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Petar Bingulac, musicologist and music critic in the diplomatic service

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Little can be found about Petar Bingulac (Vukovar, 1897 – Belgrade, 1990) in historiographic papers that do not refer to musical arts and musicology, where he left an indelible mark. As a historian exploring diplomatic history, while harboring deep respect and passion for classical music, the author of this paper did not dare until recently to even think about drawing a link between Petar Bingulac, the diplomat, and Petar Bingulac, the music theorist bravely traversing across national musical heritage, secular and religious alike. Unfortunately, not even to a genuine Renaissance man like Petar Bingulac has been granted a properly elucidated niche in professional literature he truly deserves. Encyclopedic references aside, there is not much to learn about his life in diplomacy outside archival records.

Some time ago, we researched the position of officers in a prisoner-of-war camp in Strasbourg in 1944. On the location of the officers' camp, a chapel with wall paintings dedicated to St. Sava survived, which the Republic of France protected as a heritage site. All the credit for the birth of this chapel goes to a group of imprisoned active-duty and reserve officers, patriots who never let their confinement get to them and obliterate their faith.¹ Petar Bingulac² was one of them. In a number of memoir testimonials by those who either remained émigrés after WWII or returned home and offered the completely new political and state setup a window into the horrific experience of camps, we can find a few notes about a choir in that particular camp.³ The choir raised

¹ See Milutin Simić, *Hram svetog Save u okolini Strazbura* [St. Sava Temple near Strasbourg] (Belgrade: Čigoja štampa, 2000); Ratomir Milikić, “Nepokretno i pokretno kulturno nasleđe Srba u Francuskoj iz dva svetska rata: pomoć Francuske Srbiji kroz likovnu umetnost 1914–1916. godine i oficirski logor u Strazburu (1944) [The tangible and intangible cultural heritage of Serbs in France from the two World Wars: French support for Serbia through visual arts 1914–1916 and the officers' camp in Strasbourg (1944)],” in *Očuvanje i zaštita kulturno-istorijskog nasleđa Srbije u inostranstvu*, edited by Vidoje Golubović, Branislav Đorđević (Belgrade: Institut za međunarodnu politiku i privredu, 2017), 312–327.

² Among the officers also held in the camps near Strasbourg were Professor Pavle Vasić, Stanislav Beložanski, Dragomir Arambašić, Colonel Branislav Pantić, as well as Milan Bartoš, Oto Bihalji Merin, Rafailo Blam, Đorđe Karaklajić, and many other active-duty and reserve officers.

³ See more in Stanislav Vinaver, *Godine poniženja i slobode. Život u nemačkim oflazima* [Years of Humiliation and Freedom. Life in German War Camps] (Belgrade: Prosveta, 1945); Branislav J. Pantić,

morale and successfully instilled hope in prisoners, encouraging them not to lose their spirits. The choirmaster⁴ was Petar Bingulac. From Bingulac's diplomatic file, we can learn that he was granted the rank of reserve lieutenant colonel in 1926, which is why he spent the war in the officers' camp.⁵ Had he remained home, he could have met a much worse fate, as was the case with several other career diplomats.⁶

It was not until we gained insight into his life in the camp that we came to the conclusion that Petar Bingulac, the camp choirmaster of Strasbourg, was the same Petar Bingulac whose name we had come across so often in diplomatic reports from the 1930s.

Unfortunately, literature on the work of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (SCS) / Kingdom of Yugoslavia, is very scarce,⁷ while employees of this important department have been researched even less. This paper makes a modest contribution through a biographical note on Petar Bingulac, the diplomat.

Petar Bingulac was admitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of SCS in August 1925 as a 28-year-old lawyer. Employment-wise, the foreign ministry was as closed to the broader population as it is today, and it was

Banditsko-komunistički logor 1945 [The Bandit-Communist Camp 1945] (Sidney: s.n., 1964); Staja Stajić, *Dva miliona minuta do slobode* [Two Million Minutes to Freedom] (Belgrade: Prosveta, 1963), 172.

⁴ A little scroll was painted on the chapel wall, reading: "And Bingulac's choir sang the *ekteniya*."

⁵ Archives of Yugoslavia [Arhiv Jugoslavije (AJ)], Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia [Ministarstvo spoljnih poslova Kraljevine Jugoslavije] (334), Personnel Section (box No. 139), Correspondence (No. 4491) by the City Council of Vukovar, dated June 24, 1927.

⁶ The lives and careers of diplomats of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia took very different directions. Some managed to stay outside Yugoslavia and serve the legitimate government-in-exile of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, which earned international recognition and was seated in London/Cairo. Some were interned and sent back to their occupied home country (the largest group was led by Ivo Andrić, the Ambassador to Germany at the time), and a smaller group of diplomats were confined to prisoner-of-war camps for officers (including Petar Bingulac, who had been drafted as a reserve officer). The worst fate befell the diplomats exposed to repressive measures by the occupation authorities. Two brothers, Ilija and Aleksandar Milikić, along with former head of legation Aleksandar Bodi, were arrested and shot by the Gestapo over charges of espionage, while another former head of legation, the Consul General in Prague, Radovan Šumenković, was sent to a concentration camp, leaving behind a memoir he wrote after the war to testify to his dark days of incarceration. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was liquidated shortly after the 1941 occupation, and it is curious that there are no records of the liquidation anywhere in the archives of the Republic of Serbia.

⁷ The earliest monograph about the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia is Pavle Karović's *Diplomacija* [Diplomacy] (Belgrade: Geca Kon, 1937), and the most comprehensive one published recently is Srđan Mičić's study *Od birokratije do diplomatije – Istorija jugoslovenske diplomatske službe 1918–1939* [From Bureaucracy to Diplomacy—The History of the Yugoslav Diplomatic Service 1918–1939] (Belgrade: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 2018), but the latter makes no mention of Petar Bingulac.

hardly possible to gain entry into the closed ranks without a personal intervention.⁸ For Petar Bingulac, it was his father's intervention. Nikola Bingulac was an MP for the People's Radical Party⁹ at the time, and it is a letter he wrote in 1925 on stationery with the National Assembly's header that testified to his vouching for his son. Truth be told, he was only asking that Petar be granted a month's leave so that he could defend his PhD at a law school in Paris, which indeed he was, and very quickly. He defended the thesis at the end of that same year.¹⁰

Petar Bingulac started his diplomatic career the same way as most of his peers—as an intern serving in different sectors. His first job was with the Department for the Enforcement of International Treaties, which was a very important one, analyzing and monitoring the implementation of international conventions, as well as the enforcement of those the Kingdom had acceded to. According to his first Qualification Report for 1925 (qualification reports were prepared for every civil servant at the time), his work was described as very good, as he was involved in legal affairs, and his conduct as appropriate and very decent. His superiors also noted the young intern's sense of initiative at work and his discretion.¹¹ Bingulac made an equally favorable impression the following year, this time with a special emphasis on the quality of his translations of international treaties from German, Italian and English.¹²

He continued to work for the Department (with brief interruptions) until April 1928, when he was allowed to take the state licensing exam. Upon passing the exam (for which no records are preserved), he was appointed as a clerk at the same Department. In September 1928, he moved to the Code Section of the

⁸ Both at the time of the Kingdom of Serbia and after the Great War in the Kingdom of SCS/Yugoslavia, a veil of secrecy cloaked admissions to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. An entrance exam was prescribed, and there was a level of knowledge usually expected from all candidates for internships, but those requirements were frequently derogated from. The Ministry's admissions program was complicated and very demanding, but a way around the obstacle could be found. As it happened, even members of examination committees would sometimes help candidates. Patronage dominated the institution to the extent that it often subdued competence, which was why it was pejoratively dubbed the "Yellow House." See more in Ratimir Milikić, "Ivo Andrić o Žutoj kući ili jedan denuncijantski pamflet o Ministarstvu inostranih poslova Kraljevine Jugoslavije [Ivo Andrić on the Yellow house, or a pamphlet on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia]," *Istorija 20. veka I* (2018): 57–68.

⁹ There was not much mention of his father in professional literature either. Nikola Bingulac's name was neither in the Kingdom's pioneer publishing endeavor *Ko je ko u Jugoslaviji* [Who is Who in Yugoslavia] (Belgrade; Jugoslovenski godišnjak, Zagreb, Nova Evropa, 1928), nor in the biographical lexicon of the time, *Senat, Narodna skupština* [The Senate, the National Assembly], edited by Č. Mitrović (Skopje: Nemanja, 1935).

¹⁰ AJ, 334-139, A letter dated November 7, 1925 to the Minister of Foreign Affairs by Nikola Bingulac, MP, using stationery with the letterhead of the People's Radical Party faction in the National Assembly.

¹¹ AJ, 334-139, Qualification Report for 1925, dated January 18, 1926.

¹² AJ, 334-139, Qualification Report for 1926, dated February 9, 1927.

Political Department, receiving an excellent grade that same year.¹³ Owing to the inherent sensitivity, work with codes implied diligence and commitment, as well as confidence, which had to be earned. In *Diplomacija*, Pavle Karović wrote about the work in the Department: “[It is necessary] to entrust well-rewarded officers with work on codes, as this very important job is unusually tedious, yet it requires a conscientious and perseverant person and, quite often, plenty of overtime.”

In April 1929, a problem arose in connection with Petar Bingulac’s post. Even though the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was very well disposed, having signed with Bingulac a fulltime employment contract in June 1928, and awarded him with a salary a grade above the one prescribed by law, the State Council decided to abolish his employment class (civil servants were divided into “classes” then), and started a lawsuit that lasted for years until the statute of limitations on the case eventually expired to the benefit of Bingulac.¹⁴

The end of 1929 found him in the Kingdom’s delegation to the Reparation Commission headquartered in Paris. The French capital hosted a session of the commission of experts overseeing the payment of war reparations for the damage caused by the Axis powers, led by Germany, from February 11 to June 7, 1929.

It was also Petar Bingulac’s first truly diplomatic post. Although no records are available of his stay in Paris,¹⁵ the available sources put Bingulac in the Political Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as early as late 1930, when he wrote a request to be allowed to marry Anđa Bunuševac, a law graduate and a journalist at the newspaper *Politika*.¹⁶ That request, too, was granted in record time.¹⁷ In that same period, on September 6, 1930, he was awarded the Order of the Yugoslav Crown (Rank V); it was the first version of the Order and one of the earliest awards of the honor that was only established earlier that year.¹⁸

¹³ Pavle Karović, *Diplomacija*, 71.

¹⁴ AJ, 334-139, Correspondence between the Court of Auditors, the State Council and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs under Reference No. 60.852.

¹⁵ The Archives of Yugoslavia do not hold records of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs related to the work of the Yugoslav delegation at that important conference.

¹⁶ AJ, 334-139, A request to the Minister dated November 18, 1930, referring to Anđa Bunuševac as a law graduate, a *Politika* newspaper associate and daughter of Belgrade’s industrialist Rista Bunuševac.

¹⁷ AJ, 334-139, The Minister’s consent dated November 21, 1930, sent through the Administration Department, (confidential) No. 4027, dated November 22, 1930.

¹⁸ The Order of the Yugoslav Crown was the only honor established in the joint state between the two World Wars. In April 1930, shortly after the Kingdom was renamed Yugoslavia and a personal regime was set up, the first (and also only) honor that was linked solely to the tradition of the joint state was instituted. All preceding decorations only mirrored the tradition of the Kingdom of Serbia. The Order, modeled after the French Legion of Honor, was bestowed in “recognition of achievements made for the King and Homeland, the unity of the state and the peoples.” The first version of the Order was made in a dozen copies (all ranks included) and ceased to exist in December that same year, 1930. After that, a version designed in a slightly different way was

In January 1931, he was assigned as a clerk to the Consulate General in Hamburg, but after a few days the decision was reversed, and he was reassigned to the Consulate General in Milan in the same capacity.¹⁹ He came through his first year of service with flying colors, and in addition to the excellent grade, he was described as “a highly intelligent mind, a broadly educated, extremely conscientious clerk with pleasant demeanor.”²⁰ His son, Nikola, was born in Milan on April 28, 1932. Bingulac was very successful in performing all consular duties, while following the Italian press and keeping the books at the same time. However fragmented and scattered they may be, the records of the Consulate General in Milan²¹ paint a portrait of a young diplomat in his first post abroad, with the scope and content of genuine diplomatic work. Bingulac was taking care of general affairs in a consular office that was very important for the Kingdom of Yugoslavia when Mussolini’s regime was at the peak of his power and prestige. Aside from the consular affairs concerning Yugoslav citizens in Italy, Bingulac’s responsibilities included those of today’s press attachés, following the Italian media and monitoring the press coverage of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

For his successes, Bingulac’s superior, Consul General Svetislav Predić,²² nominated him for a promotion. The young diplomat was promoted a year later, in 1933, when he became a vice-consul.

In January 1934, he was supposed to end his term in Italy and be appointed secretary at the foreign ministry. That appointment was also delayed, and Bingulac did not return to Belgrade until mid-1934, when he reported to the Political Department (Section V) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.²³ We feel that in a bid to learn more about the budding diplomat’s other side, a list of things he brought from Milan might be thought-provoking

awarded. For more see Pavel Car, Tomislav Muhić, *Odlikovanja Srbije i Jugoslavije od 1859. do 1941*. [The Orders of Serbia and Yugoslavia from 1859 to 1941] (Vienna: Verlag Militaria, 2012), 340.

¹⁹ AJ, 334-139, Petar Bingulac’s career postings until January 1931. Such last-minute changes to service arrangements abroad were very rare, but Bingulac’s was not the only case. Even today, it is not very popular to make changes once a diplomatic post abroad has been set.

²⁰ AJ, 334-139, Qualification Report for 1931.

²¹ AJ, Consulate General of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in Milan [Generalni konzulat Kraljevine Jugoslavije u Milanu] (419).

²² Before he joined the diplomatic service, Svetislav Predić was vice-governor of the Prometna Banka trade bank in Belgrade, as well as the chair and chief counsel of the City of Belgrade. Predić was also the secretary of the Industrial Chamber and an inspector at the Ministry of Trade and Industry. For him, too, the post in Milan was the first diplomatic appointment, after a brief engagement at the Kingdom’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

²³ Section V of the ministry’s Political Department was in charge of drafting, publishing and applying international treaties and conventions. This department was “a true foreign policy maker, where all the information, inputs and notifications on the international situation would be collected. How secure and accurate the implementation of a foreign policy will be, depends on the department’s organization and spirit, as well as the quality of its staff.” See Karović, *Diplomacija*, 66–67.

enough. Apart from usual household items and things diplomats traditionally own, Bingulac's list included the furnishings of a study he was sending back, namely a desk, a piano, a radio phonograph, a large number of books, musicological materials and gramophone records.²⁴

He did very well in the Political Department, but a note of "excellence" was missing in his report.²⁵ Yet as early as 1935, he was accredited to the post of secretary at the Legation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in Prague on a ministerial order.²⁶ Mere weeks later, his work was graded as excellent, with a commendation. His next promotion also awaited him in Prague, in 1937.²⁷ Clearly the shift to diplomatic affairs was not very difficult for Bingulac, as his performance in Prague was invariably graded as excellent, with a note that he would accomplish every assignment most conscientiously and to the highest standard.²⁸

After Czechoslovakia fell apart, the Sudetenland was annexed and Czechia ceased to exist, and with it the Legation in Prague. The crisis surrounding Czechoslovakia's borders in the Sudetenland was a prelude to WWII. Threatening with military intervention, Hitler asked for Czechoslovakia's richest region, the Sudetenland, and the Allies, Great Britain and France, accepted his demands at the Munich Conference on September 28, 1938, alleging they were protecting global peace. The Czechoslovakian territory was partitioned between Germany, Poland and Hungary. The country ceased to exist in March 1939, when the rest of Czechia was occupied by the Third Reich, and Slovakia became an independent state heavily dependent on it. On the eve of WWII, the Consulate General replaced the Legation

²⁴ AJ, 334-139, List of items (confidential) No. 929, the year 1934.

²⁵ AJ, 334-139, Qualification Report for 1934, dated January 20, 1935, signed by Head of Legation Vladimir Martinac.

²⁶ The minister was Milan Stojadinović, serving from 1935 to 1939, who also had the leading position in the Ministerial Council. AJ, 334-139, Decree (confidential) No. 4451, dated October 2, 1935.

²⁷ Promotions abroad were a taboo of sorts at the time, pretty much remaining so to date. They happen, but very rarely, while a diplomat serves a term in a foreign country. They are often used to reward a diplomat for exceptional, devoted work or, alternatively, as a sign of benevolence toward a diplomat in the top echelons of the ministry. AJ, 334-139, Decree (confidential) No. 984, delivered to the Legation in Prague on March 2, 1937.

²⁸ In our research, we explored Fond of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the Archives of Yugoslavia, but also parts of Fonds of the Consulate General of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in Milan and the Legation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in Czechoslovakia—Prague [Poslanstvo Kraljevine Jugoslavije u Čehoslovačkoj – Prag, No. 391]. The two fonds were in complete archival disarray, comprising over 200 boxes of records altogether. As there is no inventory of fonds, we inspected a few boxes from each, some including documents signed by Petar Bingulac. In terms of form and content, they appeared to be regular diplomatic and consular correspondence, but the sample was so limited that we are unable to offer our opinion of Bingulac's diplomatic activity in the two cities without a more comprehensive insight into the archival holdings. That is why we need to rely on information that could be derived from his personal affairs and annual qualification reports.

of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, continuing to monitor the situation. Those were the circumstances surrounding Bingulac's appointment as Vice-Consul, working under a newly-appointed Consul General, Radovan Šumenković.²⁹

There is a basic division in the diplomatic service into diplomatic and consular posts. Even though, as a rule, the former deal with political affairs and the latter represent the state administration, providing services to citizens, this is not always the case in practice, particularly back in Bingulac's day. Consular offices include those of a consul general, a consul and a vice-consul—as a deputy to the head of a consulate—as well as some lower consular ranks. The role of consulates and consulates general was similar to that of legations in parts of Europe and the world. The only difference was that a consulate was always working under the head of legation as a direct supervisor (and shortly before the war, the ambassador to the host country). Consulates dealt with political and diplomatic affairs alike. Bearing this in mind, the Consulate General in Prague was rather specific. It operated under the Embassy of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in Berlin (as Germany was the state that occupied the Czech territory). The work of the Consulate General in Prague was essential from 1939 to April 1941, as it briefed the Kingdom of Yugoslavia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, particularly on the military strength of the Third Reich and the position of the Czech people under occupation.

The complexity of the situation required Šumenković to travel frequently to Belgrade to provide for regular debriefings, and Bingulac would be running the Consulate General in his absence. Excellence in performance aside, Bingulac's 1939 grading report carried a special emphasis on his ability to collect classified and high-quality information.³⁰ The next promotion, which made him a Consul,

²⁹ It's quite predictable that the Consulate General in Prague, shortly after the German occupation of the Czech areas, would be working largely for intelligence purposes. When the WWII started it was a convenient place to report on WWII developments in Central Europe, the number and strength of German units included. For that reason Radovan Šumenković traveled to Belgrade for quite frequent briefings. After Yugoslavia was attacked on April 6, 1941, the Kingdom's diplomatic representative offices under direct control of the Third Reich were closed, and the staff interned on the banks of Lake Constance. In June 1941 they were taken by train to the occupied capital Belgrade, led by Ambassador Ivo Andrić (in violation of international norms, because all other diplomats, even those coming from the states that attacked Yugoslavia together with Germany, had been evacuated to neutral states). Few from the group of returnees were arrested by Gestapo as soon as they arrived in Belgrade. Radovan Šumenković was the least fortunate of all, as he was accused of espionage and sent to the Dahau concentration camp, barely surviving until the end of the war. Šumenković was charged over an extremely bizarre case. A diplomatic representative of the "Independent State of Croatia" moved into his official residence in Prague, where he found a hidden notebook containing data on the strength of the German army in Prague, which was probably left behind by mistake after the evacuation of the Consulate General in April that same year (1941). He delivered the notebook to the German authorities and Gestapo accused Šumenković of espionage. It was certain that Petar Bingulac was also involved in intelligence collection, and what "saved" him from imprisonment was probably the fact that he was already in a camp for officers.

³⁰ AJ, 334-139, Qualification Report for 1939, dated January 9, 1940.

followed early in 1940, when he was still in Prague.³¹ He kept monitoring the political situation in Central Europe as the German occupation of not only Czechia, but also Poland, was unraveling, creating an unconditional political affiliation by the rest of the region—particularly the newly-created Slovakia. Bingulac also witnessed the occupation of not only Czechia and Moravia, but also Poland.

In late 1940, Petar Bingulac moved to Belgrade, re-joining the Political Department in mid-October.³² Detailed lists of the items he had sent back to Belgrade are preserved.³³ Among other things, a drawing room with a radiogram, a piano, a radio, a library and crates with books, sheet music and gramophone records came back from Prague.

Although he returned to Belgrade less than six months before the whirlwind of war reached the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, no records are available as to his career movements in that brief period, as the archives covering the work of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the time were extremely fragmented. Bingulac's grade for 1940 is lost (just like his personal file for that matter),³⁴ but our guess is that he responded to a draft call in early 1941, since he was captured as a reserve officer and transferred between several officers' camps.

The interesting thing is that unlike other former employees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, Petar Bingulac sent into retirement from the position of secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (position level V) after 18 years and six months of service, the years in captivity included. The

³¹ AJ, 334-139, Decree (confidential) No. 1325, dated March 13, 1940. The promotion made as a global war was simmering close to the geographical jurisdiction of the Consulate General in Prague was by all means an extraordinary appraisal of Petar Bingulac's work, but it also reflected the necessity for high-quality diplomats who found themselves in war-affected territories not be replaced in such circumstances, but rather that their status be solidified in the host countries, i.e. the Third Reich.

³² AJ, 334-139, Decree (confidential) No. 4322, dated August 21, 1940, not enforced until October 1940.

³³ AJ, 334-139, Certificate No. 1348/40 issued by the Consulate General in Prague.

³⁴ The fact that Bingulac's personal file is missing from the foreign ministry's personnel records is not an exception, but rather a rule of sorts. It is hard to tell why, but there is a degree of certainty in the assumption that some personal files were taken by the occupation authorities if related to persons of interest. Also missing were the personal files of the Milikić brothers, Ilija, the head of Section IV of the Political Department, and Aleksandar, a young diplomat. Parts of the file of Aleksandar Bodi, a head of legation, are also missing. We know that in those three cases, the Gestapo took the files to carry out an investigation over allegations of espionage for the Allies. As other files belonging to people interned to officers' camps are also gone, we can assume that they, too, were taken by the German occupation authorities. There is also a third category of missing files we came across while examining the Archives of Yugoslavia—those of people (very few by all means) who joined the government structures of the new Democratic Federative Yugoslavia.

decision on his retirement was made by Milan Nedić's collaborationist cabinet in late March 1944, while Bingulac was still imprisoned.³⁵

As the war was nearing its end in the Balkans and the fundamentals of a new Yugoslavia were being built, Bingulac returned from the camp together with writer Stevan Jakovljević³⁶ in April 1945. From that period, we have found an illustrative excerpt from a diary of another diplomat, Kosta St. Pavlović: "Friday, April 27, 1945 [...] A Yugoslav National Liberation Committee was established at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as within all other ministries. It's a local soviet for the 'Yellow House.' The chair is Petar Bingulac (his wife has always been considered a Communist), and members completely unknown clerks. They must be some novel Communists. It must be that they'll be the ones who choose which clerks will stay which will go."³⁷

Petar Bingulac's role in ensuring the appropriate staffing of the newly-formed ministry is unrecorded, and we cannot be sure if he had any. But what we do know is that he soon devoted himself fully to music, never to return to diplomacy again, sharing the same fate with many older and more experienced peers—first and foremost Ivo Andrić³⁸—who switched to career areas they had been far less engaged in between the two wars. For him it was musicology, which he approached as a music critic and researcher. Had WWII not broken out, Petar Bingulac would have gone down in history as a diligent diplomat who would always put the interests of the state before anything else. But by a curious twist of fate, the world was able to also see his artistic side and versatile talents, and Bingulac was able to leave an indelible mark on Serbian musicology.

³⁵ AJ, 334-139, Act No. 630 issued by the Presidency of the Ministerial Council to the Ministry of Finance, dated March 3, 1944.

³⁶ Stevan Jakovljević was a celebrated pre-war writer who earned his literary fame as the author of *Srpska Trilogija* (The Serbian Trilogy), describing the suffering of the Serbian people during the Great War. Jakovljević was a professor at the Belgrade Faculty of Pharmacy.

³⁷ Kosta St. Pavlović, *Ratni dnevnik, 1945–1946* [A War Diary 1945–1946] (Belgrade: Istorijski arhiv Beograda, 2017), 95. The author's bitter remark about Petar Bingulac's wife is largely a consequence of small-town ignorance. Using a more contemporary term, Anda Bingulac was one of the most prominent Serbian feminists of the day. She was the first female professional journalist at *Politika*, the founder of the Association of Women with University Education in Yugoslavia (1927) and a member of its governing committee. After Queen Maria Karađorđević, she was the first woman to have a driving license in Yugoslavia. Anda Bunuševac-Bingulac could not possibly fit the predominant patriarchal view of the world. Her first husband was Nikola Kotur, an architect and a political secretary of the League of Communist Youth of Yugoslavia (SKOJ), killed during the Moscow Trials in the 1930s. Even though it was a brief marriage and the two were already separated when he fled for the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), she continued to be labeled a Communist.

³⁸ See more in Ratimir Milikić, "Ivo Andrić' o Žutoj kući," 57–68.

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