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MITRINOVIĆ AND INDIA¹

Abstract: The paper deals with Mitrinović's interest in India that existed in both the pre-British and British phase of his life. From his early poetry, where Upanishadic themes gave impulse to the cosmic movement in Serbian poetry, to his mature historiosophy and panhumanism influenced by Vedantic monism and universalism, one encounters Indian sources and an image of the country formed by positive Orientalism. This Indophilia, however, did not lead him to support the Indian political struggle. His personal contacts with Indians – including M. R. Anand and Bhagavan Das – as part of his vast network, have remained under-researched, so this paper presents them for the first time.

Keywords: Vedanta, monism, universalism, cosmism, M. R. Anand, B. Das

The importance of Indian thought for the study of Mitrinović has been recognized in scholarship. The details of this influence, however, have remained under-researched. My intention is to provide a kind of systematization regarding this topic.²

As mentioned in the other essay in this volume, there was an image of Mitrinović based on the idea of a split between two halves of his life: Bosnia /Yugoslavia vs. UK/Europe, youth vs. mature age, poetry vs. esotericism, nationalism vs. cosmopolitanism – which essentially implies discontinuity. This dichotomy downplays a certain continuity in his work, some red threads passing through his entire thought. One of such threads is his deep interest in India.

Mitrinović's early work and India. Poetry and cosmism. Vedanta.

Already in his early period Mitrinović was influenced by Indian texts. He translated two hymns from the *R̥g Veda* (X 121, 129) and two excerpts from *Bṛhadāraṇyaka upaniṣad*. He was familiar with the Upanishads and Vedanta from *The Secret Teaching of Veda* by Paul Deussen, a book he inher-

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2 During this research I was kindly helped by Mike Tyldesley (Mitrinović Foundation) and Julie Parry (J. B. Priestley Library University of Bradford). I thank them both.

ited from his father.³ Deussen, a classical scholar and Indologist, friend of Friedrich Nietzsche, published a couple of works on the Vedanta system of philosophy, rendering it more familiar to the German speaking world. This one is an anthology of texts about *ātman* in the Vedas, Brahmanas and Upanishads, accompanied by a short and popularly written foreword. The Vedic hymns Mitrinović chose contain cosmogonic speculations considered an early philosophical attempt within the mythological and ritualistic world of the Vedas. According to Mitrinović's friend from his youth, writer Borivoje Jevtić, that was the beginning of his "obsession" with India.⁴

Here a few words about the wider framework are in order. The Upanishads began to attract attention already in the early 19th century with Arthur Schopenhauer's enthusiastic reception of Anquetil du Peron's Latin translation from Persian, and Deussen was influenced by Schopenhauer in his approach. Deussen's presentation of the Upanishads and Vedanta⁵ was authoritative in Germany, although it is worth mentioning that some of his works also garnered respect in India (including even translations into Sanskrit).⁶ At the same time when Deussen worked on classical texts, a new intellectual movement, which modern Indologists call Neo-Vedanta, flourished in India. Its principal author was, of course, Vivekananda, and another notable name from the early 20th century was Rabindranath Tagore – not only a poet but also the author of Vedantic works (like *Sadhana*, published in 1913, the same year he was awarded the Nobel Prize). Neo-Vedanta sought to adapt itself to modern world, to the issues India was facing, such as modernization and nationalism, and in many aspects it was a reformist non-sectarian movement. Because of Vivekananda's missionary activity, Neo-Vedanta attracted many Western intellectuals in the early 20th century, like Romain Rolland, who wrote biographies of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. In Britain, where Mitrinović lived, the Upanishads and Vedanta found their way into mainstream culture, for instance, the poetry of W. B. Yeats. T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* famously ends with an Upanishadic quote. Somerset Maugham described the contemporary Vedantic saint Ramana Maharishi, whom he personally met, in the novel *The Razor's*

3 Predrag Palavestra, *Dogma i utopija Dimitrija Mitrinovića* (Beograd: Zavod za udžbenike, 2003), pp. 215–219; Ilija Marić, *Lotos i žad. Indijska i kineska filozofija kod Srba i XIX veku* (Belgrade: Jasen, 2013), pp. 126–128. The book is preserved in Mitrinović's legacy in the University Library in Belgrade. It is full of his notes, but they are all English translations of German terms, not his comments on Indian philosophy itself.

4 Borivoje Jevtić, "Dimitrije Mitrinović (2)", *Život*, Vol. 2, No. 14 (1953), p. 359.

5 For Deussen, the Upanishads are the very essence of philosophy: Ronald Inden, *Imagining India* (Bloomington-Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000), 103–104.

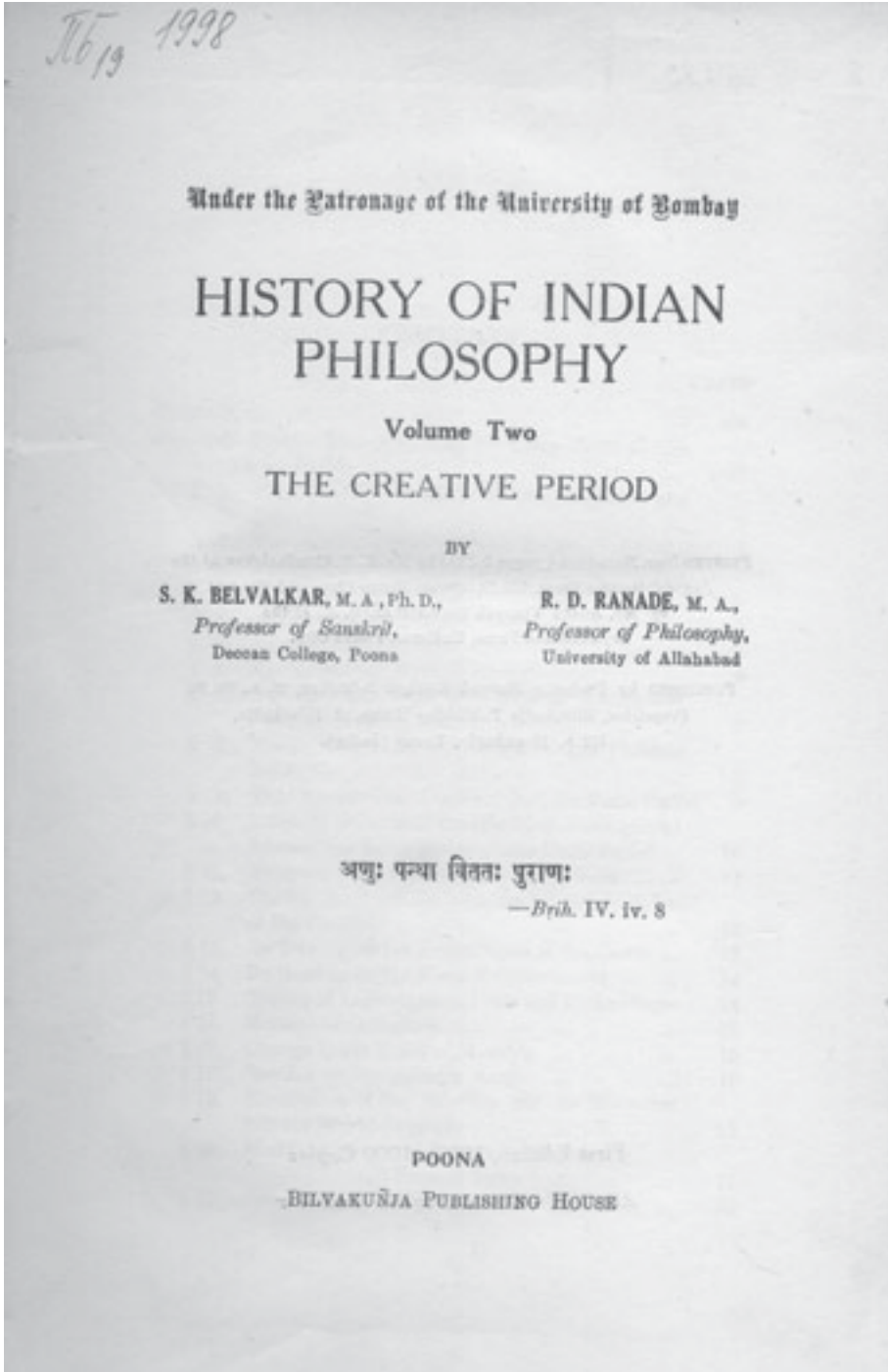
6 Wilhelm Halbfass, *India and Europe. An Essay in Understanding* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 1990), 133

Edge (1944; the title itself comes from the Upanishads). Huxley's *Eyeless in Giza* (1936) ends with the quietist tone that has a touch of Vedantism, and *The Perennial Philosophy* (USA, 1945) is fundamentally influenced by Vedantic universalism; he contributed articles to Vedantic journals too (Huxley later turned to Mahayana, Tantrism and Zen, as can be seen in *The Island*).⁷ Christopher Isherwood converted to Vedantism, becoming committed to translating and publishing of such works.

Historically, three layers can be discerned in Vedanta. First, there are the Upanishads with many different, often contradictory concepts. The system of Vedanta came later with the interpretation of texts like the Upanishads and *Bhagavadgītā*. There were very different schools within Vedanta, with the most influential in India and the West being Advaita Vedanta of Shankara, a non-dualist or monist (depending on the interpretation) teaching of the absolute identity of self (*ātman*) and the impersonal absolute (*brahman*). Finally, there is the 19–20th century modernist Neo-Vedanta. European adherents and sympathizers of Vedanta tended to neglect these different currents and historical layers, conflating them into one single vision of Vedanta identified mostly with Shankara's monist version. Moreover, the entire complex of Hinduism was often reduced to Advaita Vedanta, while its other currents and its non-textual, ritual and folk elements became neglected as Europeans focused on ancient texts. In Mitrinović's early stage, we find the Upanishads and Vedanta as interpreted by Deussen. This influence is to be discerned in the theme of identity with world-being in his poetry, the identification of the subject with the entire cosmos – something often but not quite precisely described as pantheism. For example, the long poem *My faith* declares: "Night, and me, and stars, and dark mountains/become one...Then one hears the magnificent beats/of an unknown cosmic heart/...Everything is one, immortal, all that being;/I am a marginal part, but a lasting one;/My soul is eternal, just as everything is/because she is in everything./Evil is short, transient; there is no death; /There is eternal universal love of world;/Eternal soul of endless world,/holy and secret". The poem *In my nights* repeats these reflections: "Because there is one, immortal, holy Being/I am a marginal part of it but a loved one/My soul is eternal just as everything is eternal, because my soul is in everything/The evil is of short duration. There is no death/There is eternal cosmic Grace of Everything/Eternal soul of this endless world" [...] "I am also part of holy cosmic harmony/Find yourself in all and all in yourself – / beauty exists/Listen: the worlds are hooting...Let/the beat of the world pass through your heart/Listen to the secret breathing of the entire Unity – / beauty exists".

This is not only an element of Mitrinović's personal poetics. The same themes appear in the poetry of his contemporaries – his generation – especially those from Bosnia. The identification of "I" with everything

7 Jake Poller, *Aldous Huxley and Alternative Spirituality* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2019).



Cover page of *History of Indian Philosophy* from the collection of 2,200 titles that Mitrinovic bequeathed to the University Library in Belgrade

in existence, with the universe, the feeling of universal unity of being, identification with universal consciousness – all these are the themes of younger poets of the period, just as they are Vedantic themes too. What we have here is a tendency in Serbian literature called *cosmism* by historians of Serbian literature. This thematic complex that appeared before WWI became central in avant-garde poetry of the 1920s. Mitrinović was a key figure in the formation of this poetical current. Mitrinović's introduction of Upanishadic themes was one of the impetuses for this poetical shift. Historians of literature pointed to both Mitrinović's importance in the emergence of a new poetical stream and the Indian sources of groundbreaking themes.⁸ The latter, however, remained under-researched. There were other sources, of course: German Expressionism, Walt Whitman – whose debt to Indian texts (or the lack thereof) is a matter of discussion in American criticism – and one non-literary event: the passing of Halley's comet in 1910, which impressed other poets, like the German Expressionist Jakob van Hoddis. Given Mitrinović's influence as a poet at that time, Vedantic monism turns out to be a more important incentive than expected, and cosmism can be seen as Mitrinović's legacy to Serbian poetry.⁹

Still, there are some differences between this poetical Vedantism and Indian philosophical Vedantism, especially in its monist form. In the Upanishads, there are different tendencies: both identifying the self with the transcendent absolute and with the universe. Classical Vedanta identifies the self with the absolute, seeing the phenomenal world as an illusion. Serbian poets took the idea that all beings have the same essence as a starting point for identifying with everything visible, not so much with the impersonal absolute. There are two main currents in the Vedantic relationship with the cosmos: one is acosmic (*vivartavāda*), which is Shankara's position; the other takes the absolute as the seed, the cause of the manifested cosmos (*parināmavāda*). Neo-Vedanta was closer to the latter view. Paul Deussen interpreted Vedanta precisely in the European context of pantheism¹⁰ (a tenant criticized by modern Indology), and that was most probably the direct influence on Mitrinović's version of Vedantism, as well as poetry's inclination toward images.

In his early period, Mitrinović paid attention to India on some other occasions too. He mentions the similarity of folk tales with Oriental ones, "even Indian ones", but with no philosophical implications, seeing in it a

8 Dragiša Vitošević, *Srpsko pesništvo 1901–1914 2* (Belgrade: Vuk Karadžić, 1975), 78, 85; Radovan Vučković, *Poezija srpske avangarde* (Belgrade: Službeni glasnik, 2011), 48; Radovan Vučković, *Poetika srpske avangarde* (Belgrade: Službeni glasnik, 2011), 134.

9 Indeed, some poets started displaying cosmic, monist tendencies before Mitrinović's first published cosmic verses. But this can be seen as a tendency fully developed under Mitrinović's sway.

10 Ronald Inden, *Imagining India*, 103–104.

task for ethnology and philology.¹¹ His essay on Croce starts with the impressions of Bergson, whose forerunner was, as Mitrinović sees it, Indian philosophy with its universal human importance: “the land of humanity was gifted with great creativity when the eternal nation of India gave her faith and poetry in the philosophy of the Vedas”.¹² In the period 1911–1914, during his stays in Italy and Germany, Mitrinović started shifting profoundly toward universalism. In that expanded vision, the place of India became even more important. In an invitation letter (1914) to the potential contributors to *The Aryan Europe* journal, he uses the term “Slavic-Indian spirit”.¹³ That spirit should be synthetically interwoven with the European-American one. Mitrinović sees the world in ethno-cultural blocks, and it seems that the Indo-Slavic world forms one such block. This proximity of Slavs and Indians is the legacy of the 19th century, when many a nation sought to ennoble its history by providing a direct link to India – the cradle of humanity or of Aryans, a fabulous land, and, of course, an enchanted place of eternal wisdom. (At the same time when Mitrinović uses the term, Nicholas Roerich writes along the same lines about Indian and Slavic cultural and genealogical links). The Manifesto for the *Aryan Europe* calls for the birth of God in soul and in man, a theme he will pursue until the end of his activity and life.

Mitrinović in the UK. Panhumanist historiosophy, Vedanta, Tantrism

After moving to the United Kingdom, Mitrinović definitely moved toward universalism,¹⁴ continuing and expanding his interest in all things Indian, albeit no longer as a poet but as a thinker. He became familiar with Sanskrit to some degree, as we see from many original and bilingual editions he had in his library, mostly works of Indian philosophy and religion (classical Indian literature does not seem to have attracted his attention). He read the Upanishads in the British Museum.¹⁵ Even in his personal contacts, such as those with Valerie Cooper and Philip Mairet, Mitrinović preached in a way that resembled Vedantic monism: “To be

11 Dimitrije Mitrinović, “Reprezentacija Hrvata i Srba na Međunarodnoj izložbi u Rimu“, *Sabrana djela* 1, (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1990), 338.

12 Dimitrije Mitrinović, “Prevrat Kročevov“, *Sabrana djela* 2 (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1990), 139.

13 Letter to Émile Verhaeren in *Sabrana djela* 2, 244; to other contributors: Guido van Hengel, *Vidovnjaci* (Belgrade: Clio, 2021), 222.

14 Slobodan G. Markovich, “Dimitrije Mitrinović in the Quest for Gnosis. From National to Cosmopolitan Identity“, *Književna istorija* Vol. 52, No. 171 (2020), 108; 111.

15 Andrew Rigby, *Initiation and Initiative. An Exploration of the Life and Ideas of Dimitrije Mitrinović* (New York: Boulder, Eastern European Monographs, 1984), 52.

an 'I' is to be a living centre of the universe, each one of which is looking at the same time 'everything', but each from his own separate place in space and time"... "If, as indeed is the case, I am God and the ground of all Being, what ought to be my relationship with other humans, who are also God and the ground of all Being?"¹⁶

We will present here the place India had in Mitrinović's historiosophy and the influence of Indian thought on his system (if "system" is indeed the appropriate word), and finally his contacts with Indians. The sources used here are Mitrinović's famous "World Affairs" articles published in Orage's *The New Age*, where he for the first time articulated the new ideas boiling in this period to a British audience; articles and editorials from later periods; and the lectures he gave on different occasions and to different groups.¹⁷

Mitrinović's historiosophy is organicist and universalist; it is also highly complex, so only aspects concerning India will be tackled here.¹⁸ According to him, nations have their places in the world as the organs of Adam Kadmon (in this Mitrinović differs from Spengler, according to whom cultures are enclosed in their own worlds, and becomes close to the Herderian equilibrium of culturalism and humanity). Peoples are marching toward a world synthesis, which is the embodiment of pan-humanity, which Mitrinović calls by the Sanskrit term *lokasaṃgraha*. The term appears in *Bhagavadgītā* (III, 20) in Krishna's address to Arjuna. S. Radhakrishnan and W. Sargeant translate it as "the maintenance of the world"; F. Edgerton as "control of the world"; and Annie Besant and Bhagavan Das as "the welfare of the world". Pavle Jevtić, Mitrinović's friend, the first Serbian Indologist with a PhD from the London School of Oriental Studies, in his translation of the *Gītā* to Serbian, uses a rather free (but perhaps Mitrinović-inspired) version: "love of humanity". Monier-Williams gives it other meanings too, using sources other than the *Gītā*: "experience gained from intercourse with men"; "the whole of the universe, the aggregate of worlds".¹⁹ The meanings of world synthesis, activity and work for humanity, all encompassed within this Sanskrit term, with the *Bhagavadgītā* as Mitrinović's most likely source, made it suitable for articulating panhumanism.

16 Ibid, 53–54; 62.

17 Since the lectures (published in 1995) come from the notes of his students in the audience, it seems that this source calls for caution. However, it will be used for two reasons: the themes essentially correspond to his ideas from other works published during his life time; and, even if a lecture does not convey exactly what Mitrinović said on a particular occasion, the paper did live later among his disciples as *the* Mitrinović thought and legacy.

18 For details: Rigby, op.cit., 69–83.

19 M. Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 2005).

That panhuman synthesis will be, at the same time, the incarnation of Sophia, the fourth hypostasis of God, and, since Sophia is identified with the Holy Ghost, the creation of the Holy Ghost's body. Aryandom has a key role in this combination of Sophianism and the third revelation. Mitrinović sometimes uses this word as a racial term in the 19th and early 20th century, which includes the opposition between Aryans and Semites. But elsewhere he includes Semites and Finno-Ugric peoples among Aryans. The identification of humanity's leading race with Aryans probably comes from the Theosophical concept of root-races. According to Theosophy, each epoch is dominated by one race (Polar, Hyperborean, Lemurian, Atlantean), and, at that time, it was the 5th, the Aryan race (while the future one will emerge in America). (Actually, Aryandom is subordinated toward the higher mission of Adam Kadmon's reintegration, as a higher level of synthesis. "Aryandom and the white humanity is only one of the world-organs of the Species. It is the organism of the world and the evolution of the Aeons, that is the calling of the species today, both in the Eastern and the Western hemisphere").²⁰ Within Aryandom, the two world organs constituting Europe on her way toward panhumanity are the British and Slavs, the former as the oceanic "brick", the body of future panhumanity, and the later as the continental one, doing spiritual work. And here the idea of an Indo-Slavic connection reappears. The Slavic function is the synthesis of the East and West, giving birth to a new, universal humanity.²¹ Slavs, being closer to the East, preserve the "Aryan gnosis", directing the evolution by transferring Aryan Sophian Christianity toward the West and entire humanity.²²

Although Mitrinović's ideas are heavily influenced by Indian thought, when it comes to the role of India in the world process, he does not assign her a prominent place, as we might expect. Actually, he often relies on old stereotypes about India. Already in the plans for *The Aryan Europe*, he speaks about "passive old India". In *The New Age* he writes about India's mission as eternal, but at the same time static.²³ The "Eastern function" in the world – "beatific, ecstatic, disincarnational need of the race of humanity" manifests itself in India.²⁴ But India's enchantment by the absolute turned her into the antithesis of the West and the whole world. The world function of the West, especially Britain, is to transform India into an active and dynamic entity, or else she will lose her function and virtue in the world process.²⁵ Sometimes Mitrinović's evolutive vision looks like common progressivism,

20 *Certainly, Future. Selected Writings by Dimitrije Mitrinović*, ed. by H. C. Rutherford (New York: East European Monographs, Boulder, 1987), 234.

21 *Ibid*, 148–152; 155–159; 161; 173–174; 195; 213; 221; 230; 255.

22 *Ibid*, 173–175.

23 *Ibid*, 169; 173–175.

24 Dimitrije Mitrinović, *Lectures 1926–1950* (Bradford: New Atlantis Foundation in association with J. B. Priestley Library University of Bradford, 1995), 273–274.

25 Mitrinović, *Certainly, Future*, 171–2.

like when he says that India's stubbornness obstructs progress. It is good, then, that the West imposes its materialist magic civilization. India has to suffer that before being reborn into a regenerated world.²⁶ Britain has a special connection with India – even the British “racial unconsciousness” is attracted to India because of her responsibility for *lokasamgraha*.²⁷ And although Mitrinović criticizes the idea (derived from a famous but incomplete quote from Kipling) that the East and West would never meet as shallow, lower imperialism (implying that there is a higher one), he justifies British rule in India by the British mission of bringing the Western principle through love but, if necessary, by conquest and force too. Britain has to impose values and the “logocic principle” so that India and the East generally may be transformed.²⁸ India will belong to the body of giant Albion, so she should be nurtured and loved.²⁹

It seems that, for Mitrinović, Britain and India are complementary: India as the basis of Aryan eternity, Britain as the Aryan fulfillment and self-negation.³⁰ Indian “stubbornness” to progress and her stagnancy should be ignited to develop by British dynamism. If his idea of the world process is separation from unconsciousness and the expansion of consciousness, identified with moving from the East to the West,³¹ then this division of roles is not surprising. The West should transfer the acquired consciousness to the East in order to awaken it. Odd formulations, like the one that India is the unconsciousness of America and China the unconsciousness of England, become clearer in this framework.³² Still, if “in the East the pan-human identity is revealed on the plane of instinctiveness”, India is different as it is “the consciousness of Asia, the consciousness unconsciousness of the Far East”.³³ It reveals her deep link with Europe, making her different from China and Japan – a view understandable in the context of searching for Indo-European roots in India from Romanticism on.

Mitrinović ventures into direct political comments, e.g. when he describes the appointment of Lord Reading, a Jew, as the Viceroy of India as British high treason.³⁴ In the early 1920s, he writes how wrong Gandhi is because of his opposition to Western rule and modernity. The Western role in the East's transformation is also a Christian one, so Mitrinović reproaches Indian leaders for rejecting the incarnation of Universal Man

26 Ibid, 173.

27 Ibid, 160; 170.

28 Ibid, 160, 162, 175.

29 Ibid, 406.

30 Ibid, 169.

31 Rigby, *Initiation and Initiative*, 75

32 Mitrinović, *Certainly Future*, 117.

33 Mitrinović, *Lectures 1926–1950*, 273.

34 Mitrinović, *Certainly Future*, 145–146.

in the Messiah of the world. That is why the future of the world depends on Europe, not on them.³⁵ Britain has the right to expand Aryandom and Christianity even by force, if necessary.³⁶ On the other hand, he underlines how panhumanity is being realized in India in “the mode of Christness” (“Eastern Christness”).³⁷

What strikes the reader is the split between respect for the Indian spirit and distance from the political struggles of contemporary India, between the role of a disciple who learns from eternal Indian thought and the paternalistic attitude toward the country. It is possible that his comments on actual events come from cautiousness (after all, he was a foreigner who never took British citizenship). But the issue cannot be boiled down to that – the relations between India and Britain are understandable as a part of Mitrinović’s broader vision. Some of his pages look like colonial rule transposed on a historiosophical plane. A more benevolent reader could interpret this as Mitrinović’s idea that the very existence of a maritime empire is the germ of a future world synthesis. The British maritime empire is for him the body of a “universal kingdom”, the ground for joining of the East and West and humanity’s future transformation.³⁸ Indeed, he justifies this imperial role as long as it helps such a synthesis and panhumanity. Panhumanity itself, his core concept, reveals the influence of Indian imagery. The way Mitrinović reinterpreted this idea of Dostoevsky and Solovyov meant including India and Oriental topics. As is known, Dostoevsky, in his famous 1880 Pushkin anniversary speech, concludes that the Russian man has the empathic ability to enter into all other cultures’ spirits and worldviews. That means being panhuman and being Russian means being a brother to all humankind. Solovyov gave the exegesis of this idea, but both authors speak about the Russian mission. For Mitrinović and his followers, the Russian mission became Slavic or even Yugoslav. Now, there is one article by Dostoevsky, from the same time when he formulated the panhumanity concept, essentially a political comment on Russia’s military campaign in Central Asia, in which he writes about Russia’s neglected roots in Asia and how Russia, whose real place is there, should return to these roots for her future resurrection.³⁹ However, he doesn’t call for accepting Asian ideas (or specifically mention India). In Solovyov’s lectures on panhumanity, the East and the West mean Islam and Latin Christianity. Solovyov is definitely not pro-Oriental, given his fear of a pan-Mongolian invasion of Europe.

35 Ibid, 196.

36 Ibid, 136.

37 Mitrinović, *Lectures 1926–1950*, 273.

38 Ibid, 132, 136, 166, 258.

39 F. M. Dostojevski, “Geok-Tepe. Šta za nas znači Azija“, *Dnevnik pisca 1877–1881. Dostojevski kao mislilac 4* (Belgrade: Partizanska knjiga, 1982), 513–517.

In Mitrinović's vision, Dostoevsky's and Soloviov's concept was orientalized. Mitrinović included the East in his story of panhuman progress. He not only placed the East on the map of this synthetical historiosophy, but he also merged it with the Vedantic theme of all-unity. Panhumanity thus became something bigger and more encompassing than Dostoevsky had talked about. Another new "ingredient" Mitrinović brought to panhumanity was a new psychology, i.e. psychoanalysis, and bearing this in mind helps us to understand the image of India he had. Mitrinović relied on the opposition of consciousness and unconsciousness, which entered into culture with the popularization of psychoanalysis after 1918, and transferred it to macrohistory. In his system, the psychoanalytic conquest of "dark" areas is moved to a higher plane, essentially optimistic and progressivist one, where the process won't end with everyday ego replacing *id*, but will expand towards new, undiscovered spaces of consciousness. And that explains the very content of the world process and *lokasamgraha*. It seems that the East-West synthesis means the expansion of consciousness until the cosmic, universal, divine level is reached, and that is identical with revealing of man's divine kernel. That is the Aryan gnosis that the Slavs will transfer. The Aryan gnosis – a universal gnosis actually – is revealed both through Advaita Vedanta and the Athanasian Creed (and Aryan religions are Brahmanism, Zoroastrianism and Christianity). Mitrinović's gnosis is a kind of Vedantic-Christian synthesis. In his synthetism and eclecticism, he never wonders how compatible the monism of Advaita (he doesn't speak about other Vedantic currents closer to dualism and classical theism) is with clear theism and creationism. The exclusive monotheism of Christianity is even more distant from monism than the theistic school of Vedanta. Mitrinović didn't see problem in it, first, because of his universalism: ahistoric, as universalism often is, it understood different traditions as branches sprouting from the same core. Second, his Christianity comes from the heterodox tradition about man's divine essence – a heterodox red thread within Christianity (Meister Eckhart is probably the most famous but by no means isolated example). Individual progress toward deification is part of humanity's movement toward the same goal. As Rigby notices, since Mitrinović thinks of humanity in an organicist way, if the organism is to be changed, the cells must pass through the change first.⁴⁰ The individual aspect explains his interest in Adler's individual psychology.

But the psychology had been reworked along with Mitrinović's ontology, the idea of man's divinity. Vedantic influences in Mitrinović are specifically clear in his lectures on Adler's psychology (as well as on other topics). Through Vedanta and Tantrism, Mitrinović seeks to explain Adler, but what we get is neither Adler nor Vedanta, properly speaking, but a kind of Mitrinović's recombination.

⁴⁰ Rigby, *Initiation and Initiative*, 83.



Недеља, 14 август 1938

У ЛОНДОНУ ЖИВИ

NEW BRITAIN

JUNE 21, 1928

JOHN MACMURRAY
HENRY ROBERTSON
J. H. FERRIS, JOHN
ANDERSON, & Stuart & Gordon
By OWEN MUTTER, A.



Map of the British Isles of varying the internationalism that shows the most modern civilization from the individual nations, Frenchmen, and Englishmen to be known

„Нова Британија“, недељни часопис, који је уређивао тадашњи Митровић. — На заглављу види се: „Једна од најинтереснијих путева за стварање међународне заједнице, која једнако може спавати цивилизацију јесте прилика према на индивидуалност Немцу, Французу и Енгелу“

Д о Димитрија Митровића, прилично је тешко рећи, али постојећи његов циљ.

Јер он је стварао изданања за многе, изузев за најближе пријатеље и познанике. Наполе не нишан, на не којим изданицима у Југославији. Истакли, него су свакога заборавао и његова сународника. И међу ретко познате, Колман се сањао, последњи пут је био у Београду пре десетину година. Он је остао „дојучу“ својим пријатељима. Међутим, отацко је разочарање и своја милошћива.

А у Великој Британији је привлачан, судачно и пријатељски, и налази се на челу једне политичко-идеолошке групе.

Не само то: његов међународни циљ извршио је пријатеља у Југославији који га позивају, међутим и међународно да и ствара свој програм. Најважнији

„Комонс“ им уводи читање у једно ново издавање на страни у свету, да кога се може добити потпуно перспективна објекта.“

Са циљем који изражава припадност својим националним издавањима, он обично седе за скривеним стомаком у својој јединици у Соку, или у предграђу Лондона или у Делавару, једном оду близу изгледних престоница; он се скривао међу својим издавањем, својим политичким издавањем, својим издавањем издавања која објављују не само проблеме Велике Британије, већ и Америке, Азије и Африке. Немци су издавали драге ценици и Италији, Јапану и Југославији, Јапану и Руси. А још ма је у својој условима када је он пре него година издавања и он јавно изјавио издавања и припадност издавања својим издавањима, издавањем издавања издавања. Својим издавањем

КОЈИ ДА И Велики

Овим дана „Манчестер Гардијан“ је краћи чланак, под насловом „Нова Британија“. У чланку се говори о групи људи који себи у задатка да изграде једну заједницу, са много више хуманистичке слободе, повезано низом слободарских, локалних, националних и социјалних, које би биле заштићене државном војском“.

За читатеље „Времени“ ти људи би били интересантни да шеф групе духовни вођ који један Југословенски Димитрије Митровић, тако успео је да створи посебну школу, да ствара безброј присталица, да науку следе и проповедају, који у своју сврху новог месију.

Он се залаже за дефинисање своје између Велике Британије и Средњој Европи. Амерички Државни вођ би дошао у објектима и своје сврхе изградња државно „Нова Европа“, то је крајњи циљ политичких издавања Митровића и његових издавања.

...и мисија Југославије

У мисију Југославије, у мени била издавањем који се могу се транспарентно издати Југословима. Он је још недовољно изјавио да своје издање и издавања

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Dr Pawle Jevtić's article on Mitrinović published in the Belgrade daily Vreme on August 4, 1938

ЈЕДАН ЈУГОСЛОВЕН намерава ПРЕПОРОДИ своју Британију

СТРАНА 9

Мистик и визионер, Димитрије Митриновић, створио је посебну школу у Енглеској

роднику они нису видели визионера, као много инглиски пријатељи, него човека који своје идеје не може да спроведе са стварним животом. И напустили су га исто онако, као што једнака публика у Хадс Парку изашла из многобројне тачносног које врбују припадници за своје религиозне школе, али политичка реформација.

Нови видници за нов свет

Енглеска је примила Митриновића, као што је примила и стотинама сличних визионера и необичних људи. На треба мислити да је њих сународници измислили за својим изгледима. У народном Лондону стичу се заједнички студије, најчудније контрасти који траже да створе нове системе, нове политичке доктрине или пак уређења свет отворила новим идеја. А у измисленој Европи током живота је утицај једних одређених идеја, једном лекцијом који не може изгледати изједна

од многих „пророка“, највећа сузнавица, била она са истарелим предцима, била она новина мистика. Разумо се, свака од нових покрета има своје одређеница. Ова човечина, међутим, изумислила је ослабила енергију и животно „учишће“. Он и даље са криво одређенима говори истима, даваошао, не би да се „мистичарима“ те људи који треба да поведу свет једним новим путем, путем светлости и правде и братства.

Група ово „Ново Еванђеље“ тражи нове видике. Нови и пунаја стремљени и нов свет; Она претаре доклинаме мистичарима на култури, уметности, науци и политици. За представљени ово групе уметност је у карактеристичном односу према људској активности, у апсолутном односу ума, срца и тела. Она не заборавља да животи умишља, да су људи направили ствари својства и активности на једном светом мистика, али морају да се то може живити. Мистика кроз

двадесет година, мистика кроз једно стање, а и живити је је мистика за људски дух! Она не искључује никога човека, био он припадник религиозне доктрине или Конфуција, акиниста или муслиманског „божанског оца“. Не постоје разлике, према припадницима ово групе између човека са Западе и Истока, они се не искључују, већ сваки има одређену функцију у човечанству. И као се велики деси да дође у лидер са чланом ово групе, он ће сигурно бити припадник из политичког, професионалног и кријанског. У својој јавној атмосфери, али без разума, он ће чути речи ланте и остало да се врати у једном свету који се може тако брзо створити.

А само сународника Митриновић ће, био обира да може додати или отуђе, предмети да говори сународницих службеница и светској политици, о духовном препороду, о стварима живота.

Др. Павле Јебичић

Mitrinović was open in his drawing on Vedanta, not sparing words

of praise. Vedanta is for him “our philosophical canon”, “the zenith of mind”, it is *the* Anthropo-philosophy, its meaning being the most universal; it is the only philosophical system beside Hegel’s, all others being fragments only.⁴¹ “The universal and lasting, immemorial and imperishable chief philosophy of humanity and the highest philosophy containing the acme of omniscience and philosophical problems of the Vedanta, especially as expounded by Shankara. In the Vedanta Man first reached knowledge of the absolute reality of awareness itself”.⁴²

He uses Vedantic terminology (brahman, ātman, sat-cit-ānanda, paramātman, jīvātman) but, more importantly, his core teaching about human divinity is derived from Vedantic monism. Cosmology based on manifestation, not creation, also has a Vedantic tone. God has many points of manifestation (i.e. individuals): brahman is unchangeable bliss, and all variations are of equal value to him. What the human perspective sees as opposites is the same for God. That is also the case with individuals, separate and different in their own perspective but the same for God. With acquiring the divine point of view, we will see the same whole. Mitrinović expands Vedantic monism. Not only is atman brahman, but man is the meaning of the worlds’ evolution, the meeting of cosmic entities, synthesis of world, the center of existence. Ego is God, the source of Adam and Eve, substance of the world, and the universe is part of ego.⁴³ “God is the integrated sum-total of experience of all men, all plants, all monads, all electrons. God is that universal experience which also includes bacteria, ugly animals, pain, theft, execution, lie”.⁴⁴

Hence we are all connected. Vedantic monism inspired Mitrinović’s panhumanism (not as his only source, to be sure, but an important and neglected one), and it also inspired the idea of individual ego as a springboard for the world process. That is how Mitrinović appropriated Adler’s psychology with its name “individual psychology” and its interest in social reform. This mixture of panhumanism and monism is Mitrinović’s version of Vedanta, not the heritage of Shankara. Identifying God with the cosmic whole makes Mitrinović again reminiscent of the poetry of Serbian cosmism.

Another Vedantic theme he takes is the identification of awareness (cit) with being (sat) and bliss (ānanda), or, more precisely, identifying God with universal awareness. God’s knowledge of a cow is a cow; through God’s presence in us all things will be presented to us.⁴⁵ God, that is at-

41 Mitrinović, *Lectures 1926–1950*, 176, 241.

42 Mitrinović, *Certainly, Future*, 442.

43 Mitrinović, *Lectures 1926–1950*, 64–65.

44 *Ibid*, 67.

45 *Ibid*, 180.

man that is nirvana that is Jehova, is consciousness, universal ego.⁴⁶ Human beings are self-consciousness of existence, of the absolute being, and the meaning of the world is the self-consciousness of all humans.⁴⁷ One of his texts in Serbian (*The deduction of Trinity*) also is about consciousness understood as being itself: “There is only one consciousness;” “There is nothing else but consciousness;” “Consciousness is being;” “Consciousness is God”. The entire text consists of short formulations like these, resembling very much the style of the *sūtras*.

The text *Three Revelations* puts Vedanta in a broader framework.⁴⁸ It harmonizes the gradual deification of man, the revelation of that process, and the philosophical interpretation of that revelation. The revelation before Christianity is knowledge of the ancient world, from Vedanta and Mahayana to Kabbalah, about the universal man. In our days, it is represented by Rudolf Steiner. The other revelation is Christian, about the archetypal man in history, represented by Solovyov, teaching how man ascends to become God. The third revelation is post-Christian, the new age of man and cosmos, as represented by Eric Gutkind, revealing the archetypal man in individual consciousness, i.e. Christ in men. The three triadic systems that are the basis for these revelations are Vedanta, Plato and Hegel. Vedanta possesses a trinity – sat, cit, ānanda – but not in time, since the temporal aspect would be brought by Hegel later.

Since Mitrinović’s understanding of revelation is evolutive and dialectic, it is clear why Vedanta remains eternal but static at the same time, just like India. There are some contradictions in the three revelations concept. The first revelation took place in the ancient period, but still lives today through Anthroposophy. Christianity was the next step, but he explains that Christianity is not different from older religions in its core. If all these revelations are actually of the same essence and simultaneous, what is the actual meaning of gradual, increasingly perfect revelation?

A point where he differs from Vedanta is the central place he assigns to ego. The divine self Vedanta speaks of is the deep, internal ground of being, different from the empirical and ephemeral “I”. (Buddhism also views “I” as transitory). Mitrinović’s heritage is still the Western tradition of individualism and modern psychology. It appears that he believed that psychoanalysis, as different from empirical psychology, discovers new possibilities for development. But it is not clear what the destiny of the common “I” would be in the future conquest of higher consciousness. He also rarely speaks of *māyā* (he mentions it as the basis for Vedantic inspired esthetics, together with *līlā*). Nirvana is identified with brahman, that is to say, fitted into the Hindu, Vedantic outlook. It is also acquired through

46 Ibid, 123.

47 Ibid, 132, 88.

48 Mitrinović, *Certainly, Future*, 439–443.

the experience of wholeness⁴⁹ – a teaching obviously different from Buddhist views on nirvana, however diverse they might be.

Less known is Mitrinović's interest in Tantrism, another subject on which he gave lectures. We have already pointed out the similarity of his concept of body centers to yoga and Tantrism elsewhere,⁵⁰ although Gurdjieff and Orage seem to be closer possible sources (Gurdjieff himself was familiar with Oriental traditions, of course). For Mitrinović, Tantrism is gnosis, "occultism" and "original science", from which other sciences degenerated.⁵¹ It is equal to the absolute truth, truth itself.⁵² Through tantra one achieves the experience of wholeness, of eternity, the eternal now, and that wholeness is more precisely explained as all egos different from ourselves.⁵³ Mitrinović paid special importance to the term *bindu*. This term ("point", "drop", "spot") in Tantrism signifies the concentration of energy, gaining symbolical meaning in ritual as the center of Tantric diagrams or in chanting mantras as a nasal vowel, identified with different centers in the subtle physiology of the human body (like in the head or identified with semen), and with the cause of creation on a macrocosmic level, which acquires special importance in Shaivite currents. In the dictionary accompanying a selection of his articles (1995) and, consequently, so in Mitrinović's legacy of thought preserved by his disciples, *bindu* is defined along these lines: "In the Tantric system, the transitional point between nothing and something, between physical and spiritual; potentiality of being". *Bindu* is, according to Mitrinović, the human ego, our being, the cosmic knot. Humans are the *bindu* of eternity limiting God. Mitrinović says that, for Indians, the human being is the involution of divinity.⁵⁴ Unlike animals, who are not aware of their fallen state, we know that our center is separated from "Para-atman". But if we are not in God, God is in us. Precisely through tantra, identical to free will, we can exhaust the entire experience and lives of others.⁵⁵ If we are humans only potentially and we should make ourselves, as Mitrinović says, tantra is the way to do that. Tantra is also a preparation and technology for the birth of Christ,⁵⁶ and what Mitrinović means here is most probably the internal Christ of heterodoxy. While Christianity demands faith, tantra is truth itself.⁵⁷

49 Mitrinović, *Lectures 1926–1950*, 177.

50 Nemanja Radulović, "The Sexual-Mystical Sophianism of Dimitrije Mitrinović", *La Rosa di Paracelso*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2017), 87–99.

51 Mitrinović, *Lectures 1926–1950*, 196–198, 200.

52 *Ibid.*, 194, 200.

53 *Ibid.*, 194–195.

54 *Ibid.*, 180–181, 192, 198.

55 *Ibid.*, 194–195.

56 *Ibid.*, 201.

57 *Ibid.*, 200.

Tantra can better be understood in his concept of gnosis. For Mitrinović, gnosis is different from religion, being the very truth, experience, while religions claim authority from above.⁵⁸ In other places, he defines it as “being one own’s *Bindu*, and knowing it to be one with the *Bindu* of God”,⁵⁹ or as “the study of God in the human spirit”⁶⁰ Tantra is another example of universal gnosis. (He claims that Christianity’s hidden heart is also gnosis, different from Church Christianity).⁶¹ And its kernel is, again, man’s divine essence. He interprets tantra starting with the idea of divinity potentially contained in *bindu*, which is a Tantric idea, but then he proceeds: “Everything is potentially contained in everything else; therefore gnosis possible for all are interpenetrated and yet separate. A *Bindu* is simultaneously a possibility for an atom, a monad, an earth, a universe... Everything is miraculously present everywhere, if only we knew it. All mystery is contained in every other mystery, and therefore truth is possible”.⁶² Just like Vedantic monism, this reading of tantra leads to cosmism and creates a ground for panhumanism. Although he is aware of the physiological aspects of tantra, interestingly enough, the very same thinker who emphasized a kind of sexual mysticism in “World Affairs” does not talk about the sexual or transgressive aspects of tantra (at least not in the published material).

Mitrinović understands Tantra as a heroic way of self-liberation, realisation of divine potential, restoration of man’s divine status, the immediate experience of the truth. Mitrinović identifies it with what is in the West called occultism and what is also “real science”, meaning direct and independent insight instead of relying on tradition. This identification of Tantrism, occultism, the “scientific method” and universal gnosis is fully understandable in the framework of occultism (modern Western esotericism) as the framework of his reception. The occultism of modernity tended to give itself legitimacy by appearing as scientific.⁶³ Mitrinović’s equation of Tantrism, gnosis, occultism, and science can, perhaps, be seen as an example of what Antoine Faivre calls “the praxis of the concordance”, as a landmark of Western esotericism of modernity (“a consistent tendency to try to establish common denominators between two different traditions or even more, among all traditions, in the hope of obtaining an illumination, a gnosis, of superior quality”).⁶⁴

58 Ibid, 196, 200.

59 Ibid, 180.

60 Ibid, 57.

61 Ibid, 196.

62 Ibid, 200.

63 Tantra is an “eminently scientific, empirical, detailed Indian philosophy, claiming to be verifiable science” (Ibid, 200) while gnosis generally possesses a key one can study scientifically (Ibid, 196).

64 Antoine Faivre, *Access to Western Esotericism* (State University of New York Press), 14.

In Britain of Mitrinović's time, the leading expert on Tantrism – a topic long neglected in Indology – was Sir John Woodroffe, who became famous as the author of books on that subject published under the pseudonym Arthur Avalon. Mitrinović owned copies of his works (now kept in Belgrade), but it is even more interesting that there was a kind of indirect link between them: Woodroffe was a member of the PhD committee of the above mentioned Pavle Jevtić.⁶⁵

The image of India also influenced Mitrinović's universalism. One of the sources of his universalist outlook was Theosophy. Many universalistic tendencies of Western occultism became articulated in this movement. Needless to say, Theosophy made India a privileged place in its macrohistory. The theosophical mission of the Universal Brotherhood was another source of his universalism, to which he directly refers.⁶⁶ Mitrinović added the Slavs to the Theosophical race cycles. (And he was not alone in that – Theosophists and Anthroposophists from Slavic milieus often merged Slavic messianism with Blavatsky's mythology). Another possible source of his universalism is the concept of the invisible universal church taken from esoteric Christianity.

A third source relevant for this research is Neo-Vedanta. Although Mitrinović often speaks about Vedanta, he does not refer to Neovedantic authors like Vivekananda. However, his attitude corresponds closely to the ideas of Vivekananda or Tagore. Vivekananda and other Neo-Vedantins claimed that all religions lead toward the same goal and contain the same kernel, a view that impressed Europeans with their historical remembrance of intolerance and religious wars. Some contemporary critical approaches hold, on the contrary, that this Neo-Vedantic universalism is not that tolerant as it might seem, since all non-Indian religions are subjected to a kind of *interpretatio indica* and fitted into the Hinduist framework. According to such interpretations, Neovedantic universalism is essentially hierarchical, with Advaita Vedanta on the top of the ladder.⁶⁷ But what matters now is that Europeans perceived it as all-embracing and developed their universalist ideas having the Indian ideal before them. Vivekananda's identification of Vedanta with universal truth resonates in Mitrinović, too. Mitrinović's

65 *The Conception of Karma and Reincarnation in Hindu Religion and Philosophy*, 1927; published under the slightly changed title *Karma and Reincarnation in Hindu Religion and Philosophy*.

66 Mitrinović, *Certainly, Future*, 223.

67 For details see: Stephen E. Gregg, *Swami Vivekananda and Non-Hindu Traditions. A Universal Advaita* (London & New York: Routledge, 2019); Jyotirmaya Sharma, *A Restatement of Religion. Swami Vivekananda and the Making of Hindu Nationalism* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2013). The debate about Hindu tolerance was opened in 1957 by Paul Hacker, who interpreted Hindu tolerance as hierarchical ("gradualist") inclusivism (a summary of the debate is available in: Halbfass, *India and Europe*, pp. 403–418). How important the topic of tolerance still is among the Indian intelligentsia is well illustrated by Amartya Sen's *The Argumentative Indian*, whose main argument is mobilizing tolerance against Hindutva.

derivation of social activity from the Vedantic concept of atman-brahman also resembles the political variants of Neo-Vedanta.⁶⁸ Still, it is interesting that, just as he doesn't refer to modern Vedantins, he doesn't mention one of the most famous Indians of his period, well known in Britain, who wasn't only a poet but a Vedantic philosopher too – Rabindranath Tagore, and that he mentions Gandhi only sporadically.⁶⁹

Indian names in Mitrinović's network

Finally, there are his personal contacts with many Indians. Mitrinović's activity can be understood in terms of a network, as part of the history of European intellectuals⁷⁰ – he was even described recently as a “network specialist”.⁷¹ This wide network, full of impressive names, includes Indian names too.

We learn more about his network from his letters. He was on friendly terms with Jessrajsingh Seesodia, a thakur (a kind of title from which the surname Tagore, Bengali Thakur, is derived). Mitrinović helped him financially up to his death in 1926.⁷² Mitrinović's associate Pavle Jevtić mentions in a 1938 article that Mitrinović “humbly and with a lot of piety” had organized the cremation of his friend, the Indian nationalist Seesodia.⁷³ Seesodia informs Mitrinović that he wants to publish book anonymously, in which he will reveal the true astrological keys. There are materials on astrology and yoga left by him. In the year of his death, he sent Mitrinović a synopsis of a lecture, stating that he wanted to see Mitrinović in the service of humanity in Europe. One of his letters opens with some Sanskrit verses containing the *lokasamgraha* term.⁷⁴ Mitrinović's Indian correspondents in the following three decades of his life include important names of Indian culture, such as

68 For the political aspect see V.S. Kostiuchenko, *Klassičeskaya vedanta i neovedantizm* (Moscow: Mysl, 1983), 176–196.

69 However, according to one reference, he met Gandhi, Nenad Petrović, *Dimitrije Mitrinović* (Windsor: Avala, 1967), 24.

70 A notable example is Guido van Hengel's *De Zieners*.

71 David Graham Page, *Pioneers of European Federalism: the New Europe Group and New Britain Movement (1931–1935)*, A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy, The University of Sheffield Faculty of Arts and Humanities Department of History October 2016, 66.

72 University of Bradford, New Atlantis Foundation, Special Collections (further as: NAF). Seesodia to Mitrinović 19.5. 1924 (?) (NAF 1/7/8/85); 23.6.1924 (NAF 1/7/8/56); 20.9.1924 (NAF 1/7/8/57); 8.10.1924 (NAF 1/7/8/58); 6.7.1925 (NAF 1/7/8/72)

73 Pavle Jevtić, “U Londonu živi jedan Jugosloven koji namerava da preporodi Veliku Britaniju“, *Vreme* (4.8.1938), 9.

74 Seesodia to Mitrinović 20.3.1926. (NAF 1/7/8/89); 24.1.1926 (NAF 1/7/8/84); Rex Campbell to Mitrinović 2.6.1926 (NAF 1/7/8/97).

artist Mukul Dey (1895–1989), pioneer of drypoint-etching in India, whom Seesodia introduced to Mitrinović.⁷⁵ One letter we have is from 1926 and the other from 1952. Ram Gopal (1912–2003), a performer of classical Indian dance, was impressed by people he met at Mitrinović's, connoisseurs of philosophy and occultism, and concluded they should discuss "Destiny and power of thought then Prayer, Dance and Love of mankind"⁷⁶. Writer Mulk Raj Anand (1905–2004), pioneer of Indo-Anglian literature, who lived in Britain at the time, socializing in the Bloomsbury world (and in Theosophical circles too), writes to Mitrinović regarding his collaboration in *New Britain*, since the journal was about to publish his translations of one Indian folk tale and a story from the medieval work *Yoga vasiṣṭha*. While this seems to have been part of Mitrinović's editorial duties, Anand also informs Mitrinović about work on his novel and that he will show Mitrinović his philosophical notes.⁷⁷ In that period, Anand was not a famous writer: that year, his collection of stories appeared, and his first novel, *Untouchable*, with a foreword by E.M. Forster, was published the following year. It is probably the novel he mentions to Mitrinović. Gopal Mukerji (1890–1936), one of the first Indian writers to make a name for himself in USA by writing in English, also writes to Mitrinović regarding the journal, ending his letter with *om shanti*.⁷⁸ Some Indian names are less known, but the letters are no less interesting. A certain Pirojha Mehta reports to Mitrinović that he is reading the book about Vedanta Mitrinović gave him and invites Mitrinović to a camp (associated with *New Europe* it seems) for "work", adding: "You are known to some of the 'important' people who are present here, and your word would count for a great deal". He ends the letter by expressing belief in "Life, eternal Life", in spite of menacing catastrophes.⁷⁹ Dr. Gangulee from Kolkata upon his arrival to London in 1935 reminds Mitrinović of their meeting the previous year and, since he was impressed, he asks him for meeting.⁸⁰ Dharmendranat Shastri only heard of Mitrinović from a mutual friend, so he writes from India: "Kindred hearts from far distant climes echo and re-echo. You who are a Serbian should love Indian philosophy so deeply! It is beauty of God's creation – a positive proof of the Unity of the universe! In the Divine Temple of philosophy no distinction of clime and colour! I know I could probably never see you but my winged soul flies in love to you! This kinship, believe me, dear friend, is stronger than that of blood and race...What a pity that the distinction of race and nationality should keep men separated from each other and retarding spir-

75 Mukul Dey to Mitrinović 31.7.1926 (NAF 1/7/8/101); 2.6.1952 (NAF 1/7/9/84).

76 Ram Gopal to Mitrinović 12.2.1951 (NAF 1/7/9/77).

77 Mulk Raj Anand to Mitrinović 16.7.1934 (NAF 1/7/8/207).

78 Gopal Mukerji to Mitrinović (from New York) 12.10. [1921?] (NAF 1/7/18/18).

79 Pirojha Mehta to Mitrinović 27.7.1932 (NAF 1/7/8/186); 11.8.1932 (NAF 1/7/8/187).

80 Dr. Gangulee to Mitrinović 29.7.1935 (NAF 1/7/8/215).

itual evolution by keeping them isolated”. He invites Mitrinović to contribute to the journal *Prabhat*.⁸¹ Such letters must have confirmed Mitrinović in his panhumanist faith. In 1948, Henry Rutherford, on behalf of the New Europe and New Atlantis groups, sent a letter to the Indian Vedantic philosopher and Theosophist Bhagavan Das (1869–1958)⁸² inviting him to support the initiative for the Senate and Republic of Man. Rutherford, who was in India at that time, suggested to Das to meet him in person and introduced himself as a student of Sanskrit and Indian philosophy – topics he had taken up on Mitrinović’s initiative. In explaining the Senate, the letter calls upon Das’ work *The Science of Social Organization*, based on *Manu’s Law* (*Mānavadharmasāstra*). A more elaborate description of the Senate bears resemblance to panhumanism: it should gather people regardless of their nationalities and religions in order to identify them with Man as a whole.⁸³ Das accepted to be the patron of the initiative.⁸⁴ Two years later, the English group reminded Das of the contact they had established, mentioning once again his book *The Science*. They sent him a copy of a lecture Mitrinović had given that year in London and an explanation of the third force principle. As Rutherford had done on a previous occasion, they informed Das about Mitrinović’s life and work, emphasizing how Mitrinović drew their attention to Das’ books, how he studied them and spoke of them many times, especially about *Pranava vada*.⁸⁵ They commented on the actual Cold War situation: “The only articulate evidence of world statesmanship and of action based on principle instead of mere expediency, altogether at the present time, and particularly in this Korean crisis comes from India, and most especially in the speeches of Pandit Nehru”. Nehru’s universalism and moralism in foreign policy obviously looked like new confirmation of Mitrinović’s ideals, again coming from India. They especially praised India’s decision to stay in the Commonwealth, adding: “But a still closer working is necessary between our two countries. Britain should learn to inherit the wisdom tradition that comes from India, both in the living of individual life and in the ordering of society, and transmute it through her political and administrative ability into an impartial proposal for World Order on the basis of the truly Social State of which she herself could become the first example. And she should in turn give all the help she can both technically and administratively toward’s India material welfare”.⁸⁶ Although

81 Dharmendranath Shastri to Mitrinović 8.12.1925 (NAF 1/7/8/78).

82 Kostiuhenko, *Klassicheskaya vedanta*, 204–206.

83 Henry Christian Rutherford to Bhagavan Das 5. 11. 1948. (NAF 6/1/4/1).

84 Bhagavan Das to Henry Christian Rutherford 23.11.1948. (NAF 6/1/4/2). Das mentions that he knew Patrick Geddes whom he met in India.

85 It is the text Das published 1910–1913 at the Theosophical Society publishing house, allegedly an unknown secret and ancient one, which he reconstructed from the memory of blind informant.

86 (NAF 6/1/4/3). Undated, but it is clear from the content that it was written in 1950.

the contact between Das and Mitrinović wasn't direct, those letters must have gone to India with his knowledge. Even in the new political circumstances after India's independence, Mitrinović's circle continued his vision of a bond between India and Britain, where India had role of a guru in all things spiritual and Britain of securing the material basis. Let us mention that in 1962 Rutherford gave a lecture on *Pranava vada* comparing it with Mitrinović's teaching of three revelations and the threefold social system.⁸⁷ Indeed, Das could be one of the sources of Mitrinović's tripartite concept of society. Das uses the classical Indian text *Mānavadharmasāstra*, which had served as the legislative and societal underpinning for centuries, as an outline for modern times. He explains how the tripartite cast system and fourfold division of life could function in our age. He reminds the reader of Mitrinović while explaining how an individual through stages grows toward the Universal Self.⁸⁸ Still, it is somewhat strange that they established contact that late, when Das was already elderly and India independent. It seems that only Rutherford's travel there was the impulse.

There is another source connected to (imaginary) India in some way, which perhaps influenced Mitrinović's threefold society concept. Mitrinović's most obvious source for this was, of course, Rudolf Steiner with his threefold ordering of society. But Mitrinović could have also found this idea in the works of the French esotericist Saint-Yves d'Alveydre, who had propagated *synarchy* since the late 19th century: the organization of society along the divisions into three elective collegia (educational, juridical and economic), three councils (authority, power and economy), three ministries etc, corresponding to the spiritual, intellectual and practical function. In his *Mission of India* (published posthumously in 1910), he launched a narrative⁸⁹ about the mysterious underground kingdom of Agartha, organized in a synarchic way. D'Alveydre depicts Agartha as something known to the Indian tradition and through Hindu terms. Although he learnt some Sanskrit from an Indian, the place called Agartha he describes is not part of Hindu mythology but his own creation. A new wave of interest in the fictional kingdom appeared in the 1920s with the books by Ossendowski (*Beast, Men and Gods*, 1922) and Guénon (*The King of the World*). Mitrinović had the first edition of *Mission of India* in his library (now kept in the University Library in Belgrade). Of course, it is possible that Mitrinović became familiar with the French author only after Steiner. But even in that

87 H. C. Rutherford, *The Message of Bhagavan Das on the Present Significance of the Vedic Social Order* (Richmond Hill: The New Atlantis Foundation, 1962).

88 Bhagavan Das, *The Science of Social Organization or The Laws of Manu in the Light of Theosophy* (Benares and London, Adyar: Theosophical Publishing Society, The Theosophical Office, 1910), 133–136.

89 More precisely, Louis Jaccoliot was the first to create a narrative about "Asgartha", but it was D'Alveydre's version coupled with his ideas of social organization that exercised influence in occult and other circles.

case, it is significant that the social vision Steiner started developing from 1917 is reminiscent of D'Alveydre's, which predates it. Steiner was very close with Édouard Schuré, who was an associate of D'Alveydre's, so the French author could have been the channel for conveying ideas from the Parisian occult milieu to Steiner. But Mitrinović too sought to meet Schuré as early as 1914–1916.⁹⁰ Whatever the genealogy of ideas and channels of influences might be, the image of India as formed in Western esotericism seemed to be the background lurking behind this social reformism. On the other hand, the fact that Bhagavan Das was a Theosophist too shows the complexity of the Eastern-Western exchange.

Mitrinović had had an interest in India since his early writings, especially in Vedanta philosophy. It continued in his British period, becoming one of the long, deep veins extending through his work, although in his mature period it developed into a full-blown vision encompassing cosmology, psychology, historiosophy, politics. Mitrinović's ideas can be understood as a variant of Western Neo-Vedanta. His contribution is marrying Vedantic monism with Russian panhumanism and modern psychology. Personal contacts he had with Indians reveal more about the historical and social background of his activity.

Another part of this story is that the strong Indophilia that blossomed in Serbian culture in the interwar period, extending from academic articles to ideological manifestos, was largely due to Mitrinović's influence, and that the protagonists of this pro-Indian wave – called also "Slavic-Indian humanism" – were close to the London-based guru. Pavle Jevtić was just one of them. But that fascinating topic deserves another chapter.

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⁹⁰ Schuré, whose books *The Great Initiates* and *The Evolution of Godhead* were very popular in Europe at the turn of the centuries, espouses a macrohistory that includes India and Indian avatars.

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