

KOLOSVEUMA · PORTRAIT

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# The Man Europe Forgot

*Dimitrije Mitrinović — the Serbian philosopher from Herzegovina who dreamed of a united Europe before the first shots were fired*

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*By the Kolosveuma Collective · June 2026 · kolosveuma.org*

In a quiet corner of Highgate Cemetery in north London, not far from the tomb of Karl Marx, lies a man most Europeans have never heard of. His name is Dimitrije Mitrinović. He was born in 1887 in Herzegovina, arrived in London in 1914, and spent the next four decades arguing for something the world was not yet ready to hear: that Europe needed a new architecture — not a peace treaty, not a balance of power, but a genuine civilizational framework that made conflict structurally impossible.

He died in 1953. Four years later, the Treaty of Rome gave his idea its first institutional form. The men who signed it did not cite him. History has a habit of this.

*He argued for what became the EU before the EU's founders were born. History has a habit of forgetting its most original contributors.*



## A Boy from Herzegovina

Dimitrije Mitrinović was born on 21 October 1887 in Donji Poplat, a village in Herzegovina. Educated at the Mostar Gymnasium — one of the finest schools in the region — he showed precocious gifts as a writer and organiser. By seventeen he had founded a secret literary society and was publishing poetry in regional journals. He became the youngest editor of *Bosanska Vila*, a literary magazine that also published a young Ivo Andrić.

### ► Dimitrije Mitrinović — Key Dates

- 1887 — Born in Donji Poplat, Herzegovina
- 1905 — Publishing poetry; founds *Matica*
- 1910 — Youngest editor of *Bosanska Vila*

- 1911-14 — Studies in Vienna, Rome, Munich
- 1914 — Arrives in London; flees conscription
- 1920 — World Affairs column in The New Age
- 1931 — Founds the New Europe Group
- 1932 — Launches the New Britain Movement
- 1953 — Dies in Richmond, aged 65
- Buried: Highgate Cemetery, London
- Archive: University of Bradford

In Munich he moved among the circles of Der Blaue Reiter — the avant-garde movement around Kandinsky and Klee — absorbing their conviction that art, like society, required a fundamental break with the conventions of the previous century. Between 1911 and 1914 something shifted in him: from the liberation of a people to the transformation of a civilisation. By the time he arrived in London, the question was no longer how to free Herzegovina from Austria-Hungary. It was how to free Europe from itself.



## London, 1914 — A Man with an Idea

He arrived in London at the outbreak of the First World War — a war he had not caused, fought by an empire he opposed, in a city that was not his. He set himself up as a private teacher of philosophy, gave lectures, and began writing for The New Age — the most intellectually adventurous periodical in London, read by everyone from T.S. Eliot to Ezra Pound.

From 1920, he wrote a regular column called World Affairs under the pseudonym M.M. Cosmoi. Edwin Muir, the Scottish poet and translator of Kafka, wrote of him: he looks "not several ages ahead, like Shaw or Wells, but several millennia ahead." It was meant as a compliment.

*"Not several ages ahead, like Shaw or Wells, but several millennia ahead." — Edwin Muir on Mitrinović*

What Mitrinović argued, in article after article, was this: the catastrophe of the First World War was not an accident of diplomacy. It was the predictable outcome of an architecture — a system of competing nationalisms and competing empires — that made conflict not just possible but mathematically inevitable. The solution was also architectural. Not a League of Nations that preserved the nation-state system while hoping nations would behave better. A genuinely new structure: a European federation, and beyond it, a world federation.

Around him gathered a remarkable circle: Alan Watts, who would become one of the great cultural translators between East and West; Frederick Soddy, Nobel Prize laureate in chemistry; Patrick Geddes, the pioneer of urban planning. All shared his conviction that Europe needed not better

management of the existing system but replacement of the system's foundational logic.



## **The New Europe Group — Ninety-Four Years Ahead**

In 1931, Mitrinović founded the New Europe Group, dedicated to European federation. The following year he launched the New Britain Movement — broader and briefly very influential. By 1933 it had 65 groups across Britain and a weekly newspaper with 32,000 readers.

Its programme reads, from a 2026 vantage point, with striking precision: European federalism as a step toward world federation; reform of the financial system — specifically the abolition of interest-bearing debt as the foundation of the monetary system; workers as stakeholders in the enterprises that employ them; cultural institutions with their own democratic representation.

*In 1932, Mitrinović called for the abolition of interest-bearing debt. Ninety-four years later, that is precisely what Kolosveuma proposes.*

Read that list carefully. He was not proposing incremental reforms within the existing system. He was proposing replacement of the system's operating logic — the same distinction that separates Kolosveuma from every economic reform proposal of the past century. The New Britain Movement collapsed under the pressure of the 1930s. The idea did not.



## **What He Saw That Others Didn't**

Reading Mitrinović in 2026, the question that matters is: what exactly did he see that his contemporaries missed?

He saw, first, that peace requires more than the absence of war. A Europe where nations did not fight but competed economically within a system that made some permanently wealthy and others permanently indebted was not, in his view, peace. It was a lower-intensity version of the same conflict, conducted through financial rather than military means. The European debt crisis proved him right: within the eurozone, Germany could prosper while Greece was driven to its knees without a single shot fired.

He saw, second, that the monetary system was not neutral infrastructure. It was an architecture with political consequences — one that systematically transferred value from those who work to those who lend. His campaign against interest-bearing debt was not a technical proposal. It was a moral one: the conviction that a system in which money is created as

debt, and must be repaid with interest that did not exist at the moment of borrowing, is a system designed to extract rather than to build.

*He understood that the monetary system was not neutral infrastructure. It was an architecture with political consequences. And that meant it could be changed.*

He saw, third — and this is perhaps his deepest insight — that civilizational transformation requires a change of operating principle, not a change of policy. You cannot reduce debt within a system that creates money as debt. You cannot achieve peace within a system whose architecture makes conflict structurally rational. The change must be at the level of the foundational logic from which every other feature of the system follows.

This is exactly what Kolosveuma proposes: not a reform of compound interest but its abolition; not a better management of sovereign debt but its conversion; not a new redistribution programme but a new architecture in which verified civilizational improvement generates its own financing. Mitrinović identified the problem with precision. He did not have the computational tools to specify the solution. We do.



## **Why He Was Forgotten**

Mitrinović died on 28 August 1953 in Richmond. His archive — over 4,500 volumes plus personal papers — is held at the University of Bradford. He is in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. He has a Wikipedia page. He is, by any standard, a significant figure in the intellectual history of the twentieth century. And he is almost entirely unknown.

The reasons are not mysterious. He was too early — his ideas for European federation only became institutionally viable after 1945. He was too radical — his monetary reform proposals placed him outside the range of what serious people took seriously. He was too eclectic — drawing simultaneously on psychology, spirituality, economics, and art theory in ways that made him difficult to classify. And he was a Serbian from Herzegovina in London — outside the national traditions that write the histories of ideas.

History forgets its most original contributors. The ideas that get cited are those that entered the mainstream in a form the mainstream could recognise. Mitrinović's ideas entered the mainstream in 1957 — without attribution, stripped of their most radical implications. The federation was built. The monetary reform was not.



## **The Unfinished Project**

The EU achieved the first part of Mitrinović's vision completely. It made war between its members structurally improbable — the greatest civilizational achievement of the twentieth century, and one he had argued for since 1914. He would have recognised it immediately.

The second part was never built. The monetary reform he called for — the abolition of interest-bearing debt as the foundation of the monetary system — was not made. Instead, the European single currency was built on sovereign debt. The ECB was given a mandate for price stability, not civilizational improvement. The Stability and Growth Pact enshrined the debt logic in a constitutional framework that no Southern European country has been able to comply with for a generation.

The result is predictable and predicted: Italy owes €2.87 trillion, more than its citizens earn in a year, and pays €70 billion annually in interest that builds nothing. France has attempted to reform its pension system six times in thirty years, each time producing political crisis, because the pension gap is structural — driven by the compound interest mechanism consuming the budget. Greece spent a decade in crisis not because Greeks are profligate but because the mathematics of compound interest on money created from nothing are, over sufficient time, impossible to satisfy.

*The EU made peace. It did not make flourishing. Mitrinović always argued both were necessary. He was right.*

Kolosveuma is the second architecture — the one that completes the project. It proposes exactly the monetary reform Mitrinović called for in 1932: the abolition of compound interest as the foundation of the system. It adds what he could not have specified — the Civilization Index, a verified measurement of what actually improves human life; the Peace Token, a CI-backed currency whose value is generated by civilizational improvement rather than by debt creation; the Peace Dividend Fund, which directs investment toward verified improvement and generates its own financing through the token loop.

The tools did not exist in his time. The insight did. He saw the problem with a clarity that his contemporaries could not match. The solution required a century of computational development, institutional experimentation, and accumulated civilizational evidence to become technically specifiable. It is specifiable now. The fourteen country studies in the Kolosveuma library — from Serbia to China, from Iceland to Nigeria — demonstrate, with the precision of actual numbers, that the mathematics work. That the finish lines are real. That the architecture he described is achievable.



## **A Visit to Highgate**

If you visit Highgate Cemetery today, you can find his grave. Not far from Marx — the other great theorist of the system's fundamental flaws, the other man whose ideas entered history in forms he might not have

recognised. Mitrinović's grave is quieter. Fewer visitors. No movements claiming his legacy. Just a name, two dates, and the weight of a project that was right about the problem and right about the direction of the solution — and simply too early for the world to be ready.

The Treaty of Rome was signed four years after he was buried. The Maastricht Treaty — which embedded the debt logic he spent his life arguing against — was signed thirty-eight years after. The European debt crisis began fifty-seven years after. And now, seventy-three years after his death, the mathematical argument for the reform he called for has been made with a precision he could not have achieved.

*He was not a prophet. He was an architect. The building was late. But the blueprint was always right.*

Dimitrije Mitrinović from Herzegovina. Educated in Mostar. Formed in Munich alongside Kandinsky. Writing and arguing in London for thirty-nine years. Buried at Highgate in 1953 — four years before the Treaty of Rome gave his first idea its institutional form, and seventy-three years before his second idea found its mathematics.

*The man Europe forgot. The project Europe still needs to finish. The architecture that was always right.*

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## K O L O S V E U M A

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**Mathematica contra bellum.**