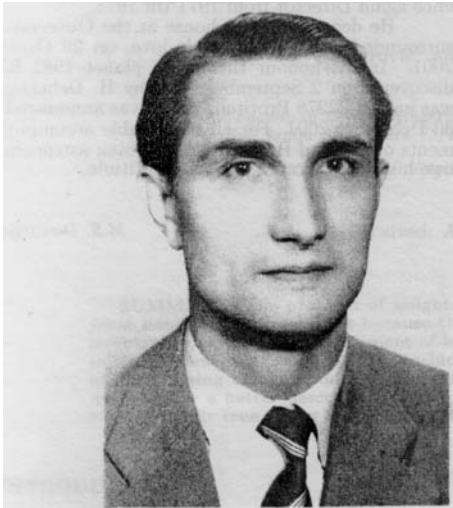


OBITUARY

MILORAD B. PROTIĆ

Belgrade 6th September 1911 – Belgrade 29 October 2001



On 29 October 2001 in Belgrade passed away in his 91st year Milorad B. Protić, one-time Director of the Belgrade Astronomical Observatory (1956-1960 and 1971-1975), and an outstanding astronomer.

He was the first resident of the just built Observatory on the Zvezdara hill in 1932, where he dwelt continuously until his last day, devoting all his life to the science he so much loved. He was the Editor-in-chief of this periodical, titled at the time *Bulletin de l'Observatoire astronomique de Belgrade* (from No. 145 for 1992 it titled *Bulletin astronomique de Belgrade* and beginning from No. 157 for 1998 it is *Serbian Astronomical Journal*) for the years 1941-1942 (published in 1950) then for 1955-1960 and for 1971-1975. He was also Editor-in-chief for a series of issues of *Publications of the Astronomical Observatory of Belgrade*, Nos. 17-19 and 21-22.

Milorad B. Protić was born in Belgrade on 6. IX 1911. He finished the technical secondary school (machine branch) in 1921, obtaining employment in

the Industry of Air-plane Motors in Rakovica, where he worked as a technical draftsman. He performed this duty until the end of August 1931. He joined the Belgrade Observatory at the end of April 1932 as a volunteer, being appointed in October of that year a junior calculator, afterwards as a calculator day-worker, to finally become in October 1935 a junior observer. From 1935 till 1937 he was the manager of the computer center.

When in 1935 the Astronomical Observatory started its observational activity the then Director V.V. Mišković entrusted Protić with the organization and conduct of regular observation of Sun-spots activity with the Zeiss astrograph. The results were regularly sent to the Central Bureau for the Solar activity in Zürich, which published them, together with the data of other observatories in its *Quarterly Bulletin of Solar Activity*.

In 1935 started, under Milorad Protić's management, the preparations and from 1936 on the observations of, minor planets, comets and satellites which continuously go on until the present-day. From 1936 up to 1956 Protić discovered 33 minor planets, all of these discoveries having been made at the Belgrade Observatory. The first of them was named 1564 Serbia. In addition, Protić as the discoverer gave names to the following minor planets: 1517 Beograd, 1550 Tito, 1554 Yugoslavia, 1605 Milanković, 1675 Simonida, 1724 Vladimir (after his grandson's name), 2244 Tesla and 1348 Mišković.

During the Second World War Protić continued working at the Observatory as an observer, performing the same function after the Liberation in 1944. When in 1946 the Observatory Director academician V.V. Mišković resigned, the Faculty Council of the Belgrade University appointed Protić deputy Director. In this capacity he managed the reconstruction of the war-devastated and ruined Observatory, taking great pains and investing all his knowledge in order that the Observatory might restore its original appearance as quickly as possible and that its normal activity be resumed. Of particular importance was the restoration of the Large Refractor's

dome and that of the almost ruined instrument inside it, the repairing of the movable floor and of all of the instalations. This extremely difficult and responsible task was accomplished in a very short time, from the middle of 1947 till the end of 1948.

Notwithstanding his enormous obligations concerning the enabling the Observatory for its normal work Protić, at the invitation of the President of the IAU Commission 20 for Minor Planets, Comets and Satellites, carried through the computation of the ephemeris for about hundred known minor planets for 1947 (98 minor planets), for 1948 (106) and for 1949 (106 minor planets).

When in May 1948 Vojislav V. Mišković's resignation from the Director's post was accepted, in his stead was appointed academician Milutin Milanković, Protić becoming the secretary, discharging this duty till January 1949. Besides his official work he studied the science he so much loved at the Faculty of Natural Sciences in Belgrade, graduating in 1951 from the Group for Astronomy of that Faculty.

From 1952 Protić is a member of the IAU Commission 20 for Minor Planets, Comets and Satellites, having attended the 9th IAU General Assembly in 1955 in Dublin as well as the 12th IAU General Assembly in 1961 in Hamburg.

From 1952 until 1956 he performed the duty

of the deputy Director. Since V.V. Mišković's retirement on 27. III 1954 Protić headed the Observatory first as a deputy Director and from 21. XI 1956 till 21. XI 1960 as Director.

From the end of 1957 until the end of 1959 it is under Protić's management that the construction of the pavilions was carried out for housing the Large Meridian Instrument, Large Transit Instrument and Vertical Circle. After 34 years installed in these pavilions were these three fundamental instruments, where with the Belgrade Observatory became one of the best outfitted for the researches in the field of fundamental astronomy. Apart from these pavilions several auxiliary structures, an apartment house and internal road were built and the Observatory's grounds were extended to the present-day 10 ha. The total investments into these additional constructions amounted to about one third of those in 1929/30 involved into building of the Observatory. Protić is once again Director from 1971 till 1975.

He deceased in his house at the Observatory, surrounded with his family's love, on 29 October 2001. In his honour the minor planet 1983 RT₃, discovered on 2 September 2001 by H. Debehogne, was named 22278 Protitch, which was announced on 30 December 2001. For all remarkable accomplishments of Milorad B. Protić the Serbian astronomers owe him lasting reverence and gratitude.

M.S. Dimitrijević