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ANGLO–SERBIAN CULTURAL RELATIONS DURING THE GREAT WAR AND ITS AFTERMATH: LEARNING OF THE OTHER THROUGH WAR EFFORTS

Abstract

After sketching a relatively low level of knowledge about Britain in Serbia and vice versa prior to the Great War, the paper highlights the closer encounter of Serbia, the United Kingdom and the United States that occurred during the Great War, as well as the effect of that encounter on the subsequent Anglo-Serbian cultural relations. Specifically, the pertinent links during the Great War are analysed through (1) the stipends provided to Serbian schoolboys/students in Britain, (2) the stay of Serbian intellectuals in Britain, and (3) the impact of British-Serbian war co-operation on the Macedonian/Salonica Front; also taken into account is (4) the impact of Serbian volunteers from the United States. Subsequent Anglo-Serbian/Yugoslav cultural relations in the inter-war period are further analysed with regard to (1) Brits/Americans residing in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, (2) the continual British educational schemes for Serbian students, (3) the emergence of organised English language instruction in Serbia, and (4) the impact of numerous inter-war Anglophile associations in Serbia/Yugoslavia. The experience of the Great War is viewed as the turning point which paved the way for all subsequent forms of Anglo-Serbian (Yugoslav) co-operation in the fields of education and culture.

Key words: Anglo-Serbian cultural relations, Great War (WW1), Serbia, Yugoslavia, United Kingdom, United States of America, British alumni, Anglophile associations, Vladeta Popović

1. Anglo-Serbian mutual level of knowledge before the Great War

At the beginning of the 20th century, the level of knowledge about Britain in Serbia and vice versa was higher than ever before, but it was still rather limited. There were few English language speakers in Belgrade and even fewer speakers of Serbian among Brits. When Edward Robert Bulwer, the first Earl of Lytton (1831-1891), published (under the literary pseudonym Owen Meredith) his collection *Serbski*

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pesme, or the National Songs of Serbia, in 1861, he acknowledged that he had made no attempt “at accurate verbal translation from the original language” (Meredith 1861: ix). This still implied that, in one way or another, he had indeed translated Serbian national songs from Serbian into English. There was only one “expert” in Britain who noticed something quite obvious – that “*serbski* is a masculine singular and *pesme* is a feminine plural” (/Strangford/ 1861: 298–299),¹ i.e. that there was no congruence in the title, and that therefore “Owen Meredith” did not really have a good command of the Serbian language.

Throughout the 19th century, there were many Brits who had quite a good knowledge of Serbia but failed to learn the Serbian language. Typical examples are Rev. William Denton (who attempted to learn Serbian) and Herbert Vivian. They both wrote excellent books on Serbia (Denton 1862; Vivian 1897). Denton visited Serbia twice in the 1860s and Vivian on multiple occasions at the end of the 19th century, but they did not learn the language. The first Brit who learned Serbian well enough to be able to translate from Serbian into English was Elodie Lawton Mijatovich (Mijatovics),² the wife of Chedomille Miyatovich and the first female historian in Serbia (Lawton Mijatovics 1872). Her translations dealt with popular Serbian tales and Serbian national ballads related to the Kosovo Battle (Lawton Mijatovics 1874; Lawton Mijatovich 1881).

In the 19th century, most British diplomats did not speak Serbian either, not even those who were positively fascinated with Serbia. Those Brits who attempted to learn Serbian had to face the lack of textbooks, dictionaries and grammars of the Serbian language. The first Serbian grammar only appeared in Britain in 1887 (Morfill 1887). It was prepared by William Morfill, with the assistance of the then Serbian diplomat in London Alexander Yovitchitch, “who conscientiously insisted that every detail should be scrupulously correct.” (Yovitchitch 1939).

The first modern Serb who learned English was Dositey Obradovich (1742–1811). However, it was only in the last decades of the 19th century that a group of Serbs who spoke English appeared, and among them were: Serbian diplomats Chedomille Miyatovich (1842–1932), Alexander Yovi(t)chi(t)ch (1856–1934), Michael G. Militchevitch (1864–1908), Ivan Pavlovitch and Slavko Groui(t)ch (1871–1937). Miyatovich and Yovitchitch were married to British women, while Grouitch married an American, Mabel Gordon Dunlop. The speakers of English also included economists

¹ The article is unsigned but was attributed to Lord Strangford in “Back Numbers LV”, *Saturday Review*, Jan. 14, 1928, 298.

² The spellings of Serbian names are given here as in contemporary documents and as the Serbs who had contacts with Britain spelled their names themselves. There are cases in which the spelling of the same person’s name evolved over time. Vladeta Popovitch, for instance, changed his spelling to Popovic and Popović.

and finance ministers Vladimir Yovanovitch (1833-1922) and Aleksa N. Spasić (1831-1920), as well as Svetomir Nikolajević (1844-1922), who briefly held the office of prime minister of Serbia (1894).³

A few Serbs learned English through an American link, and one of them was Nikola S. Jovanović Amerikanac (1853-1957). His very nickname (“the American”) indicates the American connection. In 1884, Nikola Jovanović organised the first course in the English language at the Grand School of Belgrade (the predecessor of the University of Belgrade), and in his inaugural address he was among the first to turn the attention of the citizens of Serbia to the importance of the United States of America (Jovanović/*Srpske novine*, Dec. 1884).⁴

The first translations of voluminous works from English into Serbian were done in the 1860s, by the Hungarian Serb and writer Laza Kostić, who translated E. Bulwer Lytton’s *The Last Days of Pompei* (Bulwer Lytton 1865-1867), and by Chedomille Miyatovich, who translated the travelogue of Miss Mackenzie and Miss Irby (Mackenzie and Irby 1868). Miyatovich’s later translation of Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress* (Bunyan 1879) is considered the best translation from English into Serbian in the 19th century.

The Serbian knowledge of and interest in Britain reached its peak in the 1880s, in the aftermath of the Eastern Crisis, during the government of William Gladstone (1880-1885), who was immensely popular among Serbs, Bulgarians and Greeks (Markovich 2018: 57–60). However, after this peak Serbian interest in Britain somewhat decreased, and so did British interest in Serbia. A new climax in mutual relations re-emerged only during the Great War.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the foreign languages taught in secondary schools in Serbia were German and French. The secondary schools had eight grades. After the first four grades in “real” grammar schools (“Real-Gymnasien”), pupils had examinations in the Serbian language, the German language and mathematics. The final examination was organised at the end of the eighth grade, and in terms of foreign languages, pupils could opt between German and French (Nikolitch 1909: 127–128).

On the eve of the Great War, there were so few English speakers in Serbia that even the new Serbian minister in London Mata Boshkovitch (who performed this duty from 1914 to 1916) did not speak English. All in all, everything suggests that, around 1910, the number of English speakers in Serbia did not go beyond a two-digit number, and the number of British speakers of Serbian was even smaller.

³ In the 1880s Nikolajević delivered a series of public lectures in Belgrade entitled “In front of Shakespeare” (Bečanović Nikolić 2018: 181).

⁴ His inaugural address “The Importance of English language for Serbian Science and Practical Life” was published in the official Serbian newspaper *Srpske novine*.

2. Anglo-Serbian Relations during the Great War

Under the given circumstances, the experience of the Great War proved to be crucial for the two cultures to get to know each other. The close encounter that occurred in this period is particularly obvious when one takes into account how many English language speakers among Serbs appeared at the time. Specifically, there were three groups of Serbs who came into contact with the English language and culture during the Great War: (1) Serbian schoolboys, seminarians, students and orphans who lived and attended schools in Britain in the period 1916-1921; (2) Serbian intellectuals who spent some time in Britain or the United States during the war years; (3) Serbian soldiers who came into contact with the British army and British organisations on the Macedonian/Salonica Front. In addition, the fourth group were American Serbs who joined the Serbian Army as volunteers in 1914/1915 and in 1917/1918.

2.1 Serbian schoolboys, students, seminarians, and orphans in Britain

During the Great War and its aftermath, around 550 Serbian youngsters and students spent some time in Britain through various schemes. In 1916, the Serbian Relief Fund (a British charity organisation established in London in 1914) provided stipends for 352 Serbian boys to complete their secondary schooling or to study in Britain (*List of Boys and Students* 1918).⁵ Among them were, for instance, Vladeta Popovitch (Popović), Dragomir (Dragan) Militchevitch (Milićević), and Konstantin Lukovitch. The Serbian government appointed Prof. Pavle Popović to be a special educational supervisor, and he inspected the progress of Serbian pupils and students in Britain during WWI.

In October 1917, through the joint action of Father Nikolai Velimirovich, Rev. Fynes-Clinton and Canon Carnegie, the Serbian Church Students' Aid Council was established by the Church of England and under the sponsorship of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The aim of the Aid Council was to help "a certain number of carefully selected Serbian Church Students to complete their preparation for ordination at an English university."⁶ The Serbian Church Aid Fund operated under the auspices of the Church of England. In the period 1916-1919, the council provided around 55 different stipends for Serbian theological students in Britain (Cuddesdon, Oxford, Dorchester), mostly seminarians but also some university students (Lubardić 2013: 65–67).

Finally, in October 1918, with the assistance of the National Brotherhood Council (a philanthropist organisation gathering Nonconformists), 97 Serbian orphan

⁵ Out of 352 of them, five died during their stay in Britain and 36 left schooling (Markovich 2018: 94–96).

⁶ The pamphlet of the Aid Council contains the list of its members on the cover page, and a report on the back page (AJ, Fonds 83, f. 73, No. 6).

boys and girls, previously housed in Macedonia, came to Britain. A new home for them was found in the town of Feversham in Kent. They stayed there for three years, till 1921 (Paunović et al. 2016: 213–219).⁷ Additionally, some 70 boys and girls from Serbia found refuge in Britain and were assisted by the War Refugees Committee (Paunović et al. 2016: 386).

The result of all those schemes was that, in 1919–1921, more than 500 young people returned to Serbia from Britain with perfect or very good knowledge of the English language.

One should bear in mind that in 1921 five major towns of the pre-1912 Serbia had only 170,000 inhabitants altogether (Belgrade – 111,739, Niš – 25,109, Kragujevac – 15,643, Pirot – 10,458, Šabac – 9,231) (*Résultats définitifs* 1932), and that the percentage of literate people in Serbia in 1910 was 17%. Therefore the influx of more than 500 young people from Britain who had attended some level of education there, alongside more than 3,000 pupils and students from France, had an immediate impact.

2.2 Serbian and Yugoslav intellectuals in Britain

A number of very prominent intellectuals from Serbia spent some time in London and Britain during WW1, either as cultural envoys or as diplomats. Among them were Father Nikolai Velimirovich (subsequent bishop of Žiča and Ohrid), ethnographer Tihomir R. Djordjević, Prof. Pavle Popović, Prof. Bogdan Popović, writer and diplomat Vojislav Jovanović Marambo, diplomat Djordje Djurić, publicist Milan Ćurčin, priest Voyislav Yanitch, etc. (Markovich 2017; Markovich 2018: 81–84; Vošnjak 1928: 110–113, 176–187).⁸ They returned to Belgrade with some or very good knowledge of the English language and of Britain. Dimitrije Mitrinovic (1887–1953), one of the leading authors of the *Young Bosnia* literary movement, was also a prominent member of the London Serbian colony at that time. He never returned to Serbia/Yugoslavia but continued his life as a British resident, playing an important role in the British social life in the 1920s and 1930s; he died in Richmond, Surrey. In addition to them, many other Serbian publicists, officers, diplomats and scholars spent some time in Great Britain or the United States during WW1 and returned to Serbia with at least some knowledge of English.

After the Eastern Crisis, the British interest in Serbia was not particularly high, except in 1903 following the May Coup, when Serbia was viewed in a very negative sense. For this reason, Serbian intellectuals made particular efforts to create a new

⁷ The photos and names of all 97 children are also included in this publication (Paunović et al. 2016: 264–271).

⁸ The best eyewitness account of the Serbian and Yugoslav colonies in London during the Great War has been provided by Bogumil Vošnjak (Vošnjak 1928).

view of Serbia and to propagate future Yugoslavia during their stay in Britain in the years of the Great War. Together with the “British friends of Serbia” (Robert William Seton-Watson, Sir Arthur Evans and Henry Wickham Steed), they substantially raised interest in Serbia.

Among other things, it was during the Great War that the first English-Serbian and Serbian-English dictionary appeared in Britain (Cahen 1916). It was a pocket dictionary that also included lists of personal and geographical names and was relatively well prepared. Unlike the first Serbian-English dictionary in the United States, in which even English words were spelled in Cyrillic (*Prvi* 1908),⁹ this was a reasonably well-made dictionary, although it did not include the pronunciation of English words. Serbian words were printed in the Latin alphabet since “for many who may not have time to learn the Cyrillic characters at once, it is more practical to make a first acquaintance with the language in the Latin alphabet” (Cahen 1916: iv). In other words, this dictionary was intended for Brits, in contrast to the earlier dictionaries published in Chicago, which were not intended for Americans interested in Serbian, but for immigrant Serbs.

2.3 Serbian soldiers on the Macedonian/Salonica Front

Apart from the above-described explicit educational and cultural encounters, many soldiers on the Macedonian/ Salonica Front came into contact with British soldiers, British humanitarian funds or their philanthropic and church organisations. The first contacts with the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) were made there (Radić 2019: 53). Hospital staff from Britain and stationary hospitals from New Zealand and Canada proved to be exceptionally important in supporting the Serbian Army on the Salonica Front.

Although British and Serbian military units were concentrated on different flanks of the Macedonian/Salonica front (the Serbs were on its left flank, the Brits on its right flank, and the French in the central area), there were many encounters between them. Among other things, the Brits encouraged Serbs to play football and other sports. While they were still in Corfu, Serbian soldiers learned to sing the most popular British WWI song – *It’s a long way to Tipperary* (Zec et al. 2015: 81–105).

The fact that Serbian soldiers and the Serbian administration on the Macedonian/Salonica front needed better knowledge of the languages of the Entente nations may be seen from some of the titles that were published in Salonica in this period. Thus the “Serbian Bookstore of M. Ristivojević” published *English-Serbian Vocabulary*:

⁹ The first dictionary in the United States was made for Serbian immigrants. It was published in Chicago in 1908, and all English words were printed in Cyrillic only.

containing all the usual words with their pronunciation (*English-Serbian Vocabulary* 1918). The same publisher issued one of the first books for Serbs modelled as “Easy English”, entitled *Razgovori srpsko-francuski, italijanski i engleski* [Conversations Serbian-French, Italian and English] (*Razgovori* 1918).

2.4 Volunteers among American Serbs

During the Balkan Wars in 1912/1913, some American Serbs joined the Serbian Army as volunteers. In the first years of the Great War (1914/1915), Montenegro was more interested in attracting volunteers than Serbia, but still there were many American Serb volunteers who joined the Serbian Army in the period October 1914 – October 1915. There are different estimates of their numbers; for the first year of the war they range from 4,000 to 5,000, or even more (Ostojić-Fejić 2018: 302). In October 1916, the Serbian Government sent Brigadier Milan Pribičević to America as head of the Serbian Military Mission. Pribičević travelled all around the United States and Canada in an effort to attract Serbian and Yugoslav volunteers to join the Serbian Army. After conscription they travelled to France and were then transferred to the Macedonian/Salonica Front. By the end of July 1917, Pribičević had attracted 900 volunteers (Ostojić-Fejić 2018: 304). His mission operated till March 1918, and, by that time, around 4,000 Serbian and 200 Croatian volunteers had been recruited for the Macedonian/Salonica Front (Ostojić-Fejić 2018: 309).

It should also be added that the US authorities tolerated the Serbian Military Mission although it was illegal until April 1917, since the USA was neutral until then. In other words, Pribičević breached American neutrality and American laws banning the conscription of Americans by foreign nationals, but that was met with tolerance. In April 1917, the USA declared war on Germany only. It declared war on Austria-Hungary on December 7, 1917, and never declared war on Bulgaria. Since American Serb volunteers fought against the Bulgarian Army on the Macedonian/Salonica Front, this was also something that made Pribičević’s efforts dubious even after April and December 1917. Anyway, all the Serbian volunteers from America must have had some knowledge of English, and after the war some of them stayed in Serbia, Montenegro, or in the Yugoslav areas of former Austria-Hungary, since many of them were by origin from Lika, Banija, Kordun, Dalmatia and Bosnia.

2.5 The Relevance of WW1 cultural and educational encounters

If one were to call the period of the Great War the turning point in Anglo-Serbian cultural and educational relations, one certainly would not be overestimating its importance. However, this does not mean that the English language paved its way to

Serbian schools easily. Although the war experience was crucial for the development of Anglo-Serbian and Anglo-Yugoslav cultural ties, it was much more important for Franco-Serbian and Franco-Yugoslav relations, since France turned out to be the most influential country in terms of its cultural impact on the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (Sretenović 2008; Sretenović 2010). This is very much related to the number of Serbs who lived in France during WW1. In October 1915, the armies of the Kingdom of Serbia had to retreat after facing a joint offensive of the Central Powers (Austria-Hungary and Germany joined by Bulgaria) on Serbia. The retreat included the remaining military units, but also some 20,000 civilians, and their main route was through Albania to Corfu and then to mainland Greece. Most of the Serbian civilians found refuge in France during the Great War. In January 1918, according to the French authorities, there were 17,000 Serbs and 3,000 Montenegrins in France, and Serbian statistics from the same month listed 3,286 Serbs enrolled in French schools and universities (1,178 of them were university students). There were also many more Serbs in French North Africa (Trgovčević 1995/96: 161; Trgovčević 2010: 364–365).

Therefore, the ratio of Serbs who lived in France in 1916–1918 in comparison with Serbs who lived in Britain in the same period would be 30 to 1 (or more) in favour of those Serbs who lived in France, at least in terms of quantity. In terms of quality, however, the situation was somewhat different. In Britain, Serbian boys were admitted to the best schools and universities. By November 1917, 40 Serbian schoolboys were in Oxford and 42 in Cambridge, and George Heriot's School in Edinburgh accepted 27 Serbian boys (Markovich 2018: 95–97). Additionally, Serbian pupils and students enjoyed much better conditions in Britain and were under the double supervision of the leading Oxbridge and other professors and of the Serbian educational inspector.

One of the Serbian students in Britain was Dragan Militchevitch, who later edited pro-British journals in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. On the twentieth anniversary of his return to Serbia, Militchevitch wrote about his recollections, vividly describing the experience that Serbian schoolboys received in Britain: “‘Our Gallant Allies!’”, that was the shout with which the whole British Nation, from the palaces of Lords to workers' flats and peasant cottages, greeted the arrival of three hundred Serbian boys and youngsters from Corsica and Corfu” (Militchevitch 1940: 9–10). Militchevitch was at Oxford and he remembered his professors with huge gratitude and singled out four of them: Sir Arthur Evans, “the greatest British Yugoslav”, Sidney Ball of St. John's College, who organised excursions for Serbian students and supplied them with books, Rev. Dr. Brightman of Magdalen College, in whose cabinet Serbian students were frequent visitors and who used to spend summer holidays with them, and Leigton Pullan. Rev. Pullan was “the soul of the colony of our theologians with whom he

spent every moment of his free time... Bishop of Dalmatia Irenaeus¹⁰ and learned doctor Yustin Popovich, interpreter of Dostoevsky among us, will, as long as they live, remember this man of bright eyes and warm voice who always and everywhere was hard on their trail.” (Militchevitch 1940: 10)

There was a co-ordinated effort to help Serbian schoolboys in Britain. The scheme of support included leading professors, the “British friends of Serbia”, the staff of the Serbian Relief Fund, and particularly Mrs. Gertrude Carrington Wilde, but also many individuals who contributed privately, such as the chocolate magnate Cadbury, who supported Serbian boys in Birmingham. As a result, this group became deeply attached to Britain and, in the inter-war period, the British alumni from Serbia initiated a series of pro-British and pro-Anglo-American clubs, initiatives, and commemorations in Belgrade, Serbia, and Yugoslavia.

3. Anglo-Serbian relations in the aftermath of WW1

The real impact of the Great War on Anglo-Serbian and Anglo-Yugoslav cultural relations may only be fully comprehended if the inter-war Anglo-Serbian (Yugoslav) cultural co-operation is analysed. The main features of that co-operation (which was also accompanied by a notable increase in the number of Brits/Americans residing in Serbia/Yugoslavia after the Great War) include the continuation of substantial educational links with Britain, the steady introduction of English language instruction in the Serbian education system, and the extensive activities of numerous inter-war Anglophile associations in Serbia/Yugoslavia.

3.1. Brits and Americans in the Kingdom of Serbia and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia

When Alice Mary Jacobina Rutherford came to Belgrade to marry Alexander Yovitchitch in February 1881, “one solitary Englishman resided in Belgrade” (Yovitchitch 1939: 60);¹¹ thus her mother, who accompanied her, could converse only with that one person, the British consul Mr. Baker. In 1902, Chedomille Mijatovich, in his entry on “Servia” compiled for Encyclopaedia Britannica, mentioned that 16 Englishmen lived in Serbia (Mijatovich 1902: 518–522).

¹⁰ Irenaeus Georgevich (Irinej Djordjević, 1894-1951) was Bishop of Dalmatia of the Serbian Orthodox Church from 1931 till 1941. During WW2 he was interned by Italians. After the war he went to the USA and then to Britain in 1949. He worked at the University of Cambridge until his death (Vuković 1996: 201–202). He was exceptionally active in Anglo-Yugoslav inter-war associations.

¹¹ One could dispute the information provided by Lena Yovitchitch that in 1881 a single Brit resided in Belgrade, since Elodie Mijatovich and Francis Mackenzie were also in Belgrade. Still, her story is quoted here as an illustrative indication rather than as a proven fact.

The situation changed with WW1, since a number of British citizens settled in Serbia and Yugoslavia after the war. Among them were nurses, humanitarian workers, diplomats, entrepreneurs, and even one ex officer of the Serbian and later of the Yugoslav Army – Flora Sandes, the only British woman who fought as an officer during WW1 (Miller 2012). In January 1937, Vladeta Popović reported that in Belgrade “a considerable number of private teachers of British origin are engaged in teaching English” (Popović, Jan. 1937: 13).

The official census books of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (for 1921 and 1931) did not provide any data related to foreign citizens who lived in Yugoslavia in the inter-war period. However, the Almanac of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia from 1937 included such data (Manakin 1937), as shown in Table 1. The number of “Englishmen” in Yugoslavia in 1921 was 251, and in 1931 it was 349. Additionally, there were 1,262 persons “from America” in 1931 (compared to 640 in 1921); one could suppose that many of them were Americans of Serbian and Yugoslav origin. It is interesting to note that the combined number of Englishmen and residents from America was higher than the number of Frenchmen in Yugoslavia in both censuses. At the same time, by far the most numerous were Russian emigrants who settled in the inter-war Yugoslavia (the so called “White Russian emigration”), consisting mostly of upper middle class people, officers and even some aristocrats; they almost universally spoke French, but many of them also spoke English.

<i>Foreign nationals in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia</i>		
Nationality	Number (the 1921 census)	Number (the 1931 census)
“Englishmen” (“Englezi”)	251	349
Frenchmen	703	1,085
From America	640	1,262
Russians (emigrants)	18,409	26,700

Table 1. Foreign nationals in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (according to Manakin 1937: 34)

3.2 The continual education of Serbs in Britain

Prior to the Great War, there were only rare cases of Serbian people studying in Britain. However, thanks to the co-operation established during the war, the studying of Serbian and Yugoslav nationals in Britain became normal practice in the years to come. Thus in the period 1925-1940 there were annual applications to the Ministry

of Education of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (named the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes /SCS/ until 1929) for stipends provided by the Serbian Minister's Fund, which was established in London during the Great War. The official inspector of the Ministry of Education of Yugoslavia throughout that period was Dragutin Subotić, who supervised the progress of stipend holders.

Moreover, Serbian and Yugoslav students had several possibilities to continue their education in Britain – not only institutionally, but also through private and philanthropic initiatives, or through stipends provided by mining and textile companies. The Archives of Yugoslavia keep 12 files of Yugoslav students for the period 1921-23 who had scholarships provided by the Ministry of Education of the Kingdom of SCS and 2 by other ministries. There are 59 additional files of students who obtained scholarships through the Serbian Minister's Fund in the period 1926-1939. In terms of state-related scholarships, there are 73 student files for the period 1921-1939. However, some candidates only applied, and many of their scholarships were cancelled due to their underperformance. Additionally, there are files of 51 students for the period 1923-1940 who went to Britain through private and philanthropic schemes, and 18 of them studied English. Finally, there are 10 files of students who, in the period 1936-40, were given scholarships from mining and textile companies. Altogether there are 134 files, and the list is very likely incomplete. What is significant is that studying in Britain continued systematically throughout the inter-war years (AJ 97 – 267; 159 – 382–399). In this period, the most notable scholarship holders, whose PhD theses were published in Britain, were Vladeta Popović and Mihailo Stojanović (Popovic 1928; Stojanovic 1939).

There is a need for a special study on the activities and impact of the Serbian Minister's Fund and other scholarships on British-Serbian and British-Yugoslav inter-war relations. For the time being, only rough estimates have been offered here. The most important issue is that Serbian and Yugoslav students had continued opportunities to study in Britain in the 1920s and the 1930s, and most of them used the schemes and scholarships that were established during the Great War.

3.3 The beginning of organised teaching of English in Serbia

The beginning of English university courses in Belgrade may be traced back to 1884 and to Nikola Jovanović Amerikanac (as mentioned in Section 1). One could even speculate that Dositey Obradovich, the first modern propagator of English language learning among Serbs,¹² may have given some tutorials in

¹² In his *Aesop's Fables*, published in Leipzig in 1789, Dositey has a special section of "English Sayings", and four of them are even published both in English and Slavic-Serbian. In his foreword to "English Sayings" he expressed the hope that in due time "many a person would covet to learn English, and then this good thing [English sayings] will be more available" (Obradovich 1789: 425).

English to his pupils at the College of Belgrade, which he himself had established in 1808.¹³

However, the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of Belgrade appeared only in the inter-war period – thanks to Vladeta Popović, one of the 352 Serbian boys who were accepted in Britain in 1916. The department was formed in 1929/1930. By the beginning of 1937, the department had about 130 students, with 15 students who had already graduated. Vladeta Popović's wife Mrs. Mary Stansfield Popović became an English language lecturer at the University of Belgrade in 1926, but she also conducted English courses at the Kolarac Popular University, as well as weekly radio lessons through Radio Belgrade (Popović, Jan. 1937: 12–13). By April 1941, when the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was attacked and conquered by the Third Reich and its allies, the Department of English in Belgrade had 300 students and 68 graduates.¹⁴

Overall, in the inter-war period there were at least four possibilities of learning English: (1) There were British, domestic, and Russian private tutors available to the elite of Yugoslav society only; (2) Institutionally, the language could be learned at the University of Belgrade, and, since 1938, in secondary schools as well; (3) The easiest way for the general population to learn English was through Anglophile societies, or at the Kolarac Popular University; (4) Finally, one was able to learn English through personal efforts by consulting the available textbooks, and additionally by listening to weekly lessons on Radio Belgrade.

In 1937, *The Anglo-Yugoslav Review* announced that the Minister of Education had issued a decree allowing pupils in secondary schools in Yugoslavia to opt for English as their second foreign language. French remained obligatory and pupils in third grade (at the age of 13) were allowed to choose between German and English. *The Anglo-Yugoslav Review* was very happy to conclude: “Although the necessity of introducing English as a compulsory language in secondary schools has been felt for a long time, the lack of qualified teachers has prevented, up to now, the necessary reform. This obstacle has at last been overcome, and the study of English in Yugoslav secondary schools will commence with the coming term.” (“The English Language”, Jan.-Apr. 1937: 114–115)¹⁵

In 1944, M. Miloyevitch claimed that in the inter-war period some 3,000 Yugoslavs learned English at the Anglo-American-Yugoslav Club, and that the club

¹³ Pavle Popović wrote about the period when Dositey completed his last book in Belgrade: “And it is pleasant to think that at that moment Obradović had a volume of Addison or Dr. Johnson before him.” (P. Popović 1919: 351).

¹⁴ For a concise overview of the English Department's history and development to the present day, see Rasulić 2018.

¹⁵ For a global account of the history of English language teaching in Serbia, see Ignjačević 2006.

became “a centre of social and cultural interest for many of Belgrade’s young men and women” (Miloyevitch 1944: 23). The English lessons at the club were available “four evenings a week by qualified English teachers”. Apart from courses for beginners, there were also intermediate, intermediate conversational and higher conversational classes. The groups consisted of 8-12 students (“Societies and Clubs”, Jan. 1937: 15–16).

3.4 The impact of Anglo-American-Yugoslav Associations

Anglophile clubs and British-Serbian cultural activities between the two world wars have been the subject of a series of works in Serbia (Gašić 2007; Radić 2012; Radić 2018; Radić 2019). All of them demonstrate the substantial scope of the activities of these societies, but also the very active presence of the Young Men’s Christian Association in Serbia and Yugoslavia in the inter-war period.

In the 1920s, the main Anglophile organisation in Belgrade was the *Anglo-American-Yugoslav Club*, which was established in 1924. In February 1930, the *Society of Friends of Great Britain and America in Jugoslavia* was founded by “a large group of Anglophils in Belgrade” with an aim to “extend Anglophil activities in Belgrade and throughout the country” (Popović, Mar. 1937: 38).¹⁶ The president of the Society was Bishop Nikolai Velimirovich, and its chairman Bishop Irinaeus Georgevich. The deputy chairpersons were Dr. Slavko Grouitch, Jovan Jovanović and Miss Lena Yovitchitch (Popović, Mar. 1937: 38). In 1937, the list of Anglo-American Yugoslav societies and clubs included 16 such associations: three in Belgrade,¹⁷ two in Zagreb, and one each in Ljubljana, Maribor, Niš, Novi Sad, Osijek, Šabac, Sarajevo, Split, Šibenik, Skoplje, and Valjevo. In 1942, the director of the British Institute in Belgrade was able to mention that, in the autumn of 1940, 27 Anglophile societies existed in Yugoslavia, and that 1,000 students were enrolled in the programmes of the Yugoslav-British Institute (*The Times*, Sept. 25, 1942).

There were also pro-Yugoslav societies in both Britain and the USA. In October 1927, the Yugoslav Society of Great Britain was established; it continued the work of the previous Serbian Society of Great Britain (Johnson, Mar. 1937: 45–47). In the USA, there was the American-Yugoslav Society in New York. In particular, Dr. Vladeta Popović and Bishop Irinaeus maintained the connection between the Society of Friends of Great Britain and America in Belgrade and the Yugoslav Society of Great Britain.

In October 1934, King Alexander Karageorgevich was murdered in Marseilles. His wife Queen Maria was the great granddaughter of Queen Victoria and she sponsored

¹⁶ The change of the spelling of the state name from Jugoslavia to Yugoslavia was gradually accepted in the coming years, and the names of associations followed that change.

¹⁷ These included: (1) Society of Friends of Great Britain and America in Jugoslavia, (2) The Anglo-American Yugoslav Club, and (3) The Association of Former Yugoslav Schoolboys in Britain.

many pro-British humanitarian initiatives in Yugoslavia. King Alexander (himself an outspoken Francophile) was succeeded by his son King Peter II, who was only 11 years old, so a regency council was appointed headed by Alexander's first cousin Prince Paul. Prince Paul studied at Oxford in 1913-14 and in 1918-20. He had numerous friends and acquaintances from the ranks of the British elite and aristocracy. His wife was Princess Olga of Greece and Denmark. Her sister Princess Marina married the Duke of Kent in 1934. Additionally, Prince Paul's best-man in 1923 was the Duke of York, who, in December 1936, became British King George VI. Thus, Prince Paul and Princess Olga had numerous personal links with Britain, and Anglo-Yugoslav clubs exploited that situation, usually having Prince Paul or Princess Olga as their patrons.

The scope of Anglophile, pro-British and pro-American activities in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was such that it enabled the publication of a fortnightly paper in English. In February 1932, *The South Slav Herald*, subtitled "the only Yugoslav paper in the English language", began to be published in Belgrade. In the period 1932-1940, close to 200 issues of this broadsheet newspaper came out.

In the period 1936-1941, there were five other Anglophile periodicals. In 1936/37, four issues of *The Anglo-Yugoslav Review*, "the first English periodical in Yugoslavia", were released. This review was heavily subsidised by the Yugoslav government and was published by the Society for Promoting Anglo-Saxon Culture in Yugoslavia. In 1937, Dr. Vladeta Popović edited seven issues of *The Anglophil. Anglo-American-Yugoslav Monthly* (published by The Society of Friends of Great Britain and America and the Anglo-American-Yugoslav Club in Belgrade). In 1940/41, Dragan Miltchevitch, another of the Serbian boys educated in Britain during WW1, edited three journals that gathered together admirers of Britain and the USA in Belgrade and Yugoslavia, including freemasons in particular (Markovich 2019: 284-289). During and after the conquest of France by the Third Reich, he published four issues of *Britanija (Britannia)*, which was banned in July 1940, and then three issues of *Čovečanstvo (Mankind)*, which was also banned by the Yugoslav government at the time (as it considered these publications to be too pro-British). Finally, he published *Danica* between October 1, 1940, and March 15, 1941. The editorial board of all the three journals included: David Shillan, the director of the British Institute in Belgrade, Dr. Vladeta Popović, and Božidar Pepić.

Anglophile societies in Yugoslavia even had their own day. Since 1934, they celebrated November 11, Armistice Day, as the Anglo-American Day (Popović, Mar. 1937: 14). Vladeta Popović explained the meaning of the Anglo-American Day: "Its purpose is to keep green the memory of the British and Americans who served and in many cases laid down their lives during the World War in the struggle for the freedom of Yugoslavia. The part played by Great Britain and America in those fatal days

was such that it must ever serve to mankind as an example and an impulse to higher achievements...” (Popović, Oct.-Dec. 1937: 102)

Some of these Anglophile societies had remarkably intense activities. For instance, in the period 1924-41, the Anglo-Yugoslav Club in Belgrade organised 760 lectures. What is particularly significant is that 90% of these lectures were held in English: namely, 700 lectures in English suggest that Belgrade had a substantial audience that was not only interested and motivated to attend, but also had a good enough command of the English language to be able to follow the lectures (Miloyevitch 1944: 23).

4. Conclusion

All the above-mentioned features characterising Anglo-Serbian/Yugoslav cultural relations in the inter-war period actually stem from the Great War. It was the Great War that brought Serbia into an unprecedented contact with the United Kingdom, and also with the United States of America. As a consequence of the very intensive links established during the Great War, a number of Brits and Americans settled in Serbia/Yugoslavia in the post-war years. The education of Serbian students in Britain was initiated in 1916 by the “British Friends of Serbia” and the Serbian Relief Fund, and ever since then there have been continued opportunities for the education of Serbs and Yugoslavs at British universities. The learning (and organized teaching) of English in Serbia was significantly prompted by the influx of over 500 youngsters who studied in Britain during the Great War and returned to their homeland in 1919-1921. The numerous inter-war Anglophile associations in Serbia/Yugoslavia were largely based on British alumni and individuals who spent some time in Britain or America during the Great War. In particular, the main protagonists of the Anglo-Serbian/Yugoslav cultural links in the inter-war period (Bishop Nikolai Velimirovich, Bishop Irinaeus Georgevich, Dr. Vladeta Popović, Jovan Jovanović, Dragan Militchevitch, and Prince Paul) all spent some time in Britain during the Great War and its aftermath. On the whole, all this indicates that the experience of co-operation and learning of the other during WWI paved the way for all subsequent Anglo-American cultural initiatives in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

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