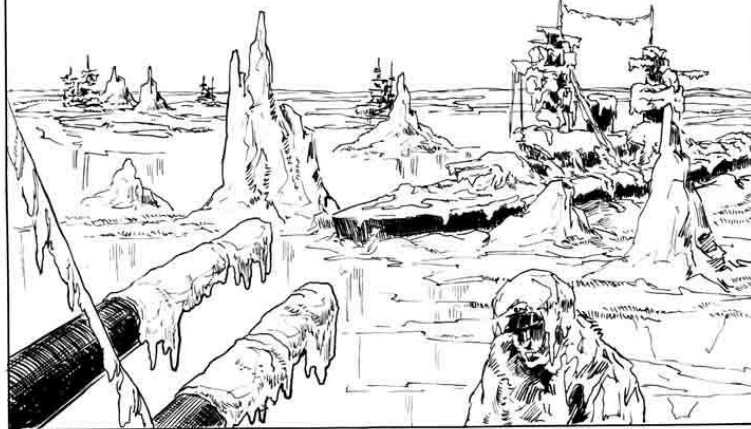


УМЕСТО  
ДА ОТВОРЕ  
ПАЉБУ ЈЕДНИ НА  
ДРУГЕ, ЗАПРЕПАШЕНИ  
И УЖАСНУТИ ЈУДИ  
ЗАБОРАВЉАЈУ НА  
МРЖЊУ... ТОПОВИ  
БЈУЈУ ВАТРУ ПУТ  
ЈЕДЕНИХ БРЕГОВА...

ГОСПОДИНЕ АДМИРАЛЕ...  
СВЕ СЕ СМРЗАВА...  
КАТАСТРОФА ЈЕ  
НЕИЗБЕЖНА!



И УСКОРО, УМЕСТО МОЌНИХ ФЛОТИЛА  
НАЗИРУ СЕ ПЛОВНИ ОБЈЕКТИ  
КОЈИ СЕ ЈАКОНО ПРЕТВАРАЈУ  
У ЛЕД...





# ГОСПОДАРЕЊЕ

# ЕШРТИ




ТАЛАС ХЛАДНОКЕ ПУСТОШИ СЕВЕРНОМ ЕВРОПОМ, ПРЕТВАРАЈУКИ СВЕ У ЛЕД...



У НАЈНЕШКЕМ ЈЕКУ РАТА СА СЕВЕРА СЕ СПУШТА СТРАХОВИТИ ТАЛАС ХЛАДНОКЕ КОЈИ УНИШТАВА СВЕ ПРЕД СОБОМ... ПУСТОШ ЗАВЛАЂУЈЕ СВОДА, А ЗАЛЕЂЕНИМ БОЈНИМ ПОЈИМА ФИЈУЧЕ УРАГАН И ЦЕРИ СЕ СМРТ... ДОТЛЕ СЕ ТАЊА НАЛАЗИ У ЈЕДНОМ СТАРОМ ЗАМКУ, ГДЕ СТУДИРА СТРАШНИ ТЕСТАМЕНТ СВОРА НЕСРЕКНОГ ДЕДЕ...

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ВАНРЕДНО ИЗДАЊЕ!... ХЛАДАН ТАЛАС ПУСТОШИ ЕВРОПУ!



А ЗА ТО ВРЕМЕ, НЕДАЛЕКО ОД БОЈНОГ ПОЈА ЛЕЖАЛА ЈЕ ЈЕДНА МАЛА КОЛИБА, БЛИЧНА ЗЕМУНИЦИ...

...СВА ПОКРИВЕНА СНЕЖНИМ ПОКРИВАЧЕМ... А У ТОЈ КОЛИБИ...



СРЕКА ШТО ЈЕ КОЛИБА ПОКРИВЕНА СНЕГОМ... АЛИ СЕ ИПАК ОДАВДЕ НИКУДА НЕ МОЖЕ... ОВО ЈЕ КРАЈ... ПРИМИО САМ У КУКУ СМРТ, КОЈА МЕ МЕ ОДВЕСТИ У БОЈНИ ЖИВОТ...

А ТЕШКОМ РАЊЕНИКУ ЈАВНОЈ СЕ ВИДИЈЕ... ОН УГЛЕДА НЕСРЕКНУ ЖРТВУ ВИЛФРЕДА ОД БАРДАНА...



ЧУЈ МЕ ИЗДАЈЧЕ ДВАДЕСЕТОР КОЛЕНА...



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... И УЗ НАРОЧИТЕ ВЕРСКЕ ЦЕРЕМОНИЈЕ ПОСАКРИВАЛИ ТЕ ПАПИРУСЕ У ПИРАМИДУ...



... И ТО У САРКОФАГ ВЕЛИКОГ ПРВОСВЕШТЕНИКА АМОН РА ТАМО СУ ТИ ПАПИРУСИ И ДАНАС, А КО ИХ БУДЕ ИМАО МОЖЕ СПРЕЧИТИ ОБУ НА ЈЕЗДУ ХЛАДНОКЕ...

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