

THE POLITICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND OF THE DESIGN AND ICONOGRAPHY ON THE BANKNOTES OF THE KINGDOM OF YUGOSLAVIA, 1929-1941

Banknotes of the National Bank of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia - war currency reserves (banknotes “for the needs of defending the state” and “for absolutely emergency needs”)

The money of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, 1929-1941, like any other money in the past and present, sends many symbolical messages on several levels, whose reading allows us to understand state, national, political, ideological, economic and cultural conditions, and the most important changes through which the Yugoslav Kingdom passed in the second decade of its existence.

The author shows the political and ideological background of the design and iconography on the banknotes of the National Bank of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia for currency reserves in case of warfare (banknotes for “the needs of defending the state” and for “absolutely emergency needs”), which were not intended for regular circulation and were either not issued (two banknotes) or began to be circulated (according to all indicators, not until 8 April 1941) when the war in Yugoslavia started. Thus these banknotes were in circulation for a short time until they were withdrawn and replaced, mostly during 1941. In the context of undoubted historical facts, the author attempts to explain some of the artistic solutions, semantic and iconographic messages (from recognizable heraldic characteristics and figures of the ruling Karađorđević dynasty and famous persons from national history, to various symbolical scenes and allegorical figures) used in preparation for the time of war, and to show how the Yugoslav Kingdom used images and messages on money to represent itself to the world and its own people, for whom the banknotes were intended.

In design and iconography, the banknotes of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, 1929-1941, for war currency reserves, and the banknotes used in regular (“permanent”) circulation, clearly expressed the national and state character of the Yugoslav monarchy headed by the Karađorđević dynasty. The design was based on Serbian history and tradition, and on the Christian heritage. In the predominantly Serbian context, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was shown and extolled as a stereotype land of hard-working and content peasants and artisans, a strong state with a glorious warrior history and continuity of rule, as a state that guarantees peace, nurtures knowledge, economic development and every kind of progress.

Keywords: Kingdom of Yugoslavia, banknotes, design, iconography, politics, ideology