

A CHRONOLOGY OF IMPORTANT EVENTS 1868–1943

Birth and education

- 1868.** Born on May 6 (April 24 in the Julian calendar) in Belgrade to a renowned Belgrade family of mother Milica and father Nikodim.
- 1878–85.** Enrolls in and finishes the First Belgrade Gymnasium in the same generation with Milorad Mitrović, Jovan Cvijić, Pavle Popović and other prominent personages of Serbian science and culture. A TV film *Professor Vujić's Hat* was made on this topic.
- 1885.** Enrolls in the Department of Mathematics and Natural Sciences at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade.
- 1889.** Completed studies in Belgrade and went to Paris for further education, and preparation for the entrance exam for enrollment to the famous university École Normale Supérieure.
- 1890.** Passed the entrance exam for enrollment to École Normale Supérieure.
- 1891.** Awarded the state scholarship of Serbia.
- 1892.** Graduated from the Sorbonne in mathematical sciences with highest marks.

- 1893.** Graduated in physical sciences from the same university. As the best student of his generation, attended the annual reception given by the President of the French Republic in 1893 and 1894.
- 1894.** Defended the doctoral dissertation *Sur les zéros et les infinis des intégrales des équations différentielles algébriques* before a commission composed of the most distinguished French mathematicians: Charles Hermite, Émile Picard and Pol Painlevé.

Academic career

- 1894.** Elected a full-time professor at the Grand School in Belgrade for the mathematical group of subjects.
- 1896.** Became a member of the Society of Italian Mathematicians in Palermo.
- 1897.** Elected a correspondent member of the Serbian Royal Academy. Became a correspondent member of the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts in Zagreb.
- 1899.** Elected a regular member of the Serbian Royal Academy. He was only 31 years old at the time.
- 1905.** When University of Belgrade was founded, he was one of the first eight professors who subsequently elected other professors of the University.
- 1908–09.** Performed duty of Dean of Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade.
- 1922.** Becomes a corresponding member of the Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague.
- 1927.** Nominated for the president of the Serbian Royal Academy. The nomination rejected by the higher authorities due to his friendship with Prince Đorđe who had fallen into disfavor with the king.
- 1929.** Elected a member of academies in Warsaw and Bucharest.

- 1931. Nominated again for the president of the Serbian Royal Academy, but the nomination was again rejected.
- 1937. Became a correspondent member of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Krakow.
- 1939. Was awarded the honorary doctorate from the University of Belgrade and the Decoration of St. Sava of the first degree.

Scientific work

- 1886. As a freshman, wrote his first academic paper *On one Modification of Graeffe's Method for Solving Higher Numerical Equations*. In his lifetime, he published over 300 academic papers in mathematics, the greatest number of which were published in world's leading academic journals.
- 1900. Constructed a hydro-integrator. For this invention he was awarded a bronze medal at the World Exhibition in Paris. Participated at the Congress of Mathematicians in Paris at which David Hilbert presented his famous list of 23 problems, which were very influential on 20th century mathematics.
- 1908. Presented academic work at the Fourth International Congress of Mathematicians in Rome.
- 1909. At the proposal of Mihailo Petrović, Jovan Cvijić and Bogdan Gavrilović, University of Belgrade invited Milutin Milanković to become a professor of applied mathematics. Milanković accepted the invitation and came to Belgrade the same year.
- 1911. Published a monograph *Elements of Mathematical Phenomenology*, an edition of the Serbian Royal Academy.
- 1912. The first doctoral dissertation in mathematics was defended at the University of Belgrade. The dissertation was defended by Mladen Berić, under the supervision of Mihailo Petrović. Presented academic work at the Fifth International Congress of Mathematicians in Cambridge.
- 1919. Published a monograph *Les spectres numeriaues*, Paris, 1919.

- 1924. Presents academic work at the International Congress of Mathematicians in Toronto. He was the vice president of the Congress and the president of the Section for Theoretical Mathematics.
- 1928. Published a monograph (his lectures at the Sorbonne) *Lecons sur les spectres mathematiques*, Paris.
- 1930. Established the Mathematical Club of the University of Belgrade.
- 1932. Together with Anton Bilimirović established the first Serbian mathematical journal *Publications de l'Institut Mathématique Université de Belgrade*.
- 1933. Published a monograph *Phenomenological Copying*, Serbian Royal Academy.
- 1934. Participated in the work of the Second Congress of Mathematicians of Slavic Countries.
- 1936. Published a monograph *One Differential Algorithm and Its Applications*, Serbian Royal Academy.
- 1937. Published a monograph *Elliptic Functions*, edition of the Endowment of Luka Trebinjac.
- 1967. His monograph *Metaphors and Allegories* was published by Srpska književna zadruga.

Major overseas travels

- 1931. Expedition to Northern Seas, from France to Hammerfest, Greenland and Island.
- 1932. Expedition to the Caribbean, visit to the Bermuda Triangle and Sargasso Sea.
- 1933. The third major journey, from Labrador to Newfoundland.
- 1934. Expedition to the Canary and Cape Verde islands, the Island of St. Helena and the south of the Atlantic Ocean and the visit to the rims of the Antarctica.
- 1935. Expedition to the Indian Ocean, journey through the Suez Canal, the Red Sea and a visit to Madagascar.

Fishing

- 1882.** Became a fisherman apprentice.
- 1897.** Published his first paper in fishery "*Do Fish Sleep*" in the magazine *The Hunter*. He published over twenty papers on the subject of fishery.
- 1888.** Became a fishing prospect.
- 1895.** Passed an exam for a fishing master.
- 1898.** Participated in the preparation of the first laws on fishing in the lakes and rivers of Serbia.
- 1900.** A member of a delegation for an agreement on a fishing convention with Austria-Hungary.
- 1902.** A member of a similar delegation for an agreement with Romania.
- 1907.** In London, as a part of the Balkan Exhibition, organized an exhibition of Serbian fisheries.
- 1911.** At an international exhibition in Turin, received a gold medal for exhibited fishing specimens.
- 1912.** Caught a catfish weighing 120 kilos.
- 1919.** One of the founders of the Institute of Oceanography in Split.
- 1920.** Bought a 13-meter steamer he named "Karaš."

Other activities

- 1896.** Established the famous tavern music band "Suz."
- 1898.** Passed the exam for a reserve second lieutenant. At the same time worked on state security ciphering tasks. Will remain the chief coder of the Serbian and the Yugoslav Army until the outbreak of World War II.
- 1910.** At the French Patent Institute registered a patent for a depth measurer. He will register a total of five patents. In the course of his entire career, Petrović was deeply engaged in the development of the teaching of mathematics in high schools.

- 1912–13.** Participated in both Balkan wars, as a reserve engineering lieutenant and then second lieutenant.
- 1914.** Participated in World War I. Was adjutant officer of Prince Đorđe. A part of the war spent in France and Switzerland working on cryptography tasks on behalf of the Serbian army. Introduced ciphering system “The Three Cardboards.”
- 1925.** Became a reserve engineering lieutenant colonel.

Last years

- 1938.** Retired.
- 1939.** Received an honorary doctorate of the Belgrade University and the Decoration of St. Sava of the first degree. Professors of the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Belgrade put forward a proposal to establish “Mathematical Institute Mihailo Petrović.”
- 1941.** At the age of 74, as a reserve officer, called again to war. The Germans captured him, but due to illness and old age he was released from captivity.
- 1943.** Died on June 8 at his home in Kosančićev venac in Belgrade.

Edited by Ž. MIJAJLOVIĆ