

# EASTER EPISTLE OF GENERAL DRAZA MIHAILOVICH 1945

"We will continue today with the set goal. Exactly at 11h, all columns will stop at the places where they find themselves. In memory of the day of the resurrection of our God-man, we will pray to God. Priests will hold a short service. Then, we move on!"

"Our struggle and our suffering is for human rights given by God. It is the way of the Lord Jesus Christ, in which he perished, but also resurrected.

"Centuries have neither defeated nor changed this, nor will the events of today.

"We may die in this battle, however victory is assured and benefits those who survive and those that come after us.

"Confident in your resolve to persevere to the end, I give you, my dear brothers-in-arms, my greeting:

"CHRIST IS RISEN!"

General Dragoljub Mihailovich



NOTE: Posted April 2020 at [www.generalmihailovich.com](http://www.generalmihailovich.com). With thanks to Aleksandra Rebic. English translation provided by Vera Dragisich, Secretary, Movement of Serbian Chetniks Ravne Gore



## INTERVIEW

with

Ambassador  
H.E. Djerdj Matkovic

On April 13, 2020, the Serbian-American Leadership Conference (SALC) sponsored an on-line briefing and discussion with His Excellency Djerdj Matkovic, the Ambassador of the Republic of Serbia to the United States. Included were representatives of the Serb National Federation, other Serbian-American organizations, societies, distinguished individuals, guests from all over the United States, and other participants. SALC President Aleksandar Djuricic, and Vice President Ljiljana Todorovic represented the SALC. Ms. Todorovic acted as moderator of the event.

President Djuricic thanked all participants, especially H.E. Djerdj Matkovic, for his time and work dedicated to restoring relations between the United States and Serbia. He stressed that the growth and success of SALC is a testament of the cooperation with the Embassy of the Republic of Serbia. "Our people can only reach prosperity through the joined effort of the Serbian-American community as a whole, the SALC, and other Serbian-American organizations, the U.S. State Department, U.S. Embassy in Belgrade, Embassy of the Republic of Serbia to the United States, Serbian Council in the U.S., Serbian-American Friendship Congress in Serbia, all political parties in Serbia and all people in Serbia. We can only do this together. If we put aside all disagreements and focus on common objectives and goals, we are on the path to do this because this is the only way that we can restore and promote a historical relationship between the U.S. and Serbia. American and Serbian people are built on shared values and friendship."

In thanking everyone, H.E. Matkovic said, "It is a great honor for me to participate and to share the views of the Serbian Government and Serbian people with you... In this difficult time, solidarity is the right word, and we have to be together, to help each other, and the end of this crisis to be stronger and smarter." He also thanked the U.S. Embassy in Belgrade for a donation for 6,000 tests to fight coronavirus.

Following are questions and answers from the interview:

**Q - Do you agree with the statement of the Honorable Anthony Godfrey, U.S. Ambassador to Serbia, when he said that the Serbian Government is taking "this pandemic battle seriously" and that Serbia came to this battle in a strong position compared to other countries in the region?**

**HE -** I agree with his statement, and I am thankful for his assessment. The Serbian Government undertook all-important measures on time, and thanks to these measures, Serbia reduced the number of infected at the beginning of March. Without this, the number of deaths would be much higher in Serbia. Some people objected to the state of emergency, which was introduced on time. They are limiting some movements and liberty, but in times of difficulties I think we cannot think about limitations. It is more important to save lives.



ВАСКРЕШЊА ПОСЛАНИЦА,  
ГЕНЕРАЛА ДРАЖЕ ИЗ 1945.

„ПРОДУЖИЋЕМО ДАНАС КА ПОСТАВЉЕНОМ ЦИЉУ.  
ТАЈНО У НАШЕ КОЛОНЕ ЋЕ СЕ ЗАСТАБИТИ НА МЕСТИ-  
МА ГДЕ СЕ БУДУ НАШЛЕ. У СЕЋАЊУ НА ДАН **ВАСКРЕСА**  
**БОГОУТОКА** ПОМОЉИЋЕМО СЕ БОГУ. СВЕШТЕНИЦИ ЋЕ  
ОДРЖАТИ КРАТКУ СЛУЖБУ БОЖЈУ. А ОНДА, **ПОКРЕТ ДАЖЕ!**  
НАША БОРБА И НАШЕ ПАТЊЕ СУ ЗА ПРАВДУ **УТОКА БОГОМ**  
**ДАНА**. ТО ЈЕ ПУТ ГОСПОДА ИСУСА ХРИСТА НА КОМЕ ЈЕ И  
ОН СТРАДАО, АЛИ И **ВАСКРЕСАО**. КЕКОЈИ ТО НИСУ ОБОРНИ  
НИ ПРОМЕНИЛИ, **НЕЋЕ НИ ПОЈАКЕ ДАНАШЊИЦЕ.**  
МИ МОЖЕМО У ТОЈ БОРБИ И ИЗГЛУТИТИ, АЛИ ЈЕ НАЈНА СИ-  
ГУРНА ПОБЕДА И БЛАГОДЕТИ ЗА ПРЕЖИВЕЛЕ И ПОТО-  
ЊЕ.  
УВЕРЕН У ВАШУ РЕШЕНОСТ ДА ИСТРАЈЕТЕ ДО КРАЈА,  
ЈА ВАМ УПУЋУЈЕМ, **ДРАГИ МОЈИ САБОРЦИ МОЈ ПОЗДРА:**  
**ХРИСТОС ВАСКРЕСЕ!**“

Драгољуб М. Михаиловић

ДВЕРИ

70 година касније, још увек се боримо и још увек слаavimo  
**ХРИСТОС ВАСКРЕСЕ!**



We are doing a little bit of sacrifice for a better tomorrow. Serbia, like other countries, has very limited hospital capabilities, but we are innovative and managed to convert some fairs into improvised hospitals. The measure was limiting the people of 65 and older in cities and rural communities. This is the most vulnerable population. I think it will show the results that this population is not affected very much.

I want to share data about the Serbian economy before the pandemic crisis erupted. Serbia has a continuing growth of GDP for four years, and it was 4.2% in 2019. This number was continuing in January and February. We have a whole budget in the four consecutive years and the declining public debt, and it was 48.9% at the beginning of 2020. We had foreign investment 3.8 billion euros in 2019, which is more than all the other five Western Balkan countries combined. The export continues to grow by 14.7% at the beginning of 2020, which was higher than before. Unemployment rate we kept under 9%... It will be much easier for Serbia to overcome this crisis economically when this crisis is over. We will have grown in a few years. The measurement that the Serbian Government takes is well design and targeting several sectors such as the private sector, small and medium enterprises. By this measure, people will be able to overcome economic hardships from this economic crisis. Projection is that Serbia will have a decline in GDP of 1.8% this year. But, from 2021, we will have grown again. This measure is worth 5.5 billion euros. It is about 50% of Serbia's budget, and I know that it is worth it. The state will have a lack of income in the next few months because of a lack of economic activity. We have a high level of foreign currencies reserve and 31 tons of gold, which is a basis for the growing economy.

**Q - How did the Serbian Embassy put the resources to use, and how can people actually see the Embassy's assessments?**

HE - Unfortunately, because of the coronavirus crisis in Washington, D.C., institutions are closed, and the Embassy is working on a limited scope. We are trying to be open and help people as needed. The consular section is dealing with people who are stayed in the United States and not able to return home because of the interruption of air traffic. Many people are registered with the Embassy, such as students, some exchange programs, tourists, or other people who lost their jobs in the U.S. These young people are very satisfied with our Consular section. We managed to fulfill all 236 seats of a flight with people from all over the United States. On the other hand, we are in a temporary office building. There was a case of coronavirus in the building and one of the floors was completely sealed off. We are mostly working from home, but there are also people who are going to the Embassy. Diplomats are now more oriented to help Serbs and our citizens who are in the U.S. and want to get back home. We also are trying to find some innovative solutions. There are still some flights from European countries with Air Serbia like Paris, Frankfurt, Stockholm, Prague, and Bratislava. Everybody who manages to get to certain destinations in Europe, we will help him or her get back home. However, this is a big burden for the Serbian economy. People are coming back, but some of them are unfortunately in-

fectured, and that will be another burden for Serbia. These are our citizens, and they all welcome. In this situation, it is better to be at home with family and friends. We are helping them. This is our goal, and I am really proud that we managed to fill that airplane. There will also be another flight from the U.S., but I do not know when at this point. I know that there will be more flights before this is over.

**Q - Can anything be done to help U.S. citizens who retired in Serbia, and who want to receive their pension funds? They are facing the issue of how to receive their pension money to Serbia because local postal offices and municipalities are closed in the time of a pandemic.**

HE - For now, there are no complaints from U.S. citizens in Serbia. Because the banks and post offices are closed, I think that the best solution would be to give the money to their attorneys or relatives. Thank you for bringing this problem to our attention. Our goal is to help everybody and people who can use their money and pensions.

**Q - In terms of residency, is there a possibility to accommodate long term stays in Serbia for those who are Serbian descendants, and who are above the status of tourist, but shorter than longer stay there such as to be a citizen?**

HE - I read that there are people who need to stay longer than 90 days with a tourist visa in Serbia. To make a distinction between regulatory people and those who are coming for business and they are Serbian descendants, we have to change the rule. It will be a longer process, but I think that people who want to stay longer than 90 days should register in the local police station and get a temporary residence permit. I think that would be a solution for people who like to stay longer than 90 days. We have to see whether this would be possible to do.

**Q - Why is the imperative for the people who were born in the former Yugoslavia and who currently reside in the United States to respond to the U.S. Census 2020? What are the long term benefits of doing that for the community?**

HE - Thank you for the Serbian-American Leadership Conference for helping us. This is a brilliant example of good cooperation to encourage people to register and take part in the U.S. Census. Any Embassy of the former Yugoslavia does not have an exact number of their citizens in the U.S. There are no obligations to register at the Embassy, and people do not do that until they need something from the Embassy. We have a list of Serbian people, but it is a partial list. The Serbian Consulate in Chicago covers the Midwest and Western parts of the U.S.; the Serbian Consulate in New York covers northeast part of the U.S., and the Serbian Consulate in Washington, D.C. covers southeast part of the U.S. This data, which we have, is very limited. With the U.S. Census, we will have a complete picture of how many Serbian people live in the U.S., and we will have more opportunities to devote some funds to cooperate with them. We can use their experience, connections, and encourage them to invest in Serbia. It is important for us that we know how many citizens of Serbian origin are in the U.S.

**Q - How closely is the Serbian Embassy working with the Serbian-American Congressional Caucus, and what are some recent issues on their agenda?**

HE - The Serbian Caucus in the U.S. Congress is a group of congressmen and senators who are in some way connected with Serbia and who have some interests in Serbia, either economically or other. The Serbian-American Caucus has 35 members. Now we have a little bit less. This number fluctuates and depends on the Congressional District, whether a congressman is elected. We have excellent traditional cooperation with the Serbian-American Caucus. The President of the Serbian Caucus was Congressman Ted Poe from Texas until recently. He retired. We have a very smart and active Congressman from Ohio, Steve Stivers. He is Co-Chair of the Serbian Caucus. The other one is Congressman Emanuel Cleaver. Congressman Stivers is a general in the Ohio National Guard. We have excellent cooperation with the National Guard of Ohio. We participate together from cyber to military exercises, training, and peacekeeping. This program is excellent. We have several aspects of cooperation with Ohio, which are beneficial for Ohio and Serbia. These are agricultural, university, education, climate change, and all other fields. If this pandemic did not happen, Congressman Stivers was planning to visit Serbia with a delegation of U.S. businesspeople and connect with the Serbian businesses and try to find a possibility for investment there... The Serbian-American Caucus is very useful, and it will be more important in the future..."

**Q - You have been a diplomat for almost four decades. What has been a highlight in the United States, and what is your hope?**

HE - I am a career diplomat for almost 40 years. In my career, I went from an attaché to ambassador. I think that it is important for a career diplomat to experience all steps. I am more than five years in the United States. I am proud to be able to manage to move the relations in a good direction because of my colleagues in the U.S. State Department, NSE, and the U.S. Congress, who were helpful and on the same page with me. We have managed to put Serbia from a third rank problem to the center of the U.S. Government. Now they are paying more attention to Serbia. For the first time, there is no automatic reply to what we have to do. They are listening to us and taking into consideration our problems and needs. This has been a highlight of my career. Another is economic success. Not only is the exchange of goods growing, but also American companies are investing in Serbia as the environment is very favorable for them... I hope that my successor will continue this work. It is an honor to be an ambassador of Serbia and represent my country here. I want to say to my fellow Serbian citizens in the United States to be safe and stay healthy and listen to the recommendation of the government and epidemiologists to stay home. The more we listen to this advice, the sooner we will be out of this, be together, and hug each other again. As an NBA fan, I am waiting to see our players Bjelica, Jokic, Bogdanovic, and Marjanovic in games again.

#### BIOGRAPHY AND CAREER

Djerdj Matkovic was born in Subotica, Serbia, on May 28, 1955. He graduated from the University of Belgrade, Faculty

of Law in 1978, International Law and International Organizations.

**Since October 2017** - Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Serbia on a non-resident basis to the Republic of Colombia

**Since January 2017** - Plenipotentiary Representative of the Republic of Serbia to the Caribbean Community (CARICOM)

**Since February 2015** - Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Serbia to the United States of America and Permanent Observer to the Organization of American States (OAS)

**April 2014 - February 2015** Foreign Policy Advisor to the Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia Mr. Aleksandar Vucic

**August 2012 - April 2014** Foreign Policy Advisor to the First Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia Mr. Aleksandar Vucic

**February 2012 - July 2012** Chief of Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia

**2011-2012** Director of the Department for North and South America at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia

**2007-2011** First Counselor at the Embassy of the Republic of Serbia in Washington, D.C., USA

**2006-2007** Deputy Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia

**2005-2006** Deputy Chief of Cabinet of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Serbia and Montenegro

**2001-2005** Minister Counselor and Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of the F.R. of Yugoslavia (later Serbia and Montenegro) in Budapest, Hungary

**1998-2001** Counselor - Chief of Cabinet of the Assistant Secretary for Bilateral Relations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**1993-1998** First Secretary at the Embassy of the F.R. of Yugoslavia in Harare, Zimbabwe

**1990-1993** First Secretary - Chief of Cabinet of the Under Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1986-1990 Third Secretary at the Embassy of the SFR of Yugoslavia in Ottawa, Canada

**1982-1986** Attaché and Third Secretary at the Department for Neighboring Countries at the Federal Secretariat of Foreign Affairs

**1981-1982** Trainee at the Federal Secretariat of Foreign Affairs of the SFR of Yugoslavia

Mr. Matkovic speaks English and Hungarian. Married, spouse Vera and son Djerdj Jr.

*SOURCE: Biography of H.E. Djerdj Matkovic was taken from the website of the Embassy of the Republic of Serbia to the United States*

—submitted by MILOŠ RASTOVIĆ