

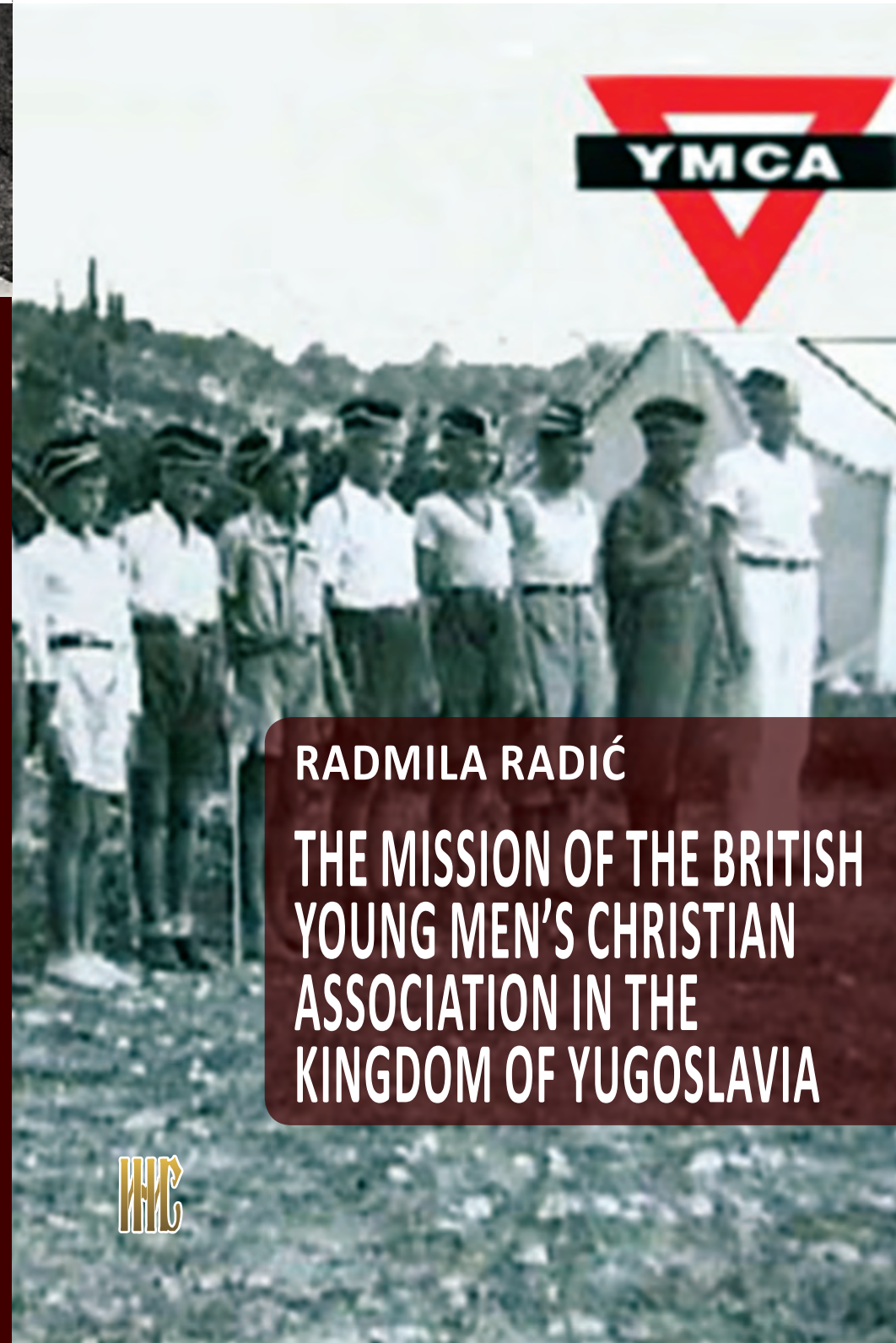


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THE MISSION OF THE BRITISH YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION IN THE KINGDOM OF YUGOSLAVIA

Radmila Radić



**RADMILA RADIĆ**  
**THE MISSION OF THE BRITISH YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION IN THE KINGDOM OF YUGOSLAVIA**



The Young Man Christian Association (YMCA) operated in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia from 1918 to 1941. British representatives chaired the organization, except for a brief spell under local governance—the only such example in Europe. Around 1900, YMCA expanded the Austro-Hungarian Empire's south Protestant parts. It framed future northern parts of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians. In 1911, American Methodist John Mott's visited the Kingdom of Serbia and formed the first branch of Belgrade University. During the First World War, the contacts between the YMCA, the Serbian authorities and representatives of the Serbian Church were maintained. The YMCA was present in the Central Powers prison camps, trying to aid inmates, many of whom were Serbs. The Association also performs at the Salonika Front among Serbian soldiers. After a truce, YMCA launched centers in Skopje, Nis, and later in Belgrade with the help of the British who arrived with soldiers from Thessaloniki. By arriving Percy Henry Sitters and his wife, the Association gain the remotest reach. From 1924 until the Second World War, Percy H. Sitters remain the director of the National Alliance, a lay-reader of the Anglican colony, and later a pastor. Despite problems, membership risen from around 1,000 in the early 1920s to about 50,000 in 1940. Yugoslav YMCA accepted in July 1935 as a member of the World Association of YMCA. Association enjoyed complete autonomy and settled close ties with the Royal Family. It enjoyed their protection and financial help. Registered as an organization of Christianization and spiritual renewal, YMCA conducted conventional Protestant methods to improve the spirit, mind and body of young individuals. Besides religious training and other social services, organized sports events and philanthropy work. Members came from the eastern regions, where individuals belonged to Orthodox and Protestant. This was the result of good cooperation with the Serbian Orthodox, Reformed, Lutheran, German and Slovak Evangelical Churches. Although branches open in Zagreb and Ljubljana, YMCA did not achieve a significant impact in the Kingdom's Catholic regions. The negative posture of the Roman Catholic Church towards Association constituted primary reason. YMCA contributes to a vast knowledge of British values and culture among the local population. It was important to keep the connections of Serbian Orthodox and Anglican Church. Especial at the beginning of World War Two.

Dr. Radmila Radić  
THE MISSION OF THE BRITISH YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN  
ASSOCIATION IN THE KINGDOM OF YUGOSLAVIA

INSTITUTE FOR RECENT HISTORY OF SERBIA  
Library STUDIES AND MONOGRAPHS  
Book 118

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ISBN 978-86-7005-161-4

DOI <https://doi.org/10.31212/monog.118.rad.missionbritishymca>

The publication of the book was supported by the Ministry of Education,  
Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia

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**THE MISSION OF THE BRITISH  
YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN  
ASSOCIATION (YMCA) IN THE  
KINGDOM OF YUGOSLAVIA**



Belgrade, 2019



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## Abbreviations

AY	Archives of Yugoslavia, Belgrade
ASOCS	Archives of the Serbian Orthodox Church Synod
BSC	Belgrade Sports Club
CCS	Christian Community of Students
CFR	Council on Foreign Relations
CIC	Central International Committee
COCC	Croatian Old Catholic Church
CPY	Communist Party of Yugoslavia
EAYC	English-American-Yugoslav Club
FBSS	First Belgrade Singing Society
LPL	Lambeth Palace Library, London
NCC	National Christian Community = God Worshipper Movement
OZNA	Department for the Protection of the People
ROCOR	Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia
SNF	Serb National Federation
SCM	Student Christian Movement
SCS	Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes
SOC	Serbian Orthodox Church
SSH	<i>South Slav Herald</i>
WCM	Women's Christian Movement
WSCF	World Student Christian Federation
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association





## FOREWORD

Religious movements and organizations were long ignored in social sciences as well as in theology. The secularization thesis supported the idea of the inevitable disappearance of religion as a phenomenon. Religion was viewed as an irrational, conservative force, without dynamism. In addition, the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA, sometimes regionally called the Y) did not fit into the theories about religious movements. It was not seen as a sect either, because it tried, among other things, to consolidate and unite churches.<sup>1</sup> Interest in the YMCA increased suddenly during the 1990s when several doctoral dissertations were defended on this subject. Most of the works were published in the United States, but the activity of the YMCA in America differs somewhat from similar activity in other parts of the world. Today, there is a great deal of literature in the world on the history and development of the YMCA, from which we have taken only a small portion that has been consulted during work on the topic in order to present the movement's origins, ideology, phases of development, and general guidelines.<sup>2</sup>

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- 1 Martti Muukkonen, *Ecumenism of the Laity: Continuity and Change in the Legation View of the World's Alliance of YMCAs, 1855–1955* (pdf), University of Joensuu, Publications in Theology 7, 2002, 16–17.
  - 2 Kenneth Scott Latourette, *World Service: A History of the Foreign Work and World Service of the Young Christian Associations of the United States and Canada*, (New York: Association Press, 1957); Howard C. Hopkins, *John R. Mott 1865–1955: A Biography*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979); Eddy Sherwood, *A Century with Youth: A History of the Y.M.C.A.*, (New York: Association Press, 1944); David Newsome, *Godliness and Good Learning*, (London: J. Murray, 1961); David McLeod, *Building Character in the American Boy: The Boy Scouts, the YMCA, and their Forerunners, 1870–1920*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983); Wenjun Xing, "Social gospel, social economics, and the YMCA: Sidney D. Gamble and Princeton-in-Peking" (1992), Doctoral Dissertations 1896 - February 2014, 1188, [http://scholarworks.umass.edu/dissertations\\_1/1188](http://scholarworks.umass.edu/dissertations_1/1188); Anthony E. Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era*, (New York: Basic Books, 1993); Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880–1917*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995); Michael S. Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); *Men and Women Adrift: The YMCA and the YWCA in the City*, eds. Nina Mjagkij, Margaret Spratt, (New York: New York University

There is still very scanty literature on the territory of the South Slavs regarding the existence and activity of the YMCA.<sup>3</sup> As a result of insufficient

Press, 1997); John Thares Davidann, *A World of Crisis and Progress: The American YMCA in Japan, 1890–1930*, (London: Lehigh University Press, 1998); Clifford Putney, *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880–1920*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001); Geoffrey D. Spurr, "The London YMCA: A Haven of Masculine Self-Improvement and Socialization for the Late-Victorian and Edwardian Clerk", *Canadian Journal of History*, vol. 37, no. 2 (August 2002), 275–301; Winter Thomas, *Making Men, Making Class: The YMCA and Workingmen, 1877–1920*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002); C. Putney, "Muscular Christianity", the encyclopedia of informal education", Accessed: 17. 07. 2018, [www.infed.org/christianeducation/muscular\\_christianity.htm](http://www.infed.org/christianeducation/muscular_christianity.htm). (The article first appeared in ABC-CLIO (2003)); Michael S. Kimmel, Amy Aronson, *Men and Masculinities: a Social, Cultural, and Historical Encyclopædia*, Volume 1, (ABC-CLIO, 2004); N. J. Watson, S. Weir, S. Friend, "The Development of Muscular Christianity in Victorian Britain and Beyond", *Journal of Religion & Society* 7, 2005, Accessed: 17. 07. 2018, [https://www.veritesport.org/downloads/The\\_Development\\_of\\_Muscular\\_Christianity\\_in\\_Victorian\\_Britain\\_and\\_Beyond.pdf](https://www.veritesport.org/downloads/The_Development_of_Muscular_Christianity_in_Victorian_Britain_and_Beyond.pdf); Martti Muukkonen, "Take a Boy and Raise Him a Man - The YMCA as a Pioneer of Youth Work", Paper to be presented to the ISTR 8<sup>th</sup> International Conference, July 09–12, 2008, Barcelona, Spain; Paul Schwinn, *The Malleable Man: The International YMCA and Christian Manhood, 1890–1940*, Accessed: 22. 08. 2018, <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/5fm1q70t>; Kenneth A. Steuer, *Pursuit of an "Unparalleled Opportunity" The American YMCA and Prisoner-of-War Diplomacy Among the Central Power Nations During World War I, 1914–1923*, (Columbia University Press, c2009, c2008), Accessed: 02. 08. 2018, <http://www.gutenberg-e.org/steuer/steuer.ch05.html#>; Samuel David Lenser, *Between the Great Idea and Kemalism: The YMCA at Izmir in the 1920s*, (Boise State University Graduate College, 2010); Geoffrey D. Spurr, "Lower-Middle-Class Masculinity and the Young Men's Christian Association, 1844–1880", *Histoire sociale / Social History*, vol. XLVII, no 95 (November 2014), 547–576; Thomas R. Davies, *History of Transnational Voluntary Associations: A Critical Multidisciplinary Review*, (BRILL, 2016); Rebecca Ann Hodges, *Christian Citizenship and the Foreign Work of the YMCA*, (Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, summer 2017), Accessed: 23. 08. 2018, [http://digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu/etd/ucb/text/Hodges\\_berkeley\\_0028E\\_17232.pdf](http://digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu/etd/ucb/text/Hodges_berkeley_0028E_17232.pdf); Tomáš Tlustý, "A Brief Comparison of Physical Education and Sport within the Czechoslovak and Polish YMCA in the Interwar Years", *Prace naukowe Akademii i im. Jana Długosza w Częstochowie Kultura Fizyczna*, 2017, t. XVI, nr. 3, 29–45, Accessed: 13. 08. 2018, <http://dx.doi.org/10.16926/kf.2017.16.24>.

- 3 Ranka Gašić, *Beograd u hodu ka Evropi. Kulturni uticaji Britanije i Nemačke na beogradsku elitu 1918–1941. [Belgrade in Advance towards Europe. The Cultural Influence of Great Britain and Germany on the Belgrade Elites 1918–1941]*, (Beograd: ISI, 2005); Branko Bjelajac, „Hrišćanska zajednica studenata kao model saradnje i tolerancije medju crkva-ma s početka XX. veka” [“The Christian Student Movement as a Model of Tolerance and Cooperation among Churches at the Beginning of the XX Century”], *Religija i tolerancija IX*, 16, July–December 2011, 309–316; Radmila Radić, „Prilog istraživanju mreže anglo-

research, Martti Muukkonen, in an otherwise valuable study on the history and activity of the YMCA, which I relied on quite heavily, states incorrectly that the expansion of the YMCA in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes/Yugoslavia began in 1913 and lasted until 1938 and that it was organized during the journey of John R. Mott, and that the movement was made up mostly of German members. The same author also states that missionary work of the British YMCA in Europe remained on the British Isles.<sup>4</sup> The case of the YMCA operations in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, or the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, shows something quite contrary. The YMCA had been present in this region since 1911 in the Kingdom of Serbia, particularly from 1918 to 1941, under the patronage of its central office in Great Britain and led by British representatives.

Although at first glance this may seem like a marginal topic for Serbian historiography, the data on the functioning of this organization brings a whole range of new knowledge about the religious map of the society, interreligious relations, certain aspects of the British presence on the territory of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and the established liaisons, about the rapport between religious and political factors towards foreigners and international religious organizations, the situation in the country, and so on.

The reasons for the insufficient interest in this topic are mainly the result of a lacking number of preserved documents in domestic archives and a shortage of research in foreign archive institutions. A few documents and photographs related to this topic have been preserved in the Archives of Yugoslavia (Court, Ministry of Religion, and Ministry of Education). An important supplement is provided by periodicals, but not enough to reconstruct a complete picture. The shortage of sources in the domestic archives has been compensated to a certain extent by the documents of the Lambeth Palace Library in London (Bermondsey), the official library of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the main archives of the Church of England. Data stored there go back to the 9<sup>th</sup> century and into the present day and their wide range includes documents

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filskih organizacija u Srbiji tokom prve polovine 20. veka" ["Contribution to the Research of the Anglophile Organizations Network in Serbia during the First Half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century"], *Tokovi istorije* 3/2012, 278–323.

4 Muukkonen, *Ecumenism of the Laity*, 173–175.

on the work of the office of the Archbishop of Canterbury, his national and international role in heading the Church of England and the Anglican community around the world. As of 1996, the library also maintains the collections of Sion College, the historic library of the London Priesthood, containing manuscripts, printed books from before 1850, as well as pamphlets. The collections that are stored there have a key focus on the activity of the Church, in addition to documents on other issues. The archive collections also keep records on the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC) and so far have mostly remained unknown to domestic researchers. Among the collections that should be explored in greater detail, and which have been used only partly in this paper, are the Church of England Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), founded in 1933 by Archbishop Cosmo Lang to oversee the ecumenical activity of the Church. Under the leadership of Arthur Headlam, Bishop of Gloucester,<sup>5</sup> and later George Bell, Bishop of Chichester, a network of committees was established whose members included bishops and priests, but also former diplomats and celebrities. Their goal was to promote connections and dialogue with the Churches of the East and the West. The first secretary was the Reverend Dr. John Albert Douglas. The documents and correspondence on the activities of Archbishop Lang, bishops Headlam and Bell, and Rev. Douglas are also stored in the Lambeth Palace Library and contain important information on contacts with the Serbian Orthodox Church (*Bishop George Bell Papers; Papers of Canon J. A. Douglas; Arthur Cayley Headlam, Bishop of Gloucester Papers*). Also of major importance are materials in the fund of Lambeth Conference Papers. In addition to these materials, there is also a part of the sources that I did not manage to look at, which also contain files related to the Kingdom of Serbia, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and Socialist Yugoslavia, in other words, relations and contacts with the Serbian Orthodox Church, individual bishops and Patriarchs, and other is-

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5 Dr. Arthur Cayley Headlam (1862–1947) was appointed professor of theology at Oxford in 1918. Prior to that, he taught at King's College in London, and at Oxford Colleges, All Souls College, Oriel College and Trinity College. (Bogdan Lubardić, „Justin Popović u Oksfordu: između romantizovanih činjenica i činjenice romantizma” [“Justin Popović in Oxford 1916–1919: Between Romanticized Facts and the Fact of Romanticism”], *Srpska teologija u dvadesetom veku: istraživački problemi i rezultati* 10 (2011), 75–197, 128–129). He was the Bishop of Gloucester from 1923 to 1945.

sues.<sup>6</sup> In addition, the sources for this topic are also in a string of other archives and files abroad that have remained unavailable to me.<sup>7</sup>

The Young Men's Christian Association was the first attempt of British missionary work in Serbia and on the territory of the lands of the South Slavs. But even before their arrival, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were attempts to establish closer ties between the Serbian and the Anglican Church (the Church of England), as well as individual missionary work. In the eighteen-sixties, William Denton (1815–1888), a priest and writer from London, resided in the Principality of Serbia. Interested in Orthodoxy and Church organization in Serbia, Denton traveled around the country and became familiar with the people and the circumstances. In order to bring the Serbian and Anglican churches, closer together, he contacted and established a correspondence with Metropolitan Michael. Upon returning to London in 1862, he published a book titled *Servia and the Servians*.<sup>8</sup>

Much better known is the example of Francis Harford MacKenzie, 1833–1895, who came to Serbia with a mission of religious and enlightenment character. The MacKenzie's were members of the Calvinistic Free Church of Scotland. His activity essentially was similar to what the YMCA was to do later. Francis MacKenzie arrived during the Serbian-Turkish war in 1876, with the intention of helping the wounded on the front lines near Knjaževac and around Zaječar, after reading reports in English newspapers about the suffering of the Serbian people in the Knjaževac district at the hands of the Turks. He spent some time in Užice in an attempt to help refugees and the needy. He enjoyed a high degree of respect by the British Foreign Office and his letters were read with much consideration. After arriving in Belgrade,

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6 For example Tait, Archibald Campbell (1811–1882), 140, f. 333 – Denton (William), 1864; Tait 82, ff. 41–2, 165; Davidson, Randall Thomas (1848–1930), 197, 297, 371, 491; General Secretary's Papers, MS 4744, MS 4745, 1916–1918; Bell (65–117) 79, 1942–1956; Runcie, Robert Alexander Kennedy (1921–2000), etc.

7 Kautz Family YMCA Libraries, World Alliance of YMCAs records, University of Minnesota Libraries; Cadbury Research Library, University of Birmingham; Paul B. Anderson Papers, 1909–1988, University of Illinois Archives; Chemin du Clos de Belmont, Genève, Archives de la YMCA; Yale University Divinity School Library, Guide to the John R. Mott Papers, RG 45.

8 Denton, W. (William), *Servia and the Servians*, (London: Bell and Daldy, 1862); Vilijem Denton, *Srbija i Srbi*, (Beograd: Službeni glasnik, 2013).

he built a city district that came to be called Englezovac (English Town), inspired by contemporary British urban planning. On a section of his own patch of land in Englezovac, later started the construction of Belgrade's church of St. Sava. He gave a part of his income to the Belgrade Society for Help to the Poor. MacKenzie also helped fallen women and girls and beggars and is the real originator of the philanthropic movement in Serbia. In 1891 he sent letters to Belgrade daily newspapers calling for the establishment of an animal protection society, for which he was immediately prepared to pay a substantial sum of money. He financially supported and founded the *Hrišćansko vesnika [Christian Herald]*, an influential journal whose editor in chief was Archpriest Aleksa Ilić. As an evangelist, MacKenzie believed that preaching of the Gospel should be made available to the secular community in their national language. For MacKenzie, enlightenment meant the same thing as Christianization and he attached major importance to religious education. He worked on spreading the knowledge of the faith, but he did not intend to educate children in the Protestant spirit, as the authorities had accused him, but in fact, he demanded explicitly that Orthodox priests teach religious education. He encountered a lot of opposition by the Serbian Church, which he criticized sternly, grieved by the Serbian people's "carelessness and lack of faith." He felt that the Church acted primarily as a tool of political and social control, neglecting its pastoral and enlightening duties to the people. MacKenzie decided to work on spreading biblical teachings in Serbia. However, the Church did not trust his activities and tried to impede them. MacKenzie saw himself as an evangelist and although he was associated with the Nazarenes for a long time, he never became their member. Nevertheless, his association with the Nazarenes contributed even further to his tense relations with the Church, although MacKenzie himself soon came to blows with this sect for refusing to become a member and rejecting to submit to the authority of its elders. MacKenzie was a staunch opponent of alcoholism and taverns. He built a Hall of Peace on Slavija in 1888–89, which was supposed to serve as a meeting place of the Englezian community, "deprived of any connection with a tavern or a café life." The Hall of Peace was used for prayer and other activities, which were mostly short-lived. For a while, the Society of St. Sava used the hall for singing lessons Literacy lessons started. MacKenzie

opened a Sunday school for the religious education of men and women but it was soon closed down. Then he opened a sewing school for young women. The school offered courses in elementary literacy, instruction on bringing up children and hygiene, as well as religious education.<sup>9</sup> MacKenzie's activities were very similar to the work of the YMCA, but there is no research to confirm whether he personally had any knowledge about their work and its extent in Great Britain.



*Hall of Peace, Belgrade*

9 Majkl Palaret, „Čovek koji je izgradio Englezovac – Fransis Makenzi u Beogradu (1876–1895)” [Michael Palairret, “The Man who built Englezovac - Francis Mackenzie in Belgrade (1876–1895)”], *Istorijski časopis* XXXIX, 1992, 137–164; Svetlana Nedić, „Sala mira” [“Hall of Peace”], *Godišnjak grada Beograda* 42, 1995, 123–132; Slobodan Marković, *Grof Čedomilj Mijatović: Viktorijanac među Srbima* [Count Chedomille Mijatovich: a Victorian among the Serbs] (Beograd: Pravni fakultet Univerziteta u Beogradu, 2006); Bojan Aleksov, *Nazareni među Srbima*, (Beograd: Zavod za udžbenike, 2010), 106–108, 111, 247–249, [Bojan Aleksov, *Religious Dissent Between the Modern and the National: Nazarenes in Hungary and Serbia 1850–1914*, Balkanologische Veröffentlichungen Des Osteuropa-Instituts A, 2006]; Branko Bjelajac, „Frensis Makenzi – prijatelj Srbije: pravoslavni dobrotvor i zaštitnik verskih manjina” [“Francis MacKenzie - Friend of Serbia: Orthodox Benefactor and Protector of Religious Minorities”], *Kolumna*, April 2012, Accessed: September 28, 2018 <https://dobravijest.files.wordpress.com/2016/02/frensis-mekenzi-prijatelj-srbije.pdf>); Olga Manojlović Pintar, *Arheologija sećanja: spomenici i identiteti u Srbiji 1918–1989* [Archeology of Memory. Monuments and Identities in Serbia 1918–1989], (Beograd: Čigoja, 2014), 104.



My research attempts to answer several key questions that relate primarily to the emergence, development, expansion and basic goals of the YMCA as a worldwide organization, its penetration into Orthodox regions and its activities on the territory of the Kingdom of Serbia and later Kingdom of the SCS / Yugoslavia. A particularly important segment relates to the links and mutual relations and cooperation with churches, and especially with the Serbian Orthodox Church in the mentioned period. Also, I have focused on the role of some key figures, British representatives of the YMCA in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, whose function, over time, has outgrown that of the Community and has become important for both the Church of England and the broader Anglican community on the eve of the Second World War. The structure of this work has been adapted to such an approach.

This monograph was created as a result of research on the project of the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technological Development entitled: "Tradition and Transformation - Historical Heritage and National Identities in Serbia in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century" (III-47019).

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Dr. Mile Bjelajac, director of the Institute for Recent History of Serbia, as well as other colleagues from the Institute, primarily Dr. Olga Manojlović-Pintar, Dr. Vesna Djikanović, and Dr. Aleksandar Stojanović, helped me unselfishly in improving and publishing this manuscript, for which I am extremely grateful to them. I would also like to thank historians and theologians Branislav Ćurčić and Nemanja Andrijašević. My gratitude goes to colleagues from the Archives of Yugoslavia (especially Suzana Srndović, and everyone else), and from the National Library of Serbia and the University Library "Svetozar Marković" for their significant assistance during my research. In particular, I want to thank the reviewers - Professor Dr. Ljubinka Trgovčević, Prof. Dr. Slobodan Marković, and Principal Research Fellow Dr. Momčilo Isić. I also owe a debt of gratitude to Bojan Drndić, Kristina Pintar, and Djordje Sekerezović for their efforts and help. I also want to thank my older son, Ognjen Radić, for enabling me to gain access to archival materials from the Lambeth Palace Library, which without his help, would have remained inaccessible.

In Belgrade, December 2018

# INTRODUCTION

## HISTORY OF THE YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

### Beginning and Development of the YMCA up to the Start of World War II

The Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) was founded as a religious association "for youth and boys" in London in 1844. Its founder was George Williams (1821–1905) and the goal of the movement was initially to improve the spiritual condition of young people engaged in the industry. From the very beginning, the movement was Protestant with representatives of the English, Methodist, Congregational and Baptist churches.<sup>10</sup>

At the same time, German youth clubs (*Jünglingsvereine*) formed another branch of the YMCA family, a federation model, which was different in many respects from the British branch model. Unlike the situation in Germany, the British YMCA did not have a missionary emphasis but was based on the British philanthropic tradition. Together with the British and German, the third branch of the YMCA was in the French-speaking area.<sup>11</sup>

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10 Steuer, *Pursuit of an "Unparalleled Opportunity"*.

11 There were two main sources from which the YMCA movement originated. The first was a German movement that could be traced back to the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (1787), in Basel, Switzerland, and the second was a British movement. The German YMCA or *Jünglingsverein* (*youth clubs*), as it was then called, was not based on the secular activity of the middle-class business, but served young pastors as a means of trying to reach out to young people. From Basel, the idea of *Jünglingsverein* expanded to Bremen (1834) and Elberfeld (1838) and from there to the rest of the German Confederation. During 1848, the *Rheinische-Westphälische Bund* in Elberfeld was formed. Elberfeld became one of the main hubs in the expansion of the *Jünglingsverein* idea in Germany, among the German population in other countries and in the Netherlands. When the World Alliance of YMCAs was founded, there were already 130 associations in Germany, which

The inception of the YMCA was an expression of political, economic and religious changes and part of the social reform movements of the times. There are several main factors that influenced the emergence and development of the YMCA: urbanization, industrialization, the growth of the middle class, educational expansion, and the Evangelical Revival. The Evangelical Revival movement emphasized the principle of the *sola scriptura* of the Reformation, redemption through the death of Christ on the cross, personal conversion, and missionary work. This spiritual wave inspired educators, preachers, and laypersons.<sup>12</sup> George Williams and many YMCA leaders were also teachers of the Sunday School Movement in Great Britain and in the United States. Industrialization and urbanization gradually broke down the old Christian norms, which led to social problems. The inability of churches to fulfill their mission gave rise to a belief that the duty of every Christian was to participate in the restoration of Christian values and in the revitalization of the Protestant Church.

The adherents of the London YMCA were mostly young members of the middle class of evangelists. The middle class was considered as the basis of the YMCA. Over time, the YMCA mission spread to other social strata.<sup>13</sup> When the YMCA membership expanded, it also changed its identity.

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formed the largest national movement in the alliance. From the very beginning, there were differences between the German and British movements. In Britain and France, the members were mainly middle-class men. In Germany, the target group was wider than in Britain. Since the associations were a means of working in the parish, the target group was the young male population in the parish region. For this reason, the German *Jünglingsverein* didn't target working-class men as much as the British YMCA did. In Britain, leaders were mostly laymen, often from the business world. In Germany, leadership was mostly in the hands of young pastors. The structure of the YMCA varied in different countries. In Germany, the federal structure is favorable. These differences in the YMCA models later served as organizational resources. London's YMCA, however, created a concept that has been adopted by others and has therefore been honored to be the progenitor of all YMCAs. Martti Muukkonen, *Framing International Aid: Case of the YMCA*, Presentation to the Conference on Religious NGOs, Civil Society and the Aid System, Oslo 8–10 November 2006, Accessed: December 27, 2018, [https://www.academia.edu/1052980/Framing\\_International\\_Aid\\_A\\_Case\\_of\\_the\\_YMCA](https://www.academia.edu/1052980/Framing_International_Aid_A_Case_of_the_YMCA), 5–6; Muukkonen, *Ecumenism of the Laity*, 60–62, 83, 85, 173, 236, 369.

12 Muukkonen, "Take a Boy and Raise Him a Man".

13 Muukkonen, *Ecumenism of the Laity*, 62–63, 67–72, 74–76, 128, 217–222.

Together with age, gender, class, and racial affiliation, the YMCA expanded its activities to promote Christian unity. Instead of focusing only on Protestants, the YMCA began to promote the unity of all Christians, even the unity of all of humanity and to consider itself a part of the ecumenical international youth movement.

In addition to the YMCA in Britain, Germany, and France, the movement also developed in the Netherlands, Belgium, the United States, Switzerland, and Australia. Very early on these branches in the different countries began to establish mutual contacts.<sup>14</sup> At the First World Conference of the YMCA, which was held before the Paris World Exposition in 1855, 99 YMCA delegates from Europe and the United States gathered to discuss merging into a single federation in order to improve cooperation among the individual societies. This was the beginning of the World's Alliance of YMCA. The conference adopted the "Paris Basis," a joint mission for all the then and future national YMCA organizations. Its motto was taken from the Bible, "That they all may be one" (John 17:21). The "Paris Basis" became an expression of the ideology of the YMCA and defined the movement's mission and identity. It had three parts, which showed the movement's important aspects. The Preamble (I) secured local independence in the newly-formed alliance. The basic principles (II) defined its ideology, identity, and mission. Finally, some additional practical proposals (III) were put forward, the most important of which was prohibiting any interference in controversial political issues. Its ideology was based on the central role of Christ in the movement "according to the Holy Scriptures." Instruments of the YMCA missions were traditional evangelical methods (preaching the gospel, biblical clubs, prayer meetings, weekly schools, etc.) and social services (lectures and training, reading rooms, etc.). The methodology differed from country to country and city to city. Local associations were entitled to organize work according to their needs.<sup>15</sup> The independence of local associations was strictly upheld in the YMCA, perhaps more so than any other of their principles. In practice, the affiliates acted as independent associations in their relations with their na-

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14 *Ibid*, 81-83.

15 *Ibid*, 17-18, 20, 85-7, 101.

tional associations, and the national alliances were independent of the World Alliance in their activity and organization.<sup>16</sup>

The YMCA leadership was based on the laity. Although there were also theologians in significant positions, basically there was no difference between the clergy and the laity. Insisting on the leadership of the laity required training professional secretaries and volunteers. The professionalization of the movement and leadership training first began in the United States in the 1880s and later spread to Europe, Asia, and Latin America. Although the number of professional secretaries grew, the movement was constructed on a voluntary basis. The training of movement leaders greatly influenced the synchronization of their work. The models came primarily from the United States. Even though the YMCA was a European invention, the most impressive development took place in the United States, both in terms of propagating the movements and developing new work models.<sup>17</sup> Initially, the YMCA used existing models of philanthropy and renewal in its work. Its original organization was constantly changing and perfecting itself in keeping with the needs and if a model proved to be efficient, it was spread through the international YMCA network.

Originally, the World Alliance of YMCAs was a loose network of local associations. Its organization began to change when the Geneva International Committee was elected in 1878 as a permanent Central International Committee (CIC) with the participation of members from each movement, later known as the World Committee. At the same time, the headquarters was established in Geneva, and the first world secretary became Charles Clément Fermaud. The structure of the movement developed slowly. Because of the fear of centralization, the CIC did not get enough resources to gain effective leadership. This led to the creation of the CIC's annual plenary system. In 1891, they adopted the first constitution that legitimized the existing practice. Other significant changes in the organization occurred when in 1926 four special commissions were formed within the Executive Committee.<sup>18</sup>

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16 *Ibid*, 280; Muukkonen, "Take a Boy and Raise Him a Man."

17 Muukkonen, *Ecumenism of the Laity*, 264, 277.

18 *Ibid*, 237-242, 246.

Initially, YMCA meetings were held in rented premises. In the late 1840s, YMCA officials came to the conclusion that permanent homes were necessary for young men to be separated from temptation and develop masculine abilities. The first building was purchased in 1854 and a "Home for Young Men" was opened, which offered YMCA members a place for daily conducting of religious activities, making contacts, socializing, and intellectual development. Reading rooms and libraries began to spring up. The London YMCA opened its premises not only to its members but also to other interested young people.<sup>19</sup> Both members and non-members paid an annual fee for using the premises. Major attention was paid to the selection of magazines and books in the reading rooms. Religious literature dominated, while novels were generally banned since sinful topics were considered incompatible with the acquisition of knowledge and efforts of a Christian spirit. However, many YMCA members and officials soon began to claim that additional forms of knowledge were necessary for the development of young Christians. They began to organize educational lectures, debate clubs, classes in English history, languages, geometry, bookkeeping, and so on. For those people who did not have enough time for reading, the lectures promoted the development of mental culture, spiritual and intellectual development, civic duty, diligence, and self-control. Many speakers argued that a broad liberal education was indispensable for individual salvation and that the development of inner qualities through a program of intellectual development provided man's resources for everyday struggle.<sup>20</sup> After a series of debates, the YMCA gradually allowed the introduction of novels and playing chess, but despite increasingly broader demands, the British YMCA officials blocked any attempts to include physical recreational activities in their association. At the World Conference in 1858, "amusement" was finally allowed in the YMCA. This was in line with the contemporary cultural trends, which emphasized masculinity in religion and the popular psychological arguments of that time, which advocated that physical training and muscle building could shape one's mental and spiritual virtues. The Fourth YMCA World Conference, held in Germany

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19 Spurr, *op. cit.*, 547-576.

20 *Ibid.*

in 1865 confirmed the importance of developing the body, mind, and spirit of the entire individual. Nevertheless, novelties related to physical activity in the YMCA first occurred in the United States.<sup>21</sup> Since 1870, some of the YMCAs in the major European centers began giving serious thought to introducing physical and recreational activities that had proven to be so successful in the United States. Physical education in the United States was legitimized in religious arguments based on the Social Gospel.<sup>22</sup> This led to a change in the nature of the discourse in British YMCA circles with regard to physical recreation, sports and secular programs in general. Sports became an important way of attracting young members and strengthening male bonding. The late 1870s and 1880s saw an explosion of YMCA growth, as associations began to introduce gyms and fitness centers and encouraged the establishment of athletic clubs. The definition of “dangerous entertainment” within the YMCA circle narrowed down from then on to cue sports, music halls, smoking, betting, and playing cards, or other activities that were viewed as corruptive.<sup>23</sup>

A new concept of physical activity, in other words, sports, was directly related to the development of the *Muscular Christianity* movement.<sup>24</sup>

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21 *Ibid.*

22 Since the 1980s in the United States, there has been a movement of evangelical Christians, which was part of the Great Awakening and was named Social Gospel. The movement endeavored to provide answers from the Christian point of view to social problems of the times.

23 Spurr, *op. cit.*, 547–576.

24 “Muscular Christianity” is a philosophical movement that emerged in England in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, characterized by the belief in patriotic duty, masculinity, the moral and physical beauty of athletics, teamwork, discipline, and self-sacrifice and “the expulsion of everything feminized, non-English and too intellectual.” The origin links to the New Testament. Early Church praised health and masculinity but was more concerned about achieving salvation and the preaching that men could achieve salvation without being healthy and masculine. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Protestant priests in England and America concluded that men could not be truly Christian if they were not muscular Christians. The phrase “Muscular Christianity” most likely first appeared in 1857 to mark the movement of the Victorian era that advocated the method of building characters among students in English public schools. It is most commonly associated with English writers Thomas Hughes, Charles Kingsley, and Ralph Connor. They developed a genre of adventurous novels filled with high principles and masculine Christian heroes. Hughes and Kingsley were not only novelists but also social critics. In their view, asceticism and feminism seriously weakened the Anglican Church. In order

It originated in Britain in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century (“appropriate for England’s imperial status” at that time), and expanded into the United States, even though physical education had its foundations in the German and Swedish gymnastics system of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. In addition to religious motivation, the Victorian obsession with health was also important for the evolution and promotion of “Muscular Christianity.” Physical education was connected primarily to the urban middle class and its need to protect its own way of life.<sup>25</sup>

In 1869, Robert McBurney, secretary-general of the YMCA in New York, developed a *Four-Fold Plan*, which saw man as a physical, educational, social, and religious entity. Luther H. Gulick (1865–1918), was instrumental in promoting “Muscular Christianity.” Together with his student, James Naismith, he invented basketball and served as a physical education instructor at the YMCA training school in Springfield, Massachusetts. Gulick created the familiar triangular YMCA logo, inscribed with the words “body,” “mind,” and “spirit.”<sup>26</sup> The Red Triangle appeared in the United States in 1891 and became the most famous symbol of the YMCA around the world. There are hundreds of modifications of the Red Triangle as different sectors developed their own logos to symbolize their relationship with the YMCA and their spe-

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for this church to be a suitable servant of British imperialism, Hughes and Kingsley tried to make the equipment robust and masculine. Their ideas did not succeed immediately in the United States due to the Protestant opposition to sports and the popularity of female iconography within the main Protestant churches. The opposition to “Muscular Christianity” in the United States never disappeared altogether but weakened after the Civil War. Social justice movement leaders and politicians such as Theodore Roosevelt considered factors such as urbanization, office work, and non-Protestant immigration, a threatening not only to health and masculinity but also to the privileged social status of White Protestants. “Muscular Christianity” was relevant until the 1920s when charges of instigating militarism began to be heard. There is extensive literature on this movement: Putney, *Muscular Christianity*; Putney, “Muscular Christianity, the encyclopedia of informal education”; Kimmel, Aronson, *Men and Masculinities*, 557–558; Geoffrey D. Spurr, “The London YMCA: A Haven of Masculine Self-Improvement and Socialization for the Late-Victorian and Edwardian Clerk”, *Canadian Journal of History*, vol. 37, no. 2 (August 2002), 275–301; Xing, “Social gospel, social economics, and the YMCA”, 110–111; Wolfgang Šmale, *Istorija muškosti u Evropi: (1450–2000)* [Wolfgang Schmale, *History of Masculinity in Europe: (1450–2000)*], (Beograd: Clío, 2011), 244.

25 Muukkonen, “Take a Boy and Raise Him a Man.”

26 Watson, Weir, Friend, “The Development of Muscular Christianity”.



cific activities. The YMCA also had a World's Alliance of YMCA badge as its symbol, which was adopted at the international YMCA World Conference in 1881 and emphasized the idea of the Worldwide Christian Association. It displays a ring with names of five parts of the world and small monograms representing the names of the associations in different languages, surrounding the Greek symbol for the name of Christ, covered with an image of the open Bible. As of World War One, the red triangle widely replaced the badge.<sup>27</sup>

Although work with boys in the YMCA started back in the mid-1840s, it was intensified in the early eighties in connection with the need for a general revitalization of the work of the movement. The idea of working with boys was to develop a personal faith and a missionary attitude in life. Conferences, conventions, and camps for boys started being organized. In Britain, the leaders of the National Council of England took an active part in launching their own model of work with boys: boy scouts. William Alexander Smith founded the Boys' Brigade in Glasgow in 1883, which further strengthened the synthesis of sports and Christianity during the Victorian era as a means of building a Christian male character. Smith identified the use of outdoor activities in character building, stimulated by the method of the work of boy scouts. Although the scout movement was formed as an independent movement in Britain in 1897, he had close contacts with the YMCA but, unlike the Boys' Brigade, it evolved into a predominantly secular organization. In many countries, the YMCA began to form scout groups and national scout associations. Globally, YMCA international scout camps and meetings of scout leaders were organized. The first experimental camp was held in 1907. Before long, one of the largest scouting organizations, the Boy Scouts of America, was founded in the United States in 1910.<sup>28</sup>

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, work with boys was established as a permanent part of the work of the YMCA. A major boost was the interest of the public for young people. New studies on adolescence in psychology emerged. In education, the emphasis turned to self-expression. The first world conference of the YMCA workers with boys was held in Oxford, Eng-

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27 Muukkonen, *Ecumenism of the Laity*, 266–268; Muukkonen, “Take a Boy and Raise Him a Man”.

28 Watson, Weir, Friend, “The Development of Muscular Christianity”.

land, in 1914. At this conference, it was agreed that working with boys should be an integral part of every association. The work continued until the global repression of the 1930s and the Second World War.<sup>29</sup>

With the growth of urbanization and the expansion of middle-class and education, the YMCA in the United States, and later in other continents too, centered its work in colleges and universities, because the elite students of all nations represented “strategic points” in the evangelization of the world since from their ranks came future national leaders.<sup>30</sup> Dr. John Mott, a US Methodist professor, was instrumental in this work with students. From 1890, Mott was secretary of the Intercollegiate YMCA of the United



*Dr. John Mott*

States and Canada and Chair of the Executive Board of the Student Volunteer Missionary Union. He and other student Christian leaders participated in the founding of the World's Student Christian Federation (WSCF) in 1895. Its first secretary-general was Tissington Tatlow. In the following half-century, Mott continued to conduct the highest executive roles through the YMCA and related ecumenical organizations. He was the founder of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America; secretary-general of the International Committee of the YMCA and the National Council of the YMCA of the United States; chair of the World Committee of the YMCA, the International Missionary Council; honorary president and one of the first active presidents of the World Council of Churches, and so on. In 1910, Mott chaired the International Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, which is generally regarded as a crucial event in the process of the birth of the modern ecumenical movement.<sup>31</sup>

Girls and young women were not a YMCA target group, even though they were present in the movement from the very beginning. A parallel organization, the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) was founded in 1866. The first national YWCA conference was held in 1871, and in 1873

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29 Muukkonen, “Take a Boy and Raise Him a Man.”

30 Hodges, *op. cit.*

31 Dr. John P Mott (1865–1955) received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1946. Bjelajac, *op. cit.*, 309–316; Hodges, *op. cit.*; Muukkonen, *Ecumenism of the Laity*, 310–11.

the International YWCA Commission was established. In the same year, the first YWCA campus was organized. Although the YMCA accepted women as members, the organization never focused on the special problems of young women in the same way that they focused on those of boys and young men. Despite the fact that the YMCA favored various organizations for both men and women, subsequently, the women's membership became a significant factor in the YMCA.<sup>32</sup> The main policy in the US and Europe was that mixed associations were not in line with the idea of the YMCA as a male organization. On the other hand, the YMCA had always emphasized the right of local associations to define their own membership policy. In Europe, mixed associations and mixed national movements were first launched in the Nordic countries. The number of mixed associations grew at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the World Health Organization initiated the problem of mixed associations in 1908 at the YMCA Geneva Plenum.

Since 1900, the North American YMCA, in cooperation with the World Alliance, established centers for work with emigrants from European ports, as millions of people went to the United States.

In the history of the YMCA, there was another aspect that is mentioned shyly and incidentally. Since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, they were linked to allegations and occasional scandals regarding the spread of homosexuality in their ranks, mainly in the United States. This prompted the YMCA leaders to introduce strict rules against homosexuality.<sup>33</sup>

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32 Muukkonen, *Ecumenism of the Laity*, 310–11.

33 John Donald Gustav-Wrathall, *Take the Young Stranger by the Hand: Same-Sex Relations and the YMCA* (Chicago [u.a.]: Univ. of Chicago, 1998). American disco group *Village People* issued in 1978 a song “Y.M.C.A.” on its third studio album *Cruisin*. The song has become popular and has performed on many sports events in the US and Europe. Some of the scenes from the official music video featured the exterior of the McBurney Branch YMCA in New York City. Upon its release, the YMCA threatened to sue the band for unauthorized use of the name. Later they agreed outside the court and expressed their pride over the song that welcomed their organization. In the gay culture from which the Village People stemmed, the song understood as a celebration of the YMCA's image as a sexual paradise for the gay population. Leading band singer and songwriter Victor Willis denied that the song composed for the people of homosexual orientation. Mark Mancini, “How Did the Real YMCA React to the Disco Song About It?” *Mentalfloss.com*. February 20, 2015; Caryn E. Neumann, “YMCA”, *An Encyclopedia of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Culture*, <http://www.gil->

## **Expansion of the Movement into Orthodox, Catholic, and Non-Christian Territories**

Over time, the YMCA expanded into Eastern Orthodox, Catholic, and non-Christian territories. The first YMCA in the Third World came from religious clubs of Westerners who lived in those countries. The British and the French, in particular (but also the Dutch), expanded their movement in their colonies. Colonialism, in general, helped the YMCA expand into new territories. The relationship between missions<sup>34</sup> and colonialism had an impact on mission objectives by incorporating the Western way of life into missionary tasks. The American missionary movement went hand in hand with US imperialism. The expansion of American democracy and Christian missions was, to a large extent, the same thing for many leading missionaries and presi-

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btqarchive.com/ssh/ymca\_S.pdf; Andy Towle, "Village People Cop: Y.M.C.A. Not about Gay Cruising", August 3, 2007, <http://www.towleroad.com/2007/08/village-people/>; Benjamin Boles, "Gay Village People Co-Founder Says, 'YMCA' Not A Gay Song", *The Huffington Post*, February 7, 2014, [https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2014/07/02/the-village-people-ymca\\_n\\_5543849.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2014/07/02/the-village-people-ymca_n_5543849.html); Abbey White, "The Real Story of the YMCA that Inspired the Village People's Gay Anthem", *Arts & Entertainment*, DEC 20, 2018, [http://gothamist.com/2018/12/20/real\\_ymca\\_village\\_people.php](http://gothamist.com/2018/12/20/real_ymca_village_people.php)

- 34 The Christian mission was an organized effort to expand Christianity. The missions included sending individuals and groups, missionaries, for the purpose of proselytizing. This involved evangelization (preaching a set of beliefs for the purpose of conversion) and humanitarian work, especially among the poor. There are several different types of missionary trips: short-term, long-term, relational, and those aimed at helping people in need. Missionaries have the authority to preach Christian faith and carry out humanitarian work to improve economic development, literacy, education, health care and the opening of an orphanage. Christian doctrines (such as the Doctrine of Love) allow the provision of help without the need for religious conversion. Protestant churches began to send missionaries in increasing numbers in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Missionaries were increasingly focusing on education, medical assistance and long-term modernization of the local population in order to introduce European middle-class values. They founded schools and medical clinics. Many were trained as doctors or organized special courses in the field of public health and tropical medicine. The rise of nationalism in the Third World prompted critics to claim that missionaries imposed the Western way of life and ignored autochthonous cultures. The Boxer Rebellion in China in 1898 included a major attack on Christian missions. The Great Depression of the 1930s was a major blow to funding the activities of missions. Legation. Christianity, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Accessed: 26. 07. 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/missions-Christianity>

dents. In this process, the role and influence of John R. Mott in the missionary and ecumenical movement was noteworthy.<sup>35</sup>

Beginning with the last decade of the nineteenth century, Christian reformers, especially the North American YMCAs and related organizations, set themselves the task of educating the leaders of nations around the world about a number of ideas called the “Christian Citizenship” through educational, social and religious programs, as well as training in sports. Motivated by the ideas of God’s universal grace, liberal human ideals, and fear of moral crisis, they sought to “not only evangelize the world in one generation” (J. Mott), through the YMCA, YWCA, the Student Volunteer Movement, and the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF), but to teach citizens and promote the ideals of justice, equality and democracy in China, Japan, India and beyond, in a project designed to “save the world,” politically and spiritually. YMCA missionaries imagined non-Christians around the world as a huge mass of souls to be saved. They also launched the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions in 1866. In the next few decades, the movement continued to grow, and hundreds of volunteers went off as missionaries to more than fifty countries.<sup>36</sup> The goal of the Student Volunteer Movement, as part of the YMCA, was to work on training local leaders in order for them to take over the new national organizations as soon as possible. The YMCA strategy in each country it entered was the construction of autochthonous management. The YMCA expected that the leaders of the organizations abroad would adopt the Christian values they had advocated. The YMCA International Committee advocated the idea of tolerance, apoliticality, intercultural, inter-religious and multinational cooperation. They claimed that they wanted to help people in the world “for their personal intellectual and spiritual advancement, without any obligation,” by building connections to bridge the division into castes, classes, races, religions, and nations. The YMCA hoped that missionaries who preached tolerance would ease conflicts abroad so that its activists could continue their Christian missions in a stable environment.<sup>37</sup>

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35 Muukkonen, *Ecumenism of the Laity*, 130–131.

36 Hodges, *op. cit.*

37 Schwinn, *The Malleable Man*.

Initially, YMCA activity in India and China had a strictly Protestant approach, but eventually, they concentrated on opening educational, recreational and inter-confessional programs. During the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the YMCA in India began developing a rural program to help small farmers by creating co-operatives and credit societies. Later, they launched a pilot project in education in China.<sup>38</sup>

The YMCA used education, and within that framework, particularly teaching English and sports as a way to modernize discourse through work with immigrants in the United States, but also in its missions. By teaching English, exercising religious and educational influence, structuring leisure time, they tried to shape the population around the world according to an imaginary "ideal model." Pointing to the problematic aspects of the modernization mission, Australian historian Ian Tyrrell emphasized the significance of the imperial intervention of Protestant movements from the United States and the YMCA in the establishment of a "moral element of the American empire" into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>39</sup>

The YMCA's activities in the Middle East date back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, when students at private American and missionary schools created branches in colleges as spaces where young men could meet to read and discuss matters relating to Christianity. In the Ottoman Empire, some missionaries and Christian leaders founded YMCA groups in Constantinople and other places from 1870. The number of members was always small. Work was intensified by American staff on the eve of World War One. In November 1913, the Constantinople YMCA was officially established and received recognition from the International Committee in New York in January 1914.<sup>40</sup> Shortly after the end of the First World War, the YMCA founded a small branch in Izmir (Smyrna), whose population at that time was Chris-

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38 Jun Xing, *Baptized in the Fire of Revolution. The American Social Gospel and the YMCA in China: 1919–1937*, (Cranbury, N.J.: Associated University Presses, 1996); Jon Thares Davidann, *A World of Crisis and Progress: The American YMCA in Japan, 1890–1930*, (Cranbury, N.J.: Associated University Presses, 1998).

39 Ian Tyrrell, *Reforming the World. The Creation of America's Moral Empire*, (Princeton University Press, 2010).

40 Steuer, *Pursuit of an "Unparalleled Opportunity."*

tian and Greek.<sup>41</sup> The new Turkish YMCA model was created during the major changes in the country at the beginning of the 1920s. The revolution led to many YMCA leaders fleeing the country, Turkey became a strong nationalist and secular state. Together with other religious organizations, the YMCA was forced to limit its activities to purely social services or educational activities. Religious propaganda, especially Christian, was forbidden. The government exercised control over the program, and permits were needed for any special gatherings. An important factor was that the foreign secretaries were Americans and the funds came mostly from the United States. The YMCA limited its work to Istanbul and focused on physical education, without any Christian emphasis.<sup>42</sup>

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the YMCA had entered the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic areas. The YMCA from Mexico changed its rules in 1907, becoming the “first association to include the Roman Catholic Church among those that meet the definition of evangelical churches.” The trend was to include Orthodox and Roman Catholics into full-fledged members. Although relations with Orthodox churches were mostly developed in mutual understanding, relations with the Roman Catholic Church were marked by a negative attitude from the Vatican, which remained in place until the Second Vatican Council. In November 1920, the Holy See sent a letter to its local bodies warning about dangerous organizations, especially the YMCA. Although the Vatican did not see any harm in the social and physical education of the YMCA, it attacked it as a Protestant organization. Such an attitude limited the possibilities of the YMCA in countries where Catholicism was the dominant religion.<sup>43</sup> In the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, the biggest Catholic state before the First World War, the YMCA as a Protestant organization did not have much success except in the Hungarian part where they had operated as a Protestant movement since 1883.<sup>44</sup>

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41 Samuel David Lenser, *Between the Great Idea and Kemalism: The YMCA at Izmir in the 1920s*, (Boise State University Graduate College, 2010).

42 Muukkonen, *Ecumenism of the Laity*, 195-198,

43 *Ibid*, 139, 143, 228, 260, 299-300, 320-322.

44 Steuer, *Pursuit of an “Unparalleled Opportunity”*.

Orthodox churches in the Balkans and the wider region were interested in building bridges toward other Christians. On the other hand, there were negative factors that obstructed the desire for cooperation with Protestants and Western Christianity in general. When the YMCA, together with its student and women's branch entered Eastern Orthodox soil, they were the first ecumenical organizations to offer contacts with Orthodox priests and laypersons.



*Paul B. Anderson*

In addition, a part of the Orthodox hierarchy had realized that the YMCA could be a useful means for reaching out to young people on the local level.<sup>45</sup> Despite the basic positive attitude toward cooperation, these organizations had to gain the trust of the Orthodox Church leaders. This building of trust and offering of services and networks was initially the main policy of the YMCA's work among the Orthodox youth. The personal relations between YMCA leaders John R. Mott and Paul B. Anderson and the Orthodox hierarchy played an important role in this trust-building process. The work of the YMCA among the Orthodox youth began in Madras, India, in 1890. In Russia, the first Orthodox YMCA was founded in St. Petersburg in 1900 (Маяк - *Miyak* - Светионик - *The Light House*). The YMCA had been present in Greece since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A section was established in Athens in 1892, but before 1914 its work was interrupted, partly due to the hostility of the Greek Orthodox Church. At the invitation of the War Council of Eleftherios Venizelos in 1918, the organization was re-established in Thessaloniki, where twenty-five Americans arrived to form staff to help soldiers. "Homes" were established for soldiers and sailors in which materials for reading, entertainment, recreational activities, and meals were provided. Schools for raising the level of literacy of poor children and adults were also opened. After 1920, the Greek YMCA entered a new period of organization with associations formed in Athens and Thessaloniki.<sup>46</sup>

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45 Muukkonen, *Ecumenism of the Laity*, 315-320.

46 Louis P. Cassimatis, *American Influence in Greece, 1917-1929*, (Kent State University Press, 1988), 127-128.



The First World War seriously impeded the work of the YMCA at the local level because its leaders were recruited into the army, its buildings were sequestered for military purposes, and their resources were reduced. During the First World War, the YMCA played a significant role in providing recreational, religious and medical services to soldiers and prisoners of war. YMCA secretaries were present in training camps, on the battlefield, and in military camps on all continents. The assistant of the Prisoners Aid of the YMCA headed projects in Austria-Hungary, France, Belgium, Italy, Russia, Serbia, Greece, and Bulgaria. This work was often closely related to the activities of the Red Cross. Work for prisoners of war was a natural continuity of work with the armed forces. The First World War was also a key moment in which the international leadership and character of the YMCA gave way to increasingly important national federations.<sup>47</sup>

After the First World War, the YMCA launched an ambitious program of cultural and social modernization of the new Czechoslovak state since its inception in 1918. In the first phase, this program was based mostly on North American and Western European “secretaries” who worked on training local leaders who soon took over the management of the movement. John R. Mott paid special attention to Czechoslovakia because he could rely on a national political elite that was transparent to the West, especially those officials who were close to President Masaryk.<sup>48</sup>

The YMCA also operated in Poland between the two world wars. As for physical education and sports, activities developed in a similar way as in Czechoslovakia, and there was cooperation between the two countries and in some other YMCA activities. The two associations were established and began working together in the 1920s, exchanging printed materials or organizing friendly matches. Both national associations began to build their own

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47 Muukkonen, *Ecumenism of the Laity*, 134.

48 Ondřej Matějka, “Erziehung zur ‘Weltbürgerlichkeit’: Der Einfluss des YMCA auf die tschechoslowakische Jugend der Zwischenkriegszeit,” *Jugend in der Tschechoslowakei. Konzepte und Lebenswelten (1918–1989)*, ed. Christiane Brenner et al., (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016), 153–79; Michel Christian, Sandrine Kott, Ondřej Matejka, “International Organizations in the Cold War: The Circulation of Experts Beyond the East-West Divide,” *Acta Universitatis Carolinae Studia Territorialia*, vol. 17, 35–60, DOI 10.14712/23363231.2017.17

premises equipped with modern sports facilities, and their members regularly participated in matches. In both countries, the YMCA started cooperation with the military after the war. They started building military homes, organizing parties for soldiers, and offering various food products at reduced prices. However, the YMCA quickly ceased to cooperate with the army in Czechoslovakia and Poland and turned to the civilian population. In Poland, local groups faced the problem of not owning their premises for their activities and having to share space with others. In 1926 the Polish YMCA founded its first office in Krakow and following that also in Warsaw in 1932. Smaller local associations in Poland did not have their own premises and their activity was conducted mostly in renter space. Accordingly, their physical education and sports activities were not as significant as in Czechoslovak associations, which, for the most part, had their own premises. The reason was probably due to the fact that the YMCA had a higher membership fee in Poland because the local associations offered their members a wider choice of other activities without placing special emphasis on physical education or sports, which was often the case in Czechoslovakia. In these two countries, the YMCA introduced sports that had been unknown hitherto. Its officials in charge of physical education became involved in promoting basketball and volleyball, as well as other "American sports" such as baseball. Team sports became very popular in both countries. But, they also went in for other sports, such as canoeing and kayaking, boxing, equestrian sports, swimming, table tennis, soccer, water polo, tennis, ice skating and ice hockey, cycling and gymnastics, even rugby and jiu-jitsu in Prague. YMCA summer camps were very popular, where pupils and students spent part of their summer holidays under the supervision of experienced physical education coaches. The first camp - Sázava was founded by the Czechoslovak YMCA in 1921, and was led by the local association in Prague. Skiing was much more popular among the Polish members. The US secretaries worked in both countries during the entire interim period, and both national YMCAs became completely independent.<sup>49</sup>

The Hungarian YMCA was founded in Budapest on October 31, 1883, under the name of the Christian Youth Association (*Keresztyén Ifjak Egyesülete*-

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49 Tlustý, "A Brief Comparison", 29-45.

KIE), at the initiative of YMCA Secretary Charles Fermaud. One of the founders and first national secretaries was Aladár Szabó. In 1880 he contacted the Scottish Mission and, together with other theologians and priests, began to organize Sunday schools. From the very beginning, the Calvinist and Lutheran churches participated in the work of the KIE. They organized Bible studies and lectures. In the beginning, most of the members were university students, who were soon joined by young craftsmen and traders. The first group of Hungarian scouts was established within the Budapest KIE. Among the leaders was Károly/Charles Dobos.<sup>50</sup> In May 1950, the organization was closed.<sup>51</sup>

Romania, in addition to the Orthodox Church, also had a large number of Protestants and Catholics in the country. The work of the YMCA began during the First World War when the YMCA representatives came into contact with Romanian soldiers. After the war, the Romanian Government invited the YMCA to continue its work. US secretaries launched a program for boys in Bucharest and were given land to open camps. By 1924, there were about 600 boys in these camps. At that time, three US secretaries were active in Romania: Frank E. Stevens, secretary-general and director of physical education, James W. Brown, director of work with boys, and William H. Morgan, student secretary. The programs included Bible study groups, playgrounds, and English classes. The student work followed the typical YMCA model. Initially, students were attracted by public lecturers delivered by Robert P. Wilder. Then followed smaller group meetings attended by interested students. The leaders attended conferences in Europe. Student work also included some limited cooperation between Romanian and Hungarian students, despite the traditional hostility between these groups. The Romanian YMCA was officially founded in 1927 and maintained contacts with the Min-

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50 Dobos Károly (1902–2004), first studied theology in Budapest and later continued in the United States from 1923 to 1927. He actively joined the YMCA and became a traveling secretary.

51 *YMCA Hungary. History of the KIE (YMCA Hungary)*, Accessed: August 15, 2018, <http://www.ymca.int/member/ymca-in-europe/ymca-hungary/>; George Alexander Kish, *The Origins of the Baptist Movement among the Hungarians. A History of the Baptists in the Kingdom of Hungary from 1846 to 1893*, Vrije Universiteit, 270–271, Accessed: Aug. 15, 2018. <https://research.vu.nl/ws/portafiles/portal/42197387/complete+disser-tation.pdf>

istry of Public Training. During the 1920s this project relied on US funds. The transition to self-support was hampered when the association in Bucharest lost the majority of its funds when its bank became insolvent. However, by the mid-1930s, the secretaries reported that the movement was able to finance itself. The Orthodox clergy was not opposed to the YMCA, as was the case in Bulgaria, but it did not provide the level of support as for the YMCA in Greece. The US secretary reported in 1924 that he was trying to develop relations with the Orthodox clergy but that he was continuing to face suspicion that he was conducting Protestant propaganda. He tried to establish connections with the less conservative elements of the clergy.<sup>52</sup>

As an Orthodox country, Bulgaria was an important territory for a mission, both for the YMCA World Alliance and also for the International Committee of the US YMCA. Four thousand Bulgarian Protestants (less than one percent of the population) constituted the nucleus of the Association. Despite their small numbers, the American Protestant churches were very active, particularly in the education system. In 1899, the first Evangelical Church (Congregationalists) set up the *Kotva (Anchor)* youth association in Sofia. This organization would later become the YMCA. For three years it existed only as an organization for men, but in 1902 they also accepted women members. The membership included Protestants, Orthodox, and Roman Catholics. The YMCA Federation joined the World Alliance of YMCAs in 1910. By 1914 there were 27 associations in Bulgaria, and most of them were connected to the Protestant churches.<sup>53</sup> During the First World War, the YMCA International Committee was active among the prisoners of war and Bulgarian soldiers. A special building was purchased in 1923 and a secretary from the United States was invited as an advisor (P. MacGregor Allen). Establishing the YMCA in Bulgaria led to stronger resistance by the local Orthodox representatives than had been the case in Greece. The reason for this was in part due to the criticism of the work of the YMCA by the representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia (ROCOR). The defense against this criticism

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52 Matthew Lee Miller, *The American YMCA and Russian Culture: The Preservation and Expansion of Orthodox Christianity, 1900–1940*, (Lexington Books, 2012), 229.

53 Steuer, *Pursuit of an "Unparalleled Opportunity"*.

was led by Stefan, the Metropolitan of Sofia, and Professor Stefan Tsankov<sup>54</sup> from the Orthodox Theological Seminary. The leaders of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church were divided into the supporters and opponents of the YMCA. In 1924 the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church issued an official statement against the YMCA saying that neither the goals nor the ideals of the YMCA were in accordance with those of the church. It was specifically against the work of the Biblical study groups as a vehicle for spreading “Protestantism.” The YMCA was declared “insecure” for members of the church. Despite the growing controversies that went on through 1929, a seaside camp was operating in Bulgaria. Also, a program for farmers and the development of agriculture was launched in cooperation with the Danish YMCA.<sup>55</sup>

Dr. Mott continued to make closer contacts with the Eastern Orthodox churches in 1924 when he embarked on a trip to the Mediterranean and held a series of conferences with leading church officials. He secured the presence of the Thessaloniki Metropolitan at the YMCA conferences in southern Austria in the summer of 1924. Later he initiated the construction of a modern YMCA building in Thessaloniki. Dr. Mott also visited the Holy Mt. Athos, where he was the guest of Meletius, the former Patriarch of Constantinople. He also met with the Metropolitan Bishop of Athens, the Patriarchs of Alexandria, Jerusalem, and others.<sup>56</sup>

The YMCA's work with young people, students, especially among Russian emigrants, led to the formation of the St. Sergius Orthodox Theological Institute in Paris in the early twenties.<sup>57</sup> However, the activity of the YMCA in Orthodox countries and among the Russian emigration after the First World

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54 Stefan Tsankov (1881–1965), graduated theology at the Orthodox Theological Faculty in Chernovtsy (1905) and law at the University of Zurich (1918). He was a full professor of canon law at the Faculty of Theology at the University of Sofia, dean, and rector of the University and a member of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

55 University of Minnesota: Records of YMCA international work in Bulgaria, 1922–1970 (bulk 1920s–1930s) National Board of the Young Men's Christian Associations International Division; Miller, *The American YMCA and Russian Culture*, 228.

56 Basil Mathews, *John R. Mott World Citizen* (New York and London: Harper & Brothers, 1934), 259–260.

57 The YMCA became the largest publisher of Orthodox theological and spiritual literature between the wars. The YMCA published the journal of the St. Sergius Orthodox Theological Institute in Paris and Nikolai Berdyaev's spiritual and philosophical journal, *Put. Bryn*

War encountered mixed reactions of the local believers and church officials. The principle of “interconfessionalism” (believing in Christ as the only factor of communion) and the use of Protestant methods provoked accusations of proselytism. Criticism against the YMCA developed in the most conservative elements of the Russian Orthodox leadership among the emigration. Individuals openly opposed the work of the YMCA as a subversive organization whose aim was to destroy them; others accepted help, leaving the suspicion unspoken. The most severe accusation was that the YMCA was a Masonic or Jewish plot, a demonic movement or a hypocritical Protestant enlightenment program.<sup>58</sup> The Russian Orthodox bishops of the Sremski Karlovci Synod actively headed an opposition campaign against the YMCA, especially Bishop Seraphim from the ROCOR, who resided in Sofia.<sup>59</sup> The Synod of the ROCOR in Sremski Karlovci and the Synod of the Bulgarian Church banned their youth from participating in YMCA activities in 1926.<sup>60</sup> The controversies over the work of the YMCA intensified, both in Romania and the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, where accusations were spreading against the alleged Masonic organization and Protestant society, and so individuals in the Serbian Orthodox Church also began expressing doubts about the motives of its operations.<sup>61</sup>

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Geffert, *Eastern Orthodox and Anglicans. Diplomacy, Theology, and the Politics of Interwar Ecumenism* (University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, 2010), 46–47.

- 58 M. L. Miller, “Paul B. Anderson, American HSML and Russian Orthodox, 1900–1940.” *Bulletin of St. Petersburg State University*. Ser. 2. 2016. Vol. 1, 42–45. [М. Л. Миллер, „Пол Б. Андерсон, Американский ХСМЛ и русские православные, 1900–1940 гг.“ *Вестник СПбГУ*, Сер. 2, 2016, Вып. 1, 42–45.]
- 59 Miller, *The American YMCA and Russian Culture*, 228. Seraphim (Sobolev, 1881–1950), bishop of the Russian Orthodox Church, then the ROCOR, and since October 1945 bishop in the Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church.
- 60 In June 1926, the Sremski Karlovci bishops passed a resolution declaring that the YMCA and the WSCF were organizations not only hostile to the Orthodox Church but also controlled by Freemasons. Geffert, *Eastern Orthodox and Anglicans*, 114–115.
- 61 „Karakter Hrišćanske zajednice mladih ljudi” [“Character of the YMCA”], *Vera i život [Faith and Life]*, 4, April 1926. Priest B. Ilić published in the *Vesnik Srpske crkve* for 1930 an open attack titled „Jedna informacija povodom osnivanja H.Z.M.Lj” [“A Note on the Occasion of the Founding of the YMCA”]

## **The YMCA and the Challenges of Secularization**

During the interwar period, the YMCA opposed secularization and other movements, which were considered the main opponents of Christianity. Freed from the leadership of church leaders, the YMCA sought answers to the challenges of secularist ideologies, especially nationalism and communism. In 1931, in a report on the World Conference in Cleveland, the two movements: nationalism and communism were designated as major threats to Christianity. Nationalism was characterized as a phenomenon that sees everything from the perspective of the nation-state. The challenges posed by communism, nationalism, and fascism were also the main theme at the conference in Mysore, India, in 1937. Commission reports at the world conferences in Helsingfors (1926), Cleveland (1931), and Mysore (1937) presented the future prospects following the First World War as rather pessimistic. The YMCA leaders saw the various forms of secularism as the main threat to their work. They emphasized the threat to the two most important pillars of Christianity: family and church. The YMCA felt that it had to do something to restore the confidence of young people in the family, the church and God. However, it was emphasized that a major difficulty was the fragmentation of Christianity.<sup>62</sup>

In the years after the First World War, the YMCA maintained the idea that human development follows universal patterns at the individual and nation levels, partly determined by nature, and partly depending on a certain degree of physical, moral and social training. Although their universalism was always incomplete and slowed down on the basis of the assumption of human resemblance, the YMCA endeavored to persuade young people in the world that it is possible to cooperate in the spirit of goodwill.<sup>63</sup>

Political elites in many countries considered the YMCA as a useful means of curbing revolutionary tendencies and as an organized way to focus on young people's surplus energy. The YMCA, along with other voluntary social organizations, was the perfect tool for their needs. Negative attitudes toward the YMCA appeared first in Russia, where the communists

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62 Muukkonen, *Ecumenism of the Laity*, 140.

63 Hodges, *op. cit.*

banned this organization after the revolution. Later, in the 1930s in Austria and Germany, the Nazi party absorbed all youth movements in the 1930s, and the YMCA was abolished. After World War Two, the YMCA no longer operated in the countries of Eastern Europe, and its property was confiscated.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> University of Minnesota: Records of YMCA international work in Bulgaria, 1922-1970 (bulk 1920s-1930s) National Board of the Young Men's Christian Associations International Division; Miller, *The American YMCA and Russian Culture*, 228.





# CHAPTER I

## INITIAL OPERATION ATTEMPTS

### In The Kingdom of Serbia until 1918

Even though William Denton, a clergyman of the Church of England, established contacts with the Serbian Church in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, advocating the idea of approaching Christian churches, interest in the churches in the East grew after the formation of the Anglican and Eastern Churches Association in 1906. The Student Christian Movement (SCM) and the YMCA also showed an increasing interest in the Balkans.<sup>65</sup> Paul Ernst Georg von Nicolay (*Пауль Эрнст Георг, барон Николаи*, 1860–1919), a Lutheran, also worked on initiating the expansion of the work of the SCM in the Balkans.<sup>66</sup> He formed



*Paul Ernst Georg von Nicolay*

65 The British CSM (at the beginning of the UK and Ireland) is a British religious charity founded in 1892 to promote missions and recruit students for missionary work. Its first secretary was Tissington Tatlow. The CSM played an important role in forming the World Council of Churches and the development of ecumenism. Tissington Tatlow, *The Story of the Student Christian Movement of Great Britain and Ireland*, (London, SCM Press, 1933); Steve Bruce BA, *"The Student Christian Movement and the Inter-Varsity Fellowship: A Sociological Study of Two Student Movements"*, (Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the Department of Sociology, University of Stirling May, 1980); Steve Bruce, "The Student Christian Movement: a nineteenth century new religious movement and its vicissitudes", *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 2 (1) (1982), 67–82.

66 Baron Paul von Nicolay graduated from the University of St. Petersburg and served in the Imperial Russian Senate and the State Council. He was the first to assemble the Russian SCM in 1909, he was the author of several books on the study of the Bible, and initiated the work of the SCM in other countries, even in the Balkans. He opened his farm in Finland for vacationing students in the summer months. Considered as a great friend of Serbia and his death in 1920 was grieved among followers of the movement as the death of "one of our country's best friends." Bjelajac, „Hrišćanska zajednica studenata“, 309–316.

the local student Christian branch of this organization in Russia in 1903. In January 1911, a representative of the SCM from France visited Belgrade and announced the visit of Dr. John Mott. In February, Baron von Nicolay, representing the Alliance of the SCM from Russia, also visited Belgrade. They arranged a welcoming committee for John Mott, who held meetings at the Russian-Serbian center. In the meantime, at the invitation of the WSCF,<sup>67</sup> Aleksandar Z. Jovičić,<sup>68</sup> at that time, the inspector of the Postal and Telegraph Department of the Construction Ministry, traveled to Constantinople to attend a conference of this organization.<sup>69</sup>

John Mott was in Belgrade in April 1911, and held several lectures at the University of Belgrade, at the St. Sava School of Theology, and in the Russian-Serbian club.<sup>70</sup> The Rector of the University invited Mott, and then canceled the invitation, and then invited him again. He explained that the cancellation came not from any gesture of hostility or fear of the Protestant faith, but “out of fear of the students”. Allegedly, the students had such a strong sense

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67 The WSCF was formed at a meeting of student leaders from 10 North American and European countries in Sweden in 1895.

68 Aleksandar Z. Jovičić (1856–1933) was the son of a Belgrade priest. He studied in Vienna, Munich, and Paris, where he completed law and political studies. He went to London in 1882 as an honorary attaché in the mission of the Kingdom of Serbia. In early 1889, the governorship decided to close down the mission for financial reasons and transfer it to Paris. Jovičić remained as the chargé d'affaires in London until 1894. He then went to Vienna, Rome, and Athens, returning to Belgrade in 1901 when he was appointed as head of the administrative department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Following orders from the Serbian Government, he went back to London in 1903 as the chargé d'affaires. It was not until the end of 1906 that there was a renewal of relations between the two kingdoms, Jovičić ended his diplomatic career and returned to his home country. He retired in 1912. He was married to a Scottish woman, Alisa-Mary Rutherford and was the father of Colonel Milan Jovičić and Lena Jovičić, famous figures in Belgrade's Anglophile circles. He died in 1933. (*Srpski biografski rečnik [Serbian biographical dictionary]*, 4, (Novi Sad: Matica srpska, 2009), 678; Gašić, *op. cit.*, 65–66) A. Z. Jovičić was the president of the Society for the Protection of Animals and Plants. *Vera i život*, 6, June 1926.

69 „Izveštaj o radu Hrišćanske Zajednice Studenata Beogradskog Univerziteta od 21. aprila do 21. novembra 1911. g.” [“Report on the Work of the University of Belgrade's Christian Union of Students from April 21 to November 21, 1911”], *Glasnik Pravoslavne crkve u Kraljevini Srbiji*, 1, January 1, 1912, 12–14; 2, January 15, 1912, 26–28.

70 *Vreme*, April 8, 1924; Miller, *The American YMCA and Russian Culture*, 229–231.

of independence that they would refuse anything they felt their professors would try to impose on their views or ideas. The Serbian Social Democratic Party organized demonstrations during his lecture and there was a physical conflict among the students. Mott's associate Ruth Rouse wrote in a report that the conflict in Belgrade led to an increased interest in Mott's lectures in Bulgaria. The Social Democrats from the Kingdom of Serbia had sent letters and telegrams to students of the same orientation at the University of Sofia, but they did not join the protests.<sup>71</sup>

During Mott's stay, the Christian Community of Students (CCS) of the University of Belgrade was established on 8/21 April 1911, headed by Dr. Marko Leko.<sup>72</sup> The CCS was created as the Serbian branch of the WSCF and at their initiative. Mott set up contacts and was received by the Metropolitan of the Serbian Church.<sup>73</sup> At the founding conference, Mott and Baron von Nicolay spoke about the work of the Association in Russia, and Ruth Rouse spoke about the work of the Christian female student community. On that occasion, 70 students enrolled. The administration of the CCS of the University of Belgrade was formed and the first meeting was held on April 28<sup>th</sup>. Baron von Nicolay was also there. They continued to hold weekly meetings at which they discussed the Holy Scriptures. Lectures were held by Hieromonk Nikolaj Velimirović and Archpriest Stevan Veselinić.<sup>74</sup> The CCS rules were approved by the University Council and Rector



*Prof. Dr. Marko Leko*

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71 Mathews, *op. cit.*, 175, 176.

72 Marko T. Leko (1853–1932), chemist, rector of the Great School, academician, president of the Red Cross, president of the YMCA and the CCS, was awarded the White Eagle III Class on January 27, 1921. Archives of Yugoslavia (hereafter: AY), Ministry of Religions, 69–157–242; Snežana Bojović, „Marko Leko (1853–1932)”, *Život i delo srpskih naučnika [Life and work of Serbian scientists]*, 4, Beograd, 1998, 33–64.

73 Bjelajac, „Hrišćanska zajednica studenata”, 309–316.

74 „Izveštaj o radu Hrišćanske Zajednice Studenata Beogradskog Univerziteta od 21. aprila do 21. novembra 1911. g.” [“Report on the Work of the University of Belgrade's Christian Union of Students from April 21 to November 21, 1911”], *Glasnik Pravoslavne crkve u Kraljevini Srbiji*, 1, January 1, 1912, 12–14; 2, January 15, 1912, 26–28.

Bogdan Gavrilović<sup>75</sup> on 11/24 October 1911. Professor Čedomilj Mitrović<sup>76</sup>, associate and lecturer, spoke at a lecture at the CCS on November 21, 1911, about the need to raise and change the social and moral picture of Serbian society, which, according to him, was appalling.<sup>77</sup> Among the other associates and members were Veselin Čajkanović,<sup>78</sup> Dimitrije Ljotić,<sup>79</sup> Professor

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75 Published as an *Addendum* to the book by Dr. Marko Leko. Marko Leko, *O boljem životu sa hemijskog gledišta [About a better Life from a Chemical Perspective]*, (Beograd: HZMLJ [YMCA], 1923), 31–32. They were published once again by Bjelajac, „Hrišćanska zajednica studenata“, 309–316.

The rules of the CCS of the University of Belgrade had five members, the first being that the goal is “to group and unite all the students who strive for the same ideal of moral life, based on the teachings of the Savior - Jesus Christ,” “working to improve the entire social, and in particular the moral and spiritual life of students,” and “to theoretically study the scientific methods in this field, by the personal proper life of their members and by exercising them in the performance of good deeds, it contributes to the successful realization of Christian ideals in all branches privately public and social life.” The CCS was able to enroll “every student and teacher of the University of Belgrade, of whichever religion and nationality, who is obliged in writing to adjust their lives and work in accordance with the prominent Community objective.” The signatories were: Dragoljub Jovičić, Alek. M. Simić, Svetozar A. Nešić, Marinko A. Birčanin, Toma P. Živković, Radosav M. Jovanović, Dragomir A. Djordjević, Petar L. Jovanović, Milorad Dragić, S. L. Milenković, Djordje Arandjelović and Djordje Tadić.

76 Čedomilj Mitrović (1870–1934), a lawyer, graduated theology in Belgrade and then attended the Spiritual Academy in Moscow. He was appointed as a teacher of theology and then transferred to the Kragujevac high school. Because of a dispute with the minister of education and church work, he was dismissed from service. He went to Vienna and then to Tübingen, where he completed his studies at the Law School, and in 1898 he defended his doctoral dissertation. He was the Dean of the Faculty of Law and Rector of the University of Belgrade from 1927 to 1930.

77 „Kulturna zadaća Hrišćanske zajednice“ [“The Cultural Task of the Christian Community”], *Glasnik Pravoslavne crkve u Kraljevini Srbiji*, 5, March 1, 1912, 71–73.

78 Veselin Čajkanović (1881–1946) was a professor at the University of Belgrade and a historian of religion. He studied classical philology at High school. He continued his education in Leipzig and a Ph.D. in Munich on a government scholarship. He participated in the Balkan Wars and in World War I. He was a professor and dean of the School of Philosophy in Belgrade, a part-time teacher of the School of Theology and a member of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts.

79 In his autobiography, Dimitrije Ljotić, then law student and at one point secretary/treasurer of the CCS, spoke of this event: “At the same time, the beginning of my public work in abstinent, Guttempler societies (my late father was unhappy when he noticed my badge, ‘Son! – he criticized me gently - so you joined the Masons’. But when I told him that I had not and that this was an international order of good temple attendants, he re-

James W. Wiles<sup>80</sup> and others. The CCS supported the distribution of 40,000 Bibles to Serbian soldiers donated by the British and Foreign Bible Society.

During the war, the University of Belgrade relocated to Niš, where the activities of the CCS continued. In an article published in 1915, Tissington Tatlow said that he had received a letter from a professor of Orthodox faith, that meetings and Bible studies were continuing in Niš on Sunday afternoons, and that this was an opportunity for students of the CCS, to attest, in such difficult circumstances, to their male and female colleagues, about the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>81</sup> Dragoljub Jovičić, one of the founders of the CCS, after retreating across Albania worked as a traveling secretary of this organization among students in France but fell ill and died in Grenoble.<sup>82</sup>

According to some sources, the YMCA also started working in the Kingdom of Serbia about that same time. Educational Inspector Sreten M. Adžić and Headmaster of the Male Teacher's College in Jagodina, wrote to the Minister of Education on October 10, 1920, that there had been a YMCA at the school since before the wars, in his opinion since 1910. In that school, as well as in the gymnasium there, the society was founded by students of the Belgrade University immediately after the founding of it at the University, and with the knowledge and approval of the school administration. Before the war, more than half of the association members were "all those who had not been poisoned by socialism and ungodliness and here in Jagodina, in the hometown of Svetozar Marković (a famous Serbian social reformer and political leader

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plied: 'Well, that's it. He told me, 'watch out for the Masons ... Do not go in there, although there are very good people there, but with a satanic organization') and then from 1911 in the Christian Community of Students at the University of Belgrade, founded under the influence of the YMCA and their talented speaker John Mott. I entered there, although a Tolstoy follower, and on this, at the invitation of Mott, in his hotel room, after the famous attack by the then free thinkers, under the protection of the late Skerlić, gave a statement that I considered Christ as the Savior and as the Teacher, based on Tolstoy, his entire teaching of the Word on the mountain from the V Chapter of the Gospel According to Matthew." Dimitrije V. Ljotić, *Sabrana dela* [Collected Works], 11 (Beograd: Nova iskra, 2001), 10; Dimitrije Ljotić, *Odabrana dela*, 1 (Minhen, 1981), 275–276.

80 James Wiles was a lecturer at the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of Belgrade and a translator of Njegoš's *Mountain Wreath* in 1930.

81 Bjelajac, „Hrišćanska zajednica studenata“, 309–316.

82 „Izveštaj Hrišćanske zajednice mladića“ [“Report of the Christian Youth Community”], *Vesnik HZM*, 1, March 6, 1920, 3–4.

of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, *author's remark*), there was always a strong socialist organization which, according to orders from Belgrade, especially kept an eye on our pupils of our Teacher's College, who, after going their separate ways, could be suitable agitators."<sup>83</sup>

As determined by R. Gašić, during the First World War, one Georgijević, then a student and later doctor of theology in Belgrade, was the secretary of YMCA in the United States, who, through his branch in Switzerland, was concerned about the Serbian Relief Fund. Many prominent Belgraders were connected with its work. The Petrović sisters worked as volunteer secretaries for the YMCA in the United States. The youngest of the sisters was later married to Ilija Šumenković, Envoy in Ankara and Slavka Gerasimović, nephew of Slavko Grujić,<sup>84</sup> who was to play an important role in the development of YMCA in the interim period.<sup>85</sup>

The International Committee of the YMCA was in a difficult position at the beginning of the war because its representatives were on opposite sides in the war. The members of the World Association of the YMCA met for the first time in London, on August 4, 1914, when the principles of voluntary work during the war were established. The seat of the Council of Voluntary War Work was in Geneva. The International Committee of the YMCA USA in New York received a call from Switzerland to send financial support and qualified secretaries to assist in the war effort of the YMCA in Europe. John R. Mott, secretary-general of the International Committee of the YMCA in the United States, visited Europe in early 1915 and, upon returning to his homeland, he urged the

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83 AY, Ministry of Education, 66-989-1372.

84 Slavko J. Grujić (1871-1937) was a lawyer, a diplomat, a benefactor. He completed his education in Paris in 1898 and received his Ph.D. He was admitted to the diplomatic service in 1894. He worked in the missions of the Kingdom of Serbia and later the Kingdom of SCS/Yugoslavia in Constantinople, Athens, Petrograd, London, Berne, and Washington. At the time of the acceptance of the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum in July 1914, in the absence of Prime Minister Nikola Pašić, he wrote a response to the ultimatum. After the death of King Alexander I Karadjordjević, he became a Marshal of the Court, but in mid-1935 he was appointed a deputy in the UK and at the same time accredited in the Netherlands. Dragoš Petrović, Predrag Krejić, "Srpski i jugoslovenski diplomatski predstavnici u Sjedinjenim Američkim Državama 1917-1945" ["Serbian and Yugoslav Diplomatic Representatives in the United States of America 1917-1945"], *Arhiv*, 1-2, 2007, 189-195.

85 Gašić, *Beograd u hodu ka Evropi*, 65-66.

American YMCA to support the prisoners of war in Europe. The problem was how to implement this because the United States was a neutral country in the war. A solution was found in offering assistance to both warring sides. The US secretaries received semi-official status as delegates of US Missions. The British, however, refused for a long time to allow American citizens to work with their prisoners, even in cooperation with the English YMCA. A series of diplomatic negotiations began between the American YMCA and the British and French governments. France promised to allow the American YMCA to operate on condition that similar activity was introduced for its prisoners in Germany. Berlin was not immediately inclined to agree to something like that. Nevertheless, the first YMCA war barracks were opened near Gottingen in Lower Saxony on April 15, 1915. Later, the American YMCA also began to work in England, then in prisoner of war camps in Siberia, and as of June 1916 also in Italy. During the period from December 1915 to October 1917, the American YMCA also presented its program in 37 of the 50 prisoners of war camps in Austria-Hungary.<sup>86</sup> They worked on organizing aid to the prisoners of war in their communication with their families, offering religious and educational programs, musical instruments, sports competitions, and exercises, but care was also taken to supply them with clothing and food.<sup>87</sup>

According to the YMCA, the number of prisoners of war in Germany increased almost exponentially during the war. By November 1918, there were 2.8 million prisoners of war in German camps. The majority of the prisoners were Russian (59%), French (22%) and British (almost 8%). The remaining 12% were Belgian, Serb, Romanian, Italian, Portuguese, Japanese, American, Montenegrin, Greek, etc. Russian, Romanian and Serbian prisoners of war were in a particularly difficult situation. The occupation of Serbia as of December 1915 broke off all chances of getting help from home. The war situation in Russia and Romania also prevented the governments of these countries from sending aid. The US government was representing the interests of Romania in Germany and sought to improve the dire conditions in feeding the Roma-

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86 Tomas Tlustý, "The YMCA organisation and its physical education and sports activities in Europe during the First World War", *Prace Naukowe Akademii im. Jana Długosza w Częstochowie, Kultura Fizyczna*, 2015, t. XIV, Nr. 1, 27–44.

87 Steuer, *Pursuit of an "Unparalleled Opportunity"*.



nian and Serbian prisoners of war but without much success. In the negotiations conducted by the YMCA, the German and Austro-Hungarian authorities constantly insisted on reciprocity. In order to expand its operations and satisfy the needs of the prisoners of war, the YMCA secretaries had to talk to the representatives of the warring sides into accepting their services.<sup>88</sup>

At the beginning of the war, the Austro-Hungarian military authorities did not allow the YMCA to work among the Russian and Serbian prisoners. The only service that was provided to them was the distribution of religious literature through the Austro-Hungarian channels of the Red Cross. Through the help of Frederic C. Penfield, the US Ambassador to Austria-Hungary, the representatives of the YMCA managed to persuade the Austro-Hungarian military authorities to allow the YMCA to begin their operations in two camps. The imperial government chose as the first places for the work of the YMCA, camps Braunau<sup>89</sup> in the Czech Republic and Sopronnyék in Hungary, each with 30,000 Russian prisoners of war. The committee of the World Alliance of YMCAs started negotiations with the government of the Kingdom of Serbia. Dr. Paul des Gouttes, a member of the World Committee of the YMCA and Honorary Secretary-General of the International Committee of the Red Cross, contacted the Serbian Red Cross in June 1915 and conveyed the demands of the Austro-Hungarian Government for reciprocity in respect to prisoners of war. Des Gouttes proposed the construction of YMCA barracks in Serbia, which would open the way for the opening of additional barracks in Austro-Hungarian for Serbian prisoners of war. John Mott agreed to fund this project in September, and the Serbian Government permitted the YMCA to start giving its services to prisoners of war. However, this permit came too late because the

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88 *Ibid.*

89 Braunau Camp or The Imperial and Royal Prisoners' Camps (Kaiserliches und Königliches Kriegsgefangenenlager Braunau) were located in the town of Braunau in the north-east of the Czech Republic in Karlovo-Hradestky near the border with Poland. The camp was formed on 11 June 1915. It contained Serbian and Russian prisoners and Serbian internees. Some 35,000 people were deported to the camp, including about 2,000 Serbian children. Mirčeta Vemić, „Pomor Srba ratnih zarobljenika i interniranih civila u austrougarskim logorima za vreme Prvog svetskog rata 1914–1918.” [“Mass Death of Serb Prisoners of War and Interned Civilians in Austro-Hungarian Camps during the World War I, 1914–1918.”], *Zbornik Matice srpske za društvene nauke*, 147 (2/2014), 201–234.

joint German-Austro-Hungarian-Bulgarian offensive against Serbia had been launched in October 1915.<sup>90</sup>

Braunau in the Czechia was the first camp that the Austro-Hungarian authorities opened for the work of the YMCA and the place where the first barracks were opened. This camp held mostly Russian prisoners of war, but many Serbs as well. The Austro-Hungarian War Ministry approved the start of work on June 11, 1915, but the development of the program was slow. It was not until 19 December 1915 that the "James Stokes Hut" opened in Braunau Camp. The ceremony was attended by the US ambassador, representatives of the Austrian and Danish Red Cross, President of the Austrian YMCA and members of the Austro-Hungarian War Ministry. Work began in 1916. The US Secretaries initiated training schools in literacy, distributed food, books, organized a drama club and theater group, religious services, and the like. In a separate room, a program was started for teaching 1,500 Serbian and Russian boys from eight to seventeen years old who had been interned in the camp.<sup>91</sup> Belgrade industrialist Rade B. Tomić, who was interned in the Braun-



*Opening of the "James Stokes Hut" at Braunau Camp, the first YMCA building for prisoners of war in the Dual Monarchy. On the right side of the picture are Serbian prisoners of war.<sup>92</sup>*

90 Steuer, *Pursuit of an "Unparalleled Opportunity"*.

91 *Ibid.*

92 Source: *For the Millions of Men Now Under Arms*, 1:7 (15 April 1916): 42A, Accessed: Sept. 20, 2018, <http://www.gutenberg-e.org/steuer/archive/detail/C05.p13.Braunau>

au camp during the war, was one of the Serb prisoners who worked with the representatives of the YMCA and organized work and aid.<sup>93 94 95</sup>



*Serbian prisoners of war, including boys in the front row, learning to read and write in the YMCA barracks in camp Boldogasszony.<sup>94</sup>*



*Opening of YMCA barrack in Camp at Philippopolis in Bulgaria in 1917.<sup>95</sup>*

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93 *Pravda*, October 15, 1937.

94 Source: *Foreign Work Photograph Collection, Kautz Family YMCA Archives*, Minneapolis, MN, Accessed: Sept. 18, 2018, <http://www.gutenberg.org/steuer/archive/detail/C13.p22E.BoldogasszonyfaSerbschool.jpg.html>

95 Source: *World's Alliance of YMCA's*, International Year Book 1920, 51.

The representatives of the Red Cross distributed funds through the US Secretary of the YMCA. Secretaries of the YMCA called on US citizens to donate aid to Serbian prisoners of war, and the International Committee in Copenhagen invested \$20,000 in the name of this aid.<sup>96</sup>

Bulgaria entered the war on 12 October 1915 on the side of the Central Powers and participated in the occupation of Serbia. The Bulgarians captured large numbers of Serbian prisoners, but also Romanians, Britons, French, Italians, Russians, and others. Conditions in Bulgarian camps were appalling. The situation was particularly difficult for Serbian prisoners of war in Philippopolis (Plovdiv). The only food that the Serbian prisoners received during the day was 300 grams of black bread and a small amount of soup made up mainly of water. They did not receive parcels of food from home. The mortality rate from hunger and cruelty during the winter of 1917–1918 was horrendous: out of the 100,000 Serbs interned in Bulgaria during the war, only 53,000 were still alive in November 1918. In the camp in Haskovo, 3,000 out of the 8,000 Serbian prisoners of war died during the war.<sup>97</sup>

When Bulgaria entered the war, the leadership of the Bulgarian National YMCA Committee contacted the World Committee in Geneva seeking assistance. They wanted the YMCA to establish work for Bulgarian interned soldiers, similar to the work that was done for the Austro-Hungarian troops. The president of the National Committee, Reverend Dimitar N. Furnajieff<sup>98</sup>

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96 Steuer, *Pursuit of an "Unparalleled Opportunity"*.

97 *Ibid.*

98 Dimitar or Demeter N. Furnajieff (Dimitър Nikolov Furnadžievъ) (1866–1944), studied at Princeton, USA, from 1888 and there he was consecrated to the pastor. Upon his return to Bulgaria in 1899 he was a priest in Kyustendil, Haskovo, Plovdiv, and Sofia. He was a member of the Bulgarian delegation for the Peace Conference in Paris in 1919. From 1912 until death he was religious representative of the General Assembly of the United Protestant Churches in Bulgaria before the Bulgarian government. He was the president of the Bulgarian Evangelical Society for 26 years. He believed "The United States of the Balkans are our salvation from Balkan wars." He initiated the creation of Evangelical seminary in Samokov, Bulgaria and after 1931 became its rector and parish priest in the local church. He takes part in the process of approaching the Serbian and Bulgarian Orthodox churches in the 1930s. He died in Sofia in 1944. *Princeton Alumni Weekly*, Vol. 25 No 25, April 1, 1925, 612; Radmila Radić, *Vojislav Janić (1890–1944), sveštenik i političar. Pogled kroz analitički prozor [Vojislav Janić (1890–1944), Priest and Politician. A View through an Analytical Window]*, (Beograd: INIS, 2018), 154.

suggested that the YMCA take over work with the prisoners of war in Bulgaria. In December 1916, the Secretary of the World Alliance of YMCAs traveled to Sofia and visited eight camps, including Philippopolis (Plovdiv), Stara-Zagora, Goino Pauicheievo, and Rakhovo. The Bulgarian government subsequently allowed the YMCA to work for prisoners of war in Bulgaria. According to the YMCA, 800 Serbian prisoners of war in Stara-Zagora were housed in a large warehouse, which the Bulgarians had intended for the work of the YMCA. In Goino Pauicheievo there were almost 4,000 prisoners (including 80 English, French and Serbian officers, plus 81 Serbian Orthodox military priests). Around 1,800 Romanian, Russian and Italian prisoners of war, plus 575 internally displaced civilians of different nationalities, were detained in Rakhovo; 19,900 men were interned in Sliven (including 104 Serbian, Russian, Romanian, English and French officers, as well as 16 Serbian Orthodox priests).<sup>99</sup>

The International Committee in New York agreed to fund the work in Bulgaria and sent its representative. While the Americans financed it, the World YMCA Association implemented social welfare services under their patronage. By September 1918, seven YMCA secretaries conducted work with prisoners of war in Bulgaria under the auspices of the Bulgarian Red Cross and the US and Dutch Embassies. The YMCA secretaries faced a general lack of clothing and blankets, but a special problem was the lack of food, so they managed to get permission from the Bulgarian authorities to buy food. The Association then leased land near the prison camp they were working on, in order to increase food supply. In order to solve the clothing crisis, the YMCA distributed clothing received from the Italian, Greek and Serbian Missions. In addition, the Association purchased clothes for prisoners with its own funds. In the course of one year, the YMCA built five barracks in the largest camps, and in another five, the existing barracks were modified to Association buildings. The barracks served as religious buildings. Concerts and sports events were also organized. Even in prisons without the official YMCA barracks, the secretaries provided books and reading materials for reading rooms. The YMCA provided services to soldiers even after the fall of Bulgaria when the repatriation of Allied war prisoners from the camp had begun. The last

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99 Steuer, *Pursuit of an "Unparalleled Opportunity"*.

prisoners left Bulgaria in January 1919. Also, the YMCA provided assistance to Bulgarian military prisoners in Greece and Serbia after the war. The talks began in May 1919. In August, the Society for Help to Bulgarian Prisoners (*Société de Secours aux Prisonniers bulgares*) addressed the Secretary-General of the World Committee of the YMCA asking for assistance. With the support of the International Red Cross Committee's Prisoner-of-War Agency, the World YMCA Committee established aid centers in Athens and Belgrade. They commenced work at the end of 1919 and worked in cooperation with the Greek and Serbian defense ministries. In Belgrade at that time were Fritz de Steiger and Jean P. Graenicher, secretaries of the Swiss Aide aux Prisonniers de Guerre de l'Alliance Universelle des Unions Chrésiennes de Jeunes Gens.<sup>100</sup>

When the United States entered the war, Germany insisted on expelling all US workers from all prison camps. A similar situation occurred in Austria-Hungary. The US secretaries in Germany and Austria-Hungary were replaced by YMCA secretaries from neutral countries (Switzerland, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden). A special fund was set up to finance their work. In 1917 alone, over \$3 million was issued through their fund.<sup>101</sup>

The YMCA operated during the war and through the English branch between the Serbian army on the Thessaloniki front and in Taranto (Italy), and later in Skopje, Veles, Mitrovica, and others. "The Serbian soldiers first became acquainted with the YMCA on the Thessaloniki front, where its large tents marked with a red triangle, its temporary shelters, its traveling canteens, etc. gave spiritual, mental and physical refreshment to the officers and soldiers of the allied army. In all these places the YMCA helped maintain that high morale, without which no army, no matter how powerful, could hope to achieve success. The Association accomplished this by allowing military priests to conduct services in large tents for members of their churches, organizing lectures and entertaining gatherings, giving out free books and writing supplies, serving tea, coffee, organizing games, and so on."<sup>102</sup>

100 „A tous nos Amis les anciens prisonniers et internés Serbes en Bulgarie”, *Vesnik HZM*, 1, March 6, 1920.

101 Tlusty, "The YMCA organisation".

102 „Šta su g'dja i g. Sifers učinili za naš narod" ["What Mrs. and Mr. Sitters did for our People"], *Vreme*, November 22, 1927, 4; Persi Sifers, „Hrišćanska zajednica mladih ljudi u Jugoslaviji" ["YMCA in Yugoslavia"], *Britanija*, 4, July 1, 1940, 25-26.

During the First World War, the YMCA cooperated with representatives of the Government of the Kingdom of Serbia in Russia, regarding the transportation of Serbian refugees, especially children and students, to the United States. In this endeavor, mention was also made of a certain teacher, Nikezić, who was a member of this organization.<sup>103</sup>

The Serbian students and pupils, as well as their professors, who sought shelter as refugees in Great Britain, also had the opportunity to become acquainted with the work of the YMCA.<sup>104</sup> Priest Vojislav - Voja Janić, who stayed in England during the First World War, wrote from Oxford to Envoy Jovan Jovanović Pižon on 26 July/8 August 1918 that the British YMCA decided to send to Thessaloniki a representative with the permission to diversify work among the Serbian refugees and soldiers. Since on 3/18 August, a session in London was scheduled to be attended by the chief secretary of the British YMCA, as well as a representative from the United States, Janić requested instructions for further work. He talked about the Americans and British were cautious and did not want to impose based on the ex-



Dr. Voja Janić

103 Records from March 16 (March 3, 1918, March 21, March 8, 1918, March 24, March 11, 1918, May 26, 1918, May 31, 1818, April 2 (March 20) 1918, April 4 (March 22, 1918), Miloš Moskovljević, *Dnevnik 1916-1968* [Miloš Moskovljević, *Diary 1916-1918*, ed. Momčilo Isić], 1, (Beograd: INIS, 2018), 326, 330, 331, 337, 338, 370, 373.

This probably refers to Petar Nikezić (1890-1967) from Bar. In World War I, he participated in the battles in Shkodra. Latinka Perović says that through Albania and Egypt, he went to America with orders to gain support for the war. In an article titled "How Montenegro is engaged in Goleš Mountain", *Srbobran*, 386, dated March 2, 1917, 4, states that in the summer of 1915, as the director of Pečka Bank he was Montenegro's delegate for food procurement in Egypt. L. Perović also writes that as a trained trader, he entered a delegation, which in 1917, through Japan, went to Russia. He stayed there for nine months. After the war, Petar Nikezić worked for Standard Oil Company. Marko Nikezić, *Srpska krhka vertikala* [*The Serbian Fragile Vertical*], ed. Latinka Perović. (Beograd: HCHR in Serbia, 2003), 36. In the press, it can be found that he worked as a private clerk for the Yugoslav "Englbert" tire company. *Time*, April 17, 1949, 7.

104 Miloš Paunović, Milan Igrutinović, Dejan Zec, Filip Baljkas, *Izbeglištvo u učionici: srpski studenti i djaci u Velikoj Britaniji za vreme Prvog svetskog rata* [*Exile in the Classroom: Serbian Students and Pupils in Great Britain during the First World War*], (Beograd: Centar za sportsko nasleđe Jugoistočne Evrope, 2016), 100-101.



perience with John Mott, who was surprised unpleasantly when he first arrived in Serbia. Mott wrote after that to his English friend that they should wait to be invited. Therefore, Janić advised Jovanović to send a telegram to the interior minister and ask him what should be done as the first priority for the Serb refugees from Thessaloniki and also pose the same question to the War Ministry. Janić would then present these requests at the next session. He added that Father Damaskin (Dragutin Grdanički)<sup>105</sup> with several Serbian theology and other students acted as an envoy of the Serbian YMCA at this association's conference in 1918, attended by more than 300 students from all over the world.<sup>106</sup>

### **Renewed Work in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes through 1924**

There were several British religious organizations in Yugoslavia between the two world wars: the British and Foreign Bible Society,<sup>107</sup> the YMCA,

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105 Damaskin Grdanički (1892–1969) was a bishop and metropolitan of the Serbian Orthodox Church. He graduated theology at the St. Sava School in Belgrade in 1912. He taught music in the First Kragujevac High School and then enrolled in the Spiritual Academy in St. Petersburg. He settled down in the Rakovica Monastery and was placed in the rank of archdeacon before going to Russia. He graduated from the Spiritual Academy with a degree in theology in 1917. During World War I, for some time, he was a military priest of the Second Volunteer Division in Russia, then in Oxford, a parish priest and teacher in the Serbian refugee colony and professor of theology. After the war, he graduated from the Faculty of Philosophy in Freiburg where he was promoted to Doctor of Philosophy. He was secretary of the Patriarchate, assistant professor of the Orthodox Theological Faculty, American-Canadian Bishop, and since 1939 the Bishop of Banat. After the war, he was elected Metropolitan of Zagreb in 1947. Sava Vuković, *Српску јепарцу од деветом до деадецемоз века [Serbian Bishops from the Ninth to the Twentieth Century]*, (Belgrade, Podgorica, Kragujevac, 1996), 149–150.

106 AY, Jovan Jovanović Pižon, 80–36–137–138.

107 The British and Foreign Bible Society (B. S.) was the organization of the Anglican Church that dealt with the publication of the Bible in foreign languages. It was founded in 1804 in London, but the number of independent B.S. grew over time in various countries of Europe and the United States. British and foreign B. S. issued the Holy Scriptures in the Serbian language translated by Vuk Karadžić, the editorial staff of Atanasije Stojković in Leipzig in 1830 and 1834. The entire translation by Vuk Karadžić issued in Vienna in 1847 and in the editorial office of Djuro Daničić in 1871 in Belgrade. *Azbučnik SPC po Radoslavu Gru-*



the Christian Student Union (CSU) and the Salvation Army.<sup>108</sup> The work of these organizations was interconnected, and therefore their membership and often their administration were interwoven.<sup>109</sup>

With the help of the British, who arrived with the troops from Thessaloniki shortly after the armistice, YMCA centers were opened (besides Skopje, Veles, and Mitrovica) in Tetovo, Niš, Belgrade, Kragujevac, and Jagodina.<sup>110</sup> The YMCA's activities in Skopje had begun before the First World War, and Jaroslav Vošt, who worked closely with the YMCA, renewed its work after the liberation.<sup>111</sup> Premises were shared in Skopje with the Soko movement, who received new uniforms and organized themselves as Boy Scouts. The YMCA barrack was also used by about 200 Russian refugees who, after having arrived in Skopje, lived there for a while, then organized a literary club and held meetings there three times a week. *Весник Хришћанске заједнице младића* (*The YMCA Daily News*) was published for a short period in Skopje in 1920. Its editor was first Arthur W. Blaxall,<sup>112</sup> then M. Bumbić, an attor-

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*jiću* [*The Alphabet of the SOC according to Radoslav Grujić*], (Beograd: BIGZ: Muzeji Srpske pravoslavne crkve, 1993), 31–32.

After World War I, British and foreign B.S. in Belgrade first had its headquarters in 25 Pop Lukina Street, and later in 47 Knez Mihailova Street. Dr. Marko Leko wrote to the Ministry of Religion on 15 November 1921 that the British and Foreign Bible Society, led by V. Liechtenberger had been active in Serbia for more than 50 years and suggested that it be awarded the Order of St. Sava III Class. (AY, Ministry of Religion KSCS, 69–11–26). The president of the Society for the Balkans was James Wiles. British and foreign B. S. was engaged, in addition to religious propaganda, in collecting all kinds of publications to assist libraries damaged in the war, especially the University Library. In December 1932, US Deputy Dr. John Dyneley Prince and James Wiley held a lecture on British and Foreign B.S. In 1936, the Society published the New Testament in the translation of Dimitrije Stefanović, Dean of the Faculty of Theology. *South Slav Herald* (hereafter: *SSH*), 19, December 1, 1932, 1; Ranka Gašić, *Beograd u hodu ka Evropi*, 65–66.

108 *Vreme*, February 19, 1941, 9.

109 *SSH*, 4, April 16, 1934, 2.

110 Lambeth Palace Library, (hereafter: LPL), Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 279–280, April 1930, “The Y. M. C. A in Yugoslavia”, Papers concerning Rev. Percy Henry Smart Sitters, director of the Young Men’s Christian Association, Yugoslavia, and correspondence with Douglas; Sitters, *op. cit.*, 25–26.

111 „Soko u Južnoj Srbiji [“The Soko Movement in South Serbia”], *Vesnik HZM*, 2, March 20, 1920, 2–3.

112 It was a list of propaganda-religious character. It came out twice a week and issued a total of nine numbers during the 1920s.

ney.<sup>113</sup> Issue number 9 announced that the next issue, no. 10 would be the last one and that a decision on the possible further publication of the newspaper would be made after the conference planned for the end of August in Niška Banja. However, its publication was terminated.



Arthur Blaxall visited Bitola (where he had also been during the war) and held lectures in the high school on the topic of the YMCA in an attempt to initiate its work there.<sup>114</sup> In Tetovo, they also had around 50 people interested in working and another 10 or so members.<sup>115</sup>

Slavko A. Jonke, a pastor of the Lutheran Church, who during the war was in London at the YMCA School,<sup>116</sup> started work in Veles on February 29, 1920, when a branch was established, whose members were mainly high school students.<sup>117</sup>

113 *Vesnik Hrišćanske zajednice mladića* (hereafter: *Vesnik HZM*), 9, June 29, 1920, 1, 4.

114 *Vesnik HZM*, 5, May 1, 1920.

115 „Izveštaj Hrišćanske zajednice mladića“ [“Report of the Christian Community of Young Men”], *Vesnik HZM*, 1, March 6, 1920, 3–4.

116 *Beogradske novine*, 143, July 7, 1916, 4; 56, February 27, 1917, 4.

117 *Vesnik HZM*, 9, June 29, 1920, 1, 4.

With the financial, personal and organizational support of the YMCA Central Committee in London, work was started in Belgrade. In April 1919, YMCA secretary S. Wright petitioned Education Minister Ljuba Davidović to help them with 1,000 dinars, which he had promised them earlier. He wrote that he would soon open an office and asked the Minister to officially inform all the high schools and the University accordingly. They also planned to open a student library, organize English classes and sports activities for pupils over 16. S. Wright also sought to employ a student fluent in French and English to help him as a secretary. The Minister approved the aid.<sup>118</sup>

More extensive activities started in Belgrade in 1920. The work was headed by British YMCA secretaries S. Wright and F. Reaton, who stayed there for two years. From the time when the representatives of the English YMCA came to Belgrade through December 31, 1920, Major Sava S. Radosavljević was officially hired in the Mission's main office as an assistant.<sup>119</sup> Their office space was located at No. 2 Pozorišna Street (today Francuska Street). They had meetings on Thursdays and Sundays and the reading room was open every day.<sup>120</sup> Meetings for students were also held. Prayers were initially held at the home of James Wiles.<sup>121</sup> In Belgrade, they started rallying boys to play soccer, and a scout society or Flag Scouts and Mountaineers [*Steg izvidnika i planinki*] started. Sections of these scout organizations also operated in Skopje.

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118 AY, Ministry of Education, 66-479-755.

119 Marko Leko proposed Major Radosavljević for the Order. The proposal was received on March 9, 1922, and the Minister of Religion proposed him for the Order of the St. Sava IV. At the beginning of 1927, Sava S. Radosavljević was a cavalry lieutenant-colonel at the Intelligence Department of the Main General Staff. By that time, he had already been decorated with the French Legion of Honor but had not yet received a medal for which he was proposed in 1921. The YMCA again requested on February 17, 1926, that the Ministry of Religion distinguish him. Radosavljević himself wrote to Religion Minister M. Srškić on 29 April 1927 that he had already come to him regarding this issue in February 1927 on the occasion of "forgotten decorations" and that he had told him to remind him to sign the decision. AY, Ministry of Religion, 69-157-242

120 „Izveštaj Hrišćanske zajednice mladića“ [“Report of the Christian Community of Young Men”], *Vesnik HZM*, 1, March 6, 1920, 3-4.

121 *Vesnik HZM*, 2, March 20, 1920, 2-3.



*Group of Belgrade Flag Scouts and Mountaineers after a lecture at the YMCA.<sup>122</sup>*



*The formal opening of new premises for YMCA young scouts and mountaineers of the 3rd company of the Belgrade Steg in No. 2 Pozorišna Street.<sup>123</sup>*

<sup>122</sup> <sup>123</sup>

Initially, a considerable number of women also attended the weekly meetings and a branch of the women's association was launched, and weekly meetings were set aside for men only. They also encountered difficulties and misunderstandings, and some Orthodox priests complained about their activities. At one of the meetings on March 14, 1920, among the listeners was

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<sup>122</sup> *Ilustrovani List*, 36, September 6–14, 1923.

<sup>123</sup> AY, Ministry of Education, 66–479–755

a priest who asked the audience how many had been to church that day and why they were attending meetings of sects such as the YMCA. After explaining to him what their purpose and goal was, he apparently changed his mind quickly and promised to help them in their work.<sup>124</sup>

Montague Waldegrave<sup>125</sup> and Oliver H. McCowen<sup>126</sup> were particularly instrumental in providing assistance. M. Waldgrave, son of Lord Radstock, who had worked among soldiers on the French front during the war, arrived in Belgrade for the first time on May 2, 1920. On that occasion, he also visited Skopje.<sup>127</sup> Later he came to the Kingdom of SCS on several occasions.



Montague Waldegrave

In addition to working in Veles, Pastor Slavko Jonke also worked on launching and developing YMCA operations in, Niš, Jagodina and Kragujevac.<sup>128</sup> In 1919, the work of the YMCA was re-established in Jagodina among the students of the high school and the Male Teachers' school. Before the war, the students had conducted the work themselves with the aid and advice of Lj. Jovanović, a theology teacher and junior high school substitute teacher. In early 1920, the students asked Prof. Josif V. Stojanović<sup>129</sup> to become chair, which was approved by school administrator M. Adžić. In addition to him,

124 „Izveštaj” [“Report”], *Vesnik HZM*, 4, April 10, 1920.

125 Montague Waldegrave (1867–1953), 5. Baron of Rodstock, was an Irish aristocrat.

126 Oliver H. McCowen (187–1942) was the organizing secretary of the YMCA in the expeditionary forces in France during First World War I.

127 *Vesnik HZM*, 8, June 12, 1920.

128 „Izveštaj Hrišćanske zajednice mladića” [“Report of the Christian Community of Young Men”], *Vesnik HZM*, 1, March 6, 1920, 3–4.

129 Stojanović V. Josif (1865–1929), was born in Paraćin and was a teacher of the Junior High School Paraćin, as school supervisor in Jagodina, teacher of the Teachers School in Jagodina for Christian teaching, Russian language, civic rights and duties, then director 1920–21, and 1923–25, as well as teacher of the School in Vršac. He was also president of the Municipality of Jagodina in 1918 and a pedagogical writer. He is the author of several textbooks and other works, including *Nauka o hrišćanskom moralu* [*The science of Christian Morale*]. Predrag Jašović, Djordje Petković, „Aktivnost školskog nadzornika Josifa V. Stojanovića na razmediji vekova (1898–1902) u arhivskim dokumentima osnovne škole u Bačini” [“The Activity of School Supervisor Josif V. Stojanović at the turn of the Century (1898–1902) in Archive Documents of an Elementary School in Bačina”], *Koreni*, V, 2007.

another early activist was Milan Bozoljac.<sup>130</sup> The community had around 100 members.<sup>131</sup> According to superintendent Adžić, in the activities of the YMCA, religious issues were never addressed, which could lead students to bigots, but on the contrary, they discussed issues of Christian ethics, brotherhood, love, mercifulness, and so on, and “in this way this society acted beneficially for the uprightness of student souls ...” He added that he was not aware that the teachers were urging students to join the society, but said that during 1919 and 1920, communist student activists attacked YMCA members at the behest of certain communist teachers.<sup>132</sup>

The first Rules of the National Alliance of YMCAs were adopted at the first National Conference of the YMCA in Niška Banja from 25 to 30 August 1920. According to Article 2, the “Community recognizes Jesus Christ as its leader and as the perfect revelation of Godly and human nature.” The aim of the Community was the realization and expansion of the “Kingdom of God on Earth.” Regular members were young people over 18, while associate members were those over 16. Each new member was proposed by two existing members. The organization of each community was self-governing. Each group of ten or more regular members was required to elect a Steering Committee of four members who headed the work of the association. Every local association with a Steering Committee sent an envoy to the sessions of the Central Board. The Central Board elected the Executive Board consisting of a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and three members. A

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130 *Vesnik HZM*, 2, March 20, 1920, 2–3.

Milan Bozoljac was a local economist in Jagodina. He was born in Leskovci, Župa County. He graduated from the Winemaking and Fruit Production School in Negotin. As a prosperous economist, he was one of the main founders of the Jagodina district plant nursery. He participated in the expansion of the God Worshipper Movement and in the drafting of the first rules of the National Christian Community (NCC). He worked on the organization of the NCC fraternity in Jagodina and also held beekeeping courses. He launched the *Duhovni život* in 1931 and in 1932 he was excluded from NCC membership because of spiritism. (Radmila Radić, *Narodna verovanja, religija i spiritizam u srpskom društvu 19. i u prvoj polovini 20. veka* [Folk Beliefs, Religion and Spiritism in Serbian Society in the 19<sup>th</sup> and the First Half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century], (Beograd: INIS, 2009), 200, 203–204, 218, 222). He died in 1937. *Pravda*, May 24, 1937.

131 *Vesnik HZM*, 9, June 29, 1920, 1, 4.

132 AY, Ministry of Education, 66–989–1372.

monthly fee was paid. The membership fee for one year was 80 dinars, and 60 dinars for students.<sup>133</sup>



From 1 November 1920, the work of the YMCA was organized under Serbian administration. The Ministry of Religion accepted the Rules on February 17, 1921. On the same date, they received a certificate confirming that they were a cultural association “whose aim is the Christianization of society and its cultural and educational spiritual advancement”. This certificate was issued at the request of President Dr. Marko Leko on February 10, 1921, for the purpose of getting a waiver for exemption from customs duties and taxes. The secretary of the YMCA at that time was Djordje Arandjelović.<sup>134</sup> The YMCA also had as its members about 40 Russian students, who were provided free English language training. In the beginning, they had a Russian room at the YMCA premises.<sup>135</sup>

A new YMCA Board was elected on November 16, 1922, and was constituted at its session on 19 November 1922. The chair was Vladeta Popović,<sup>136</sup> teaching assistant at the University, the deputy chair was Branislav

133 *Pravila Narodnog Saveza hrišćanskih zajednica mladih ljudi [Rules of the National Alliance of YMCA]*, (Beograd, 1920).

134 AY, Ministry of Religion, 69-157-242.

135 *Vera i život*, 7, May 1925 and November 10, 1926.

136 Vladeta Popović (1894–1951) was a professor at the University of Belgrade and founder of the Department of English Language and Literature in 1929, along with his wife,

Kovandžić, medical student and treasurer, and members were Dragoš Radović, law student and librarian, and Velimir Nikolić, student of technology. The members of the subcommittee for religious activities were: Archpriest Miloš Andjelković, Dušan Petrović, teaching assistant, Nestor Malinić, law student, and Stevan Ilić, a chemistry student. The members of the subcommittee for physical activities were: Dragoš Radović, Branislav Kovandžić, and Vojislav Andjelković, student of technical engineering. The members of the subcommittee for social and educational activities were: Vladeta Popović and Velimir Nikolić. The members of the subcommittee for working with boys were B. Kovandžić, Dušan Petrović and Vojislav Grujić, student of philosophy. The members of the subcommittee on economics and finance were: Dragiša Trebinjac, an official of the National Bank, Velimir Milenković, merchant, Vojislav Andjelković and Dragoš Radović. The main secretary still was Djordje Arandjelović.<sup>137</sup>

At the third national conference held in the summer of 1922, a decision was made to start work with boys. This activity started in three centers: Skopje, Belgrade, and Kragujevac. They conducted spiritual lectures and Bible studies and they also organized sports activities. In Belgrade, work was hampered by the impossibility of finding suitable space and experienced people to work with the boys. In Kragujevac, work with boys was conducted only during the summer because the center had not been fully developed. Camps were organized around Trstenik and Predejane. The boys lived in tents and the camps were arranged according to children's scout camps in England.

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Mary Stansfield-Popović. Prof. Popović was sent to Dachau camp during World War II, while Mary Stansfield-Popović, as a British citizen, was interned in a camp in Germany. They survived the war and continued their work at the University. Prof. Veselin Kostić, Ph.D., *Katedra za anglistiku: 75 godina rada [Department of English Studies: 75 Years of Work]*, Accessed: 01. 09. 2018, <http://old.fil.bg.ac.rs/katedre/ang/eng/01.aboutus/aboutus.html>

137 Djordje Arandjelović, „Hrišćanska zajednica mladih ljudi” [“YMCA”], *Vesnik*, 39, December 20, 1922, 4; 40, December 25, 1922, 5; „Hrišćanska Zajednica mladih ljudi” [“YMCA”], *Vesnik*, 8, April 1, 1924, 3–4.





*YMCA camp in Predejane in 1923*<sup>138</sup>

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Over the next few years, hostels were opened for students in Skopje and a dining area in Belgrade, where 50 members received meals at favorable prices.<sup>139</sup> At the beginning of 1924, centers in Belgrade, Niš, Crvenka, Skopje, Kragujevac, and Tetovo started working. The lack of skilled secretaries and financial resources limited a faster development of YMCAs, but another important reason was the parallel existence of a similar religious organization. In the early 1920s, there was a parallel development of the National Christian Community (NCC) or the God Worshipper Movement. It was an autochthonous movement (even though initially it suffered from the influences of

138 *Ilustrovani List*, 36, September 6–14, 1923.

139 „Hrišćanska Zajednica mladih ljudi” [“YMCA”], *Vesnik*, 8, April 1, 1924, 3–4.

both Nazarenes and Spiritism) and organization within the Serbian Orthodox Church albeit along with to the YMCA model, so they were often confused.<sup>140</sup> The name National Christian Community was given under the influence of the English Christian Communities with the addition of National, but it was often noted that they had nothing to do with the YMCA. However, the similarities in work were numerous. According to the rules of the NCC of 1921, it was created with the aim of grouping all Orthodox movements in Serbia into a single one. On March 2, 1921, Patriarch Dimitrije approved the Basic Rules of the NCC and gave his blessing for the establishment of the association. This approval was also confirmed by the Synod of the SOC in 1922. However, during the entire interwar period, the God Worshipers had strong opposition in the SOC, primarily among the clergy. The first article defined the association as “a community of all who love God and fulfill His commandments” under the name “National Christian Community”, which “recognizes the Lord Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world, and the Orthodox faith as the compulsory religion.” The goal was to make a moral revival of the people and then make them comprehensively capable of living life on earth and support all the movements in this field. The task of the board was to raise funds and the task of the executive committee was to “spread the teachings of the Gospel in various places and create new associations.” Since their main goal was to determine the members “in the Orthodox faith” and “the moral rejuvenation of our people,” they worked on creating reading rooms, holding lectures, interpreting the Holy Scriptures, holding conferences, courses for the study of church singing and church rules, courses for educating missionaries, etc. They also organized spiritual concerts, pilgrimages to monasteries, organizing choirs, literacy courses, and so on. Between the two world wars, the God Worshipers also maintained an active publishing activity. They published the newspaper *Hrišćanska zajednica - Pravoslavna hrišćanska zajednica* (*Christian Community - Orthodox Christian Community*). They had intended to raise an NCC home base in Kragujevac, where their headquarters was located. In the course of 1925, the “Christian Mercy Foundation” was created

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140 Zagreb newspaper *Obzor* confused in 1932 the YMCA with the National Christian Community, i.e. The God Worshiper Movement. „Sabor Hrišćanskih zajednica mladih ljudi” [“The Assembly of YMCAs”], *Obzor*, August 31, 1932.

to assist poor, miserable, abandoned, impoverished members and non-members of the movement. They introduced a compulsory membership fee, and one of the similarities was the holding of annual gatherings which, as of 1926 became national Orthodox annual councils. In addition to regular annual assemblies, the God Worshipers also gathered in numerous, most often three-month prayer eparchial councils. Certain names have been mentioned as being active in the work of both communities: Marko Leko, Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović, Jovan (Branko) Rapajić,<sup>141</sup> archpriest Drag. Tufegdžić from Badovinaci, Ratibor Djurdjević, et al.<sup>142</sup> The main differences between the NCC and the YMCA were that the former was not interconfessional or ecumenically oriented and that in its coverage, it mainly comprised the population from rural areas, unlike the YMCA, whose supporters, apart from some Protestants from the north of the country, came mainly from urban areas.

The influence of the YMCA and the NCC was also felt in the work of the Women's Christian Movement (WCM) officially founded in Belgrade on March 21, 1920. According to a document dated 25 August 1921, the goal of the movement was "raising the morale of Christ's religion," providing material and moral aid to orphaned and abandoned children, the elderly, and poor families, the establishment of Christian social institutions: nursery schools, recreation centers, youth homes, orphanages and shelters for the elderly. The WCM organized lectures, spiritual academies, and charity events. Later, they

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141 Jovan Rapajić (Branko) was born in 1910. He finished Orthodox Seminary in Bitola in 1931, and he graduated at the SOC Faculty of Theology in Belgrade in 1935. He helped Bishop Nikolai in the God Worshiper Movement. He became a priest in 1936. During World War II, Jovan Rapajić was a priest, secretary, and adviser to Draža Mihailović and head of the Religious Section of the Supreme Command of Yugoslav Army in the Fatherland (Chetniks or The Ravna Gora movement). He, along with Dr. Ratibor Djurdjević, spent the spring of 1944 in the village Borča near Kragujevac and the Kalenić Monastery held a religious-ideological course with young members of the Ravna Gora movement. After the Red Army penetrated into Serbia in the autumn of 1944, he withdrew to Bosnia with the army of Draža Mihailović. In May 1945, the Partisans captured him with Mihailo Djušić. They were prisoners of the OZNA and were probably shot in the village of Blažuj.

142 Radmila Radić, Aleksandra Djurić Milovanović, „The God Worshiper Movement in Serbian Society in the Twentieth Century: Emergence, Development, and Structures”, *Orthodox Christian Renewal Movements in Eastern Europe*, eds. A. Djurić Milovanović, R. Radić, (Palgrave Macmillan, Springer International Publishing, 2017), 137–172.

started establishing local women's committees and movements and formed sections for nursery schools, propaganda, provisions, and social events. The chair of the WCM was Danica Ž. Djordjević and the secretary were Darinka Janošević, a teacher at the First Women's High School in Belgrade, who had studied in England.<sup>143</sup> After 1928, their patron was Princess Olga Karadjordjević. They had branches in Negotin, Zaječar, Prokuplje, Niš, and Kraljevo. The SOC Council confirmed the Rules of the WCM at the session of the Parliament in 1932.<sup>144</sup> The WCM opened "Children's Meal Center" for poor children in 1937 under the benefaction of Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović. In the course of 1935, they joined the Yugoslav Women's Alliance. The members of the WCM regularly organized various events, lectures, tea parties with table tennis and board games.<sup>145</sup>

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- 143 Darinka Janošević was a professor at the First Belgrade Female Gymnasium since 1920. (*Prosvetni glasnik*: October 1, 1920, 7; February 1, 1930, 164). She was decorated with the Order of St. Save on January 27, 1921, at the proposal of the Christian Union of Students of the University of Belgrade. (AY, Ministry of Religion, 69–157–242; *Prosvetni glasnik*, November 1, 1922, 244) She was one of the founders of the Women's Party in 1927 (*Vreme*, May 8, 1927, 4). Since 1933 she was a director of the First Women's Gymnasium in Belgrade (today's Fifth Belgrade Gymnasium). In the same year, she was decorated with the Order of the Yugoslav crown of the Order IV. *Prosvetni glasnik*: November 1, 1933, 1153; March 1, 1940, 233; *Pravda*: January 28, 1933, 3; December 27, 1933, 7; June 12, 1934, 9; June 21, 1934, 18; June 29, 1934, 3; *Vreme*: December 27, 1933, 2; October 26, 1936, 8.
- 144 Archives of the SOC Synod (hereafter: ASOCS), Registry of Assemblies Minutes for 1932, Record 171 from September 21 / October 3, 1932.
- 145 „Sinoć je Ženski hrišćanski pokret priredio svoju akademiju” [“Last night, the Women's Christian Movement organized its Academy”], *Politika*, February 11, 1940, 16; *Vreme*, December 13, 1930, 9; January 31, 1932; February 21, 1940, 11.



## CHAPTER II

### ORGANIZATION

#### The Arrival of the Sitters Couple

After the British secretaries left and the local authorities took over its administration, the work of the YMCA was fraught with inconsistency and inexperience in its work methods and with a deficiency of leaders and activists. Consequently, the Executive Committee of the YMCA from the Kingdom of SCS asked the general secretary of the English headquarters to send their representatives to Belgrade.<sup>146</sup> The Central Committee in England appointed Percy Henry Smart Sitters as national advisory secretary of all YMCAs in the Kingdom of SCS and as the representative of the National Committee in



146 „Šta su g-dja i g. Sifers učinili za naš narod” [“What Mrs. and Mr. Sitters did for our People”], *Vreme*, November 22, 1927, 4.

London,<sup>147</sup> at the request of the Bishop of Gibraltar, who visited the Kingdom of SCS in 1924.<sup>148</sup> P. Sitters arrived on April 2, 1924, with his wife, Kathleen, who had previously been the editor of a religious journal in London.<sup>149</sup>

There was tiny information about the life of the Sitters couple before their arrival in the Kingdom of SCS. Percy H. S. Sitters was born in 1883, in Plymouth, a town on the south coast of Devon, England, to George and Harriet Sitters. In Brentford, Middlesex, in the autumn of 1918, he married Kathleen M. Bell (born in Surrey near London, on February 26, 1885).<sup>150</sup> For services rendered to the Belgian Army, he was awarded Knight of the Order of Leopold II. As a member of the YMCA Corps, he was decorated for his military service in the British Army during the First World War, 1914–1919.<sup>151</sup> In January 1919, P. H. S. Sitters became the proud holder of the *Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) as Officer of the Civil Division, Esq. District Secretary YMCA Calais Dunkirk Area*.<sup>152</sup>

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- 147 *Pravda*, November 15, 1924, 4; *Vera i život*, 1, November 1924 and 4, April 1927. P. H. Sitters was not a bishop as cited in part of the literature.
- 148 *Vera i život* carried a text from an English magazine of November 1924 on the visit of the Bishop of Gibraltar to Yugoslavia. The bishop was met by priest Kosta Luković who took him to the hotel in the Patriarch's car. He held a lecture with theologians in Sremski Karlovci and visited the monasteries in Fruška Gora, conducted services in the British Legation and went on from Belgrade to Bucharest. *Vera i život*, February 3, 1925.
- 149 An article in 1931 states that Percy and Kathleen Sitters are "a nice couple" who have been living in Serbia for ten years. "Desetogodišnjica rada u našoj sredini Engleskinje gdje Katlen Sifers" ["Englishwoman Mrs. Kathleen Sitters' 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Work in our Midst"], *Žena i svet*, 12, 1931, 20.
- 150 "England and Wales Census, 1891," Database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:W48F-2ZM:25> October 2017), Percy Sitters in household of George Sitters, Plymouth, Devon, England; from "1891 England, Scotland and Wales census," database and images, findmypast (<http://www.findmypast.com:n.d.>); citing PRO RG 12, Devon county, subdistrict, The National Archives of the UK, Kew, Surrey.
- 151 Percy H S Sitters, Corps: Young Men's Christian Association, British Army Medal Index Cards, 1914–1920, NA, WO372/18 Campaign Medal Index Cards and Silver War Badge Cards Britain, Campaign, Gallantry & Long Service Medals & Awards, Accessed: 19. 09. 2018, The National Archives, <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/SearchUI/Details?uri=D5180863>
- 152 "To be Officers of the Civil Division of the said Most Excellent Order: Percy Henry Smart Sitters, Esq. District Secretary Y.M.C.A. Calais Dunkirk Area". *The London Gazette*, 7 Jan-

Kathleen Sitters is mentioned in some places as the author of book in 1923<sup>153</sup> about Thomas Bond Bishop (1839–1920), an opponent of Darwin's theory of evolution and uncle of Edward Alexander Crowley,<sup>154</sup> and his work for the *Children's Special Mission - CSSM*, nowadays known as the *Scripture Union* in the movement of evangelization among children. The Mission introduced the practice of boys' camps that were to be practiced in the work of the YMCA.<sup>155</sup>

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uary 1919, 31114, 459; *The Edinburgh Gazette*, 9 January 1919, 179. - It is a highly valued medal of the British Empire, a British order of chivalry for the contribution to art and science, work in charitable and social organizations and public service outside the civil service. It was founded in 1917 by King George V, and consists of five levels of civil and military merit, the most important of which are the first two whose recipients become Knights / Ladies. The officer belongs to the fourth grade. Order of the British Empire. Official Website of the British Monarchy. The Royal Household, Accessed: 19. 09. 2018, <https://web.archive.org/web/20100327214051/>, <http://www.royal.gov.uk/MonarchUK/Honours/OrderoftheBritishEmpire.aspx>

153 Percy Sitters, Mrs. *T. B. B. of the C.S.S.M. A memoir of Tom Bond Bishop, etc. [With plates, including portraits.]*, (London: Children's Special Service Legation, 1923), 176. - In some cases, it says the author is anonymous or is C. Russell.

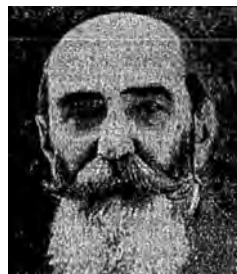
154 Aleister Crowley (1875–1947), was an English occultist, magician, poet, painter, writer, and hiker.

155 The mission of the Special Children's Service was inspired by the example of Rev. Payson Hammond, an American evangelist clergyman who came to Britain in 1867. He recognized the need to form special religious services attractive to children. His mode of operation was accepted by Josiah Spiers in Islington and Tomas Bond Bishop. They decided to form a national organization for the evangelization of children, which eventually transformed into an international movement. Methods of work included early meetings on the beach during summer, excursions, and picnics where children were introduced to the Bible through play and entertainment. In that period they were limited to children from the wealthier layers of society. University students were recruited to help in the animation of children. Later, children's magazines were also introduced. *SU History*, Accessed: 19. 09. 2018, <http://www.su.org.sg/index.php/who-we-are/suhistory>; Bruce, *The Student Christian Movement*, 68-70.



The Bishop of Gibraltar also granted P. H. Sitters permission to take on the duty of lay reader<sup>156</sup> of the English colony in Belgrade.<sup>157</sup> According to their own testimony, the Sitters couple had the most difficult period during the first two years of their stay, from 1924 to 1926.<sup>158</sup> The original plan was that they would stay in the Kingdom of SCS for only three years. At the request of Belgrade, during their stay in England in the summer of 1927, a decision had been made for them to continue their work.<sup>159</sup>

During their first years in Belgrade, the Sitters lived in Dobračina Street in a house owned by Aleksandar Z. Jovičić, President of the YMCA. The house was sold in 1933 and the couple moved to 27 Marshal Pilsudski Street.<sup>160</sup>



Aleksandar Z. Jovičić

156 LPL, Lang 177, ff. 375–407, P. H. Sitters, Chaplain in Belgrade, Yugoslavia 1940–1941, awarded a Lambeth degree; “Anglo-Saxon Visitors to Yugoslavia”, *SSH*, 6, May 17, 1932, 6; “Church in a Club”, *SSH*, 3, April 3, 1933, 5.

A lay reader (a *čtec* in the SOC) is a layman who is authorized in the English community by the bishop to preach, teach, and help in pastoral, evangelical, and liturgical work. The lecturers are often active in the religious teaching of young people and the management of discussion groups. Their job involves social work and helping people to establish themselves in faith. They can be engaged in ecumenical work. The lector is not a member of the clergy and his duties in the church are limited. This function has existed in the Anglican Church since 1866. Gordon W. Kuhrt, *Ministry Issues for the Church of England: Mapping the Trends* (Church House Publishing, 2001), 134.

157 Annual meetings of the Anglican Church were held at the English-American-Yugoslav Club, which donated to the church. “Anglo-Saxon Visitors to Yugoslavia”, *SSH*, 6, May 17, 1932, 6; “Church in a Club”, *SSH*, 3, April 3, 1933, 5.

158 *Vera i život*, March 3, 1926; LPL, Bulletin No. 45 May–June 1934, Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242–352 Papers concerning Rev. Percy Henry Smart Sitters, director of the Young Men’s Christian Association, Yugoslavia, and correspondence with Douglas; CFR DOC 1/101-200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1936, 101 Bulletin No. 53 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia covering the period April to May received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade.

159 *Vera i život*, 5, May 1927.

160 LPL, Bulletin No 44, January 1934, Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242–352 Papers concerning Rev. Percy Henry Smart Sitters, director of the Young Men’s Christian Association, Yugoslavia, and correspondence with Douglas.

The three or four years that followed after their arriving were dedicated to efforts to establish an organizational base.<sup>161</sup> Soon after their coming, the husband and wife began to rally young people to attend classes on the study of the Holy Scriptures, libraries, language study,<sup>162</sup> weekly afternoon religious lectures, work with scouts and mountaineers<sup>163</sup> and board games in the premises of the YMCA. Looking to uphold morality and religion, the YMCA sent a complaint to the Ministry of Education in 1924 against professors of the University of Belgrade who were speaking ungodly words, insulting religious feelings, denying God, and spreading atheism.<sup>164</sup>

Dr. John Mott visited Belgrade again in April 1924 and held two lectures at the University as part of a meeting of regional Balkan YMCA secretaries with delegations from England and the United States. Voja Janić, minister of religion, received John Mott in Sremski Karlovci, where he held a

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161 LPL, 280–April 1930, “The Y. M. C. A. in Yugoslavia”, Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242–352 Papers concerning Rev. Percy Henry Smart Sitters, director of the Young Men’s Christian Association, Yugoslavia, and correspondence with Douglas.

162 *Pravda*, October 8, 1924, 4.

163 The YMCA had a “Scout” and “Planinka” division in Belgrade. For them, one-day trips to the village of Slanci or eastern Vračar were organized. The scouts had theoretical and practical training. They engaged in woodcutting, bookbinding, framing pictures, learning the basics of first aid and signaling, organized scouting games. Refreshment of the consecration of the scout troop was performed at the sports field “Soko” in Košutnjak. The flag’s sponsor was Crown Prince Petar, represented by the aide Colonel Dragutinović. The entire banner, according to scout tradition, was built in the shape of a horse-shoe. The consecration of the flag was performed by Topčider priest Stojković. In Kragujevac, there is also a Scout banner and mountain hut. (*Vera i život*: 5, March 6, April 7, May 10, August 1925; *Vreme*, March 7, 1925; *Pravda*, March 7, 1925, 5) In addition to the “Scout” and “Planinka” within the YMCA, existed a separate organization, the Association of Surveyors and Mountaineers, which before the First World War was founded by Dr. Miloš Dj. Popović (1876–1954), a doctor, within the framework of the Youth Association. The Scout Movement was renewed in 1919 and operated within the Soko organization. In 1921, the Union of scouts and planinkas of the Kingdom of SCS was formed and changed its name in 1929 to the Scout Association of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. *Četiri imena za 99 godina*, Accessed: 19. 09. 2018, [http://www.izvidjacibeograda.org.rs/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=191%3Akako-smo-menjali-ime&catid=1%3Alatest-news&Itemid=50&lang=en](http://www.izvidjacibeograda.org.rs/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=191%3Akako-smo-menjali-ime&catid=1%3Alatest-news&Itemid=50&lang=en)

164 AY, Ministry of Education, 66–63–167.

lecture in the Seminary St. Sava.<sup>165</sup> Minister Janić, associated with the work of the YMCA since the time of the war, exempted them from paying taxes in June 1924.<sup>166 167</sup>



*Dr. Milan Dj. Popović, head of the Main Headquarters of the Association of Scouts and Mountaineers 1925<sup>167</sup>*

The first practical school for secretaries of the YMCA, headed by Kathleen Sitters was held at Banja Koviljača in June 1924. The program included biblical studies, history and the principles of the YMCA, working with boys, hygiene, etc. Then, the Fifth Annual Assembly was held from 1 to 4 July 1924, at which reports from dozens of local YMCA centers in the country were received. It was chaired by Aleksandar Z. Jovičić, who was subsequently elected as president three times. The main secretary was still Djordje Arandjelović. Drago Dj. Tufegdžić, a priest from Badovinci, was elected as a member of

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165 AY, Legation in London, 341-123-313; *Vreme*, April 8 and 17, 1924; „G. D-r Džon Mot u Beogradu” [“Mr. Dr. John Mott in Belgrade”], *Vesnik*, 11, April 25, 1924, 2. - One of the John Motts (President of the World Association of Students and the Secretary-General of the YMCA) lectures in Belgrade, bore the title: „Šta sadašnje doba očekuje od studenata” [“What is Expected from Present Day Students”], *Pravda*, April 15, 1924.

166 AY, Ministry of Religion, 69-157-242.

167 *Vera i život*, 10, August 1925.

the Executive Committee.<sup>168</sup> Lectures at the assembly were held by P. Sitters ("YMCA Program for the next five years" and "YMCA Membership - its meaning and responsibility and how to preserve it"), as well as James Wiles and Dr. Marko Leko.<sup>169 170</sup>



*Fifth Annual YMCA Assembly in the Kingdom of SCS in 1924.<sup>170</sup>*

Kosta Šantić became a secretary in Niš in the autumn of 1924,<sup>171</sup> while in Skopje, Žika Panić,<sup>172</sup> who had returned from practical training in Manchester, replaced the former secretary, D. Trivunac. The YMCA president was Sima Momirović, a lawyer. A camp for boys was organized in Kragujevac in Sabant during the summer. The camp was headed by Secretary T. Dimitrijević.<sup>173</sup> Gen-

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168 Archpriest Dragutin Dj. Tufegdžić, the son-in-law of writer Janko Veselinović, was later editor of the *Glas crkve*, the semi-official organ of the Eparchy of Šabac and the priest of the parish church of St. Mark in Belgrade. He published in the *Glas crkve*, in the July 1924, "One Letter" in which he presents his impressions from the Fifth Annual Assembly of the YMCA. Later, he praised the YMCA. Drag. Dj. Tufegdžić, „Jedan potreban pokret” [“One Needed Movement”], *Vera i život*, 7, May 1925.

169 *Vera i život*, 1, November 1924, 5, 8, 9.

170 *Ibid.*

171 K. Šantić, „H.Z.M.Lj. i njeno dejstvo na omladinu” [“YMCA and its Effect on the Youth”], *Vera i život*, 8, June 1925.

172 In 1925 Živojin Panić moved to Belgrade and headed the boys' department. *Vera i život*, 6, April 1925; 1, February 1930.

173 *Vera i život*, 8, June 1925.

eral Živojin Terzibašić, the head of the Military-Technical Institute in Kragujevac, accepted the Association's request for assistance in tents and other provisions. The children were from different parts of the country and each morning they had a collective lesson in studying the Holy Scriptures, and then the students who had failed in certain subjects were preparing to pass their exams.<sup>174</sup>



Bishop Tihon Radovanović



Branislav Kovandžić

The president of the YMCA in Belgrade was Dr. N. Djordjević, who was succeeded by Dr. Tihomir Radovanović as of 1925,<sup>175</sup> while Branislav Kovandžić<sup>176</sup> was vice-president. The representatives of the Executive Board were Aleksandar Jovičić, M. Nenadović, Tihomir Radovanović, James Wiles,

174 *Vera i život*, 1, November 1924.

175 Tihomir Radovanović, Bishop Tihon of Zahumlje-Herzegovina (1891–1951). He completed his studies at the School of Theology in Athens (1918–1921), and then received his doctorate in Leipzig. He was a substitute professor at the First Male Gymnasium in Belgrade, assistant professor of the Theological Faculty in Belgrade and secretary of the Synod of the SOC. He was elected in 1934 as Bishop of Herzegovina. He retired in 1939. Vuković, *op. cit.*, 493–494.

176 Branislav M. Kovandžić was a long-standing personal secretary to P. H. Sitters. From 1934, he was secretary of the National Association of YMCA, and later secretary of the Student Conference. Kovandžić was one of the students who was educated in England during the war. AY, Milan Stojadinović, 37-25-198; *SSH*, 3, 1935, 1; 4, 1936, 1; *Politika*, April 4, 1936, 5; „Nj. V. Kraljici predati su prilozima za Spomen-dom Blaženopočivšeg Kralja Aleksandra. Spomen dom podiže HZMLj” [“HM The Queen was presented with Contributions for the Memorial Hall Building of the Blessed King Aleksandar. YMCA to Build the Memorial”], *Pravda*, April 5, 1936, 2; Sitters, *op. cit.*, 25–26.

Branislav Kovandžić, D. Dulkanović<sup>177</sup>, and General Secretary Djordje Arandjelović.<sup>178</sup> At the beginning of the 1930s, Vasa Lazarević,<sup>179</sup> became vice president of the Belgrade branch, while the manager was Reginald C. Taggart. Taggart had previously served as secretary of the Belgrade YMCA and succeeded Arandjelović.<sup>180</sup> Before the war, in 1940, the president of the YMCA in Belgrade was engineer Krsta Andjus, and the vice-presidents were Lena Jovičić<sup>181</sup> and Radovan Vraneš, while the secretary was Ratibor Djurdjević.<sup>182</sup>

177 Sitters and Dulkanović attended the plenary sessions of the World Alliance of YMCAs May 18–22, 1925. *Vera i život*, 9, June 1925.

178 *Vera i život*, 2, December 1924.

179 Vasa Lazarević (1875–1941) graduated from the Faculty of Law in Belgrade and entered the police service. He got his professional training abroad (United States, England, France, Germany, Austria, etc.). He studied at Scotland Yard in London as early as 1909, and in Thessaloniki from 1916 to 1918 he was the commander of the camp of Serbian civilian refugees and cooperated with English and American missions to help Serb refugees. He was the holder of the Red Cross of the United States. He had a number of functions in the police. After the First World War, he was the chief mayor of Kavadarci and Skopje (1918–1919). From 1921 to 1925 he was head of the Department of State Protection. He founded the magazine *Policija* and published it for three decades. He pledged to modernize the police force. Vasa Lazarević was also the first vice president of the Belgrade municipality since 1933, vice president of the Auto club and member of the Masonic Lodge since 1927, *Beogradske opštinske novine*, November 1, 1933, 3; Gašić, *op. cit.*, 65–66; *Srpski biografski rečnik*, 5, (Novi Sad: Matica srpska, 2011), 480.

180 Djordje Arandjelović left the position in 1925. (*Vera i život*, June 9, 1925) Taggart held public lectures in Belgrade in 1927 during his occasional visits to his home country, held lectures on the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and in one of them in Manchester in 1931 urged industrialists to consider “a more favorable Yugoslav market” and English tourists to visit the Adriatic Sea and Slovenia. *Pravda*, October 1, 1931, 4.

181 Lena A. Jovičić, was born in 1885. She lived in Serbia during World War I. She was the author of numerous books on Yugoslavia, mainly geographic handbooks, travel guides, itineraries, textbooks for children and studies on the architecture of the monasteries in Serbia. The most important work of travel character from the interwar period is the *Kojekude po Srbiji*, published in 1926. In this book, Lena Jovičić points out the problems of poor infrastructure, lack of organization, and poverty of the population of Yugoslavia, looking at the Balkans through the oriental prism. She was her father's author and biographer. *The Biography of a Serbian Diplomat*, (London: Epworth, 1939). She was actively cooperating with the YMCA, and she was a secretary at the English Charles Dickens Hall in whose administration Darinka Grujić was the president. *Pravda*, December 15, 1934, 5.

182 AY, Ministry of Education, 66–3292–2551. - Dr. Ratibor M. Djurdjević (1915–2011) began his studies in forestry in Belgrade and ended up in Edinburgh in 1938. He was a member of the God Worshipper Movement, and on his return from his studies, he worked as



Lena Jovičić



Reginald C. Taggart



Vasa Lazarević

The YMCA was propagated in the Kingdom of SCS as a religious association “for youth and boys” and as a “non-confessional and non-political organization,” and declared as its goal to unite all people and their association with the “bond of brotherhood in Christ.”<sup>183</sup> At the end of the 1920s, they claimed to have around 1,000 members. During its work in the Kingdom of SCS / Yugoslavia, as H. P. Sitters wrote, the YMCA, in accomplishing its tasks, used the following means: Bible study, clubs, lectures, libraries, reading rooms, music, excursions, sports and other means of social, mental and

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secretary of the YMCA. During the war, until 1943 he was engaged in the National Labor Department of Milan Nedić. At the Supreme Command of the Royal Army in the Fatherland, Ratibor Djurdjević was a lecturer in the missionary-ideological section. In the autumn of 1944, he fled from Serbia and worked in refugee camps in Italy and Germany as secretary of the YMCA. In the early fifties, he went to the United States. He graduated from the George Williams College of the YMCA in Chicago. He dealt with clinical psychology but quit the American Psychologists' Association for opposing their attitude on homosexuality. He returned to Serbia in 1992. He was an author and publisher of anti-Semitic literature. He founded and led the publishing house *Ihtus - Christian Book*. He was married to Vera, the daughter of Mihail Olćan, who was otherwise the cousin of Mihailo Pupin. Branislav A. Žorž, *Zavod u Smederevskoj Palanci [Institute in Smederevska Palanka]*, (Belgrade, 2006); Aleksandar Stojanović, „Iščekivanje sudbine i novi počeci: prilozi istraživanju istorije srpske kolaboracionističke emigracije u prvim godinama posle Drugog svetskog rata” [“Anticipation of Destiny and New Beginnings: Contributions to the Research of the History of Serbian Collaborationist Emigration in the First Years after World War II”], 1945. *kraj ili novi početak? Tematski zbornik radova [1945. The End or a New Beginning?]*, ed. Zoran Janjetović, (Beograd, INIS, 2016), 339–374.

183 Vera i život, 5, March 1925.



physical education, publishing newspapers, magazines, and works of general literature. The Association used the red triangle as its symbol. "The Red Triangle, which has become such a close and dear sign of allied troops on all battlefields were adopted by the Association because, like the Red Cross, it was easy to recognize during hostilities, either by friend or foe."<sup>184</sup> The symbol itself signified the three sides of the human being: the mind, the body, and the spirit, which corresponded with the triple work that the YMCA had developed: spiritual, mental and physical. The triangle, with one peak, was turned down to symbolize that the work rested on God's help. Above the triangle, the inscription was introduced: For God, King and Country.<sup>185</sup> They also used the badge that was the official badge of the World Committee adopted at the World Conference in London in 1881.<sup>186</sup>



184 Sifers, *op. cit.*, 25–26.

185 AY, Central Press Bureau of the Presidency of the Ministerial Council of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, 38–773–197.

186 *Pravila HZMLj u Jugoslaviji [Rules of the YMCA in Yugoslavia]*, (Belgrade, 1935). During the 1920s, the badge was more in use than the triangle in the Kingdom of SCS due to certain allegations that they were a Masonic organization. The sign used by the World Committee in Geneva had in the center of the sun from which the symbol of Christ, used in the catacombs. On this symbol, the Gospel according to John is opened, chapter 17, verse 21, that all be one. The names of the five continents are written around the ini-



The YMCA held its first annual dinner in Belgrade in April 1928, with 150 people present, including several ministers and government officials, and many students and scouts. They also received a welcome letter from Prince Pavle and congratulatory greetings from the YMCA councils in London, Geneva, Bucharest, Sofia, Rome, Prague, and Berlin.<sup>187</sup>

The Sitters paid regular visits to associations and helped them work. The Sitters usually traveled with B. Kovandžić, but when Percy Sitters was absent, Kovandžić went alone or was accompanied by Miloš Parenta.<sup>188</sup>

In Niš, the work on organizing the branch was initially headed by Secretary Tihon Radovanović (who later moved to Belgrade) with the help of the

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tial Christian Community in different languages. „Karakter Hrišćanske zajednice mladih ljudi” [“Character of the YMCA”], *Vera i život*, April 4, 1926.

187 LPL, Bulletin No. 23, Y.M.C.A. April 20, 1928, Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Lambeth Conference 2, 263–264.

188 LPL, CFR DOC 1 / 101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents 1, 1937, 29–129, Bulletin No. 56 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia, Spring 1937 received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade marked “Private and Confidential”; CFR DOC 1 / 101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents 1, June 1938 59–159 Bulletin No. 58 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade marked “Private and Confidential”; CFR DOC 1 / 101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents 1, December 1938, 66A - 166A Bulletin No. 60. Yugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin received from P.H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade; 349–Y.M.C.A. Bulletin No. 63, December 6<sup>th</sup>, 1939, Douglas 51-Papers of J. A. Douglas about the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242–352 Papers regarding Rev. Percy Henry Smart Sitters, director of the Young Men’s Christian Association, Yugoslavia, and correspondence with Douglas.

Miloš Parenta (1867–1944) completed the eight-year grammar school and Orthodox Seminary in Zadar. He also studied at the Protestant Theological School in Vienna. He was a professor at the Zadar High School and Seminary in Zadar. At one time, he was the personal secretary of the Serbian Metropolitan Mihailo. During the Balkan wars, he was a national defense attorney in Zadar and was imprisoned during World War I. After the war, he was elected vice president of the National Council for Zadar and Northern Dalmatia. He was a lecturer and rector of Seminary of St. Sava and editor of  *Glasnik*, the official SOC gazette. M. Parenta was a member of the Radical Party. After retiring in 1927, he worked as a part-time teacher of religious education at the Second Boy’s High School in Belgrade. AY, Ministry of Religion, 69–19–42; *Vera i život*, 1, February 1930; Gordana Krivokapić–Jović, *Oklop bez viteza [Armor without Knight]*, (Beograd: INIS; 2002), 293; Sofija Božić, *Srbi u Hrvatskoj i jugoslovenska država 1918–1929 [Serbs in Croatia and the Yugoslav State 1918–1929]*, (Beograd: INIS, 2008), 736.

bishop of Niš, Dositej.<sup>189</sup> The President of the YMCA in Niš was first Archpriest Dimitrije Pejović<sup>190</sup> and then Lazar Marčetić, director of the Trade Academy,<sup>191</sup> while the secretary was Kosta Šantić and the honorary president was Archbishop Dositej.<sup>192</sup> The president of the chess section, which organized chess tournaments, was Ljubomir Pejović, a student of technical engineering. A major manifestation of Orthodoxy was held in Niš on April 1925, with the help of the priesthood of the Diocese of Niš, during which they sold books of religious content, badges, held spiritual concerts, and so on.<sup>193</sup> A meeting was also held at the Officer's Club, where Archbishop Dositej and priest Pejović delivered lectures. On that occasion, Sitters spoke about "English friendship toward the Kingdom of SCS" and the translator was Irinej Djordjević, assistant professor of the University of Belgrade and later a bishop.<sup>194</sup> At that time,

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189 LPL, Bulletin No. 29, December 1, 1929, Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Lambeth Conference 2, 276–277.

190 Archpriest Dimitrije Pejović was the editor of the *Pregled crkve eparhije niške* of the Diocese of Niš (published as an official newsletter of the diocese and a spiritual journal) from 1920 to 1924 and later president of the Spiritual Court in the eparchy. Interestingly, at that time and even later in the preserved copies of the magazine (from 1920 to 1939), there is no mention of the YMCA except one brief report from June 1926 in issue number 6 on building the YMCA center in Jerusalem.

191 *Vera i život*, 1, February 1930.

192 *Vera i život*, 1, November 1924; 2, December 1924; 1, January 1930; 2, March 1930; 3, April 1930.

193 *Vera i život*, 6, April 1925.

194 Irinej (Milan) Djordjević (1894–1951) finished elementary school in Takovo. He was a temporary teacher in 1913. He was in the army from 1914 to 1916. He served as a paramedic in the rank of lance sergeant. He became a monk during World War I and as a servant of the church, he was sent to study in St. Petersburg. Then he moved to England, where he finished Seminary St. Save in Cuddesdon and study at Oxford. At the same time, he worked as a secretary and assistant to the head of the Serbian Intelligence Bureau in England from September 1918 to May 1919. He was assigned to the rank of Deacon in 1919 and sent to the School of Theology in Athens, where he received his doctorate. He was appointed as a teacher at the Faculty of Theology in Belgrade in 1924. He was appointed Bishop of Srem in 1928 and in 1931 he was elected as the Bishop of Dalmatia. After the death of the American-Canadian bishop in 1935, he administered this diocese until the election of a new bishop in 1938. He edited the journal *Hrišćanski život*. He was a correspondent member of the Anglican Eastern Church Association. During World War II, he was interned in Italy. AY, Ministry of Religion KSCS, 69–15–38 and 69–42–68; Vuković, *op. cit.*, 201–202.



Archbishop Dositej at the YMCA conference in India in 1937.

the YMCA in Niš was located in one of the buildings on the main street.<sup>195</sup> In addition to Archbishop Dositej, Mayor Dragiša Cvetković (financially as well as by providing office space) and Minister Nikola Uzunović, helped and supported the work of the YMCA in Niš. Lieutenant Colonel John Lloyd Vaughan Seymour Williams, vice-chair of the Executive Committee of the YMCA in London, visited the YMCA in Niš the same year. He was accompanied by P. H. Sitters and Archbishop Dositej. Lloyd Williams visited the YMCA headquarters and the Penitentiary and the children's home, where they were greeted by Florens Maw<sup>196</sup>. A text published in a magazine called *The Living Church*, on

195 *Vera i život*, 7, May 1925.

196 *Vera i život*, 5, March 1925; „HZMLj i ratna siročad u Nišu” [“YMCA and War Orphans in Niš”, *Vera i život*, 6, April 1925; „Jedna poseta zajednici u Nišu” [“One Visit to the Community in Niš”], *Vera i život*, 7, May 1925 and 8, June 1925; Radić, „Prilog istraživanju”, 278–323.

September 17, 1932,<sup>197</sup> writes about the help that Archbishop Dositej provided for the YMCA. As the bishop of Zagreb, Dositej Vasić spent several months traveling to the Far East in 1937, where he attended the World Congress of the YMCA in Mysore, India on January 2, 1937. After the conference, Archbishop Dositej visited Kottayam, Kerala, together with Feodor T. Pianoff.<sup>198</sup> He later gave lectures about his travels with projections in some branches of the YMCA, for example in Požarevac and Vukovar.<sup>199</sup>

One of the most important tasks that the Sitters couple undertook was the training of associates and leaders. The second training school for leaders of the movement was held from February 25 to March 2, 1929. The school was attended by about 50 Orthodox and Protestant delegates from more than 12 centers in the country. Lectures were held by Orthodox bishops and priests, pastors of the Reformed and Lutheran Church, Dr. William A. Visser't Hooft from the World Committee in Geneva, and the first secretary of the World Council of Churches, and the YMCA staff in Belgrade. The topics included: familiarizing with the Bible and the meaning of prayer in everyday life; work of summer camps; responsibility of membership, etc. Special attention was devoted to discussions.<sup>200</sup>

The third annual training school in Crvenka was organized in 1930 along with the same model. At that time, there were already 19 associations in the country, and 94 delegates were present in Crvenka. The training schools began with prayers and Bible studies. Every morning and evening consultations were held on issues related to the work of the YMCA, headed by Miloš Parenta, Donald A. Lowrie,<sup>201</sup> Károly Dobos, Reginald Taggart, and

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197 *Hristu veran do smrti. Sveštenoisповедnik Dositej zagrebački i vavedenjski*, (Beograd-Cetinje, 2008), 81–84.

198 Feodor T. Pianoff was the leader of the Russian Student Christian Movement. *Pravda*, March 1, 1937, 10; *Vreme*, April 5, 1937, 4; LPL, CFR DOC 1/101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1937, 29–129 Bulletin No. 56 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia Spring 1937 received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade.

199 *Pravda*, April 25, 1937, 12.

200 LPL, Bulletin No. 26, March 23, 1929, Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Lambeth Conference 2, 270–271.

201 Donald Alexander Lowrie (1889–1974) worked in the US YMCA before World War I. He volunteered to serve in Russia in 1916 as the Prisoners' Aid Secretary for Central Powers POW's in Siberia. He remained in Russia until 1922 and published the book *The Light*

Percy Sitters. Most delegates were aged 18 to 24, but there were also older ones. In addition to students, the participants also included priests, doctors, entrepreneurs, farmers, merchants, and salesmen, etc. Every afternoon was dedicated to games and sports, not only for recreation but also to show what kind of games could be played without any equipment, so even the poorest associations could organize them for their members. In their reports, the Sitters were particularly proud of the four languages spoken: Serbian, German, Hungarian and English (they had three translators) and of the fact that the representatives of seven churches were present: Orthodox, Lutherans, Reformed, Catholics, Old Catholics, Methodists, and Anglicans. The last evening they held a small ceremony, which was later repeated frequently on similar occasions. They would place a large white candle in the center of a wreath in which five colored candles were fixed. Each delegate had a small candle. The big candle symbolized the light of Christ "that inspired George Williams to establish the first YMCA." After the verses about the light of the world that were read in different languages, the candle would be lit and would light up the darkened room. Then, the five smaller candles would be lit, each for one continent in which the YMCA operated. The secretary would then light his little candle from the big one and add it to the man next to him, and so on until all the candles that were held by the persons present would illuminate the space.<sup>202</sup>

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*of Russia: An Introduction to the Russian Church* (Prague: YMCA Press, 1923). He then went to Czechoslovakia, where he worked with Russian students until 1928 and then organized the work of students throughout the country. From Czechoslovakia, he was transferred to the Kingdom of SCS where he also organized work with students. Lowrie returned from the YMCA in 1932 and became director of the US Center at Cité Universit  in Paris. With the approach of World War II and the increasing wave of refugees, Lowrie returns to the YMCA in 1938. He worked to provide US relief to refugees from various countries in France. In October 1942, he moved to Switzerland to provide YMCA services to refugees in that country. From 1945 to 1950, Lowrie represented the World Committee of the Alliance of YMCAs in providing assistance to displaced persons in France. *Donald Alexander Lowrie*, Accessed: 19. 09. 2018, <https://www.geni.com/people/Donald-Lowrie/6000000017697472088>

202 LPL, Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 279, March 11, 1930. Papers concerning Rev. Percy Henry Smart Sitters, director of the Young Men’s Christian Association, Yugoslavia, and correspondence with Douglas; *Vera i  ivot*, 3, April 1930.

Because of the great interest in training schools, as early as 1931, there were proposals to launch two schools, in the north and the south of the country.<sup>203</sup> In 1931, Percy Sitters organized and convened a conference and a school for the leaders of the YMCA in Stara Moravica, Bačka. There were about 120 delegates from 36 different locations in Yugoslavia in which the YMCA organizations operated. On that occasion as well, the participants belonged to different religions. Lectures were held by the priest, Vlada Milutinović, Donald Lowrie, director of the student section of the YMCA, Agoston Sándor,<sup>204</sup> the bishop of the Reformed Church, James Wiles, the director of the Bible Society, Károly Dobos, one of the secretaries of the YMCA, Stefan Ilkić,<sup>205</sup> an igumen from Sombor, Dragutin Tomac, lawyer and president of the YMCA in Zagreb, R. Taggart, director of the YMCA in Belgrade, Miloš Parenta and Sitters. The school was also visited by a county official from Bačka Topola named, Blagojević.<sup>206</sup>



*Agoston Sándor*

- 203 LPL, Bell 217, ff. 260–1, Jugoslav [Yugoslav] 268–9–Jugoslav [Yugoslav] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin No. 37, January–February 1932, 1931–2, by Percy Henry Smart Sitters, Anglican chaplain in Belgrade, Yugoslavia.
- 204 Ágoston Sándor, 1882–1960), studied theology from 1900 to 1904. He was the bishop of the Reformed Church as of 1933. *Vera i život*, 1, February 1930; Tomislav Branković, *Protestantske zajednice u Jugoslaviji [Protestant Communities in Yugoslavia]*, (Niš–Beograd, 2006), 38–54.
- 205 Stefan Ilkić (1875–1963) was a teacher and archimandrite. He was born in Sombor where he graduated at the Teachers' College in 1893. He attended the Spiritual Academy in Kiev (1897–1898). He settled in 1908 in the monastery of Saint George in the vicinity of Timisoara. He was a head monk of the Holy Trinity Monastery in Great Kikinda. From 1918 to 1919 he was in the service of the administrator of the Serbian parish in Arad. He returned to Sombor in 1920, where he worked as a director of the Stevan Konjević Foundation. In 1928, he launched a magazine *Duhovna straža*. For some time he was advocating the approach to the Roman Catholic Church and wrote about this in this paper (*Duhovna straža*, 3, 1934, 176). He became archimandrite in 1932. He also edited the calendar of the Synod of the Serbian Orthodox *Crkva* for 1934 and 1935. At one point, he was the director of the City Library in Sombor. Laposava Kljaić, „Arhimandrit Stefan Ilkić” [“Archimandrite Stefan Ilkić”], *Zbornik Matice srpske za istoriju*, 69–70, 2004, 285–290.
- 206 „Konferencija i škola za vodje HZMLj” [“Conference and School for Leaders of the YMCA”], *Pravda*, March 6, 1931, 4.



*YMCA delegation in Belgrade at a conference in school for leaders in Stara Moravica in 1931.*<sup>207</sup>

In February 1932, the 4<sup>th</sup> annual training school was held in Stare Moravice, the biggest one of its kind, with 200 delegates.<sup>208</sup> In the autumn of the same year, two more schools were organized in Feketić and Debeljača, which went on for three to four days. The delegates had the opportunity to discuss the difficulties they faced, about how some members sometimes lost their initial enthusiasm, about problems regarding insufficient space, collection of membership fees, the needs of young people and methods of working with them, and so on.<sup>209</sup> In the course of the following years, the training courses were held in Stari Sivac, Pačir, Kopačevo, Veliki Bečkerek, Novi Sad and other places.<sup>210</sup>

In addition to training for leaders, Percy Sitters also trained the staff. From September 1936, the YMCA staff met every morning from 8.30 to 9.30.

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207 *Ibid.*

208 LPL, Bulletin No. 38, June 1932, Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242–352 Papers concerning Rev. Percy Henry Smart Sitters, director of the Young Men’s Christian Association, Yugoslavia, and correspondence with Douglas.

209 LPL, Bulletin No. 40, November–December 1932, Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242–352.

210 LPL, Bulletin No. 45 May–June 1934, Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242–352; CFR (Council on Foreign Relations) DOC 1/201–310, CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, June 1939 C.F.R. 201, Bulletin No. 61. Jugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade marked “Private and Confidential”.



The classes were devoted to a systematic course in Bible studies, financial issues, administration, and so on.<sup>211</sup>

Percy Sitters was pleased with the progress of the movement and in 1930, he said in a report that the number of centers had increased. He added, with some possible exaggeration, that the number of members was not an adequate indication of the YMCA's influence or the position it occupies in the country, because it "affects thousands of men, women, and children in everyday life" and continues to "show signs that individual lives have completely changed through work in the YMCA." Finally, it says that the movement has occupied a position where it has complete freedom of action as it is considered to represent a great unifying force in the country.<sup>212</sup>

Since the beginning of the thirties, the YMCA established branches in Zagreb and Ljubljana. The President of the Association in Zagreb was Dr. Dragutin Tomac, a lawyer, and the members of the Board were: Filip Pop, evangelical bishop, Marko Kalogjera, Old Catholic bishop, Archpriest Radivoje Kokić (priest in Zagreb), Dr. Egon Zahradka,<sup>213</sup> V. Pavlović, Branko Pešelj, Vladimir Kamencil, Matija Vinkopu, and Secretary Vladislav Kalogjera, a cousin of the Old Catholic bishop.<sup>214</sup> Percy Sitters went to Zagreb several times a year to help organize the movement or attend meetings of the YMCA Board.<sup>215</sup> In February 1931, members of the local YMCA organized a public meeting in the old Croatian Parliament building where they showed a film about the work of the

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211 LPL, "Report of the Work of the Y. M. C. A. in Yugoslavia", November 1936, Private & Confidential, Douglas 51-Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 329.

212 LPL, "The Y. M. C. A. in Yugoslavia", April 1930, Douglas 51-Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 280.

213 Dr. Egon Zahradka was a doctor at the Mental Hospital in Sarajevo until 1930 when he was transferred to a mental hospital in Stenjevec near Zagreb. He was also head of the department at the Kovin psychiatric hospital in Kovin. In the YMCA he competed in table tennis competitions. From 1934 he was president of the YTTA (Yugoslav Table Tennis Association). Željko Rodić, Srdjan Milovanović, „Istorijat Specijalne bolnice za psihijatrijske bolesti „Kovin” u Kovinu”, [“History of the Special Hospital for Psychiatric Diseases “Kovin” in Kovin”], *Engrami*, vol. 37, no. 4, 2015; *Jutro*, 2, Ljubljana, January 8, 1934 .

214 *Pravda*, December 6, 1930, 10; „Poseta g. Sitera HZMLj u Zagrebu” [“The Visit of Mr. Sitters to the YMCA in Zagreb”], *Pravda*, December 17, 1930, 18.

215 LPL, Bulletin No. 42, 1933, Douglas 51-Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242-352.



YMCA in the country. President Tomac delivered a welcome speech. Kathleen Sitters commented on the films in Serbo-Croatian. Representatives of the authorities were present in the audience, including the head of the Savska Region, Dr. Josip Šilović, who was the honorary president of the YMCA in Zagreb, representatives of the various churches (except Roman Catholic), the army, and students.<sup>216</sup> The seat of the YMCA in Zagreb was initially located at No. 2 Zrinjski Square but space was not quite satisfactory, so in November 1937 they moved to a new space.<sup>217</sup>

During 1933, a charitable sale of handicrafts was organized, followed by a series of meetings in Zagreb. On May 11, 1933, P. H. Sitters wrote to Brigadier General Aleksandar Dimitrijević, the Court Marshal, that on May 10, 1933, he had spoken with Queen Maria about a meeting that was to be organized by the YMCA in Zagreb in the form of a concert in the auditorium of the Officers Club. Sitters was supposed to talk about the work of the organization and present a film about the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. He implored the Queen to designate an emissary and she sent her lady-in-waiting, Eleonora Šverljuga.<sup>218</sup> The YMCA event at the Officers Club in Zagreb was held on May 14<sup>th</sup>. Ban Dr. Ivo Perović<sup>219</sup> was presiding. Other attending officials included Army Commander General Ljubomir Marić, General Mihailo Bodi, commander of the Sava Division, Mayor Dr. Ivo Krbek, Former Minister Dr. Oto Frangeš, the English consul, the Evangelist Bishop F. Pop, and others. The Queen's emissary was greeted by Kathleen Sitters, Ljubica Marić,<sup>220</sup> the wife of Gener-

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216 LPL, Bulletin No. 33, March 1931. Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242–352.

217 AY, Court, 74–196–278; LPL, CFR DOC 1/101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1937, 17–117 Bulletin No. 55 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia covering the period December 1936–January 1937 received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade marked “Private and Confidential”.

218 AY, Court, 74–196–278. Eleonora Šverljuga (1888–1965) was the wife of Dr. Stanko Šverljuga (1880–1958), Croatian economist, minister of finance and minister of trade and industry, and the long-time president of the Zagreb Stock Exchange for goods and values.

219 Ivo Perović (1882–1958) was County Prefect of the Split region, assistant to the Minister of Internal Affairs, and as of 1931 the Ban of the Sava Banovina and the Royal Regent of the minor King Petar Karadjordjević as of 1934.

220 General Ljubomir Marić (1878–1960) was a Yugoslav Army General, Minister of the Army and Navy in the Royal Government and Professor at the Military Academy. As an army general in 1930, he was appointed the commander of the Fourth Army Region in

al Marić, and General Bodi's wife Zora.<sup>221</sup> Dr. D. Tomac, the president of the YMCA in Zagreb, emphasized the important role of the Sitters in promulgating Yugoslavia abroad. Sitters said in his speech that "Yugoslavia is a happy country, which has a great future because it is headed by a royal family that looks after its youth." Then the concert was held and a film was shown about the natural beauties of the country, costumes, the royal family and scenes from the activity of the YMCA. It was again commented by Kathleen Sitters.<sup>222</sup> Prince Pavle also wrote a congratulatory letter on that occasion.<sup>223 224</sup>



*Queen Maria Karadjordjević visiting the Croatian Museum of Contemporary Art in Zagreb in 1933.*<sup>224</sup>

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Zagreb. From 1935 to 1936, he was Chief of the General Staff of the Yugoslav Army. In the government of Milan Stojadinović, he was Minister of the Army and Navy of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1936–1938). He retired in 1939. Dušica Bojić, *Memoari generala i ministra Ljubomira Marića (1878–1960)*, (Beograd: Udruženje potomaka ratnika 1912–1920 "Ljubomir Marić", 2012).

- 221 The wife of General Mihailo D. Bodi (1884–1953), daughter of Laza Dimitrijević, a doctor from Smederevo. She was a member of the English-American-Yugoslav club in 1940. *Vreme*, January 23, 1940, 11.
- 222 „Uspjela priredba Kršćanske zajednice mladih ljudi” Zagreb 15. maja” [“Successful YMCA Event. Zagreb on May 15”], *Novosti*, 134, May 16, 1933, 6; *SSH*, 5, 1933, 2; *Pravda*, May 17, 1933, 5.
- 223 LPL, Bulletin No. 43, May and June 1933, Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242–352.
- 224 *Vreme*, December 23, 1933, 1.

During the royal couple's visit to Zagreb in December 1933, Queen Maria visited the YMCA center at No. 8 Jelačić Square.<sup>225</sup> She was welcomed by the new president, Marko Kostrenčić, professor at the University of Zagreb and former minister, who was to be appointed as the new district head (Ban) the following year.<sup>226</sup> Kostrenčić as a mason was not popular with Roman Catholic circles. Archbishop-coadjutor Aloysius Stepinac complained about the bad ideological climate of the country at his meeting with Prince Pavle Karadjordjević January 5, 1935. He said in the name of Archbishop Bauer, as an argument, the government appointed to the Ban a mason Kostrenčić. Stepinac later recorded in his diary "Prince Pavle embarrassed, and apologized that he did not know."<sup>227</sup>



Marko Kostrenčić

A YMCA assembly was held in Zagreb in April 1934, presided by Dr. Marko Kostrenčić. Officials who attended the assembly were, among others, Zagreb Archbishop Dositej,<sup>228</sup> P. H. Sitters, Belgrade YMCA President Vasa Lazarević, as well as Tasa Marković, Chief of the Ministry of Justice, Dr. Stanko

225 M. Kostrenčić filed a petition in December 1933 for Queen Maria to visit the YMCA premises during a visit to Zagreb. AY, Court, 74-196-278; LPL, Bulletin No 44, January 1934 Douglas 51-Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242-352; YMCA Headquarters Belgrade, Yugoslavia to Council of Foreign Relations, CFR DOC 1/51-100 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1935, 23A - O.C. 24/C.F.R.

226 Marko Kostrenčić (1884-1976) was a Croatian lawyer, historian, and politician. He studied law in Vienna and Zagreb. He was the first professor of law history in Zagreb from 1912 to 1937 and from 1945 to 1955. He was a regular member of the Yugoslav Academy of Arts and Sciences as of 1921. He was a minister of social policy (1931-1932) and the ban of the Sava Banovina (1934-1936). During World War II from 1941 to 1942, he was interned in the Stara Gradiška camp. D. Tomac handed down his duty to Kostrenčić in December 1933. *Vera i život*, December 2, 1933.

227 Ljubodrag Dimić, Nikola Žutić, *Alojzije Stepinac - država, crkva, nadbiskup (1934-1941)* (Beograd, 2017), 287.

228 The Metropolitanate of Zagreb was founded in 1931. Dositej (Vasić) was elected metropolitan in 1932 and took office in 1933.

Miholić,<sup>229</sup> and others.<sup>230</sup> The Zagreb YMCA opened a reading and writing room in 1935, and on Friday's they held a series of religious discussions and lectures with the participation of Archbishop Dositej, Bishop Dr. F. Pop, Zora Bodi, and others. Zora Bodi left Zagreb that same year because of her husband's transfer, but she continued to help the work of the branch and attend annual meetings.<sup>231</sup> Jovan (Branko) Rapajić from the Faculty of Theology in Belgrade frequently gave lectures. The Sitters considered him as one of the most dedicated members.<sup>232</sup> In July 1935 the Zagreb YMCA received a visit from members of the British Navy's Mediterranean Fleet, headed by their chaplain.<sup>233</sup> Lectures were often accompanied by parties with "English dances."<sup>234</sup>

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229 Stanko Miholić (1891–1960) studied chemistry, mathematics, and physics at the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb, where he graduated in 1918. After training at Cambridge, he was appointed in 1930 for the manager of the State Chemical Laboratory in Belgrade. From 1936 to 1939, he was an assistant professor at the Chemical Department of the Medical School in Belgrade, and later was the manager of the Institute for Fuel, Ores, and Metallurgy in Zagreb (1939–50). He retired in 1957. He was the editor-in-chief of the journal *Arhiv za kemiju* [*Chemistry Archive*] (1939–40 and 1946–53). Accessed: 29. 09. 2018, <http://www.enciklopedija.hr/natuknica.aspx?ID=40673>

230 „Skupština HZMLj u Zagrebu” [“YMCA Assembly in Zagreb”], *Pravda*, April 19, 1934, 9.

231 LPL, YMCA Headquarters Belgrade, Yugoslavia to Council of Foreign Relations, CFR DOC 1/51–100, CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1935, December 1935, 39–89 Bulletin No. 51 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia by P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters; YMCA Headquarters Belgrade, Yugoslavia to Council of Foreign Relations, CFR DOC 1/51–100, CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, March 1936, 43–93 Bulletin No. 52 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia by P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters.

232 LPL, YMCA Headquarters Belgrade, Yugoslavia to Council of Foreign Relations, CFR DOC 1/51–100 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1935, 36–86, Bulletin No. 50 Summer bulletin about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia by P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters.

233 *Ibid.*

234 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, June 1938 59–159 Bulletin No. 58 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade marked “Private and Confidential”.

With special efforts being made by Professor Dr. Rihard Burijan<sup>235</sup> and Dr. Jakob Kelemina,<sup>236</sup> a committee was appointed to prepare the organization of the YMCA and convene the founding assembly, which was held at the University of Ljubljana on January 24, 1934.<sup>237</sup> Among the students who took part in the work were Vida Novak and J. Prohaska. The Sitters wrote in their reports that one of the problems was the great poverty of students in Slovenia, who came from rural areas without money and made due the best they could. Many of them wanted to “warm up on the YMCA fire.”<sup>238</sup> Despite everything, the work of the movement in Slovenia progressed slowly. In the course of 1938, they had about 75 members.<sup>239</sup>

235 Richard Burian (1871–1954) was born in Vienna, where he graduated at the School of Medicine (1894). He was a professor at the universities in Vienna, Leipzig, Innsbruck and Hanover and manager of the Physiology Department at the Zoological and Oceanographic Institute in Naples. He came to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia at the invitation of the School of Medicine in Ljubljana and later became a regular professor of physiology in 1920 at the newly established Medical School in Belgrade. He started the construction of the building of the Physiological and Histological Institute. In addition to being one of the founders of the Medical School in Belgrade and its long-standing dean and one of the founders and first “heads” of School of Veterinary Medicine (1936) and the School of Pharmacy in Belgrade (1939), which were located in the same building. He was elected as a correspondent member of the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1926. He retired in 1938, but until the beginning of World War II he continued his experiments in the Physiological Institute. On April 6, 1941, one of the first Nazi bombs demolished this building. He spent the war in Belgrade. He went to the United States in 1947. *Institut za medicinsku fiziologiju Rihard Burijan. Istorijat*, Accessed: 27. 07. 2018, [http://www.mfub.bg.ac.rs/sr/instituti/institut\\_za\\_medicensku\\_fiziologiju/istorijat\\_instituta.dot](http://www.mfub.bg.ac.rs/sr/instituti/institut_za_medicensku_fiziologiju/istorijat_instituta.dot)

236 Jakob Kelemina (1882–1957), Slovenian literary historian, theoretician, and Germanist. “Kelemina, Jakob” (1882–1957). *Slovenska biografija*. Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti, Znanstvenoraziskovalni center SAZU, 2013. Accessed: January 1, 2018, <http://www.slovenska-biografija.si/oseba/sbi270160/#slovenski-biografski-leksikon>

237 “Ustanovitev YMCE v Ljubljana”, *Jutro*, XV, šte. 18, Ljubljana, January 24, 1934; „Osnivanje Hrišćanske zajednice na Univerzitetu u Ljubljani” [“The establishment of the Christian Community at the University of Ljubljana”], *Pravda*, February 3, 1934, 4.

238 LPL, Bulletin No 44, January 1934, CFR DOC 1/101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1937, 17–117 Bulletin No. 55 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia covering the period December 1936 – January 1937 received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade marked “Private and Confidential.”

239 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101–200CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, December 1938, 66A–166A Bulletin No. 60. Yugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade marked “Private and Confidential.”

Every year, national conferences were held, mostly in Belgrade, but also in other parts of the country. The National Conference was held in Zagreb at the end of April 1934. They expected 50 delegates because of a lack of funding, but they had about 100, thanks to the fact that Prince Pavle had secured a discount on train tickets. Also present was Archbishop Dositej.<sup>240</sup> The following year, 1935, the National YMCA Conference in Yugoslavia was held in Belgrade in the month of June. Members came from various centers and discussed a new draft of the guidelines for the work of the Yugoslav YMCA. The National Council reviewed and considered them until finally it was presented to delegates as a basis for further work. Regarding the adoption of rules and regulations, Sitters noted in one of the reports that in the past years every attempt to create to harmonize these rules provoked strong feelings and controversies but that the spirit of the Association had changed thanks to the careful attention paid by President Vasa Lazarević and the National Council, which included lawyers from Zagreb and Belgrade, who studied the rules, approved them, and in the end, everything went without any opposition. The representatives of the individual associations at the national conference also submitted short reports on their work.<sup>241</sup>

During the 1930s the branches operated, in addition to Belgrade, Zagreb, Ljubljana, and Niš, also in Feketić, Maradik,<sup>242</sup> Negotin,<sup>243</sup>

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240 LPL, Bulletin No. 45 May–June 1934, Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242–352.

241 LPL, YMCA Headquarters Belgrade, Yugoslavia to Council of Foreign Relations, CFR DOC 1/51–100 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1935, 36–86, Bulletin No. 50. Summer bulletin about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia by P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters.

242 In Maradik, the honorary president was Živko Tedić, an Orthodox priest, who held meetings on Tuesdays and Fridays and had 76 male and 36 female members. *Vera i život*, 2, March 1930.

243 During 1929, a branch was established in Negotin and was immediately accepted into the Association of the YMCA. Members of the administration were: Milivoj Ž. Lazić, president, Professor Stojan J. Mladenović, vice president, Danilo Bogić secretary, Lazar Zdravković, treasurer and others. They had a total of nine members out of which five were in office. AY, Ministry of the Interior of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, 14–61–179–186.

Požarevac,<sup>244</sup> Vojlovica, Pančevo,<sup>245</sup> Zemun, Crvenka, Titel, Stari Sivac, Ru-  
menka, Novi Sad, Novi Vrbas, Stare Moravice, Pačir, Subotica, Stari Bečej,<sup>246</sup>  
Zrenjanin, Debeljača, Kovačevo.<sup>247</sup> Kikinda, Kragujevac, Leskovac, Prokuplje,  
Skopje, Ohrid, Tetovo, and other places, mainly in the eastern parts of the  
country, in areas with a majority Orthodox population and in the northern  
areas with a predominantly Protestant population.

The Interior Ministry confirmed the Rules of the YMCA on October  
28, 1935. These rules were supposed to make the work of all the branches  
in Yugoslavia uniform (for which a lot of time and effort were subsequently  
devoted),<sup>248</sup> and which defined the duties and responsibilities of the mem-  
bers in order to ensure the success and development of the movements in  
the country.<sup>249</sup> The basics read: "The Young Men's Christian Association tends  
to unite young people who, accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as their God and  
Savior, according to the Holy Scriptures, want to be His disciples in their lives  
and to unite their efforts to expand His Kingdom among young people." The  
aim of the Association was: "Assisting in the spirit of the above basics, and  
in friendly cooperation with the Church, moral, spiritual, intellectual, social,  
and physical progress of the young people; maintaining friendly relations

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244 The YMCA was founded in the Požarevac High School in 1937, and Bishop Venijamin, in  
agreement with the school's principal, Aleksandar Milićević, decided to put the work  
of this community on a broader basis. *Pravda*, March 16, 1937, 5; LPL, CFR DOC 1/101-  
200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, June 1938 59-159 Bulletin No. 58 about  
the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sit-  
ters in Belgrade marked "Private and Confidential."

245 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101-200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, June 1938 59-  
CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, C.F.R. 159 Bulletin No. 58 about the work of  
the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade  
marked "Private and Confidential."

246 LPL, Bulletin No. 38, June 1932, Douglas 51-Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb  
Orthodox Church, ff. 242-352 Papers concerning Rev. Percy Henry Smart Sitters, director  
of the Young Men's Christian Association, Yugoslavia, and correspondence with Douglas.

247 LPL, Bell 217, ff. 260-1, Jugoslav [Yugoslav] 268-9 - Jugoslav [Yugoslav] Y.M.C.A. Bul-  
letin No. 37, January-February 1932, 1931-2, by Percy Henry Smart Sitters, Anglican  
chaplain in Belgrade, Yugoslavia.

248 LPL, "Report of the Work of the Y. M. C. A. in Yugoslavia", November 1936, Private & Confi-  
dential, Douglas 51-Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 329.

249 *Vreme*: January 27, 1936, 8; March 18, 1937, 9.

with the young people of other countries, who have similar ideals, through the World's Brotherhood of Associations.”

The rules stipulate that the Annual Assembly represented a gathering of all official representatives of accredited YMCAs in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The Assembly met once a year and determined the general scope of work and was convened by the National Alliance. The National Alliance was the federal body of all the local and separate ecclesiastical associations in the Kingdom and operated, as the supreme authority, over all areas of work, organization, and finances. Every local association was organized so that it could sustain itself. It chose its own board. The delegates at the annual assemblies came from the ranks of the National Alliance, all local associations in the country, and from certain church communities. Only regular members who paid a membership fee were able to be official delegates. Corresponding members were those that the National Alliance asked to represent the YMCA in a place where there was no local association yet. The National Alliance consisted of a president and secretary from each group of church associations and 15 members elected at annual assemblies. It elected a president, two vice presidents, and a treasurer. Membership could be regular, irregular, honorary, and charity-based. Regular members could be persons older than 18 years, proposed by two regular members. Irregular members could be persons over 16 years of age, “of sound moral character who have a propensity for YMCA objectives but do not want to take any responsibility for themselves.” Regular and irregular members paid a membership fee. Regular members had the right to wear a YMCA badge.<sup>250</sup>



250 *Pravila HZMLJ u Jugoslaviji [Rules of the YMCA in Yugoslavia]*, (Beograd: Izdanje Nacionalnog saveza HZMLJ u Jugoslaviji, 1935); LPL, YMCA Headquarters Belgrade, Yugoslavia to Council of Foreign Relations, CFR DOC 1/51-100, CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, December 1935, 39 – 89 Bulletin No. 51 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia by P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters.



In July 1935, as representatives of the National Executive Committee, Branislav Kovandžić and Percy Sitters attended the meetings of the YMCA World's Committee Meetings in Geneva. On that occasion, the Yugoslav YMCA was accepted as a member of the World's Alliance of YMCAs.<sup>251</sup> The next National Committee conference was held in Belgrade in 1936.<sup>252</sup>

Dr. Marko Kostrenčić presided over the Annual YMCA Assembly in Belgrade on April 1937.<sup>253</sup> The Board members elected that year were Ljubica Jovanović, wife of Senator Miloje Ž. Jovanović, Vida Novak from Ljubljana, Dr. Dragutin Tomac, Dr. Egon Zahradka, Aleksandar Miličević, a high school principal from Požarevac, Slobodan Baranac, an inspector at the Ministry of Forestry and Mining, and a priest, Szabo, from Petrovgrad.<sup>254</sup> For the purpose of organizing the Assembly, they sought help from the Court Marshal's office, since they had received financial support for earlier conferences in 1935 and 1936 (10.000 dinars each). On April 28, 1937, their appeal was accepted and Prince Pavle approved 10,000 dinars for that year.<sup>255</sup> During 1937, two YMCA conferences from Zagreb and Ljubljana were held in Bled with the same program. All delegates attending the conferences were guests of the Sitters couple. Lectures were held by P. H. Sitters, Kathleen Sitters and B. Kovandžić.<sup>256</sup>

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251 LPL, YMCA Headquarters Belgrade, Yugoslavia to Council of Foreign Relations, CFR DOC 1/51-100 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1935, 36-86, Bulletin No. 50. Summer bulletin about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia by P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters; Sitters, *op. cit.*, 25-26.

252 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101-200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1936-101 Bulletin No. 53 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia covering the period April to May received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade.

253 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101-200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1937, 29-129 Bulletin No. 56 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia Spring 1937 received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade.

254 AY, Court, 74-196-278; *Pravda*, April 5, 1937, 8; *Vreme*, April 5, 1937, 6.

255 AY, Court, 74-196-278.

256 „Konferencija članova Hrišćanske zajednice mladih ljudi iz Zagreba i Ljubljane na Bledu“ [“YMCA Members from Zagreb and Ljubljana Conference at Bled”], *Vreme*, October 29, 1937, 10.



A few days before the session of the National Alliance of YMCA's in November 1937, they asked the Court Marshal to arrange for Prince Pavle to receive them so they could thank him for his help and inform him about their work. The committee for the reception with Prince Pavle was comprised of: Dr. Stanko Miholić, assistant professor, University of Belgrade, Dr. Jakob Kelemina, professor of the University of Ljubljana, Dr. Marko Kostrenčić, former regional administrator, Zagreb, Vasa Lazarević, retired head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Belgrade, Dr. Vladeta Popović, prof. University of Belgrade, Ljubica D. Pešić,<sup>258</sup> Belgrade, Vida Novak, Ljubljana, Dr. Dragutin Tomac, law-

257 *Pravda*, April 5, 1937, 8.

258 Ljubica Pešić (around 1879–1945) was the daughter of Borko Todorović, director of the Trade Academy. She completed elementary school and high school for women in Belgrade. She passed the teacher's exam in 1897–98. She was the wife of Dušan Pešić, a division general, chief of staff of the Third Army at Corfu and editor of *Radnik*. Ljubica Pešić worked in cultural, humanitarian, and national associations. During the Balkan Wars, she worked in hospitals in Ćuprija and Belgrade. In World War I, after the country's occupation, she first crossed to Corfu and then went to Rome with her husband, who had been appointed as military attaché. There she established the committee for helping captured and interned Serbs at the end of 1917 along with Poleksija Todorović and Delfa Ivanić. After the war, she was active at the Circle of Serbian Sisters and wrote for its newspaper, *Vardar*. She was in the company's management and took part in all activities, and often wrote annual work reports that were read at the company's assemblies. She participated in the Congress of the Unity of Slavic Women who organized the Circle in Belgrade in 1933. From 1924 to 1927 she was also an administrative member of the Maternity Association, precisely at a time when this company raised its new home for infants. She collaborated and wrote in the *Jugoslovenska žena* (1931–34) and other newspapers and magazines, and she also translated from German. She was awarded the Cross of the Ministry of War and the Cross of the Red Cross.

yer, Zagreb, Aleksandar Milićević, director of the Požarevac high school, Krsta Andjus, Belgrade, Jordan Cvetković, senator, Niš, Josif Mihailović, renter, Skopje, Zora M. Bodi, Belgrade, Ljubica M. Ж. Jovanović, Belgrade, D. Levaj, pensionary, V. Kikinda, Dušan Simonović, Milorad Djordjević, clerk at the Agrarian Bank of Belgrade, Mihailo Jovanović, National Bank official, Belgrade, Dragos Radović, attorney, Belgrade, Slobodan Baranac, inspector of forestry and mining, Miloš Parenta, rector, retired, Sitters, and B. Kovandžić.<sup>259</sup> As in previous years, the members of the National Alliance were mainly retired government officials, Orthodox priests, wives of generals and former ministers, university professors, rentiers, doctors, lawyers, civil servants, etc.<sup>260</sup>

At the annual assembly in 1938, honorary presidents Kosta Luković and Theo Turek, the German evangelical pastor from Belgrade, as well as Milenko Janošević,<sup>261</sup> head of the Department of Secondary Education of the Ministry of Education, were elected honorary presidents. Tasa Marković, Dušan Tanasković, Aleksa Stanojević, Maria Rajković, Miodrag Popović, Mate Davidović, and Valter Bela were elected to the new administration. Jelena Šipetić, Ilija Djaković, and Radomir Dimitrijević<sup>262</sup> entered the Supervisory Board. A day earlier, they asked the royal marshal to have Prince Pavle send an envoy, but they were told that envoys were not sent to regular annual assemblies.<sup>263</sup> In April 1938, Prime Minister Milan Stojadinović received, on behalf of the National Association of the YMCA, Dr. Stanko Miholić, B. M.

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259 „Sednica Nacionalnog saveza HZMLj” [“YMCA National Assembly Session”], *Pravda*, November 26, 1937, 18; AY, Court, 74–196–278.

260 LPL, Bell 217, ff. 260–1, Jugoslav [Yugoslav] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin (No. 35. October – November 1931) by Percy Henry Smart Sitters, Anglican chaplain in Belgrade, Yugoslavia.

261 Milenko Janošević (1891–1964) completed the Seminary St. Save School (1901–1911). After graduating, Janošević entered the military service and, as a member of the infantry, passed the officer’s exam in the First Balkan War. He studied at Oxford from 1917 to 1921. After the war, he worked as a substitute teacher at the high school in Sremska Mitrovica, then as head of the Department of the Danube Banovina and principal of the Third Boy’s High School. He was editor-in-chief of *Srbadije*, a radical newspaper from 1923 to 1927 (*SBR*, 4, Novi Sad, 2009, 315). Janošević was the editor of *Hrišćanski život*, participated in the conference of the League of Churches in Sofia in 1933, was one of the founders of the Radical Social Party, and wrote with Voja Janić comments on the Constitution and laws of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

262 *Pravda*, January 31, 1938, 7.

263 AY, Court, 74–196–278.

Kovandžić, Vaso Lazarević, Miloš Parenta, and Voja Beleslin, as well as the participants of the YMCA student's conference in Selce on 15–27 April 1938.<sup>264</sup>

Annual assemblies were held for the next three years. At the beginning of 1939, the annual national conference was held in Belgrade and was attended by about 100 young people from the country.<sup>265</sup> The new board members were Zora M. Bodi, Lena Jovičić, lawyer Vojin Beleslin, Ivan Marković, and Pavle Marcikić. A letter was sent from the Assembly to President Vasa Lazarević, who was in Vienna for medical treatment.<sup>266</sup>

In April the following year, the annual assembly was held in Novi Sad. Present, on behalf of the National Alliance, were Slobodan Baranac, Zora M. Bodi, Dušan Simonović, Dr. Stanko Miholić, Percy Sitters, a priest of the Reformed Church named Sekelj, as well as the president of the Belgrade YMCA, Krsta Andjus and vice-president, Radovan Vraneš. The assembly was chaired by Dr. Stanko Miholić. In the discussion, the delegates expressed the desire that the Association influence its branches focus on work with craftsmen and workers.<sup>267</sup> At the session of the National Association of the YMCA on July 2, 1940, Stanko Miholić<sup>268</sup> was elected President. The last regular assembly was held in Belgrade in February 1941.<sup>269</sup>

Holding conferences in the interior of the country also fell into the hands of the YMCA. YMCA conferences at the Reformed Church in Feketić were held twice, in November 1932 and 1939. In both cases, the director of the National Association, Sitters and Branislav Kovandžić were present,

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264 AY, Milan Stojadinović, 37–25–198.

265 LPL, CFR DOC 1/201–310, CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, June 1939 C.F.R. 201, Bulletin No. 61. Yugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade marked "Private and Confidential", June 1939.

266 „Skupština Hrišćanske zajednice mladih ljudi" ["YMCA Assembly"], *Pravda*, January 30, 1939, 6.

267 *Vreme*, January 28, 1940, 11; „Godišnja skupština Nacionalnog saveza H. Z. M. Lj." ["Annual Assembly of the YMCA National Alliance"], *Vreme*, April 24, 1940, 10.

268 „Sednica Nacionalnog saveza Hrišćanske zajednice" ["Session of the YMCA National Alliance"], *Vreme*, July 2, 1940, 9. The attendees were Dr. Stanko Miholić, Engineer Krsta Andjus, Senior Advisor to the Ministry of Forests and Mines Slobodan Baranac, trader Ljuba Saračević, Cassation Judge Tasa Marković, Zora Bodi, trader Dušan Simonović, priest M. Has, P. Sitters and Secretary B. Kovandžić.

269 *Pravda*, February 3, 1941, 6.

as well as the supreme senior of the Reformed Church, Sandor Agoston.<sup>270</sup> Guests, representatives of the YMCA from Romania and Hungary<sup>271</sup> also attended. During 1940, conferences were held in Pačir for YMCA members in the Reformed Church centers, headed by Bishop Agoston. The second conference was held in Murska Sobota in early 1941.<sup>272</sup>

At the end of the thirties, the practice of working in sections, units, and clubs was developed, and so there were sections for students,<sup>273</sup> high school pupils, craftsmen and merchants, and farmers,<sup>274</sup> and there was also a department for education, a society for the study of the Holy Scriptures, a debate club, a library, a reading room, cinema, radio, café, sports club, tourist club, photo club, chess club, cub scouts, boy scouts, summer camp, a publishing section, a social dance nights section, etc. In the high school section, debates were held in which individuals were chosen to defend or oppose a certain topic, involving the other pupils in the discussion.<sup>275</sup> Special conferences were held for high school students, members of the YMCA, from various parts of the country where they had lectures by Ilija Beleslin, retired priest, Jovan Rapajić retired deputy bishop, Dr. Borislav Lorenc, university

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- 270 LPL, Bulletin No. 40, November–December 1932, Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242–352 Papers concerning Rev. Percy Henry Smart Sitters, director of the Young Men’s Christian Association, Yugoslavia, and correspondence with Douglas; CFR DOC 1/101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, June 1938 59–159 Bulletin No. 58 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade marked “Private and Confidential”
- 271 „Konferencija HZMLj u Vojvodini” [“YMCA Conference in Vojvodina”], *Pravda*, December 2, 1932, 5; „Konferencija Hrišćanske Zajednice Mladih Ljudi pri Reformovanoj crkvi u Jugoslaviji” [“The Conference of the YMCA at the Reformed Church in Yugoslavia”], *Pravda*, November 12, 1939, 9.
- 272 LPL, CFR DOC 1/201–310, CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, January 1941, 7–207, Yugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin No. 66 received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters, Belgrade.
- 273 B. Kovandžić led a group of students who met on Saturday night and there were about 60, LPL, Bulletin No. 40, November–December 1932, Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242–352.
- 274 Sitters, *op. cit.*, 25–26; LPL, Bell 217, ff. 260–1, Yugoslav [Yugoslav] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin No. 35 October – November 1931 by Percy Henry Smart Sitters, Anglican chaplain in Belgrade, Yugoslavia.
- 275 *Vreme*, March 6, 1940, 11.

professor, Miloš Parenta, Nikola Krstić, and others.<sup>276</sup> In November 1940, at the invitation of Bishop Nikolaj, 80 young high school students spent three days at the Blagoveštenje Monastery. They came from 14 towns from different parts of the country, from Petrovgrad, Niš, Skopje, Sarajevo, and others. The aim of this meeting was to “teach young people the work of the YMCA and discuss and solve problems in their lives from a Christian point of view.” The meeting was opened by Jovan (Branko) Rapajić. B. Kovandžić and R. Djurdjević described the purpose of the YMCA and the qualities that young people needed to have to become leaders and this was followed by discussions. Particularly distinguished among the boys was Ivan Bešlić, the son of Transport Minister Nikola Bešlić.<sup>277</sup>

It is impossible to determine today how many members of the YMCA there really were. According to Percy Sitters, at the beginning of 1928, there were four centers with 430 members,<sup>278</sup> and at the end of 1928, there were about 1,500 members and 34 associations.<sup>279</sup> In 1930, there were 22 centers with more than 2,000 members; in the middle of 1932, there were 35 associations with 3,424 members, 1,724 juniors, 1,607 seniors, and 93 students. The number of members active in the Bible teaching program that year was 1,557, in education classes 1,720, etc. The number of members who attended religious classes weekly was 1,994 and social meetings 2,268.<sup>280</sup> In early 1935, there were still 35 associations<sup>281</sup> and in 1940 there were more than

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276 „Konferencija srednjoškolaca članova Hrišćanske zajednice mladih ljudi” [“Conference of High School Students of the YMCA”], *Vreme*, February 3, 1940, 11; February 17, 1940, 11; March 30, 1940, 13.

277 LPL, CFR DOC 1/201–310, CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, January 1941, 7–207, Yugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin No. 66 received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters, Belgrade.

278 LPL, Headlam Papers MS 2642 ff. 53–6, Sitters (Kathleen), wife of Sitters (Percy Henry Smart), Chaplain in Belgrade, Correspondence with the Bishop of Gloucester.

279 LPL, Bulletin No. 26, March 23, 1929 Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Lambeth Conference 2, 270–271.

280 LPL, Bulletin No. 38, June 1932, Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242–352.

281 LPL, Bulletin No. 32, December 1930, Bulletin No. 45 May–June 1934, Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242–352.

50 associations, with about 50,000 members.<sup>282</sup> According to some other information, the YMCA in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1938 had 53 branches with 9,420 members.<sup>283</sup>

### Staff

In addition to Percy Sitters, the British YMCA staff, at the beginning of the 1930s, consisted of Reginald Taggart, who was secretary-general of the Belgrade Association, and two volunteers, Kathleen Sitters, and Ruth Trouton, who headed the women's and girls' section and the women's branch of the student section. The Yugoslav staff in Belgrade and other centers comprised six paid and 30 honorary secretaries.<sup>284</sup> Taggart held classes in English,<sup>285</sup> organized debates and work in camps, prepared the choir, and his efforts resulted in an increased interest in music and church recitals on gramophone records, which were usually held on Sunday nights. Taggart also conducted a group of young people, who spoke English and met with them on Sunday afternoons for discussions,<sup>286</sup> plus two groups of high school students he dubbed the World Fraternity Club and Enthusiasm (Polet), and they also had regular weekly meetings. Taggart and his wife left Belgrade in 1937, after 11 years.<sup>287</sup>

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282 Sitters, *op. cit.*, 25–26.

283 Muukkonen, *op. cit.*, 176. The data cited by the author provides a combination of data from the World's Alliance Statistics for 1855–1909, 1937, 1938 and cannot be considered completely reliable.

284 LPL, "The Y. M. C. A. in Yugoslavia" April 1930 Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 280.

285 R. Taggart gave English lessons according to the for "Dent's method." *Pravda*, January 12, 1937, 21.

286 LPL, Bulletin No. 29, December 1, 1929. Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Lambeth Conference 2, 276–277.

287 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1937, 29–129 Bulletin No. 56 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia, Spring 1937 received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade marked "Private and Confidential"; "Y. M. C. A. Change", *SSH*, 7, 1937, 3.



*Priest Kosta Luković and Queen Maria at a ceremony in the YMCA in 1933.*<sup>288</sup>

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In early 1926 there was a plan for priest Kosta Luković<sup>289</sup> to be admitted to the YMCA as a professional staffer. Luković was willing to accept this function, but the problem arose over the issue of his payment. Luković could not work in the YMCA as a volunteer, because he had to support a family with three children, and the YMCA had problems with securing regular income for him. Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović felt that Luković's involvement with the YMCA would serve the best possible interests of young people in the country, especially students, over which the SOC had little influence. Bishop Nikolaj told Sitters that it is possible to find a way for Luković to remain

288 *Vreme*, January 2, 1933, 8.

289 Konstantin Luković was born in Kraljevo in 1892. He finished elementary school in Kragujevac in 1903, Seminary of St. Sava in Belgrade in 1912, University of Cambridge (School of Philosophy-History) 1919. Joined in the army in 1912 and was promoted to the rank of sergeant. He volunteered in the 5<sup>th</sup> overland infantry regiment and later in the military station and the military hospital in Tetovo. He was substitute teacher of a theology of the Seminary St. Sava in Belgrade. Due to the war and suspension of work in seminaries, he was appointed as a teacher in Tetovo, and as a deacon (supervised in Skopje in 1915), he remained as a teacher until the evacuation. Luković was released from the army and sent to England for studies. By the decision of Metropolitan Dimitrios in 1919, he was appointed a deacon of the Cathedral Church in Belgrade. In 1920 he was decorated with the Order of St. Sava V, the red belt and the rank of an archdeacon. Luković was appointed as an official in the Synod in 1923 and later he was the priest of the St. Micheal's Cathedral Church in Belgrade and Archpriest of Belgrade. AY, Ministry of Religion of the Kingdom of SCS, 69–231–357; *Šematizam Istočno-pravoslavne srpske Patrijaršije po podacima iz 1924. godine* [*Shematicism of the Eastern Orthodox Serbian Patriarchy according to data from 1924*], (Sremski Karlovci: Sv. Arh. Sinod, 1925), 5.



in contact with the SOC (in case he wanted to return to the SOC after a period of service in the YMCA) by being appointed priest at the Royal Court. In that case, his obligations would require an hour or two of his time in the morning, leaving him plenty of time for other obligations. Sitters felt that Luković's appointment to the YMCA, as a man with experience and sympathy for the Anglican Church and personal knowledge of university life in England, would yield far-reaching results for the friendship between the two churches. There was also an option for Luković to be paid by the Serbian Orthodox Church, but it was quickly rejected because Patriarch Dimitrije did not have any such funds at his disposal, but had to get the government's permission for any payments above 5,000 dinars (about 18 pounds). The question was whether the Patriarch was willing to make the sacrifice of giving up his assistant (at that time Luković was a clerk in the Synod), even though Bishop Nikolaj and the others were aware that the Patriarch would not make an issue of this. In June 1926, there was still a correspondence going on regarding Luković's salary, but he did not end up working in the YMCA.<sup>290</sup>

Among the paid secretaries was Branislav Kovandžić, who "worked tirelessly," which, as Sitters reported to the central London office, was "unusual for the Yugoslavs." In addition to his other obligations, he also served as a translator for Sitters (who, unlike his wife, never learned the Serbian language). He attended conferences in Czechoslovakia and Geneva,<sup>291</sup> he stayed on several occasions in England,<sup>292</sup> and the Sitters couple socialized with his family on a personal basis.<sup>293</sup>

One of the youngest secretaries, whom, in his reports, Sitters referred to as Miško, was the leader of a group of young people who, like him, were Protestants from the north of the country. Many of these young men and women came

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290 LPL, Douglas 88, ff. 72, 74–6, Sitters, Rev. Percy Henry Smart, director of the Young Men's Christian Association, Yugoslavia. 1926–1932, Letters to Bishop J. H. Greig.

291 LPL, Council on Foreign Relations, CFR DOC 1/51–100 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1935 36–86 Bulletin No. 50. Summer bulletin about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia by P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters.

292 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1936101. Bulletin No. 53 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia covering the period April to May received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade.

293 LPL, Bulletin No. 26, March 23, 1929. Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Lambeth Conference 2, 270–271.

to Belgrade looking for work or to study, and many were isolated. He took care of them and worked on organizing them.<sup>294</sup> In addition to those who stayed in the capital for a long time, from the second half of the thirties the Belgrade association introduced the practice of offering occasional lodging for young people who wanted to visit the capital but had no friends there or any money.<sup>295</sup>

The Sitters had high hopes for Jovan Crnogorac, who, in the second half of the 30s, was a young assistant secretary in the Belgrade Association. The Sitters wrote that when he finished his studies he would be able to dedicate himself fully to work in the YMCA, to be a successful leader and that he was a born organizer.<sup>296</sup> Crnogorac was at a training school in Prague<sup>297</sup> and also in Stockholm at the World Committee meetings of 1938.<sup>298</sup>

Jovan Crnogorac was one of the three boys who was sent to the United States in 1931. P. H. Sitters, the national advisory secretary, and director of the YMCA, sent a letter to the education minister on June 3, 1931 informing him that the YMCA World Conference in the United States and Canada would be organized in late July (Toronto, July 27 and Cleveland, August 4 to August 9, 1931), intended for young people who would be the future leaders working with youth. They had planned to send three high school students from Bel-

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294 LPL, Bulletin No. 32, December 1930, Douglas 51-Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242-352; Bell 217, ff. 260-1, Jugoslav [Yugoslav] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin (No. 35. October - November 1931) by Percy Henry Smart Sitters, Anglican chaplain in Belgrade, Yugoslavia.

LPL, Bulletin No. 38, June 1932, CFR DOC 1/201-310, CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, June 1939 C.F.R. 201, Bulletin No. 61. Jugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A.

295 LPL, Bulletin No. 38, June 1932, CFR DOC 1/201-310, CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, June 1939 C.F.R. 201, Bulletin No. 61. Jugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A.

296 LPL, "Report of the Work of the Y. M. C. A. in Yugoslavia", November 1936, Private & Confidential, Douglas 51-Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 329.

297 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101-200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1936, 101. Bulletin No. 53 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia covering the period April to May received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade.

298 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101-200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, June 1938 59-CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, C.F.R. 159 Bulletin No. 58 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade marked "Private and Confidential".

grade, members of the YMCA: Vladimir Dedijer,<sup>299</sup> secretary of the International Brother Club, Jovan Crnogorac, head of the boys' department, and Borivoje Dedijer,<sup>300</sup> a member of the International Brother Club. The US branch of the

299 Vladimir Dedijer (1914–1990), lawyer, journalist, historian. He attended high school in Belgrade. After returning from the United States, he enrolled at the School of Law in Belgrade and as a student began to write for the Belgrade daily, *Politika*. Upon the outbreak of the civil war in Spain, he was a reporter in 1936. He also engaged in translation. He became a member of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY) in 1939. His father, Jevto Dedijer, was an assistant professor of geography at Belgrade University to Professor Jovan Cvijić and he died in 1918. In addition to Vladimir, Jovan had two more sons, Borivoje-Bora and Stevan, who was a nuclear physicist and social theorist and lived in Sweden as of 1961. *Srpski biografski rečnik*, 3, (Novi Sad: Matica srpska, 2007), 132–134.

300 In 1928, P. H. Sitters intervened in England on behalf of Bora Dedijer at the request of his mother, Milica Dedijer (Resavska Steet 11, Belgrade) and Slavko Grujić's wife, Mabel. Sitters wrote the boy was 12 years old and was the youngest son of Mrs. Dedijer, a well-known and respected Belgrade resident. He said that she managed the Serbian Girls' House, which was conducted by the Circle of Serbian Sisters (Kolo srpskih sestara). According to Sitters, Milica Dedijer told him that her husband was in the Serbian diplomatic service and that before the war he was in the Legation to Bern (in 1917). When the war broke out, Dedijer fell ill and died trying to reach Bosnia (Jevto Dedijer died in 1918 in a hospital in Sarajevo, *emphasis added*). Sitters further wrote that Bora was born in 1914 (he was born in 1915 or 1916, *emphasis added*) and that his mother, in the difficult circumstances, agreed in 1927 to offer Dr. Robertson (Brent House, Dartford) to take her son and educate him. The mother thought when she agreed that he was going to keep it until the end of university education, but Sitters said that there seemed to be some misunderstanding. The mother then wrote to her friend Mabel Grujić, an American married to a Serbian diplomat with whom her husband had worked in Bern, who knew the family and asked for her advice and help. M. Grujić wrote to Sitters and asked if she knew anyone who would receive Bora Dedijer for schooling. Sitters went to Dartford and saw Dr. Robertson and Bora and he had separate conversations with them. The doctor spoke very highly of Bora and his character and abilities. He said the boy was very intelligent and would return all the money invested for his education. Robertson hoped that Bora would become his secretary and help him in his practice, but the boy did not want to be a doctor but an architect. Sitters continued to write that he was impressed by the boy, who was attractive, intelligent, loved England and wanted to stay. He told Dr. Robertson he would immediately look for someone who was ready to receive the boy. Robertson was willing to arrange for the boy to stay with his housekeeper during his vacation unless another solution was found. Mrs. Dedijer was unable to pay for her boy's schooling, according to Sitters, because she was supported by her parents and two sons. LPL, Headlam Papers MS 2642 ff. 59–60, Sitters (Percy Henry Smart), Chaplain in Belgrade, 1928, Memorandum on B. Dedier.

There is tiny information about Bora Dedijer and they are often contradictory. The dates of his birth are mentioned as 1914, 1915 or 1916, and his birthplace was either Niš or Belgrade. Stevan Dedijer wrote that Bora was born in 1916 in Belgrade and that in 1923 he was eight years old. His older brothers, Vladimir (1914–1990) and Stevan (1911–2004) wrote that he had gone to England when he was nine or twelve years old and that he stayed there for three or six years. Both quote the fact that he was staying in a Quaker family in England, but while Vladimir mentioned Marie and Frank Penman, Stevan men-

YMCA promised to take care of delegates from the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, but they needed material resources for the trip, so they asked for half of 15,000 dinars because the rest had already been secured. The ministry informed them on June 12, 1931, that there was no way they could help.<sup>301</sup> However, the delegation managed to go to the conference and stay in the US and Canada for three months. In addition to the Dedijer brothers and Jovan Crnogorac, other members were Aleksa Varga and Dr. Egon Zahradka from Zagreb.<sup>302,303</sup>



*Delegates of the Belgrade YMCA at the World Conference in the USA and Canada: Vladimir Dedijer (17), Jovan Crnogorac (17), and Borivoje Dedijer (16).<sup>303</sup>*

tioned the Richardson family in Sidcot, England. They only agreed that he attended Sidcot School of Quakers. He graduated from high school in Belgrade in 1933 and was exempted from oral exams as an excellent student. („Završetak mature u Beogradu” [“Completion of graduation in Belgrade”], *Pravda*, May 25, 1933, 6) Both Vladimir and Stevan Dedijer wrote that in the 1930s Bora worked on the construction of a railroad in Bosnia. It seems that Bora, unlike his brothers, was not a member of the CPY. Vladimir Dedijer also said that Bora was an engineer and that during the war he had an appendix operation, but according to his mother’s story, the German doctors did not take appropriate measures, and he died in 1943. Stevan said that he only learned in 1945 that Bora had died. According to his allegations, Stevan Dedijer provided training in Italy and the United States and secured his employment with his connections with Mabel Grujić, who knew his father, Jevta Dedier from Bern. Stevan, however, also said that she had cooperated with the British Naval Intelligence and that he tried to recruit him in 1945. Vladimir Dedijer, *My Beloved Land*, (London, Simon and Schuster New York, 1961), 106, 135, 136, 193, 278, 363; Stevan Dedijer, *Autobiografija. Špijun kojeg smo voljeli* [Autobiography. The Spy We Loved], (Zagreb: VBZ, 2011), 56, 62, 103, 156; Stevan Dedijer: *My Life of Curiosity and Insights: A Chronicle of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (Nordic Academic Press, 2010), 52, 100.

301 AY, Ministry of Education, 66–479–755.

302 „Povratak delegata Hrišćanske zajednice mladih ljudi iz Amerike” [“The Return of YMCA Delegates from America”], *Obzor*, October 2, 1931.

303 AY, Ministry of Education, 66–479–755.

Upon their return, the Sitters wrote that it was captivating to read letters about them that came from the YMCA secretary over the water. "The boys from Yugoslavia left an excellent impression in the United States," one of them wrote, and another said: "We were very pleased that one of your boys was in our boys' camp and we think he is an excellent representative of the YMCA. His attitude, behavior, and leadership made us proud of the Association. He spoke in English at our camp service on Sunday, and later he talked about the YMCA in Yugoslavia. Since we have some boys in the camp who are not members of the Association, he helped us in this way." The boy was Vladimir Dedijer, who at that time had started studying at the University and moved to the Student Section of the YMCA. According to the Sitters, Donald Lowrie had high hopes for him.<sup>304</sup>

The three young men submitted a report on their stay in the United States and Canada on December 29, 1931. It was concluded that they had adopted new concepts of work and the right purpose in the lives of young people.<sup>305</sup> In his memories, Vladimir Dedijer writes something quite different. He states that his involvement in the YMCA began when he started taking English classes with R. Taggart. Also, he was involved in the YMCA table tennis team. He was chosen, with his brother Bora and Jovan Crnogorac, to go to the Twelfth YMCA Congress and, according to his testimony, they had to cover some a portion of their own travel expenses. They spent two days in New York and later visited various YMCA camps in the United States before the opening of the conferences in Toronto and Cleveland. Bora Dedijer wrote a diary of the entire journey from the very start. When they arrived in the United States, they asked the YMCA representatives to allow them to meet with their brother Stevan, who was studying in the United States and whom they had not seen for a long time. Vladimir Dedijer wrote about being disappointed in the YMCA during his stay in the United States, but his testimony should be taken with a grain of salt because he wrote it thirty years later and in completely different

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304 LPL, Bell 217, ff. 260–1, Jugoslav [Yugoslav] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin No. 35. October – November 1931 by Percy Henry Smart Sitters, Anglican chaplain in Belgrade, Yugoslavia.

305 LPL, Bell 217, ff. 260–1, Jugoslav [Yugoslav] 268–9–Jugoslav [Yugoslav] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin No. 37, January–February 1932, 1931–2, by Percy Henry Smart Sitters, Anglican chaplain in Belgrade, Yugoslavia.

circumstances. Allegedly, his first disappointment happened during his tour of New York with an American student, when he learned that black boys who came by themselves could not stay at the YMCA hostel in which they had been accommodated, but were housed in a special hostel provided for them in Harlem. Dedijer then visited various camps, talked about Yugoslavia and played table tennis. He describes a camp at Lake Hamilton in New York, with about 80 boys, age 9 to 13 years old. The camp director was an energetic man, and the boys slept in cabins and each cabin was supervised by one student who done calisthenics with them. In these camps, certain duties were repeated day after day. He added that he had managed to gain some experience in boxing in one of the camps. He wrote that the conference was opened in Toronto and that there were 1,500 delegates from 47 countries and that everyone sang songs in their own languages. Then the conference moved to Cleveland where they were welcomed in a radio message by President Hoover. He experienced another disappointment when he and his brother Bora visited the Bible exhibition in various languages organized by the YMCA. When they came to the Bible in their own language they read the inscription: "Serbian: spoken in Austria-Hungary!" They were offended because that state had been non-existent for almost 13 years and they went to protest to the director of the YMCA, who promised that this would be corrected. In the office, they met with Professor Stefan Tsankov from Bulgaria, whom Dedijer did not like because he kept insisting that he tell him what his nationality was and he said he was Yugoslav. Also, he remembered his uncle, who had been killed by the Bulgarians. Dedijer also wrote that the German delegation behaved strangely during the Congress and sought to adopt a resolution on the revision of the Treaty of Versailles and the elimination of all humiliating clauses relating to the defeated nations, in particular, the issue of German responsibility for the First World War. The Germans succeeded in their demand and only the French opposed it. During the congress, he also saw a group that protested against the YMCA and when he talked to them, they told him that the YMCA was preaching one thing and doing another; that the board members were the richest people while millions of people were unemployed in the United States, that they were talking about equality, but discriminate against colored people, and so on. When they met up with their brother Stevan later, Dedijer mentioned that he told his brother

how they had offered him to study at Springfield College and become a YMCA preacher. He went on to say that he told his brother that he was confused and disappointed and that his decision not to continue his studies at the YMCA was largely influenced by his brother who did not believe in God. On return, they stayed in Paris for some time. When he returned to Belgrade, he looked up his Sunday school teacher, Miloš Parenta, and told him that he had returned from the United States free from any illusions because although Christian ethics did have value in practice, Christian organizations were not implementing it. He wondered why God tolerated so much injustice in the world and said that he no longer believed, after which, according to Dedijer, the old man cried because he had considered him as his best student.<sup>306</sup>

Vladimir Dedijer did not terminate all contacts with the YMCA immediately. He said himself that his first report as a London journalist in 1936 was sent by phone from the YMCA premises to Bloomsbury.<sup>307</sup> Namely, in January 1936, following the death of King George V, funerals and sorrow in England, reports appeared in the main newspapers in Belgrade, sent by Vladimir Dedijer. Sitters notes that everyone in the YMCA was proud because they were written by a young journalist who had long been their member and had spent many evenings with them at home. "It is wonderful to see how well he knows our country."<sup>308</sup> In addition, a year later, Dedijer stayed at the YMCA camp in Mlini and held lectures about his impressions from Spain.<sup>309</sup>

### Financing work

P. H. Sitters protested in a letter sent to *South Slav Herald* in 1934 because it called the YMCA an Anglo-American organization. He said that the

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306 Dedijer, *op. cit.*, 112, 135–147.

307 *Ibid.*, 190.

308 *Politika*, January 21, 1936, 9938, 1; January 22, 1936, 9939, and other; LPL, YMCA Headquarters Belgrade, Yugoslavia to Council of Foreign Relations, CFR DOC 1/51–100, CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, March 1936, 43–93 Bulletin No. 52 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia by P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters. Private and Confidential.

309 *Pravda*, August 1, 1937, 16. He also lectured on the same subject in EAYC. „Predavanje g. Dedijera u Englesko – američko – jugoslovenskom klubu” [“Lecture of Mr. Dedijer in the English - American - Yugoslav Club”], *Vreme*, February 24, 1937, 11.

center of the organization was in Geneva, that the YMCA in all countries was national, that all the leaders were local people, and that he himself only had an advisory role. The newspaper's editorial board responded with a remark that all the staff was being paid from London.<sup>310</sup> Namely, the English National Council did not just provide leadership to the Yugoslav YMCA. In addition to a one-time gift of 1,000 pounds (from the sale of equipment used on the Salonika front), they also subsidized its regular activities.<sup>311</sup> This money was managed in a special fund by Sitters personally. Assistance in managing the fund was provided by local secretaries and an honorary treasurer in England who was in charge of this job. Contributions increased every year and an additional 1,300 pounds was obtained through special gifts.<sup>312</sup>

The Yugoslav YMCA also received help from the Sussex-Surrey Division of the YMCA, which had decided to accept Sitters, their former secretary, as their representative when he went to Yugoslavia. Initially, they collected about 500 pounds a year to help his work in the Kingdom. Interest grew and this amount gradually increased over the years. The Irish YMCA, at a conference held in Belfast in 1926, also decided to accept Sitters as its representative abroad. Since then, several Irish associations had a very real and practical interest in the work of the Association in the Kingdom of the SCS.<sup>313</sup> The associations in Ealing, Forest Gate, Plymouth, Exeter, and so on, also saw Sitters as their representative and their members contributed to regular Yugoslav funds. Contributions were received from a large number of people from other parts of England.<sup>314</sup>

Distribution money in Yugoslavia was based on a policy of donations to local associations to help them with difficulties in their early years. However, the economic crisis and the crash of the pound made circumstances

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310 "Is the YMCA National or Not?" *SSH*, 8, June 16, 1934, 2.

311 *Vera i život*, 1, November 1924.

312 LPL, "The Y. M. C. A. in Yugoslavia" April 1930. Douglas 51—Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 280.

313 *Ibid.*

314 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1. October 1938, 66 – 166, Bulletin No. 59. Yugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade.



worse.<sup>315</sup> When Sitters took over, the English pound was worth about 500 dinars, and in March 1930 it was around 275. Donations were reduced, nominally and effectively. For 1930-1931, English contributions were reduced by around 300 pounds. This reduction led to the necessity of collecting more money in Yugoslavia, but the economic situation in the country was arduous. In a business report sent to the Overseas Department of the English National Council, Sitters said that *Politika* had announced that Belgrade was the poorest city in Europe and that 80 percent of its population was living below the minimum standard. Nevertheless, more than 600 pounds was received from various sources in the country during the financial year. In 1930 revenues amounted to a total of 1,831.4 pounds - the same amount as expenditures. Most of it was spent on salaries and other expenses (1,547 pounds), travel costs (107 pounds), training schools and conferences (58 pounds), social gatherings and propaganda (32 pounds), repairs and equipment (37 pounds), etc. All YMCA finances in Yugoslavia were conducted in dinars. A part of the money from abroad came through a subscription to a quarterly bulletin that Sitters had prepared on the work of the YMCA in Yugoslavia and sent to Great Britain.<sup>316</sup> By January 1941, they had issued 66 bulletins, at an average of three to four a year. Almost in each issue, the last paragraphs were dedicated to remembering the members of the YMCA outside the Kingdom of Yugoslavia who had helped their work, either through financial contributions or in other ways.<sup>317</sup>

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315 LPL, "The Y. M. C. A. in Yugoslavia" April 1930. Douglas 51-Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 280.

316 LPL, National Council of Y. M. C. A.'s Overseas Department. Yugoslavia Fund. April 1, 1929, to March 31, 1930, YMCA Headquarters Belgrade, Yugoslavia to Council of Foreign Relations, CFR DOC 1/51-100 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1935, 36 - 86, Bulletin No. 50. Summer bulletin about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia by P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters; CFR DOC 1/101-200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1936 C. F. R 111, Bulletin No. 54 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia covering the period October to November 1936, received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade marked "Private and Confidential."

317 LPL, Bell 217, ff. 260-1, Jugoslav [Yugoslav] 268-9 - Jugoslav [Yugoslav] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin No. 37, January-February 1932, 1931-2, by Percy Henry Smart Sitters, Anglican chaplain in Belgrade, Yugoslavia; CFR DOC 1/101-200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1936 C. F. R 111, Bulletin No. 54 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia covering the period October to November 1936, received from P. H. Sitters and

In addition, the couple spent each summer or autumn in England and Ireland, where they collected additional funds by holding lectures or screening films about Yugoslavia and YMCA deputation work.<sup>318</sup> In a report in the autumn of 1931, Sitters wrote: "For a moment, still, we have to look back to the days of our deputation in England (which already look far off); to the many occasions when we were showing films; to the many kindnesses shown to us and to the growing interest in the Yugoslav YMCA, for which we cannot thank you enough."<sup>319</sup>

In 1932, the Sitters visited Cork, Dublin, and Belfast, and had meetings with friends and members, and in Sussex, Brighton, Gilford and elsewhere, where they were assisted by the bishops of Gibraltar and Gilford.<sup>320</sup> During the years when they went to visit Ireland and England to raise money, in their absence, the work of the YMCA in the country suffered, so in 1934 the trip was omitted.<sup>321</sup> The Irish YMCA continued to send them contributions and when they skipped their visit, they were hoping at one point that the others would follow the Irish case so that there would no longer be nec-

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Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade marked "Private and Confidential"; CFR DOC 1/201-310, CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, June 1939 C.F.R. 201, Bulletin No. 61. Jugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade marked "Private and Confidential."

- 318 *Vera i život*, 6, June 1926; LPL, Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Lambeth Conference 2, 263-264, Bulletin No. 23, Y.M.C.A. April 20, 1928, 273, Bulletin No. 28, September 1929; Douglas 88, ff. 72, 74-6, 78-80, 187, 119-26, Sitters, Rev. Percy Henry Smart, director of the Young Men's Christian Association, Yugoslavia. 1926-1932, Letters to Bishop J. H. Greig; 2615-2650 - Headlam Papers, MSS - Manuscripts, MS 2649 ff. 126-8, 130, 142, 147. Sitters (Percy Henry Smart), Chaplain in Belgrade. Correspondence with the Bishop of Gloucester; CFR DOC 1/101-200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, June 1938, 59-159 Bulletin No. 58 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia received from P. H. Sitters and Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade marked "Private and Confidential"; CFR DOC 1/101-200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, Winter 1937.
- 319 LPL, Bell 217, ff. 260-1, Jugoslav [Yugoslav] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin No. 35. October - November 1931 by Percy Henry Smart Sitters, Anglican chaplain in Belgrade, Yugoslavia.
- 320 LPL, Bulletin, No. 39, Sept. 1932, Douglas 51-Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242-352.
- 321 LPL, Bulletin No. 45 May-June 1934, Douglas 51-Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242-352.

essary to leave work in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.<sup>322</sup> However, due to a lack of funding, they had to continue with deputations in the following years.

The YMCA also applied for assistance, money or travel allowance to various local state institutions and the Court. Prince Pavle often met their requests with cash contributions, as well as Queen Maria and Crown Prince Petar, Prime Minister Milan Stojadinović, as well as various ministries (religion, education, and transport).<sup>323</sup> In 1921, the YMCA was exempted from paying customs duties and taxes, and in the autumn of 1927, they asked the Ministry of Religion to exempt them from paying customs duties for goods imported as gifts from England.<sup>324</sup> Nevertheless, the Yugoslav YMCA never managed to become completely independent financially.

One of the criticisms that Branko T. Ilić voiced against the work of the YMCA referred to the fact that the YMCA was never under any kind of control and that it was not subordinated to any church so that nobody controlled its work.<sup>325</sup> However, the work of the YMCA was indeed monitored regularly and controlled. In addition to the quarterly reports from the Sitters, the Kingdom of SCS was visited by various delegations or individuals from abroad every year, from the UK central office (M. Waldegrave), as well as representatives of the Church of England and various Association bodies based in Geneva and from other parts of the world as well.<sup>326</sup>

During 1928, Indian sociologist Sharan Singh, who had close ties with the YMCA, arrived for a visit. They went to Stara Moravica and held several meetings.<sup>327</sup> Oliver H. McOwen and the Bishop of Guildford arrived in 1929.<sup>328</sup> At the end of 1930, Dr. Robert P. Wilder from the United States was on a trip to Belgrade and was a guest of James Wiles from the British and foreign bib-

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322 LPL, Bulletin No. 34, June 1931 Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242–352.

323 AY, Court, 74–196–278; Ministry of Education, 66–479–755; *Vreme*, April 10, 1940, 7.

324 AY, Ministry of Religion, 69–157–242.

325 Ilić, *op. cit.*, 9–10.

326 LPL, Douglas 88, ff. 74–6, Sitters, Rev. Percy Henry Smart, director of the Young Men's Christian Association, Yugoslavia. 1926–1932, Letters to Bishop J. H. Greig.

327 LPL, Bulletin No. 23, Y.M.C.A. April 20, 1928. Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Lambeth Conference 2, 262; *Vera i život*, 1, January 1927.

328 LPL, Bulletin No. 26, March 23, 1929, Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Lambeth Conference 2, 270–271.



Sharan Singh



Visit of an Indian Sociologists in the Belgrade's YMCA in 1928.

lical societies. Wilder later wrote about the successful work of this society, which increased the distribution of Bibles from 4,000 in 1919 to 40,000 in 1929. He expressed regret that he did not meet Sitters, but he learned from Taggart a lot about the work of the YMCA.<sup>329</sup> During 1931, they received a visit from Colonel Arthur Smith<sup>330</sup> and his wife. One of the most frequent guests was the priest John Douglas,<sup>331</sup> who first visited Belgrade in 1884 and came to the Kingdom about 20 times between the wars.<sup>332</sup>

329 Robert P. Wilder, "A Visit to Albania, Belgrade and St. Andrae", *News bulletin of the Near East Christian Council*, December 1930, 11–13. *News bulletin of the Near East Christian Council*, American Research Institute in Turkey, Istanbul Center Library, online in Digital Library for International Research Archive, Item #11262, Accessed: 07. 12. 2017, <http://www.dliir.org/archive/items/show/11262>

330 Colonel Arthur Smith was the commander of the Coldstream Guards regiment, a part of the infantry of the British Guard unit. He stayed in Belgrade with his wife, as a guest of the Sitters. They visited St. Michael's Cathedral Church and the YMCA, and the colonel also held a lecture on Palestine, accompanied by the Belgrade Choir conducted by K. Manojlovic, which sang several religious songs. In honor of Colonel Smith, a tea party was held at "Palas" Hotel. „Dolazak u Beograd pukovnika Artura Smita" ["Coming to Belgrade, Colonel Arthur Smith"], *Pravda*, March 9, 1931, 3; „Predavanje g. Artura Smita u HZMLji o Palestini" ["Lecture by Mr. Arthur Smith at the YMCA about Palestine"], *Pravda*, March 12, 1931, 4; LPL, Bulletin No. 33, March 1931, Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242–352.

331 John Albert Douglas (1868–1956) was a priest of the Church of England and the main figure in the relationship between the Anglican Church and Orthodoxy. From 1935 to 1945, he was Secretary. General of the Council of Foreign Affairs of the Church of England.

332 *Vreme*, April 23, 1940, 8; LPL, Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serbian Orthodox Church, ff. 299 Papers regarding Rev. Percy Henry Smart Sitters, director of the Young Men's Christian Association, Yugoslavia, and correspondence with Douglas.

In late March 1933, Sir A. Henry McMahon, president of the YMCA in England, visited the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, accompanied by his secretary, F. J. Chamberlain.<sup>333</sup> The last visit that Dr. John Mott, president of the World Alliance of YMCAs, made to Belgrade, took place in May 1933, on his way to Palestine,<sup>334</sup> and twenty days before the conference with the representatives of the Orthodox churches in Bucharest. Preparations for his visit began at the end of 1932, when Darius Alton Davis,<sup>335</sup> secretary of the World YMCA in Geneva, arrived in Belgrade. On the occasion of his arrival, Kathleen Sitters arranged a tea party attended by architect Milan Zloković, James Wiles, National Library Director Miloš Zečević, and others.<sup>336</sup> At a wider YMCA conference held in early May, two committees were selected to be in charge of this visit. The decision was made to invite Bishop Nikolaj to chair the welcoming committee.<sup>337</sup> For some reason, the chair finally turned out to be Prince Pavle Karadjordjević. On the occasion of the visit of J. Mott, on April 1, 1933, B. Kovandžić asked the Royal Marshal on behalf of P. H. Sitters for a reception with King Aleksandar. They were told that they could not receive Mott due



John Douglas

333 "Y.M.C.A Chiefs Coming", *SSH*, 24, 1933, 2.

334 Bjelajac, *op. cit.*, 309–316.

335 Darius A. Davis (1883–1970) was appointed as the representative of the YMCA in Europe after World War I, and from that position, he organized work in several countries. In 1925 he became Secretary of the National Council of Switzerland, and in 1931 he was appointed as Assistant Secretary - General of the World YMCA, based in Geneva, and held that position until the Second World War. Lawrence P. Gooley, "A Franklin County War Hero Without A Gun", August 16, 2010, Accessed: 19. 09. 2018, <https://www.adirondackalmanack.com/category/history/page/81>

336 *Pravda*, December 15, 1932, 16; April 5, 1936, 19.

337 The organization included Darinka Janošević, high school principal, Dr. Borislav Lorenc, Professor of the University, Ilija Beleslin, Tasa Marković, Inspector of the Ministry of Justice, Bozidar Zecević, President of the Red Cross Board of the Red Cross, Jovan (Branko) Rapajić, candidate of theology, Slavko Marjanović, candidate technician, R. S. Taggart, director of the YMCA and B. Kovandžić, Secretary of the National Alliance of YMCAs. *Pravda*, 5 February 1933, 3.

to the illness of the young Prince Andrej.<sup>338</sup> J. Mott was received by the Sitters couple, Vasa Lazarević, president of the YMCA in Belgrade, retired police commissioner, and Miloš Parenta. He spent three days in Yugoslavia, met with students, members of the YMCA, visited Prime Minister Milan Srškić<sup>339</sup> and Patriarch Varnava in Sremski Karlovci.<sup>340</sup> He also addressed the theologians in Sremski Karlovci, and spoke at a tea party at the YMCA on May 2, in the presence of Prince Pavle and Princess Olga.<sup>341</sup>

In 1934 P. H. Sitters hosted Harold Wallis Harman, president of the Institute of Brewing and Distilling in London and president of the London YMCA, who came to develop the Yugoslav rosemary oil industry.<sup>342</sup>



*F. J. Chamberlain*



*Sir A. Henry McMahon*

338 AY, Court, 74–196–278.

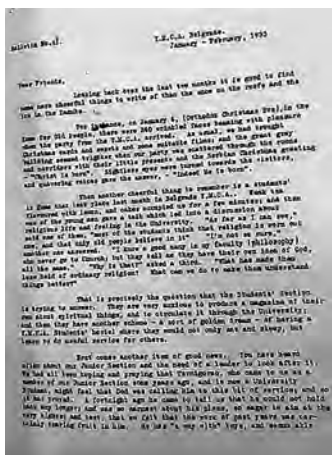
339 Milan Srškić (1880–1937), lawyer and politician, graduated from the Faculty of Law with a doctorate in Vienna. He worked as a lawyer in Sarajevo and actively participated in the struggle for Bosnian-Herzegovinian church-school autonomy. He was elected deputy in the Bosnian Parliament (1910). Srškić was a member of the Yugoslav Committee in London (1918) and Temporary National Representation, the President of the Provincial Government of BH, and member of the Constitutional Assembly. He was elected deputy in the 1923, 1925, 1927, and 1931 parliamentary elections. He was minister on several occasions and prime minister from July to November 1932 and from November 1932 to January 1934. As a Radical Party dissident, he was one of the founders of the Yugoslav National Party (JNS). „Smrt bivšeg pretседnika vlade dr. Milana Srškića“ [“The Death of Former Prime Minister Dr. Milan Srškić”], *Vreme*, April 13, 1937, 4.

340 John Mott was visiting the Patriarch accompanied by Metropolitan Dositej, Vicar Bishop Vikentije Vujić, P. H. Sitters, and B. Kovandžić. *Pravda*, May 3, 1933, 9; May 7, 1933, 20; “Y. M. C. A. Chief here”, *SSH*, 5, 1933, 2; LPL, Bulletin No. 41, January–February 1933, Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242–352.

341 LPL, Bulletin No. 43, May and June 1933, Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242–352.

342 He visited Metropolitan Dositej and the YMCA in Zagreb. He expressed satisfaction with the work of HZMLJ and he greeted him in Belgrade and Vasa Lazarević, vice president of the Belgrade Municipality. *Vreme*, May 4, 1934, 2.

Captain MacCormack, traveling secretary of the Officers of the Christian Union,<sup>343</sup> the Prosch couple from the YMCA World Committee in Geneva, Hilda Grenfell (Mrs. Arthur Grenfell), president of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) in G. Britain and a member of the Executive Board of the World YWCA, stayed in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia during 1936 in a visit to the YMCA. Hilda Grenfell and her husband would be in Belgrade again in 1939.<sup>344</sup> Sitters also received visits from two members of the British



*One of the bulletins that the Sitters sent regularly to the London headquarters*

- 343 LPL, "Report of the Work of the Y. M. C. A. in Yugoslavia", November 1936, Private & Confidential, Douglas 51-Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 329.
- 344 LPL, CFR DOC 1/51-100 YMCA Headquarters Belgrade, Yugoslavia to Council of Foreign Relations, CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, March 1936, 43-93, Bulletin No. 52 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia by P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters. Private and Confidential; CFR DOC 1/101-200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1936, 101 Bulletin No. 53 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia covering the period April to May received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade; CFR DOC 1/101-200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1936 C. F. R 111, Bulletin No. 54 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia covering the period October to November 1936, received from P. H. Sitters and Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade marked "Private and Confidential"; CFR DOC 1/201-310, CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, May 1940, 4-204, Bulletin No. 64. [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A.



Parliament and several other guests related to the work of the British YMCA. They went to see the University of Belgrade, a female student dorm and the canteen.<sup>345</sup> At the end of February 1939, a clergyman, Francis House, and his wife arrived from Geneva to hold a meeting of the Committee of the Student Christian Movement, attended by representatives from Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria. The YMCA headquarters in Belgrade was also visited in 1939 by the Rev. Maurice Beauchamp and again by John Douglas.<sup>346</sup>

### Patrons and Protectors

In 1924, Crown Prince Petar, the firstborn son of King Aleksandar Karadjordjević, was chosen as the protector of the YMCA. P. H. Sitters pointed out on several occasions that since Princess Olga had become the president of the women's section in 1928 and since Prince Pavle had taken over the presidency of the National Committee of the YMCA, they had enormous progress in their work. Success, therefore, was achieved only when the royal family took interest in the YMCA.<sup>347</sup> In addition to Prince Pavle and Princess Olga, Queen Maria became the High Protectors of the Young Women's Christian Association (YMCW), as a branch of the YMCA. The Queen received the Sitters couple for the first time on March 28, 1927, and this audience lasted about 40 minutes without anyone else being present. The Queen congratulated them on three-year work in the Kingdom of SCS.<sup>348</sup> A new visit to the



- 345 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1937, 29–129 Bulletin No. 56 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia Spring 1937 received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade marked "Private and Confidential."
- 346 LPL, CFR DOC 1/201–310, CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, June 1939 C.F.R. 201, Bulletin No. 61. Jugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade marked "Private and Confidential."
- 347 LPL, April 1930, "The Y. M. C. A. in Yugoslavia", Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Lambeth Conference 2, 280; Persi Sitters, *op. cit.*, 25–26.
- 348 LPL, Headlam Papers MS 2642 ff. 61–6, Report of a visit to Yugoslavia by McNeice (John Frederick), Bishop of Cashel and Waterford, and Sitters (Percy Henry Smart), Chaplain in Belgrade.



Royal Court followed in March 1929, and on that occasion Queen Maria allowed the Sitters to bring with them two members, a Serbian boy from Belgrade and an ethnic Hungarian boy from Subotica. This was the first delegation received by five-year-old Crown Prince Petar. He was given a photo album, prepared by R. Taggart, from the summer camp in Mlini, for which King Aleksandar donated two tents.<sup>349</sup> The same or a similar album was later also given to Prince Pavle, and it has been preserved in the Royal Court collection of the Yugoslav Archive.

In December 1929 they had a meeting with Princess Olga, who had been following their work. That year Sitters was also received by General Petar Živković, prime minister of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, who expressed satisfaction with the work of the YMCA and offered his assistance. In February 1930, the Sitters ate lunch with Prince Pavle and Princess Olga.<sup>350</sup> On May 30, 1930, Sitters asked to be received by King Aleksandar before departing for England for four months.<sup>351</sup> There is no confirmation whether they met and what they talked about, but Sitters wrote that King Aleksandar had expressed a desire to see their spread throughout the country.<sup>352</sup>

Sitters also maintained contacts with Belgrade Mayor Milan Nešić, who promised assistance in providing space for playgrounds.<sup>353</sup> Significant support also came from Živojin A. Lazić,<sup>354</sup> assistant Minister of Internal Affairs. He gave a favorable opinion on



Живојин А. Лазић

349 LPL, Bulletin No. 26, March 23, 1929, Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Lambeth Conference 2, 270-271.

350 *Vera i život*, 1, February 1930; 2, March 1930; 3, April 1930.

351 AY, Court, 74-196-278

352 LPL, April 1930, "The Y. M. C. A. in Yugoslavia", Douglas 51-Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 280

353 LPL, Bulletin No. 32, December 1930, Douglas 51-Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242-352

354 Živojin (Žika) Lazić (1876-1958) was head of the Department of Public Security of the Ministry of the Interior (1919-1919), Deputy Minister of the Interior, the first Ban of the Vardar Banovina (1929-1932) and the Minister of the Interior of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1932-1934). After World War II, he was allowed to leave Yugoslavia. He died in

the work of the YMCA, on October 9, 1929, and as for Sitters, he said he was working on acquainting the English people with the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.<sup>355</sup> When he left Belgrade in November 1929 and assumed the position of Ban of the Vardar Banovina, Sitters hosted a tea party in his honor and thanked him for all his help and gave him a present. Lazić replied that he valued the work of the YMCA on the moral and physical education of young people, on learning about the fatherland and spreading the love for the king. On that occasion, he said that proof of how much he and his wife valued the work of the YMCA was that they had allowed both of their sons to spend time with them. They did this because they believe that the YMCA prepared young people for life in the best way. Kathleen Sitters gave Mrs. Lazić a book by Jelena Lazarević, entitled *English Women among our People*.<sup>356,357</sup>

An annual banquet was held in the glass hall of the restaurant “Srpski



*Prince Pavle and Princess Olga at the YMCA banquet in March 1930.*<sup>357</sup>

kralj” (The Serbian King), on March 18, 1930, for the delegates from all the YMCA centers in Yugoslavia, in the presence of Prince Pavle, the president of the National Committee, and Princess Olga. The banquet was attended by

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Canada. Stevan Dedijer says that Žika Lazić worked for the Communists during the war. Dedijer, *Autobiografija*, 77.

355 AY, Ministry of Internal Affairs, 14-61-179-186.

356 LPL, Bulletin No. 29, December 1, 1929, Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Lambeth Conference 2, 276-277; *Vreme*, November 17, 1929, 7.

357 *Vreme*, March 20, 1930, 3.

Justice Minister Milan Srškić, US Envoy John Dyneley Prince,<sup>358</sup> British Envoy Neville Meyrick Henderson,<sup>359</sup> Deputy Foreign Minister Luj Bakotić, Bishops Dositej, and Mardarije, Ret. Minister Voja Janić, Svetislav Hodjera, head of the Office of the Prime Minister, Lazar Marčetić, director of the Trade Academy from Niš, D. Tomac, Chair of the Board of the Zagreb YMCA, Miloš Parenta, Former Rector of the School of Theology in Belgrade, and others. On that oc-

358 Dr. John D. Prince (1868–1945) was the US Envoy in Yugoslavia from 23 February 1926 to 31 August 1932. (*SSH*, 1/1932, 2) Percy Sitters received a letter from the English chapel in Copenhagen informing him that US deputy Prince was an avid church activist and lay reader. LPL, Douglas 88, ff. 72, 74–6, 78–80, 187, 119–26, Sitters, Rev. Percy Henry Smart, director of the Young Men's Christian Association, Yugoslavia. 1926–1932, Letters to Bishop J. H. Greig.

359 Neville M. Henderson (1882–1942) was the British Envoy in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia from 1929 to 1935. From the moment he arrived in Belgrade in 1929, Henderson, in his own words, invested “the utmost effort” to promote British propaganda in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. He considered Yugoslavia as the only one among all the post-war states formed on the ruins of the Habsburg monarchy, which could be “called to play the most important role in future international relations.” At the same time, he assessed that the influence of Great Britain in this country was “considerably less significant than it should be.” It did not take much time for him to conclude that in Yugoslavia there was a very widespread belief that Great Britain was “too preoccupied with its own non-European problems, to pay attention to a country that, as a former war ally and a small rising future force in the Balkans, and thinks it deserves such attention.” On the other hand, he thought that King Aleksandar would be extremely pleased with greater convergence of Yugoslavia with Britain. According to Nevil Henderson's estimates for the British Legation in Belgrade, a serious “source of discomfort” was “critical and often biased inscriptions” about Yugoslavia in the British press. Especially dissatisfaction arose from articles about the situation in Yugoslavia after the proclamation of King Aleksandar's dictatorship, printed in the London *Times*, which in Yugoslavia was considered an “interpreter of the enlightened part of British public opinion”. In his 1931 report from Yugoslavia, Henderson noted that in February a real scandal arose regarding an article about King Aleksandar's visit to Zagreb and Serbian-Croatian relations in Yugoslavia. In 1932, according to a British MP, the *Times* “mitigated its criticism at the expense of the current regime,” that is, the monarchist dictatorship of King Aleksandar in Yugoslavia. However, according to Henderson's estimates, an “unscrupulous campaign against Yugoslavia” was launched at the same time in a series of other British newspapers, dominated by the *Sunday Express* and the *Daily Express*. That, as the British Envoy informed his superiors, has left “a very unfavorable impression” on Yugoslav public opinion, noting that it “has not yet learned what freedom of press means.” Biljana Šimunić – Bešlin, „Grejs Elison i Karadjordjevići” [“Grace Ellison and the Karadjordjevićs”], *Novovekovne srpske dinastije u memoaristici* [*Modern Age Serbian Dynasties in Memoir Writing*], ed. Petar Krestić, (Beograd: Istorijski institut, 2007), 177–191.

casion, P. H. Sitters thanked the Royal Government for the assistance provided to the YMCA, and especially Voja Janić,<sup>360</sup> on services rendered while he was Minister of Religion, and Boža Maksimović, Minister of Education, who had issued a decree to teachers to develop among the pupils a movement to join the YMCA.<sup>361</sup> Vladislav Kalogjera, a nephew of an Old Catholic bishop from Zagreb, read a telegram of greeting to His Majesty the King. After the telegram was read, a “symbolic act of Christian brotherhood was performed”.



*Neville Meyrick Henderson*

On a round board decorated with greenery, a big candle represented the light of Christ. Five banners with the national tricolor were lowered and merged with the big candle and five others representing the continents of the world. As the central candle was lit, the light in the hall was extinguished and the board with the candles was brought before Prince Pavle. While quotes from the Bible were being read, the Prince lit up five candles in the order in which the YMCA was spread throughout the world. Then the delegates of some of the centers from the country came in and lit candles that represented their organizations, and then the fire was passed on from one banquet participant to another before whom one small candle was standing.<sup>362</sup>

In late December 1932, Queen Maria received the Sitters couple for her birthday celebration in Zagreb.<sup>363</sup> On the day of her birth, January 9, 1933, a religious service was held at the Palace Chapel, benediction in St. Michael's Cathedral Church in Belgrade and the Orthodox Church in Zagreb, as well as the ball organized by the officers of the Zagreb garrison at the “Esplanade”

360 Radmila Radić, *Život u vremenima: patrijarh Gavrilo (Dožić). Drugo, prošireno i dopunjeno izdanje*, [Life in Times: Patriarch Gavrilo (Dožić). Second, Extended and Amended Edition], (Beograd: PBF, 2011), 167, 175, 184–186, 192, 213.

361 *Vera i život*, 3, April 1930.

362 „Nj. V. Knez Pavle i Knjeginja Olga na banketu H. Z. M. Lj.” [“His Highness Prince Pavle and Princess Olga at a Y.M.C.A. Banquet”], *Vreme*, March 20, 1930, 3; Nj. V. Knez Pavle na skupu HZMLj” [“His Highness Prince Pavle at a YMCA Meeting”], *Politika*, March 20, 1930, 3; *Vera i život*, 3, April 1930.

363 LPL, Headlam Papers, MS 2639 ff. 37, 43, 57, 92, 183, 237, Sitters (Kathleen), wife of Sitters (Percy Henry Smart), Chaplain in Belgrade Correspondence with the Bishop of Gloucester.

Hotel.<sup>364</sup> There is no data on the participation of the YMCA in these celebrations, but in December 1933 the Queen visited the YMCA in Zagreb.

In the spring of 1934, the Sitters paid another visit to the Royal Court.<sup>365</sup> In early January 1935, the YMCA petitioned Royal Marshal Dr. Slavko Grujić for the continued patronage of Crown Prince Petar II. They were told that since the YMCA was under the patronage of the Prince Regent Pavle and Princess Olga, no other patronage was required (February 15, 1935). Crown Prince Petar would, however, continue to be listed as a protector of the Association on the headers of their official letters.<sup>366</sup>

All conferences, assemblies and other gatherings regularly sent telegrams and letters of appreciation to members of the Royal family.<sup>367</sup> In addition to the permanent requests for assistance, in the archives, there are preserved documents and requests for members of the royal family to respond with their presence or to send envoys to YMCA meeting or ceremonies.<sup>368</sup> P. H. Sitters, as well as B. Kovandžić, requested periodically appointments with the Prince Regent in order to report to him on their work and were most often received, although the contents of the conversations have not been preserved.<sup>369</sup> For example, Sitters had tea with Prince Pavle on May 1, 1938, prior to their departure for England.<sup>370</sup> After returning from their trip in the late summer of 1938, the Sitters were to meet again with Prince Pavle and Princess Olga on several occasions. They were invited to lunch attended by the Duke and Duchess of Kent during a student conference at the lake Bled resort. On another occasion at that time, Prince Regent Pavle also made a per-

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364 *Vreme*, January 10, 1933, 1.

365 LPL, Bulletin No. 45 May–June 1934 Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242–352.

366 AY, Court, 74–196–278.

367 *Pravda*, October 23, 1938, 6; „Konferencija srednjoškolača članova Hrišćanske zajednice mladih ljudi” [“Conference of High School Students of the YMCA”], *Vreme*, February 3, 1940, 11; *Vreme*, February 8, 1941, 9.

368 AY, Court, 74–196–278; Ministry of Education, 66–479–755; *Vreme*, April 10, 1940, 7.

369 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, June 1938 59 – CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, C.F.R. 159 Bulletin No. 58.

370 AY, Dvor, 74–196–278.

sonal visit to the participants of the conference, "arriving for tea crossing a field on foot with two staff members."<sup>371</sup>

In May 1939, Prince Pavle and Princess Olga called the Sitters for tea, after returning from Rome. The Sitters were also received by Queen Maria, who at that time was recovering from an illness.<sup>372</sup> In October 1940, Sitters wrote to John Douglas that he and his wife often saw the Royal family and King Peter.<sup>373</sup> Peter II Karadjordjević briefly joined the student conference at Lake Bled that year. There were 37 delegates headed by President Andrej Krstić. Petar II came with Prince Aleksandar, the eldest son of Prince Regent Pavle, who had just come home from Eaton College. Three young men representing Belgrade, Zagreb, and Ljubljana were presented to the King and the Prince. Kovandžić gave a lecture on the YMCA and Jovan Crnogorac staged a demonstration with evening games in which the guests took part. The choir sang, and they had tea and took pictures with the king.<sup>374</sup>

Proof of P. H. Sitters' influence with the Royal family can be seen in the letters written by Ronald Hugh Campbell, <sup>375</sup> the Envoy in Belgrade. On January 14, 1941, he wrote to Anthony Eden, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, about the problem of how the British Legation could come into contact with King Petar and secure his trust because the Germans were keeping an eye on him. He said that something could be done through Sitters, the Legation's chaplain, who has been in the country for years with the YMCA and who had excellent relations with Prince Pavle and Princess Olga and their children, and also with the king and that he enjoyed their trust. "Prin-

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371 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1. October 1938, 66 – 166 Bulletin No. 59. Yugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A.

372 LPL, CFR DOC 1/201–310, CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, June 1939 C.F.R. 201, Bulletin No. 61. Yugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A.

373 LPL, CFR OC 257 Individual Orthodox Churches: Serbia: Contacts: Serbian Bishops, Correspondence regarding Reverend P. H Sitters including the suggestion that he be awarded a Lambeth Degree; Rev. P. H. Sitters, 1938–43.

374 LPL, CFR DOC 1/201–310 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, October 1940, 8–208, Yugoslavia Y.M.C.A. Bulletin No. 65.

375 Ronald Hugh Campbell (1883–1953) was the Envoy of Great Britain and the empowered minister in Belgrade from 1935 to 1939.

cess Olga told Sitters in confidence that she did not like the influence of some boys around him from the standpoint of good behavior, religious and moral education, and asked Sitters to try to introduce a different and more serious type of boy into his company. Sitters tried to deal with this delicate task."<sup>376</sup> Sitters did not mention this episode in his reports.

### Opponents

We have already mentioned that the number of opponents of the activities of the Young Men's Christian Association in the Orthodox churches in the Balkan countries in the mid-1920s started to increase. Its representatives were faced with accusations of spreading Protestant propaganda. The resistance was more pronounced in Bulgaria than in Greece, Romania, or the Kingdom of the SCS. The reason was partly due to the criticism of the work of the YMCA, which came from the representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia. They were joined by some bishops and clergy from the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. Although not so strongly pronounced, dissenting voices also came from among the clergy of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

Branko T. Ilić, a priest from Leskovac, published some criticism against the YMCA in a church newspaper in 1930,<sup>377</sup> as well as a booklet printed in Kruševac entitled, *Is It Necessary to Establish the YMCA?*, relying largely on the writings of Bulgarian Bishop Simeon.<sup>378</sup> He dedicated the book to his teacher Justin Popović, a professor at the Seminary St. Sava, who himself occasionally held lectures in the YMCA. Ilić was one of the rare priests who at that time supported the National Christian Community, which was also a great opponent of the YMCA. When asked what the goal of the YMCA was, Ilić said: "It is difficult to answer this question, because the secret of this question lies in the English themselves, who are keeping it well hidden from the clergy as a snake hides its legs, as the local people here say. Some say the goal is only to

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376 Živko Avramovski, *Britanci u Kraljevini Jugoslaviji [The British in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia]*, I-III, (Beograd: Arhiv Jugoslavije; Zagreb: Globus, 1986–1996), III, 587–588.

377 Branko Ilić, „Jedna informacija povodom osnivanja H. Z. M. Lj” [“A Note on the Occasion of the Founding of the YMCA”], *Vesnik Srpske crkve*, 2, 1930.

378 Metropolitan of Varna and Preslav Simeon (Odisej Popnikolov, 1840–1937).

have the name of Jesus Christ heard in society as much as possible, to make it known to all peoples on the earth, from east to west and from north to south. That is a good goal and a good idea to have Christ mentioned as much as possible, but exaggerated sacrificing by the English, especially in Orthodox countries, is very suspicious to us. We are wondering why the English are the ones who are appearing as Christ's preachers among us. Do they want to create syncretism? So, the goal of the YMCA is to acquaint as many people and nations as possible with Christ and for Him to show himself to them, but in what form, size, or magnitude, that is something secondary. The main thing is to preach Christ, or rather, not to preach Him as He deserves but to impose on everyone their Protestantism about every Christian being worthy of learning about Christ according to their genuine sapience."<sup>379</sup>

Regarding the financing of the YMCA, Ilić wrote: "Just imagine how much money have spent on the salary of the secretary, on office rent, staff salaries, purchase of books, various sports equipment, and so on. The detriments are huge for establishing and maintaining the associations. The English will spare no expenses, just so they entice the youth with the YMCA. They support many of our students at various schools and colleges just to gain their friendship. The effort, money is time for the English to attract the masses by preaching religion and Christ."<sup>380</sup>

Ilić goes on to warn: "We - Serbs - always tolerate someone and we do not fight until the knife is placed under our throat. When a fire breaks out in a depot full of gunpowder, we think the fire needs to be put out. In that same way, the establishment of the YMCA is dangerous for us Serbs, in our midst, because they are dangerous for the Orthodox faith and for Orthodoxy, lest we become flooded with rationalistic Protestantism."<sup>381</sup> He felt that the English had created the YMCA in order to use this organization to impose Protestantism on Orthodox Christians by "turning young people into indifferent Christians so that they would become God-fighters" and eventually Protestants. He believed that Protestantism was a renunciation of traditions and authority

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379 Branko T. Ilić, *Treba li osnovati H. Z. M. Lj.? [Should the Y. M. C. A. be founded?]*, (Kruševac: Štamparija „Slovo” Ljubisava Kovića, 1930), 5–6.

380 *Ibid.*, 7.

381 *Ibid.*, 7–8.



in forming a religious view of the world. "The decisions of ecumenical councils, the holy canons, the dogmatic, the works of the holy Orthodox fathers - all that is a historical ballast for the Protestants and their followers, which obscures the true meaning of the gospel. Rationality, my own rationality, is the last non-appellate judge when reading and interpreting the Bible. Under the spirit of such a direction, the basics of every religion are destroyed."<sup>382</sup>

Branko Ilić criticized the local priests for tolerating the YMCA and holding lectures at its meetings. "Everyone should remember that the YMCA is hiding poisonous arrows that cause mental death. Some of our Orthodox Christians say that the YMCA, headed by the Church of England, wants to come closer to the Orthodox faith, and some, however, say that they would turn into the Orthodox faith. None of this is true. The only thing that is true, unfortunately, is that they are establishing the YMCA in our region, moreover at the proposal of some high church officials."<sup>383</sup>

Ilić also criticized the YMCA for being inter-confessional; for representing views about how to be "indifferent toward the interests, needs, and aspirations of the state, the people and tribes that make it up"; and also that its principles are atheistic. "The priesthood should take every step to prevent the establishment of the YMCA wherever it is mentioned. It would not be a bad thing if His Beatitude, Patriarch Varnava, issued a single decree ordering the entire clergy to avoid the establishment of the YMCA and to avoid being seen at meetings of the YMCA. The reason for this ban would be to avoid young men being scandalized by Christ. When the flock sees their shepherd working in the circle of the Protestants, it will follow him."<sup>384</sup>

Branko Ilić concluded that "thanks to the indifferent environment of church folk, Western winds have begun to blow through our church. It is essential to do everything to stop these winds from blowing because with this blowing they can fill the souls of the devout with poisonous gases, which one day will snuff out what little of this early Christianity that is left in our people. To each Christian man or woman, as his/her good friend, we recommend staying clear of the YMCA, striving against the establishment of these

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382 *Ibid*, 8.

383 *Ibid*, 9-10.

384 *Ibid*, 12-15.

institutions, which are against the church and the state. The YMCA gives no salvation for mankind. It gives spiritual death. The Serbian Orthodox Church gives salvation, instills faith, hope, and love.”<sup>385</sup> He cautions that “methods of enticing used by the Protestants, such as tea parties, playing various games, reading books together, biding time is very soul destroying” and advises going to the National Christian Community, where they will find the right path. “Ergo, in the end, everyone should be told to avoid establishing the YMCA, because that would take them into the crowd of heretics. Man, flee from the devil’s pitfalls, lest you fall into them.”<sup>386</sup>

Responding to these accusations, clergyman Radovan Jurišić said that the YMCA was a Christian association but that it was not narrow or limited and did not belong to any particular confession or place but was international. Jurišić wrote that the [YMCA] management was in the hands of the English, but that this was because there was no financial basis or “ready people” who would manage and implement this social idea.<sup>387</sup>

In order to clarify the misunderstandings and policies of the YMCA in Orthodox countries and eliminate any suspicions regarding proselytism, John Mott organized three unofficial conferences between the YMCA and the Orthodox hierarchs. The first one was held in Sofia, on 24–25. April 1928. It was attended by the Russian bishop Eulogius,<sup>388</sup> Dr. Stefan Tsankov, Arch-

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385 *Ibid*, 15.

386 *Ibid*, 16.

387 „Karakter Hrišćanske zajednice Mladih Ljudi” [“Character of the YMCA”], *Vera i život*, 1, November 1924 and 4, April 1926, 57; Jurišić Radovan, „Hrišćanska Zajednica mladih ljudi” [“YMCA”], *Glas crkve*, 5–6, 1931, 105–107.

Radovan Jurišić, a graduate theologian, was a cadet of the Serbian Relief Fund. Born in 1895. During 1918 and 1919 he was in England and Scotland to study agronomy. (Bogdan Lubardić, „Srpski bogoslovi u Velikoj Britaniji: Kadestonski teološki koledž 1917–1919 – prilozi i dopune I (analitičko–dokumentarni deo)” [“Serbian Theologians in Great Britain – Cuddesdon Theological College 1917–1919 I (integral version with photo documents)”], *Srpska teologija u dvadesetom veku: istraživački problemi i rezultati*, 14 (2013), 52–127). After the war Jurišić was a priest in Šabac.

388 Metropolitan Eulogius (Georgiyevsky, 1868–1947) was a bishop of the Russian Orthodox Church and after the October Revolution the founder of the Russian Orthodox Exarchate in Western Europe since 1931 under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. He influenced the establishment of the Orthodox Theological Institute of St. Sergius in Paris. He was in conflict with the ROCOR in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. One

priest Tit Simedrea, Donald A. Lowrie from Czechoslovakia (who would later come to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia), Percy H. S. Sitters, Dr. Jovan D. Stojanović,<sup>389</sup> et al.<sup>390</sup> The participants adopted a document entitled "The Basics of Understanding Between the Representatives of Orthodox Churches and the World Committee of the YMCA."<sup>391</sup> The principles of the work of the YMCA in Orthodox countries were agreed according to which the Association should conduct its activity in accordance with the principles of the Orthodox Church and in consultation with its leaders; the leadership of the YMCA should be chosen so as to be acceptable for the Orthodox Churches; special methods were also supposed to be created in order to influence the members of the groups to become and remain loyal and active members of the Church; Orthodox groups had to be open to non-Orthodox young people who were interested in Orthodoxy and non-Orthodox groups to be open to Orthodox young people; proselytism had to be discouraged and condemned; in Orthodox groups, the interpretation of the Bible should be done in full harmony with Orthodox teachings; the general activities of YMCA should be open to everyone, without any confessional discrimination; problems that could arise in the future should be resolved in a spirit of trust and goodwill. With this agreement, the YMCA chose a model that existed in Germany and the Nordic countries: the work was turned over to the local majority church, al-



Donald A. Lowrie

year before his death in 1946, he returned to the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate.

389 Monk Jovan (Dušan) Stojanović, born in 1895 in Petovec, was the son of David Stojanović, a trader. He got a degree in theology in Belgrade. Together with Justin Popović, he enrolled at Oxford University and was admitted to the St. Steven's Dorm on November 2, 1916. He graduated with his second maturity examination (December 30, 1918–January 18, 1919) in Cuddesdon. He was awarded the BLitt diploma at Oxford on February 15, 1919. Stojanović was a teacher for a certain time in theology at the Seminary St. Sava. Between 1924 and 1926 he returned to Oxford to complete his doctorate. He was a member of the Executive Committee of the YMCA in 1927. AY, Ministry of Education, 66–446–703, 479–755; Lubardić, „Srpski bogoslovi u Velikoj Britaniji”.

390 AY, Ministry of Internal Affairs, 14–28–74.

391 Miller, *The American YMCA and Russian Culture*.

though there was the possibility of connecting with ecumenical groups. It was important that all Orthodox and Ecumenical groups were open to all groups and denominations. In this way, the YMCA wanted to maintain its ecumenical character. Another important point in the agreement was that the YMCA wanted to reduce the fears of the Orthodox clergy that it would be the "fifth column" of Protestantism. Thus, the Orthodox churches officially got greater control over the work of the YMCA on their territory than the Protestant churches did themselves.<sup>392</sup>



*Dositej, Bishop of Niš*



*Miloš A. Parenta, Archpriest*

At the second conference of the World Alliance of YMCAs in Kifissia (*Kifissia, Κηφισιά*) near Athens, in February 1930, the following people participated from the Kingdom of Yugoslavia: Archbishop Dositej, Bishop Nikolaj, Voja Janić and Miloš Parenta. They did not attend the conference as representatives or delegates of the SOC but in a private capacity.<sup>393</sup> The conference was held between the representatives of the YMCA and representatives of all the Balkan Orthodox churches. Attended Dr. John Mott, Paisios, vicar bishop of Sofia, University professor Stefan Tsankov, Tit Simedrea, vicar bishop of

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392 Miller, *The American YMCA and Russian Culture*, 228; Muukkonen, *Ecumenism of the Laity*, 315-320.

393 ASOCS, Registry of Assemblies Minutes for 1930, AS No. 32, Reg. 151, November 4, 1930.

Bucharest, representatives of the Patriarchate of Alexandria, and others. The conference was opened by the Bishop of Athens, who also said a few appropriate words. The following issues were on the agenda: 1) reports on religious problems arising from social, spiritual and moral circumstances in the Orthodox countries; 2) how the YMCA could help churches to eradicate these problems; 3) the issue of the leadership of the YMCA in the Orthodox countries; 4) the composition of the national associations in the Orthodox countries; and so on. Bishops Nikolaj and Dositej spoke about these issues in their reports. The representatives of the YMCA emphasized that any proselytism in favor of any Christian religion was absolutely out of the question and that the Association wanted to be “only an assistant to Christian churches in saving their youth from anti-Christian ideas and directions, from depraved societies and immoral situations, from languor and to instill in them a Christian character, to make them faithful and devoted members of their church, loyal sons of the King and the Homeland and decent citizens.” In his discourse during the conference, John Mott emphasized that the YMCA wanted to be a servant of the church in educating young people and that it would always work in accord with the Orthodox Church on all things that concern the Orthodox youth. It considers itself an instrument for gathering the scattered Orthodox youth. He added that the YMCA wanted to be of help in all problems, especially in curbing the scourge of communism, which posed a great danger to the centuries-old cultural order of Christian nations and countries.<sup>394</sup>

In a statement to the *Vreme* magazine, Voja Janić, a member of the delegation and former Minister of Religion, talked of what their mission in Athens was. He said that it had been concluded that the YMCA aimed to lead the Christian youth to the threshold of the Christian Orthodox Church; that the YMCA wanted Orthodox Christians in the Balkans to take the leadership of the movement into their own hands; and as a sign of the YMCA movement for the Balkans would take as its emblem the cross with a monogram of Christ. Janić added that John Mott had stated that the goal of the YMCA was to be a humble servant of the Orthodox Church in order to save young people from

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394 Miloš Parenta, „Hrišćanska Konferencija u Atini” [“Christian Conference in Athens”], *Vera i život*, 3, April 1930.

atheism. According to Janić, the conference shattered the misconception that the YMCA was a proselytizing movement of a social international character and added that it had nothing to do with communism, proselytism, or the Masonic movement.<sup>395</sup> The results from Sofia and Kifissia were also accepted at the World Conference in Cleveland in 1931.<sup>396,397</sup>



*Photo from the conference in Athens held from February 25 to March 2, 1930. In the first row, second from the right is Nikolaj Velimirović, fourth is Dositej Vasić, and sixth is John Mott. Miloš Parenta is standing behind Mott to the left. Voja Janić is standing on the right side at the top.<sup>397</sup>*

Instead of holding one international meeting for everyone in the Balkans, which was the practice in 1928 and 1930, John Mott organized preparatory national conferences in Greece, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Romania

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395 *Vera i život*, 1, 1930; 2, March 1930; 3, April 1930. Voja Janić and the Bishop of Niš Dositej stayed in Athens in early March and, upon their return, they stopped in Skopje and stayed with the Metropolitan of Varna. A. Musanić, „Konferencija predstavnika pravoslavnih crkava sa Balkana i delegata H. Z. M. Lj. u Atini. Izjava g. dr. V. Janjića” [“Conference of Representatives of Orthodox Churches from the Balkans and YMCA Delegates in Athens. Statement by Mr. Dr. V. Janjić”], *Vreme*, March 9, 1930, 1.

396 Mathews, *op. cit.*, 259–264.

397 Project Canterbury: *The Christian East*, Spring, 1930, 32, Accessed: 20. 08. 2018, <http://anglicanhistory.org/orthodoxy/athens1930.html>

in 1933. He also gave public lectures for students. In Belgrade, Prince Pavle was chair of the organization for his welcome, and in Sofia, it was Archbishop Stefan. Mott also had private contacts with prime ministers, foreign ministers, and university presidents. From May 19–22, 1933, Bucharest, the capital of Romania, hosted the Third Conference on the relationship between the Orthodox Church and the YMCA. Mott presided over the three-day consultations on the future of cooperation between the Orthodox Church and the YMCA. Serving as the basis for the talks were the decisions from all four national conferences, as well as the conclusions from Sofia and Athens. The decisions from this meeting analyzed the dangers and problems of young people in the Orthodox countries and the conclusion was that in most aspects there were great similarities with the problems that young people were facing all over the world.<sup>398</sup> At this conference, delegates from Romania, Greece, Bulgaria (Bulgarian Metropolitan of Vratsa Paisiy, Professor Tsankov, Zlatanov retired Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs, and others) and representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church were represented. The SOC delegation consisted of Vicar Bishop Vikentije Vujić, Former Minister Voja Janić, Red Cross President Božidar Zečević, P. H. Sitters, director of the National Council of the YMCA in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, Branislav Kovandžic, secretary of the YMCA in Belgrade, and theology student Branko Rapajić.<sup>399</sup> The Yugoslav delegation had several meetings with the delegates from Bulgaria and Romania, as well as with Yugoslav Envoy Boško Čolak Antić.<sup>400</sup>

As a result of these conferences, the YMCA agreed to adapt to the specific conditions in the Orthodox countries. In 1933 the agreement was finally determined between the YMCA and the Orthodox Churches in the Balkans that the work of the Association, the leadership, and character in these countries should be Orthodox, to enable the work of confessional subgroups, reject proselytism and make Bible studies in the spirit and in line with the Orthodox understanding of the Holy Scriptures. The agreement had the blessing

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398 Mathews, *op. cit.*, 261–264.

399 *Vera i život*, 1, November 1933.

400 „Povratak naših delegata sa konferencija balkanskih hrišćanskih zajednica u Bukureštu” [“The Return of Our Delegates from the Conferences of the Balkan Christian Communities in Bucharest”], *Pravda*, May 28, 1933, 6.

of the Romanian, Serbian, Bulgarian, Greek, Alexandrian and Russian emigrant hierarchies (except for the Synod of the ROCOR in Sremski Karlovci) and opened the way for cooperation. The YMCA made an effort to adapt its methods to Orthodox Christianity and the local culture, even though their activities were open for everyone.<sup>401</sup>

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401 Hildo Bos, "Orthodox Youth and Orthodox Culture: The Genesis of Syndesmos, 1923–1953", International Symposium *Aspects of the cultural and religious life of the Russian Diaspora in Europe in the Twentieth Century*, Institute for Eastern Christian Studies and the Hernen Foundation at Hernen Castle, 1–2 March 2002, Accessed: May 9, 2018, [www.syndesmos.org](http://www.syndesmos.org)





## CHAPTER III

### FORMS OF ACTIVITY

#### “Spiritual and Intellectual Education”

During its work in the Kingdom of SCS/Yugoslavia, the YMCA used its usual methods of spiritual and intellectual education (preaching the gospel, Bible clubs, classes for studying and reading the Holy Scriptures, prayer meetings, weekly schools, spiritual concerts, Lantern-talks,<sup>402</sup> etc.) and social services (lectures and training, reading rooms, library, publishing magazines, books and brochures, teaching English, French and Esperanto, setting up choirs, orchestras,<sup>403</sup> radio, photo club, tea room, soirées, screening films, and so on). Courses in typography, stenography, and mechanics<sup>404</sup> were organized in Belgrade and Kragujevac, as well as literacy courses in Niš. In Niš, there was also the YMCA's theater section and special lectures were organized frequently for children. An “Intellectual Section of the YMCA” was also formed.<sup>405</sup> In February 1940, the YMCA launched an agricultural course in Vojlovica.<sup>406</sup> Visits to “religious meetings” during the 1930s totaled more than 14,000 and more than 9,000 visitors attended educational lectures and classes.<sup>407</sup>

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402 *Lantern-talks* were held every week during the winter, and then slides with views of Christ's life, readings from the Bible, and so on were shown. LPL, CFR DOC 1/101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1937, 29–129 Bulletin No. 56 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia. Spring 1937 received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade marked “Private and Confidential.”

403 A tambura band was established in Kragujevac. *Vera i život*, 5, March 1925.

404 The mechanics' course in Kragujevac was headed by engineer Milan Veljović, a member of the YMCA, and the course was free. *Vera i život*, 7, May 1925. In Kragujevac, work in 1925 was divided into sections: religious, intellectual, music, sports, and theater. They kept foreign language lessons free. *Vera i život*, March 5, 1925.

405 *Vera i život*, 3, January 1925.

406 *Vreme*, February 24, 1940, 9.

407 LPL, March 11, 1930, Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Lambeth Conference 2, 278.

Caring for the “proper spiritual education of the youth” in 1924 the YMCA protested against the lecture of Professor Brana Petronijević, at Kolarac University, in which he claimed that man originated from fish. The YMCA accused the professor of wrongly educating young people and leading them astray. They joined the Priesthood Association and filed a lawsuit with the Ministry of Religion and the Ministry of Education. A complaint was also filed by the Women’s Christian Movement.<sup>408</sup> Similar claims were made at that time by the Berlin anthropologist Dr. Max Westenhöfer, reported by the Belgrade press.<sup>409</sup> Prof. Petronijević was not discouraged by the attacks, and he continued to lecture on the same subject in the same place the following year.

Of particular importance was work with boys according to the instructions set down by John Mott regarding two types of activities: the inner, within the Association itself, and the outer, tied to other organizations. The internal program meant that the head of the boys’ classroom would make a plan: a) for activities performed by the boys themselves; and b) for organizing classrooms to “become strong and train as much as is necessary for physical work”; group games during which the boys should be taught not to compete for personal glory, but for the honor of their team or classroom; educational activities (which were not supposed to consist solely of lectures and speeches, but also of methods that applied the boys’ active participation - for example, debating, singing). The curriculum included lectures in subjects such as civil society, art, music, science, history, caring for animals, etc. The program of religious activity meant that every evening work was finished with a prayer and reading parts of the Bible, that once or twice a week there was Bible class, and religious lectures with projections on Sunday nights. Part of that time was supposed to be dedicated to preparing the

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408 *Vreme*, March 23, 1924, 6. Branislav Petronijević (1875–1954) was a Serbian philosopher, academician. He was the grandson of Archpriest Petronije Jeremić, after whom his father, a theologian, but not a priest, took their family name. Branislav Petronijević graduated from the High School in Valjevo. He studied in Vienna and Leipzig, where he received his doctorate in 1898. He was appointed as a full professor at the Great School in 1903, and in 1919 he was elected as a full professor at the University of Belgrade. In 1921 Petronijević became a regular member of the Serbian Royal Academy.

409 *Vreme*, April 21, 1924, 5.

older boys for leadership and for training “every individual to accept duties and responsibilities.”<sup>410</sup>



*A YMCA Program for working in the Boys Department*

In all the YMCAs in the world, one week in November was marked as “Week of Prayer.” They would hold daily lectures and collect contributions for the World Committee in Geneva.<sup>411</sup> Since 1924, the “Week of Prayer” was held in all national centers (Belgrade, Ohrid, Tetovo, Skopje, Leskovac, Niš, Kragujevac, Crvenka, Titel, and later in Zagreb and Ljubljana) and that practice was continued until the outbreak of war.<sup>412</sup> Lecturers were P. H. Sitters, Irinej Djordjević, James Wiles, Kathleen Sitters, and others. One of the topics that the British Envoy covered was the many of dangers which young people of both sexes from 15 to 18 years old were exposed to, including going to coffee bars and movie theaters.<sup>413</sup> Occasionally, the lectures were attended

410 Džon Mot, „Kako treba izvoditi rad u odeljenju za dečake” [“How Work Ought to be Conducted in the Boys Department”], *Vera i život*, 2, December 1924.

411 *Vera i život*, 2, December 1924; LPL, Bell 217, ff. 260–1, Jugoslav [Yugoslav] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin No. 35. October – November 1931 by Percy Henry Smart Sitters, Anglican chaplain in Belgrade, Yugoslavia.

412 LPL, Y.M.C.A. Bulletin No. 63, December 6<sup>th</sup>, 1939, Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 349.

413 In connection with the discussions about the influence of the cinema on the youth in 1930, a resolution was passed in the YMCA to send a request to the ministries of educa-

by Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović.<sup>414</sup> In the mid-thirties, in the Belgrade YMCA, the “Week of Prayer” began with daily meetings with special speakers such as Archbishop Dositej and Theo Turek, Lutheran pastor from Belgrade.<sup>415</sup>

There were regular biblical meetings or biblical lessons headed by Miloš Parenta, where religious music was played on a gramophone.<sup>416</sup> Bible classes were also held in English. Bible classes for students were held by Kathleen Sitters in Belgrade every Friday.<sup>417</sup> Bible classes were organized too for high school pupils and for girls’ section. Imre Kovač came to Belgrade once a week and held Bible classes for members of the YMCA who spoke Hungarian.<sup>418</sup>

Since the beginning of the 1920s, they started publishing and printing several newspapers,<sup>419</sup> but the most important activity was related to the

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tion and social policy to pass a law prohibiting children from attending certain cinemas. *Vera i život*, 1, February 1930.

414 *Pravda*, November 9, 1924, 5; *Vreme*, November 14, 1926, 7.

415 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1936 C. F. R 111, Bulletin No. 54 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia covering the period October to November 1936, received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade marked “Private and Confidential”; CFR DOC 1/101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, Winter 1937 44–144 Bulletin No. 57 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade marked “Private and Confidential.”

416 *Vreme*, November 1, 1931, 9.

417 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, Winter 1937 44–144 Bulletin No. 57 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade marked “Private and Confidential”; CFR DOC 1/101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, June 1938 59–159 Bulletin No. 58 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade marked “Private and Confidential.”

418 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1936 C. F. R 111, Bulletin No. 54 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia covering the period October to November 1936, received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade marked “Private and Confidential.”

419 Among others, they printed: Klark Vili Torburn, *Hrišćanska zajednica mladih ljudi: H.Z.M.L.: bratski saveti [Young Men’s Christian Association: YMCA: brotherly advices]*, (Sremski Karlovci, Srpska manastirska štamparija, 1922); Samuel W. Irwin, *A Book of Remembrance: Recollections of the Y. M. C. A. Overseas Training Conference at Columbia University*, (Beograd: Narodna misao, 1924); Marko Leko, *O boljem životu sa hemijskog gledišta [On a Better Life from a Chemical Perspective]*, (Beograd: HZMLj, 1923); Oliver Makanen, *Crkva i Hrišćanska zajednica mladih ljudi [The Church and the YMCA]*, (Beograd: HZMLj, Štamparija Save Radenkovića i Brata, 1924); *Zašto sam hrišćanin [Why I*

publication of their own magazine. At their Fifth Annual Conference in 1924, they decided to launch a magazine called *Vera i život*. On the front page of the first issue from November 1924, was a photograph of Crown Prince Petar and a subtitle, "A Magazine for Our Country's Youth." The goal of the magazine was to "merge all the Associations into one common fraternity in Christ," "to awaken the interest of members and boys, in the Associations in our country and those abroad," to take care of the physical, mental and religious upbringing of boys and youth and "to popularize all over our country the goals and aspirations of the YMCA."<sup>420</sup> Editors were from issue no. 3 (1925) Aleksandar Z. Jovičić and P. H. Sitters; from issue no. 1 (1926) P. H. Sitters and Jovan (Dušan) Stojanović; from issue no. 1 (1930) P. H. Sitters and Miloš Parenta. As of issue no. 3 (1934), the chief editor was Dragić Pešić. The owner of the magazine was the Head Office of the YMCA in Belgrade. Dr. Jovan D. Stojanović, as secretary of the Executive Committee of the YMCA, requested in 1927 that the Ministry of Education approve the sale of the magazine in elementary schools.<sup>421</sup> The magazine ceased being published in 1930 and was renewed in 1933 as the main body of the National Association of the YMCA in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and was alternately printed in Cyrillic and Latin scripts. The first issue came out in November that year, although in a smaller circulation than before. The magazine published texts on religious topics, on the education of youth, on hygiene, and gave medical advice on maintaining health. It also published texts by Bishop Nikolaj, Metropolitan Dositej, Justin Popović, Vladeta Popović, Vladimir Solovyov, John Mott, Dostoyevsky, and recommended reading the works of Bishop Nikolaj.<sup>422</sup> It continued being published until 1935.

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*am a Christian?]*, (Beograd: HZMLJ, 1926); *Hrišćanska zajednica mladih ljudi u Kraljevini Jugoslaviji: studentska konferencija Selce 1937 godine [YMCA in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia: Student Conference Selce in 1937]*, (Beograd, HZMLJ, Grafički umetnički zavod Planeta, 1937).

420 *Vera i život*, 5, March 1925.

421 AY, Ministry of Religion, 69-157-242.

422 *Vera i život*: 1, November 1924; 2, December 1924; 3, February 1925; 1, January 1926; 2, February 1926; 3, March 1926; 4, April 1926; 2, February 1927; 1, 1930; 1, November 1933.



The first issue of *Vera i život* magazine from 1924

Soon after arriving, the Sitters started a series of weekly religious and educational lectures with projections.<sup>423</sup> According to press reports, they held more than seventy lectures in Belgrade between 1924 and 1932, sometimes including tea parties. Lectures were held at the YMCA Hall in Pozorišna Street, at the Anglo-American-Yugoslav Club,<sup>424</sup> with whose work they were closely

423 *Pravda*, November 15, 1924, 4.

424 The following organizations were active in the Kingdom between the two world wars: the English-American-Yugoslav club formed in 1924; English-Yugoslav Club in Niš; Association of Friends of Great Britain and America; Association of Former Yugoslav Students in Great Britain (1933); Society for the Advancement of Anglo-Saxon Culture in Yugoslavia from 1935; Association of English Language and Literature Students of the University of Belgrade in 1938 (Gašić, *Beograd u hodu ka Evropi*, 35–36; Pauновиć, Igrutinović, Zec, Baljkas, *op. cit.*, 100–101). Before 1936, when the British Council started operating in the country, there were 12 associations, and another 15 were created for the within five years. The goal of the English-American-Yugoslav Club was to cultivate cultural relations and friendly relations between the two nations. Concretized by Roland Bryce, a diplomat and *Times* correspondent and Dr. Katherine MacPhail, manager of the English Children's Hospital in Belgrade. A wider and narrower board of directors was elected, and Sir Alban Charles Young, the British Envoy since 1919, was appointed as honorary Vice-President. The following members were elected to the committee: Spomena Ninčić, wife of Momčilo Ninčić, Aca V. Marinković, dr Katherine MacPhail, Aleksandar Vidaković, R. Bryce, Clark, Director of the English Commercial Bank, Bogdan Popović, University Professor, Pavle Popović, University Professor, Jovan Jovanović, Assembly Deputy, Tih. Djordjević, University Professor, General Pešić, Minister of the Mili-

connected (11 Pozorišna St., 30 Knjeginje Ljubice St.), at the New University (Kolarac), in 46 Knez Mihailova St., etc. Lectures were mainly devoted to religious issues,<sup>425</sup> but to other topics as well (such as the novel, "The Vicar of

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tary, Voja Janić, Minister of Religion, Jovan Tanović, Manager of *Politika*. 200 people and 50 members of the colony applied for membership. According to the idea, the Club was supposed to be an extension of a Club founded in London under the name of the Serbian Society in the United Kingdom. („U Beogradu je osnovan i jedan englesko-srpski klub" ["An English-Serbian Club was also founded in Belgrade"], *Vreme*, March 4, 1924, 5). The work of the EAYC was also attended by British Legation officer Božidar Pepić, journalist Gradimir Kozomarić, Petar Milojević, Milan Simonović, Irinej Djordjević, Petar Ristić, Stojan Gavrilović, Voja Subotić, Vladeta Popović, and others. Club premises were first in Pozrišna Street and later in Dobračina Street. In March 1933, Foreign Minister Bogoljub Jevtić was elected as President, while Vice-Presidents were Nevil Henderson and John D. Prince, Envoys of G. Britain and the United States in Belgrade. R. Taggart was a member of the board. (*Pravda*, March 8, 1933, 6). One year before the war, the Club united with the Association of Friends of G. Britain and the United States, headed by Jovan Jovanović Pižon and Bishop Nikolai. In the Club also held annual meetings of the Anglican Church. (*SSH*, 6, 1932, 6; 3, 1933, 5). The beginning of the season in the work of the Club was usually opened by an English Envoy in Belgrade, and often tea-parties were held. (*Pravda*, October 16, 1926, 4).

- 425 Some of the topics of the lectures were: „Kako da upoznamo Boga?" ["How Do We Meet God?"]; „Kako da dočekamo Hrista?" ["How do We Welcome Christ?"]; „Na putu života" ["On the Way of Life"]; „Hrišćanska smelost" ["Christian boldness"]; „Vrednost molitve" ["The Value of Prayer"]; „Zašto verujem u Boga" ["Why I Believe in God"]; „Hristov poziv studentima" ["Christ's Call to Students"]; „U čemu se Sv. Pismo razlikuje od ostalih knjiga?" ["Why the Holy Scripture Differs from other Books?"]; „Šta je vera?" ["What is Faith?"]; „Ko kruniše kralja?" ["Who Crowns the King?"]; „O službi Bogu" ["On the Service of God"]; „Zašto je Hristos razapet?" ["Why was Christ Crucified?"]; „Život Hristov" ["Life of Christ"]; „Epizode iz života Hristova" ["Episodes from the Life of Christ"]; „Život Josifov" ["Life of Joseph"]; „Voda života" ["Water of Life"]; „O nekim čuvenim religioznim slikama" ["About Some Famous Religious Images"]; „Poklonikovo putovanje" ["The Devotee's Journey"]; „Šta znači molitva" ["What does Prayer Mean"]; „Život proroka" ["The Life of a Prophet"]; „O lepim pričama iz Sv. Pisma" ["About the Beautiful Stories from the Holy Scripture"]; „Slike iz života apostola Pavla" ["Images from the Life of Paul the Apostle"]; „O bludnom sinu" ["About the Wicked Son"]; „Kako Bog govori ljudima" ["How God Speaks to the People"]; „Poslednji dani našeg Gospoda na zemlji" ["The Last Days of Our Lord on Earth"]; „Pisci sv. Pisma" ["Writers of the Holy Scripture"]; „Jevandjelje po Jovanu" ["Gospel of John"]; „Greh" ["Sin"]; „Spasenje" ["Salvation"]; „Rodjenje Hristovo" ["The Birth of Christ"]; „Čovek pred lavovima" ["Man in front of the Lions"]; „Prorok Danilo" ["Prophet Danilo"]; „Apostol Pavle" ["Paul the Apostle"]; „Kako Bog izvodi ljude na sud" ["How will the Judgment of God take Place"]; „Isus spasitelj" ["Jesus the Savior"]; „Tajna mira" ["The Secret of Peace"]; „O Mojsiju" ["About Moses"]; „Veliki proroci" ["Great Prophets"]; „O problemu straha i smrti" ["On the Problem of Fear and Death"];



Wakefield” by Oliver Goldsmith; about cathedrals in England; the problems of youth and the YMCA’s work with youth; about Palestine, etc.). Admission to lectures was mostly free. Occasionally tickets were charged two and three dinars, and the proceeds were intended for the purchase of books for poor students of the University of Belgrade or for other needs.<sup>426</sup>

In addition to the Sitters couple, lecturers came from different denominations and spoke on different topics. The local lecturers were: Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović, Justin Popović,<sup>427</sup> Dr. Marko Leko, James Wiles, Dr. Tihomir Radovanović, Miloš Parenta,<sup>428</sup> priest Gavra Milošević,<sup>429</sup> Jovan D. Stojanović,<sup>430</sup> Draga Ilić,<sup>431</sup> priest Vlada Milutinović,<sup>432</sup> Igumen Stefan Ilkić,<sup>433</sup> Rad. Ružičić, Milan Popović, Dr. Stevan Z. Ivanić, Director of the Central Hygiene

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- „O proroku Iliji” [“About the Prophet Elijah”]; „Hristos nevidljivi gost” [“Christ the Invisible Guest”]; „O apostolu Petru” [“About Peter the Apostle”]; „Kušanje Hristovo u pustinji” [“The Temptations of Christ in the Desert”], etc.
- 426 *Pravda*: April 12, 1924, 4; April 19, 1924, 4; May 4, 1924, 5; Nov. 8, 1924, 4; Nov. 15, 1924, 4; Nov. 30, 1924; Dec. 19, 1924, 4; Dec. 27, 1924; Jan. 31, 1925, 5; Feb. 14, 1925, 5; March 27, 1925, 6; April 10, 1925, 6; April 12, 1925, 5; May 8, 1925, 5; May 17, 1925, 5; May 22, 1925, 6; May 29, 1925, 5; Nov. 27, 1925, 6; Dec. 4, 1925, 6; Dec. 11, 1925, 6; Dec. 18, 1925, 2; Oct. 16, 1926, 4; Nov. 5, 1926, 5; Nov. 7, 1928, 16.  
*Vreme*: May 11, 1924, 2; Jan. 22, 1926, 2, 6; Jan. 29, 1926, 7; Jan. 31, 1926, 6; Feb. 19, 1926, 6; Nov. 5, 1926, 6; Nov. 27, 1926, 6; Dec. 1, 1926, 7; Dec. 10, 1926; Dec. 21, 1926, 6; Dec. 31, 1926; Feb. 4, 1927; Nov. 13, 1927, 10; Nov. 25, 1927, 7; Dec. 2, 1927, 19; Dec. 16, 1927, 7; Jan. 27, 1928, 5; April 6, 1928, 8; Oct. 21, 1928, 1; Nov. 2, 1928, 8; Nov. 23, 1928, 7; Nov. 25, 1928, 10; Nov. 30, 1928, 7; Dec. 7, 1928, 8; Dec. 14, 1928, 8; Jan. 20, 1929, 7; Feb. 1, 1929, 7; Feb. 3, 1929, 10; March 22, 1929, 9; Nov. 17, 1929, 11; Nov. 22, 1929, 9; Nov. 27, 1929, 9; Dec. 11, 1929, 9; Dec. 13, 1929, 9; Dec. 24, 1929, 8; Dec. 27, 1929, 9; Feb. 14, 1930, 8; April 11, 1930, 9; Feb. 4, 1931, 9; Feb. 11, 1931, 9; March 18, 1931, 7; April 1, 1931, 9; April 8, 1931, 9; Dec. 27, 1931.
- 427 Justin Popović held lectures in the society for the study of the Holy Scriptures and in Sunday prayers. *Vera i život*, 10 November 11 December 1926; *Vreme*, December 7, 1926.
- 428 *Vreme*: Nov. 19, 1926, 6; May 18, 1930, 10; Feb. 1, 1931, 11; March 22, 1931, 10; Oct. 25, 1931, 11; Nov. 22, 1931, 10. *Pravda*: Oct. 14, 1931; May 3, 1931, 11.
- 429 *Pravda*, Nov. 18, 1931.
- 430 *Vreme*, February 14, 1926, 8.
- 431 *Vreme*, May 26, 1929, 9.
- 432 *Vreme*, December 6, 1931, 11.
- 433 *Vreme*, November 2, 1930, 9.

Institute,<sup>434</sup> Bishop Kalogjera from the Old Catholic Church,<sup>435</sup> Steva Dimitrijević, Dean of the School of Theology,<sup>436</sup> Petar Vlačić,<sup>437</sup> a friar from the Franciscan order, and many others.

Many lectures were held by various guests from abroad. Among them were: Dr. John Harold Greig, bishop of Gibraltar and Guildford, Edgar M. Robinson, secretary of the World Committee of the YMCA in Geneva,<sup>438</sup> Rev. Edward Sydney Woods, professor, canon and later bishop from Cambridge;<sup>439</sup> Rabindranath Tagore;<sup>440</sup> George Arthur Drostan Ogilvie-Forbes;<sup>441</sup> Albert M. Chesley, an American specialist in working with boys;<sup>442</sup> Dr William Howard Taft, representative of the International Committee of the YMCA from Geneva;<sup>443</sup> a few Indian preachers;<sup>444</sup> Colonel Giles Frank Lucas Netlam, British military attaché held a conference at the YMCA at the Sitter's request where he spoke about the work of the Commission for Delineation with Bulgaria,<sup>445</sup> and others. Lectures were also



*Edward Sydney Woods*

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434 *Vreme*, November 13, 1930, 9.

435 *Vreme*, November 23, 1930, 7.

436 *Vreme*, Dec. 21, 1930, 10.

437 *Vera i život*, 4, April 1927.

438 *Vera i život*: 2, Dec. 1924; 13–14, November - December 1925; 10, Nov. 1926; 1, 1930; *Hristu veran do smrti*, 172.

439 Edward Sidney Woods (1877–1953) was a professor at Trinity College in Cambridge, Vicar of the Church of the Holy Trinity and later Assistant Bishop of Croydon and Bishop Lichfield. Woods was in Belgrade in December 1926. He held lectures and was received in the British Legation, where he was presented to Prince Pavle. He also visited P. Popovic, the Rector of the University of Belgrade, and was received by the Patriarch of the Serbian Orthodox Church. *Vera i život*, 11, Dec. 1926; *Vreme*, Nov. 20, 1926.

440 *Vera i život*, 11, Dec. 1926.

441 George Ogilvie-Forbes (1891–1954) was a British diplomat. *Vreme*, Dec. 3, 1926.

442 *Vreme*, May 26, 1927, 4.

443 *Vreme*, March 3, 1929, 8.

444 *Vreme*: Nov. 1, 1926, 5; Jan. 14, 1927; Jan. 16, 1927; June 20, 1929, 9. *Pravda*: Jan. 27, 1927, 4.

445 „Putovanje po Srbiji” [“Travel around Serbia”], *Politika*, March 5, 1927, 4; „Kako je obeležavana granica prema Bugarskoj i Albaniji” [“How the Border to Bulgaria and Albania was Marked”], *Vreme*, March 5, 1927, 1. Colonel Frank Lucas Netlam Giles (b. 1879) served as military attaché in Belgrade, Athens, and Prague from 1925 to 1929.

held by Irish Bishop Dr. Robert Miller,<sup>446</sup> US Military Attaché Colonel Edward Davis,<sup>447</sup> William Arthur Churchill,<sup>448</sup> Gibraltar Bishop Frederick Hicks,<sup>449</sup> as well as Alexei Suvorin, who was at the head of the “New Health - New Life” Association and who recommended fasting every Friday during 1927.<sup>450</sup>

Priest Branko Ilić wrote in 1930: “The main listeners at the lectures are young people. Among them are mostly students and some are high school pupils. But in addition to the lectures for youth, there are other interesting things. For example, in the YMCA building, there is a reading room with all kinds of informative daily newspapers, magazines, books by prominent people, and so on. It also has sports games for passing the time. Games played in the YMCA building itself are tennis, chess, and some other English games, and there are open-field games such as football, rugby and so on. In the winter, young people like to hang around in the YMCA because when it is cold it is convenient to read sit in the sit and read newspapers or books in a warm room. In winter, most of the members are in the YMCA premises, spending time together.”<sup>451</sup>

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He was a member of the Yugoslavian - Bulgarian International Border Commission between 1920 and 1922 and the Yugoslav-Albanian International Border Commission (Albanian Border Commission) between 1922 and 1925. (*Who Was Who*, III, 1929–1940, London, 1941). The Albanian Border Commission was constituted in Paris on 18 January 1922 and consisted of the President, Brigadier General Enrique Telina (Italy), Colonel Giles (Britain) and Lieutenant Colonel Emanuel Perete (France). The Commission mapped the border and raised border stones. Colonel Giles’s archives are kept at University College London-UCL Library Services: UCL Archives, <http://archives.ucl.ac.uk>

446 *Vreme*, March 22, 1927.

447 *Vreme*, February 26, 1928.

448 *Pravda*, May 22, 1930, 1.

449 *Vreme*, October 19, 1930, 11.

450 Aleksei A. Suvorin (1862–1937), a journalist and writer, also used the pseudonym Aleksei Poroshin. He was editor of the newspaper *Novo vreme*. At the end of 1903, he published his magazine *Rus (Russian)*. In St. Petersburg he founded the publishing house “Novyj chelovek,” in which he published books on non-traditional medicine and exotic methods of treating human diseases. He was the eldest son of a well-known Russian book publisher, A. S. Suvorin. Aleksej Suvorin, *Metoda Suvorina. Ozdravljenje pomoću gladi i hrane. Prvi deo – Ozdravljenje pomoću gladi [Suvorin’s Method. Healing Using Hunger and Food. Part One - Healing by Hunger]*, (Izdanje udruženja „Novo zdravlje–novi život,” Beograd, 1928); *Vreme*: Dec. 16, 1927, 7; Dec. 30, 1927, 6.

451 Ilić, *Treba li osnivati H. Z. M. Lj.?*, 5–6.

As of 1932, lectures were no longer regular practice but were held occasionally and more in the field of English literature than religion. Kathleen Sitters held her lectures in the Serbian language and it was said that she performed her mission with "poetic eloquence."<sup>452</sup> Unlike her, Sitters had an interpreter at his lectures, B. Kovandžić.<sup>453</sup>



*Kathleen Sitters*

Spiritual concerts were held from time to time and the First Belgrade Singing Society (FBSS), conducted by Kosta Manojlović, often performed on those occasions. In late March 1931, one such concert in the YMCA was attended by Princess Olga and Princess Marina, as well as bishops Dositej and Irinej Ćirić. In the following years, Princess Olga occasionally attended these spiritual concerts, especially the one organized by the Andjus couple in January 1941, also attended by foreign representatives.<sup>454 455</sup>



*Bishop Dositej, P. Sitters, Princess Olga and her sister Marina at the YMCA's requiem concert in 1931.<sup>455</sup>*

452 AY, Legation in London, 341–71–206; *Vera i život*, 8, Sept. 1926; 1, Nov. 1924; 2, Dec. 1924; *Vreme*: Oct. 4, 1926, 2; Oct. 3, 1927, 2; Nov. 22, 1927, 4; June 14, 1932, 5; *Pravda*, Jan. 10, 1928, 10; Dec. 15, 1932, 16; May 16, 1937, 12.

453 AY, Court, 74–196–278.

454 *Vreme*, March 29, 1931, 5; LPL, CFR DOC 1/201–310, CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, January 1941, 7207, Yugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin No. 66 received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters, Belgrade.

455 *Vreme*, March 29, 1931, 5.

R. Taggart had made preparations for the work of the choir, which was supposed to perform at public religious meetings on Sunday nights. When he left the country, an inaugural meeting was held in 1937 and the choir continued under the leadership of Miloš Pišćević.<sup>456</sup> Occasionally they organized a series of spiritual music recitals from various regions by listening to music from record players. Before each record, a short description would be given so that the audience could better understand what kind of music was being played.<sup>457</sup>

### **Physical Education**

Sports and physical education played a key role in working with boys and young people in the YMCA. Various activities were organized that included summer camps for children and youth, hiking trips, work with boy scouts and hikers, sports sections (chess, table tennis, hockey, football) and various competitions. The YMCA table tennis section was the most active in the field of sports activities. They participated in the club's national championship, played games in various parts of the country, and even talked with some players from abroad to come and play in Belgrade.<sup>458</sup> In 1938, the YMCA table tennis team won the Karl Husnik Cup, and at the Serbian championship, they were behind the national champion "Makabi" from Zagreb.<sup>459</sup> Every Saturday afternoon, hockey players dressed in red and blue tee-shirts given to them as a gift, went to Topčider Park to play games. As of 1932, the YMCA

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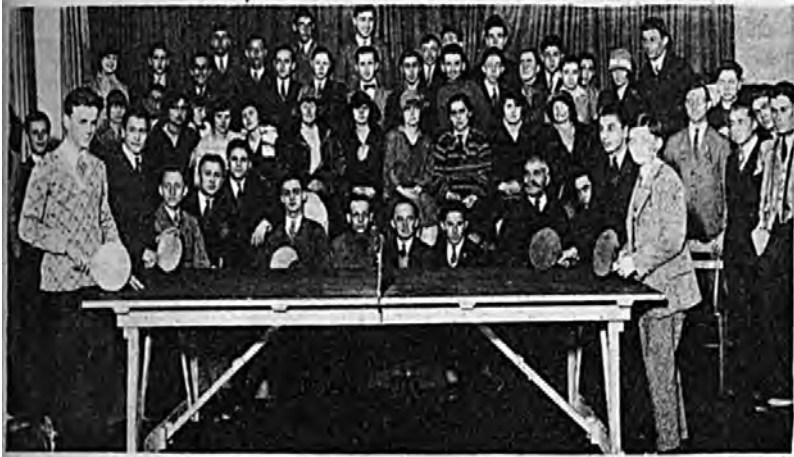
456 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101-200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1936 C. F. R 111, Bulletin No. 54 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia covering the period October to November 1936, received from P. H. Sitters and Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade marked "Private and Confidential"; CFR DOC 1/101-200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, December 1938, 66A - 166 A Bulletin No. 60. Yugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin received from P. H. Sitters and Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade marked "Private and Confidential"; *Vreme*, March 24, 1937, 9.

457 LPL, Bulletin No. 26, March 23, 1929, Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Lambeth Conference 2, 270-271.

458 *Vreme*: Feb. 19, 1932, 8; Nov. 20, 1934; Feb. 23, 1936, 7; May 5, 1940, 21.

459 *Vreme*: Oct. 29, 1939, 11; Feb. 24, 1940, 12.

hockey club started training at the BSK [Belgrade Sports Club] grounds.<sup>460</sup> Badminton was also introduced as a new game.<sup>461</sup>



*A table tennis match at the YMCA in Belgrade*

The YMCA organized its first children's summer camp in 1921. In a letter to the Minister of Religion of May 17, 1921, they wrote that during the summer they would organize a camp for 100 boys, members of the YMCA, from 20 to 29 July, near Trstenik. At the same time, they also planned a conference from 4 to 7 August and requested a discount for the transportation of pupils and materials. Boys aged 10 to 15 years of age were allowed to sign up for the camp with their parents' written permission. Staying there meant accommodation under tents. They had a cook and medical care in conjunction with the American Medical Center in Trstenik. The boys were charged four dinars a day for food and also paid their own travel expenses. The daily schedule in the camp included the study of the Bible, games and compe-

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460 *Vreme*, Oct. 28, 1933, 10.

461 LPL, Bulletin No. 32, December 1930, Douglas 51—Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242–352.

tition sports, entertainment, visits to the Ljubostinja Monastery<sup>462</sup> and Vrnjačka Banja, and lectures with projectors. Within the conference meetings and lectures on Bible Studies, the Life of Jesus Christ, and Christ in social life were organized. The Ministry of Religion, however, did not approve the requested railway discount.<sup>463</sup>



*The YMCA boy's camp from Skopje*

Three years later, in 1924, the YMCA boy's camp from Skopje was organized together with the Red Cross youth from July 15 to August 26 near Vladičin Han, in the portico of Prekodolska Church. The head of the camp was D. Trivunac. The camp accommodated 42 boys and 28 girls. They slept in tents, on straw mattresses. The girls prepared and served food while the boys brought water and firewood.<sup>464</sup> The children's summer camps were also organized in the vicinity of Banja Koviljača in 1924 and Soko Banja in 1925. Vitomir Pavlović, secretary of the YMCA in Belgrade, organized the collecting of contributions for poor children who wanted to come to the camp.<sup>465</sup>

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462 On 16 August 1921, the Prior of the Ljubostinja Monastery requested compensation of 1,219 dinars he spent on the reception of the YMCA. The request was approved. AY, Ministry of Religion, 69–157–242.

463 *Ibid.*

464 *Vera i život*, 2, Dec. 1924.

465 „X. 3. M. Lj. za vreme leta” [“YMCA during the Summer“], *Vreme*, June 3, 1924.





*A Camp in Banja Koviljača 1924.*



*A Camp near Soko Banja in 1925.<sup>466</sup>*

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466 AY, Ministry of Education, 66-479-755.



For the work of the Camp in Soko Banja during the summer of 1925, they received help from the Ministry of Education. The camp was inhabited by 300 children from Ruma, Sremska Mitrovica, Novi Sad, Sombor, Veliki Bečkerek, Vršac, Pančevo, Zemun, Belgrade, Požarevac, Valjevo, Kragujevac, Niš, Bitola, Ohrid, and Skopje.<sup>467</sup> The children from Kragujevac were camped around the town the same year.<sup>468</sup>

In early June, summer camp was also organized in Split by the president of the local YMCA, Professor Josip Barač.<sup>469</sup> In 1926 P. Sitters already sought a place in Dalmatia perfect for organizing a permanent seaside camp.<sup>470</sup> In the meantime, the YMCA organized the departure of a group of boys for a five-day stay in a camp in Bosnia in 1928. Final preparations for a seaside summer camp began in 1928 when the boys from the YMCA in Hungary were invited to join.<sup>471</sup> In July 1929, the first group went on a summer holiday in tents in the town of Mlini near Dubrovnik, near the "Kupari" Hotel. The children in the camp had organized classes in English and French, and those who failed in certain subjects had professors who prepared them for correctional exams.<sup>472</sup> The organization and running of the camp were attended by YMCA Director in Belgrade, Taggart, and Branislav M. Kovandžić, secretary of the National Association of the YMCA, as well as Ruth Trouton, who was in charge of the Women's Branch of the YMCA. According to Taggart's report, over 300 boys and girls and older members stayed at the camp. They came from all parts of the country. The main group in July was from Belgrade and consisted of Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and student - members of the YMCA, parents, and friends. There were 14 young people from Niš and 10 from Zagreb. In August, delegates from all centers in the Hungarian and German-speaking areas of the country came. A group of 11 boys from Budapest arrived as well as two Russian boys, a girl from Greece and a French family. The organization of work in the camp was divided into

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467 AY, Ministry of Education, 66-479-755; *Vreme*, June 15, 1925.

468 *Vera i život*, 10, August 1925.

469 *Vera i život*, 6, June 1926.

470 LPL, Douglas 88, ff. 72, 74-6, 78-80, 187, 119-26, Sitters, Rev. Percy Henry Smart, director of the Young Men's Christian Association, Yugoslavia. 1926-1932, Letters to Bishop J. H. Greig.

471 LPL, Bulletin No. 23, Y.M.C.A. April 20, 1928, Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Lambeth Conference 2, 263, 264.

472 *Vreme*, July 14, 1929.

two parts. In July, the usual program was performed, during which they tried to give members a vacation break but also to have them perform "useful activities." At the end of the month, many returned home and their places were occupied by delegates of the YMCA leadership training course and the weekly school conference at the request of the Union of Sunday Schools in Yugoslavia, whose president was Sitters.<sup>473</sup>

The camp's organizers had problems providing food for so many peo-



*Members of the administration of the Sunday School Union, with Sitters in the middle*

ple, but also to finding suitable labor. Dr. Miloš Parenta conducted the morning prayers. Occasional lectures were held, and a series of evening debates about the "Modern Youth" were being conducted continuously. Leadership training courses were held during the first two weeks of August with more than 100 delegates being present. All the Protestant churches (Lutheran, Reformed, Methodist, and Baptist) had their representatives, and 14 participants were pastors. Almost every center in the country was represented. The group from Bačka was headed by priest Imre Kovač from Subotica. Evening conferences included guest lecturers from England and Hungary.<sup>474</sup>

In Mlini, the camp was visited by the Regional Administrator Ante Perković, the first time on July 14, and a second time, accompanied by the President of the Dubrovnik municipality. All delegates and members formed a long line in the center of the Camp and as they passed, they sang the anthem. Dubrovnik

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473 The Conference of the Sunday school was held in 1930 in Novi Sad. *Vera i život*, 3, April 1930.

474 LPL, Bulletin No. 28, September 1929, Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Lambeth Conference 2, 273.



YMCA Camp in Mlini near Dubrovnik

Mayor Miće Mičić told Sitters during the visit that he did not know any other organization in the country that could bring Serbs, Hungarians, and Germans from Yugoslavia to live together “in the spirit of happiness and harmony.”<sup>475</sup>

Access to the Camp in Mlini was expanded after 1930, and then in 1931, a pavilion was built, which served as a dining room. King Aleksandar Karadjordjević donated two tents with the names of his sons: “Crown Prince Petar” and “Crown Prince Tomislav.”<sup>476</sup> A conference was also held from August 2 to 15, 1931, with delegates from Romania, Czechoslovakia and Hungary and permanent delegates from England. Lectures were held by Ž. Lazić, professor of the National Teachers College from Negotin, Mihajlo Spiridonović, priest from Prokuplje, Mihailo Milinković, Director of the High school in Prokuplje, Borislav Lorenc, Professor of the University of Belgrade, Miloš Parenta, James Wiles, Ljudevit Devai, a priest from the Reformed Church from Stare Moravice, and Donald Lowrie. Upon their return, a gala dinner was organized at the YMCA, attended by members and friends of the Association who had stayed at the Mlini camp during the summer. There were about 70 delegates from various parts of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, but mostly eastern (except for Zagreb and Travnik). The delegates were welcomed by R. Taggart.<sup>477</sup>

475 LPL, Bulletin No. 29, December 1, 1929, Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Lambeth Conference 2, 276–277.

476 „Uspjela priredba Kršćanske zajednice mladih ljudi. Zagreb 15. maja”, *Novosti*, 134, May 16, 1933, 6.

477 *Pravda*, Dec. 11, 1931, 4; *Vreme*, July 10, 1931, 6.





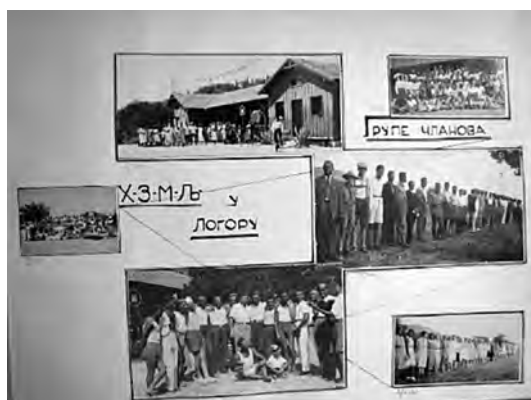
















*YMCA Summer Camp and vacation spot in Mlini, near Dubrovnik.  
Photos of life at the summer camp.<sup>478</sup>*

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The camp had a military regimen and discipline. The campers awoke to trumpets at 06:30 hours. There was mandatory gymnastics and straightening out of tents, singing the anthem, followed by prayer and then breakfast, and then educational and religious meetings and lectures from 9 to 10, swimming between 10:30 and 12:30, lunch, rest, and again beach, sports (badminton, table tennis, water polo, volleyball) and games, walks, from 16:30 to

478 AY, Court 74, Album 18, 5/4467-4579.

17:00 tea and snacks and then Bible lessons<sup>479</sup> with discussion and re-lecturing. At 20:00 there was dinner and from 21:00 campfire and at 22:00 they went to sleep. The entertainment program included organized excursions, swimming competitions, tennis, and courses for amateur photographers, etc. Those who did not obey discipline had to leave the camp and return home. There were children of various ages, even those under 12. In 1932 prices were reduced.<sup>480</sup> A one-month stay at the camp cost 700 dinars for youth, 850 for adults, and 500 dinars for elementary school pupils, which still only a very small number of families could afford,<sup>481</sup> although they had the privileges of traveling by rail and steamboat. That trip itself took about 26 hours.<sup>482</sup>

Kovandžić's speech about the YMCA camp in Mlini was also broadcast on the radio in 1932. By 1932, about 250 YMCA members passed through the camp, including groups from abroad, as well as several hundred children and adults who were not permanent members. The camp program generally remained the same with minor modifications. As more participants came they began to divide them into three groups according to their native language for participation in Bible studies. Igumen Stefan Ilkić from Sombor held lectures and supervised spiritual life in the camp. They discussed prac-

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479 Bible classes that began to be held at the Mlini camp, continued on their return to Belgrade because a group of young people wanted to study Christ's teaching about some of the social problems of that time. LPL, Bell 217, ff. 260-1, Yugoslavia Y.M.C.A. Bulletin No. 35. October - November 1931 by Percy Henry Smart Sitters, Anglican chaplain in Belgrade, Yugoslavia.

480 „Logor i letovalište H. Z. M. Lj. u Mlini (Dubrovnik)” [“YMCA Camp and Resort in Mlini (Dubrovnik)”], *Politika*, May 25, 1932.

481 About 85% of the citizens of Belgrade, mostly those who lived from their salaries, wages or pensions, had monthly incomes lower than 2,000 dinars. The monthly income of workers was below 1,000 dinars. According to the Labor cost index from 1933, the minimum needs of a four-member family, without rent, were about 1,400 dinars a month, therefore, almost twice as much as what the family had. Zlata Vuksanović Macura, „Rentijerski stanovi za siromašne Beogradjane, 1919-1941” [“Rentable Apartments for the Poor Residents of Belgrade, 1919-1941”], *Zbornik Muzeja primenjene umetnosti*, 8, 77-86.

482 *Pravda*, May 24, 1932, 5; LPL, Bulletin No. 38, June 1932, Douglas 51-Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242-352.

tial problems in various centers and issues raised at the World Conference in Canada and America.<sup>483</sup>

In 1933, the camp in Mlini was reduced to a certain extent because it had turned out that many were unable to cover the costs.<sup>484</sup> However, the camp hosted a group of Egyptians who stayed for a week, as well as guests from Austria, Hungary, and Romania.<sup>485</sup> That same year, on Easter, a number of English pupils traveled to Sušak and sailed among the islands, and they also invited two boys from Belgrade to join them for the sake of “spreading international friendship.” One of them was a member of the YMCA in Belgrade, but his name was not mentioned.<sup>486</sup>

Summer vacations in Mlini were organized during July and August until 1938.<sup>487</sup> Occasionally, they received financial aid from the Royal Court.<sup>488</sup> During 1937, a liturgy, served by M. Parenta, was held in the colony itself on the occasion of the death of Patriarch Varnava. It was attended by Jovan Djonović, retired minister and lawyer Stevan Janić, brother of retired minister Voja Janić. Lectures were held by Parenta, Jovan Dajković, Ljubomir Ivančević, Branislav Kovandžić, and Vladimir Dedijer, on contemporary events in Spain.<sup>489</sup> In June 1938, a tea party was held for fifteen ladies from Belgrade,

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483 LPL, Bulletin, No. 39, September 1932 Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242–352; „Letovalište u Mlinama”, *Pravda*, July 21, 1932; „Logor Hrišćanske zajednice u Mlinima” [“YMCA Camp in Mlini”], *Politika*, August 20, 1932.

484 LPL, Bulletin No. 43, May and June 1933, Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242–352.

485 *Pravda*, August 16, 1933, 6.

486 LPL, Bulletin No. 42, 1933, Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242–352.

487 LPL, Bulletin No. 45, May–June 1934, Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas about the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242–352; *Pravda*: May 28, 1933, 22; June 12, 1934, 10; *Vreme*, May 28, 1937, 11. Sitters also experienced a minor traffic accident on the way from Dubrovnik to Herceg Novi in 1934. He specifically thanked the gendarmeries for their help. *Pravda*, July 1, 1934, 8; LPL, CFR DOC 1 / 101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents 1 Winter 1937 44–144 Bulletin No. 57 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia received from P. H. Sitters and Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade marked “Private and Confidential”.

488 LPL, Bulletin No. 45 May–June 1934, Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242–352.

489 *Pravda*, August 1, 1937, 16.

mainly the wives of ministers, who had followed the work of the camp and showed a desire to help with the work. Jovan Crnogorac and Jovan Dajković explained what it meant for students, pupils, and other members, to have an inexpensive or even free stay at the seaside. Kovandžić talked about the lack of tents and equipment. The ladies suggested publishing a newspaper article. Shortly thereafter they received a dozen tents. There were 200 children and adults on holiday in Mlini that year. In addition to Miloš Parenta, Branko Rapajić was also present, who at that time was working at the NCC publishing house in Kragujevac, from where he brought various books and brochures.<sup>490</sup>

During 1939, a decision was made not to use the Mlini camp any longer because it was considered more practical to have regional camps in different parts of the country, around Subotica, Novi Sad, Belgrade, Požarevac and Ljubljana.<sup>491</sup> This practice already started in 1934. The YMCA's junior scout section, headed by Crnogorac, organized a camp near Prokuplje. Crnogorac told them Bible stories and encouraged them to ask questions. When questions were too difficult for him, he sent them to the Sitters to answer. After returning, they organized an exhibition featuring a Native American wigwam, giant birds and animals, witty drawings and diagrams of their work. The children filled up two rooms in the YMCA with their works, and in addition, they organized a program of singing and reciting.<sup>492</sup>

At Lake Bohinj, a camp was organized in 1935, headed by two Protestant pastors affiliated with the YMCA. This camp was intended for those members who could not pay to stay in Mlini. It lasted for two weeks and had around 60 members. In the same year, a camp in Prokuplje was planned for boy scouts.<sup>493</sup>

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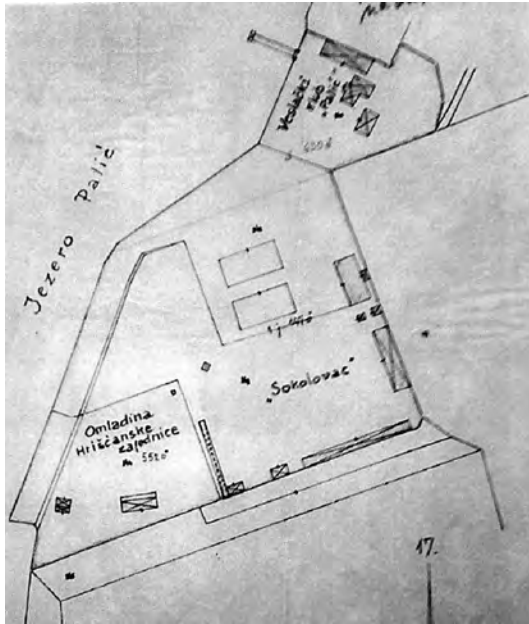
490 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1. October 1938, 66 – 166, Bulletin No. 59. Yugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade.

491 LPL, CFR DOC 1/201–310, CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, June 1939 C.F.R. 201, Bulletin No. 61. Yugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade.

492 LPL, YMCA Headquarters Belgrade, Yugoslavia to Council of Foreign Relations, CFR DOC 1/51–100 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, December 1935, 39–89 Bulletin No. 51 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia by P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters.

493 LPL, YMCA Headquarters Belgrade, Yugoslavia to Council of Foreign Relations, CFR DOC 1/51–100 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1935, 36–86, Bulletin No. 50. Sum-

Two camps were organized in 1936 on Goč. Since the railway was not working, they borrowed a truck and went with it twice a week to the nearest town to buy the necessary things and food. There were 50 participants. The group was led by Jovan Crnogorac and Kovandžić also visited them after returning from England. The second camp was organized in the north across the Danube and it was headed by Imre Kovač, who was also working in the villages that were connected with the Reformed Church.<sup>494</sup>



YMCA camp at Lake Palić

During 1937 there was a camp at Lake Palić near the Hungarian border that was headed by Keck Zsigmond, a pastor of the Reformed Church in

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mer bulletin about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia by P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters.

494 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1936 C. F. R 111, Bulletin No. 54 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia covering the period October to November 1936, received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade.



Subotica. The land on which the camp was located was owned by the Reformed Church, surrendered to the YMCA and covered an area of around 2,000 square meters.<sup>495</sup> They held a program of Bible discussions. In addition to the Lake Palić and Mlini camps, there was the third camp that year, in Upper Lendava.<sup>496</sup>

The youth summer camp at Mt. Tara was organized during the summer of 1940, with visits to old churches and monasteries and compulsory camp nights. The second camp was at Novo Mesto in Slovenia, and its main purpose was to provide assistance to farmers in the field and the women in their house chores. The third camp was in Beočin and it was organized by Protestant clergymen. The participants brought their own food and stayed until it was consumed.<sup>497</sup>

In the early 1930s, B. Kovandžić and R. Taggart reorganized the work with boys, and they also led other youth groups. Jovan Crnogorac, who headed the junior scout section in the YMCA, launched a magazine, for which the boys wrote, drew, and edited by themselves. In addition, Crnogorac introduced into the YMCA the practice that each boy, when considered to be sufficiently trained in the work of the Association, received membership through a special brief ceremony and was given a small picture in Bible classes that illustrated the lessons. When they collected four small images, they got a bigger one.<sup>498</sup> The section that Crnogorac headed in 1936 had 50 junior scouts. He

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495 Historical Archives Subotica, Executive Committee of the City National Committee, No. 43022/1947, January 1948, Subotica. Case: Complaint of the Reformed Church Municipality in Subotica on the occasion of the decision of the Executive Board of the City National Committee in Subotica no. 27745/1947. The document received from Mr. Branislav Ćurčić.

496 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1. Winter 1937 44–144 Bulletin No. 57 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade.

497 *Vreme*: June 25, 1940, 11; June 9, 1940, 19; LPL, CFR DOC 1/201–310, CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, October 1940, 8 – 208, Jugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin No. 65 received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters, Belgrade.

498 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1936 C. F. R 111, Bulletin No. 54 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia covering the period October to November 1936, received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade.



also organized a training course for leaders that lasted four days, in which Kovandžić's son also took part.<sup>499</sup>

### Propaganda and Humanitarian Work

In addition to their publicity work for the YMCA in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the Sitters and Reginald Taggart also worked on promoting the Kingdom in Great Britain, as part of their regular fund-raising visits, but also in contact with representatives of the YMCA who came during the inter-war period. However, the publicity work was two-sided. Consciously or not, like the other Britons present in the country, they worked on promulgating, in addition the English language (before World War I, German was spoken more than French in Belgrade, while "English was virtually never spoken at all")<sup>500</sup> and values, customs and symbols of the British way of life (loyalty to the crown, charity work, tea parties, sales exhibitions, celebration of holidays, etc.), which they brought with them. Hubert Butler, who was in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia from 1934 to 1937 as a scholar of the School for Slavic Studies in London and who held English classes at the English-American-Yugoslav Club, wrote that at that time "it was rather modern be anglophile; people felt that they were being very democratic if they went to the club and read *The Illustrated London News*."<sup>501</sup>

English language courses were constantly present in the work of the YMCA. In addition to standard courses, they also held special English language courses for high school students.<sup>502</sup> The YMCA organized numerous public lectures in the field of English life, literature, and art (Shakespeare,<sup>503</sup> Dickens' Christmas stories, the life of artists in England,<sup>504</sup> the attractions of

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499 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101-200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1937, 17-117, Bulletin No. 55 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia covering the period December 1936-January 1937 received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade.

500 Aleksandar Deroko, *A ondak je letijo jeroplan nad Beogradom. Sećanja [And then an airplane is flying over Belgrade. Memories]*, (Beograd, 2013), 62.

501 Hubert Butler, *Balkanski eseji [Balkan Essays]*, (Zagreb: Fraktura, 2016), 328.

502 *Vreme*, Sept. 6, 1936; *Pravda*, Feb. 4, 1941, 9.

503 *Vreme*, March 6, 1941, 9.

504 *Vreme*, March 30, 1926, 6.

London,<sup>505</sup> rural life in England, Oxford and its colleges, etc.) A lecture from 1934 was devoted to dogs and cats in English literature. In 1936 and 1937, lectures were devoted to “unforgettable sentences in English prose” and “wild birds in English literature.”<sup>506</sup> In November 1939, there was information about another lecture on the book *Alice in Wonderland*, which was illustrated with projections in color.<sup>507</sup> The lectures were in English, with occasional translations.<sup>508</sup>

In addition to English language and literature, another constantly promoted activity was organizing tea parties, unavoidable and very popular among Belgraders. The final event of each season, before the summer break, was usually a tea party followed by English games and folk songs.<sup>509</sup> The start of the winter working season in October was marked by a meeting of all members, again with a tea party and an entertaining program.<sup>510</sup> In addition, on Sunday nights, public spiritual meetings were followed by so-called Social Hours for members, and there were always more people present than had been planned. The program consisted of conversation, music, croissants and pastry, sweets and light tea. Evenings were organized under the auspices of various foreign diplomats (Czechoslovak Evening, French Evening) with concerts and tea parties, attended by members of the Czech and French diplomatic colonies.<sup>511</sup> The boys themselves, mem-

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505 “London, a Romantic City,” along with projections, showed the interior and exterior of the Upper and Lower Houses and the Parliament, Westminster Abbey, Hyde Park, the YMCA Building in Tottenham, Buckingham Palace, Victoria Railway Station, and London at night. *Vreme*, Nov. 30, 1933, 10; *Pravda*, April 12, 1933, 14.

506 *Vreme*: Feb. 26, 1936, 8; Feb. 17, 1937, 11; *Pravda*: Dec. 17, 1937, 20.

507 „Predavanje u Engleskom klubu” [“Lecture at the English Club”], *Pravda*, Nov. 12, 1939, 17.

508 *Pravda*, Jan. 4, 1934, 13; *Vreme*, Nov. 28, 1934, 8.

509 LPL, CFR DOC 1/201–310, CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, June 1939 C.F.R. 201, Bulletin No. 61. Yugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade.

510 *Vreme*, Sept. 27, 1936, 9.

511 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1936 C. F. R 111, Bulletin No. 54 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia covering the period October to November 1936, received from P. H. Sitters and Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade marked “Private and Confidential”; CFR DOC 1/101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1937, 17–117 Bulletin No. 55 about the work of the Y.M.C.A.

bers of the YMCA, occasionally organized tea parties together with their parents with a program of singing recitation devoted to themes from the Bible. During one such event in 1938, in a report sent to the United Kingdom, Sitters asked: "is there any other YMCA in the world where they have more tea than we have here?"<sup>512</sup>

Since arriving in the Kingdom, the Sitters had become indispensable for various cultural, and especially charity events in the anglophile circles, including the English-American-Yugoslav club, the English Charles Dickens Nursery School, the Serbian-American Orphanage, the Women's League for Peace and Freedom.<sup>513</sup> Charity work was perceived as a Christian duty and was common in the British Isles since the 19<sup>th</sup> century when it became a norm for churches and associations because there was no adequate system for helping the poor. The YMCA in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was devoted to philanthropic work, calling on the elderly, the sick, and prisoners,<sup>514</sup> collecting help for poor families and students, abandoned girls and the blind.<sup>515</sup> In Belgrade, YMCA members also held lectures on work in nursing homes, homes for the blind, etc.<sup>516</sup> Groups of scouts gathered help for poor children and gave out gifts in Jatagan Mala (a shanty town in Belgrade).<sup>517</sup> They felt that in this way they not only performed useful services but also worked to create good citizens.<sup>518</sup>

Each year on the first day of Christmas they went to a retirement home in 27 Deligradska Street in Belgrade. From the money they had pre-

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in Yugoslavia covering the period December 1936–January 1937 received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade marked "Private and Confidential."

512 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, June 1938 59 – 159 Bulletin No. 58 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade marked "Private and Confidential."

513 *Pravda*: May 7, 1933, 11; April 5, 1934, 5; January 30, 1934, 13; Dec. 15, 1934, 5.

514 Work with prisoners began at the Penitentiary in Niš, where K. Šantić was especially engaged. P. Sitters also held a lecture at the Penitentiary in 1925. K. Šantić, „Kazneni zavod u Nišu” [“Prison in Niš”], *Vera i život*, 4, Feb. 1925; 7, May 1925.

515 LPL, CFR DOC 1/201–310, CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, January 1941, 7–207, Yugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin No. 66 received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters, Belgrade.

516 *Ibid.*

517 *Vera i život*, 4, Feb. 1925.

518 *Vera i život*, 3, Jan. 1925.

viously collected, they bought sweets and greeting cards. They carried a record player with them and organized parties or showed films. Sometimes Yugoslav Army officers or soldiers, or boys from the group headed by Jovan Crnogorac, would be part of the group that made these charity visits. In one of the reports, Sitters noted that people in the old folks' nursing home were pushed aside and forgotten, that except them there were no visitors in the building, and that the only person who remembered to send them a gift was King Aleksandar.<sup>519</sup>

The Sitters also visited juvenile detention centers<sup>520</sup> and Kathleen Sitters and members of the YMCA visited homes to for blind children and the homes for abandoned girls and on Christmas Eve gave out gifts to the residents.<sup>521</sup> Occasionally, collecting voluntary donations were organized in the streets to help work with young people.<sup>522</sup> The YMCA was also involved in the work of the Sobriety Lodge.<sup>523</sup> In Stare Moravice, they had "Mothers' Day," when YMCA members collected funds for the poorest families to buy milk for

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519 LPL, Bulletin No. 26, March 23, 1929, Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Lambeth Conference 2, 270-271; Bulletin No. 33, March 1931, Douglas 51-Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242-352; Bell 217, ff. 260-1, Jugoslav [Yugoslav] 268-9 - Jugoslav [Yugoslav] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin No. 37, January-February 1932, 1931-2, by Percy Henry Smart Sitters, Anglican chaplain in Belgrade, Yugoslavia; Bulletin No. 41, January-February 1933, Douglas 51-Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242-352; YMCA Headquarters Belgrade, Yugoslavia to Council of Foreign Relations, Bulletin No 44, January 1934, CFR DOC 1/101-200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1937, 17-117 Bulletin No. 55 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia covering the period December 1936-January 1937 received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade; CFR DOC 1/51-100, CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1935, 23A-24/C.F.R. 73A, Bulletin No. 49 (January, February & March) about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia in the first quarter of 1935 by P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters; CFR DOC 1/201-310, CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, January 1941, 7-207, Jugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin No. 66 received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters, Belgrade.

520 *Vera i život*, 3, March 1927.

521 *Opštinske novine*, Feb. 1, 1931, 114; „Desetogodišnjica rada u našoj sredini Engleskinje gdje Katlen Sifers“ [“Englishwoman Mrs. Kathleen Sitters' 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Work in our Midst”], *Žena i svet*, 12, 1931, 20; *Pravda*, Jan. 2, 1932, 16.

522 *Vreme*, October 19, 1930, 11.

523 *Prvada*, Nov. 7, 1932, 10.

their babies.<sup>524</sup> The boy scouts took part at the tea party that Queen Maria organized for 300 poor children (1936).<sup>525</sup> When the Belgrade City Administration issued an urgent call in 1937 for the collection of “winter aid” for some of the poorest people, YMCA scouts collected money for that fund. In keeping with the old “Fathers” tradition among the Serbs, they handed in their contributions, tied up Sitters, and did not let him go until he too made his contribution. Sitters wrote on that occasion that in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia “there is a great deal of poverty that we think does not exist in England.”<sup>526</sup>

In early 1939, at the annual national conference, it was decided the YMCA in Belgrade should build a camp for poor members in the vicinity of the city but the realization of this plan did not occur.<sup>527</sup> After the war had begun in 1939, they were collected and sent packages to military prisoners in Germany. The Sitters were touched by how the Yugoslavs helped in this endeavor, remembering English kindness during World War One.

During their summer holidays in England, Scotland, and Ireland, the Sitters gave lectures about the Kingdom of SCS / Yugoslavia, its history, epic poetry, folk customs, and faith.<sup>528</sup> Initially, Sitters featured a film about the Kingdom that was given to him by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Then he prepared a film in his own production featuring King Aleksandar, which he presented for the first time at the conference for YMCA leaders in March 1931.<sup>529</sup> According to the local press, the Sitters couple spent four months in England that same

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524 LPL, Bulletin No. 34, June 1931, Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242–352.

525 LPL, YMCA Headquarters Belgrade, Yugoslavia to Council of Foreign Relations, CFR DOC 1/51–100 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, March 1936, 43–93 Bulletin No. 52 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia by P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters “Private and Confidential.”

526 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1937, 17–CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, C.F.R. 117 Bulletin No. 55 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia covering the period December 1936–January 1937 received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade.

527 LPL, CFR DOC 1/201–310, CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, June 1939 C.F.R. 201, Bulletin No. 61. Yugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade.

528 *Vera i život*: 8, Sept. 1926; 1, Nov. 1924; 2, Dec. 1924.

529 „Konferencija i škola za vodje HZMLj” [“Conference and School for Leaders of the YMCA”], *Pravda*, March 6, 1931, 4.

year and promoted Yugoslavia and the situation in the Balkans. They featured Sitters' film,<sup>530</sup> and his wife brought folk costumes from Yugoslavia. They were assisted by the Bishop of Guildford Grieg, Colonel A. Smith, A. W. Churchill, Bishop Hicks, and others. The Sitters held more than 120 lectures, in London, Hastings, Eastbourne, Chichester, Nottingham, etc. They also organized several conferences with the most distinguished representatives of the cities they visited. At the lecture in Dorking, the women guests were dressed in Yugoslav folk costumes.<sup>531</sup> After returning to Belgrade in 1932, Sitters gave a press statement in which he said: "I spent the last two months mostly in Scotland, where I showed two films about the beauty of Yugoslavia. Those two films were received so well that I decided, at the suggestion of my fellow citizens, to follow up those films and show that third film in my country."<sup>532</sup>

In 1933, B. Kovandžić asked the Royal Court to give support to the publicity work that Sitters did with his film in England, but apparently, he did not receive a reply and so the request was repeated on May 17.<sup>533</sup> This film included additional material, mainly images from the everyday life of King Petar II and the work of the YMCA, and its title was "Yugoslavia, the Romantic Land of the Southern Slavs". The film had two parts and lasted about 40 minutes.<sup>534</sup> It was shown in the following years, and also during the journey to England and Scotland (the Duchess of Kent, sister of Princess Olga, attended the filming in London in 1937),<sup>535</sup> in Bulgaria, as well as on various occasions in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia<sup>536</sup> and when visiting the YMCA branches

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530 The film was shown in London and Kent. „Jugoslavija na filmu u Londonu” [“Yugoslavia on Movie in London”], *Vreme*, Oct. 20, 1931, 8.

531 „Naš narod, krajevi i običaji u slici i reči u Engleskoj” [“Our people, Places, and Customs in Picture and Words in England”], *Pravda*, Nov. 22, 1931, 7.

532 *Vreme*, June 14, 1932, 5.

533 AY, Court, 74–196–278.

534 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1. October 1938, 66 – 166 Bulletin No. 59. Yugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A.

535 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1. Winter 1937, 44–144 Bulletin No. 57 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade.

536 *Vreme*, June 14, 1932, 5; *Pravda*, March 31, 1933; March 16, 1937, 5; “A Film of Yugoslavia”, *SSH*, 3, 1934, vol. III, April 2, 3.

(Prokuplje,<sup>537</sup> Požarevac,<sup>538</sup> Feketić,<sup>539</sup> Crvenka, Stari Sivic, Zagreb, etc.). The purpose of the presentation was to promulgate the work of the YMCA, but also to collect funds for continued activities or for specific purposes such as the construction of the Memorial Home to King Aleksandar. Therefore, the tickets for projections were collected from time to time.<sup>540</sup>

In the early thirties, King Aleksandar became interested in the films that the Sitters had recorded. He was keen to see how people in England received them, whether they liked them, and he asked the Sitters to come to Dedinje and to show them to him. After presenting a film at the Royal Palace about the work of the YMCA, they received a letter of thanks from Prince Pavle.<sup>541</sup> The King and the Queen again called the Sitters in the spring of 1934 for lunch and for a new projection. Prince Pavle and Princess Olga were present, as well as the British and US Envoys, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and others.<sup>542</sup> Sitters constantly updated and improved his films. At first, they were black and white, later they were in color, and some also had musical accompaniment. In the autumn of 1936, they were again invited to the Palace to show King Petar the film they had made about him. The film portrayed him in sports activities, how he studies and played with his two brothers in the

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537 LPL, Bulletin No. 34, June 1931, Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242–352.

538 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1937, 29–129 Bulletin No. 56 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia, Spring 1937 received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade marked “Private and Confidential.”

539 LPL, YMCA Headquarters Belgrade, Yugoslavia to Council of Foreign Relations, CFR DOC 1/51–100, CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1935, O.C. 24/C.F.R. 73A, Bulletin No. 49 (January, February & March) about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia in the first quarter of 1935 by P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters.

540 LPL, CFR DOC 1/51–100, CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1935, 23A–24/C.F.R. 73A, Bulletin No. 49 January, February & March, about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia in the first quarter of 1935 by P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters.

541 LPL, Bulletin No. 32, December 1930, Bulletin No. 33, March 1931, Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242–352.

542 LPL, Bulletin No. 45 May–June 1934, Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242–352.

garden at Dedinje.<sup>543</sup> This film was subsequently screened in England in 1938, as was the film about the work of the YMCA.<sup>544</sup>

In October 1934, following the assassination of King Aleksandar, the National Council of the YMCA sent an appeal to all the YMCA branches in the country to hold meetings of members to offer a prayer for King Aleksandar's "martyrdom." All events were canceled during the public period of mourning and a telegram of condolences was sent to Queen Maria.<sup>545</sup> The Sitters wrote that in 1934 Belgrade was "a city of broken hearts for many weeks" and that it was never completely the same after that. When the six months of public mourning ended on April 9, commemorative services were held throughout the country. The YMCA participated in those ceremonies. Requiem concerts were organized in Belgrade and Zagreb. The YMCA organized a commemorative concert for the "martyr king" in Belgrade in April 1935 at the premises of the Officer's Club. It was opened by prayer and after that, the great mass stood in silence for a moment of tribute. Attending the concert was Dr. Slavko Grujić, Marshal of the Royal Court, as the emissary of His Majesty the King, British MP in Belgrade, Henderson, YMCA President Vasa Lazarević, Sitters, et al. The concert was opened by Miloš Parenta. It was performed by The First Belgrade Singing Society (FBSS), the Choir of the National Theater in Belgrade, and the Belgrade Philharmonic. The choirs and the artists performed on a voluntary basis. The entire program was broadcast on the radio. Sitters showed a film made during King Aleksandar's funeral, and "many wept during the screening."<sup>546</sup> The Zagreb concert was also broadcast on the

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543 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101-200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1936 C. F. R 111, Bulletin No. 54 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia covering the period October to November 1936, received from P. H. Sitters and Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade marked "Private and Confidential"; CFR DOC 1/101-200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1937, 29-129, Bulletin No. 56 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia, Spring 1937 received from P. H. Sitters and Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade marked "Private and Confidential"; Y.M.C.A. Bulletin No. 63, December 6<sup>th</sup>, 1939, Douglas 51-Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 349

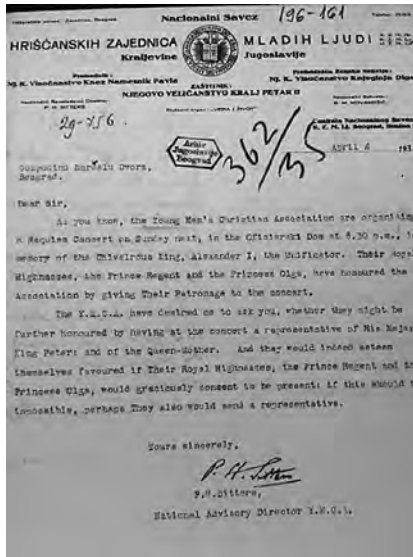
544 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101-200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, June 1938 59-159 Bulletin No. 58 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade.

545 *Pravda*, Oct. 12, 1934, 13.

546 AY, Court, 74-196-278; *Pravda*, April 9, 1935, 2; LPL, YMCA Headquarters Belgrade, Yugoslavia to Council of Foreign Relations, CFR DOC 1/51-100, CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1935, CFR DOC 1/51-100, December 1935, 39-89 Bulletin No. 51 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia by P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters.



radio, attended by Metropolitan Dositej, Bishop F. Pop, army representatives, the Sitters, and others.<sup>547</sup>



*Sitters' request of April 1935 to the Marshal of the Royal Court for the Royal family to send its representatives to the requiem concert they were preparing.*

Sitters also recorded a film about the members of the Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church in 1930, but it is not known whether he ever finishing it and screened it.<sup>548</sup> One of the films from 1933 showed scenes from Orthodox life, but it is also not known where, or whether it was ever shown.<sup>549</sup> In

- 547 LPL, YMCA Headquarters Belgrade, Yugoslavia to Council of Foreign Relations, CFR DOC 1/51-100, CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1935, 23A -24/C.F.R. 73A, Bulletin No. 49 January, February & March about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia in the first quarter of 1935 by P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters.
- 548 LPL, Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Lambeth Conference 2, ff. 462, 464, 470-1, 473-6, Papers concerning Rev. Percy Henry Smart Sitters, director of the Young Men's Christian Association, Yugoslavia, and correspondence with Douglas.
- 549 LPL, 2615-2650 - Headlam Papers, MSS - Manuscripts, MS 2649 ff. 126-8, 130, 142, 147. Sitters (Percy Henry Smart), Chaplain in Belgrade. Correspondence with the Bishop of Gloucester.

the YMCA, occasionally, they also broadcast films received from Great Britain. A presentation of awarded films sent by the Institute for Amateur Cinematographers in London was organized in 1935. Belgrade was the first city on the list of countries where these films were shown.<sup>550</sup>

In addition to publicity and charity work, the British in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia also nurtured respect for certain symbols and rituals that were not purely religious and related only to the YMCA. They celebrated various anniversaries and dates from British history in an effort to give them official significance and provide approval and patronage by the authorities or the Royal family, with their preferred presence.<sup>551</sup>



*Envoy Kennard, the British Military Attaché, members of the Legation of Great Britain, Sitters and Bishop Nikolaj at the French Military Cemetery in 1926.<sup>551</sup>*

Armistice Day was marked for the first time in Buckingham Palace in London on November 10 and 11, 1919 to commemorate the ceasefire signed after World War I, between the Allies and Germany in Compiègne, France, on the “eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month” in 1918. This day was marked in the Kingdom of the SCS until 1926,<sup>552</sup> but as of 1928, it was given increasing attention. That year, the League of Remembrance from New York City called for this day to be marked with two minutes of remem-

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550 LPL, YMCA Headquarters Belgrade, Yugoslavia to Council of Foreign Relations, CFR DOC 1/51-100 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1935, CFR DOC 1/51-100, December 1935, 39-89 Bulletin No. 51 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia by P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters.

551 *Politika*, Nov. 12, 1926, 5.

552 *Vreme*, Nov. 12, 1926, 1.

bering the fallen victims.<sup>553</sup> In Belgrade, Patriarch Dimitrije consecrated the War Ossuary in memory of the defenders of Belgrade, erected by the Belgrade municipal authorities. Commemorations were also held at the cemeteries of the fallen Allied soldiers.<sup>554</sup> Sitters attended these commemorations in May 1929 and he also attended the consecration ceremony of the monument to the fallen British soldiers in Niš, conducted by Bishop Dositej.<sup>555</sup>



*From the celebration of Peace Day at the English Club in Belgrade.  
Left: Sitters during the speech.*

Every year, the YMCA marked Armistice Day or Peace Day, as the newspapers in the capital then called it, with solemn commemorative ceremonies in a church improvised in Association's hall. This ceremony was attended by the diplomatic representatives of Great Britain and the United States in the Kingdom of SCS / Yugoslavia, a number of Serbian Orthodox Church officials (Bishop Nikolaj, Archimandrite Sevastijan Dabović,<sup>556</sup> Archpriest Gavro Mi-

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553 *Vreme*, Sept. 27, 1928, 7.

554 *Vreme*, Nov. 12, 1928, 5.

555 *Pravda*, May 13, 1929, 5.

556 Archimandrite Sevastijan Dabović was a missionary of the American Biblical Society at the beginning of the twenties. He wrote to the Minister of Education on May 20, 1921 that the British Bible Society monopolized the work "on our territory" and that the English "were weak and burdened by the deficit in this work (but that) they still did not want to relinquish the printing of the Bible and the New Testament to others or even to Americans." Americans were ready to meet and assist in national enlightenment in the

lošević, and Miloš Parenta), members of the British and American diplomatic colonies and members of the YMCA, with occasional performances by the First Belgrade Singing Society conducted by Kosta Manojlović or the choir of the Cathedral Church of St. Michael.<sup>557</sup> The room was usually decorated with allied flags, chrysanthemums and poppies; services were performed by Sitters and dictums were read by the British and American Envoys.<sup>558</sup> At times, Orthodox priests also took part in the services. On November 11, 1934, the Armistice Day commemoration to the fallen soldiers from Great Britain and the United States was held in St. Michael's Cathedral Church in Belgrade. The commemoration service was conducted by Bishop Dr. Irinej Djordjević. Representatives of King Peter II and Queen Maria, Slavko Grujić, the Marshal of the Royal Court, US Ambassador Charles Wilson, representatives of the Legations, the Sitters, as well as members of the British and American diplomatic colonies, who had red poppies on their lapels. The same day, a solemn session was held

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Kingdom of SCS, so he asked for a free ticket for transport by the end of the year but did not receive it. (AY, Ministry of Religion, 69–157–242).

Sevastian (Jovan) Dabović was born in San Francisco in 1863. His parents had moved to the United States from Boka Kotorska. He became a monk during his education in Russia. He was appointed missionary in California and the State of Washington as a clerk of the Russian Orthodox Church. He built the first Serbian church in the United States in 1894. Toward the end of World War I, he also worked on examining the possibility of American priests being accepted into the Serbian army. (Emhardt William Chauncey, *Project Canterbury: Historical Contact of Eastern Orthodox and Anglican Churches. A review of the relations between the Orthodox Church of the East and the Anglican Church since the time of Theodore of Tarsus*, (New York: Department of Missions and Church Extension of the Episcopal Church, 1920), Accessed: 19. 09. 2018, [http://anglicanhistory.org/orthodoxy/emhardt\\_historical1920.html](http://anglicanhistory.org/orthodoxy/emhardt_historical1920.html)) He died in Žiča on November 30, 1940. He is buried at a monastery cemetery. (Sava Vuković, *Istorija Srpske pravoslavne crkve u Americi i Kanadi 1891–1941 [History of the Serbian Orthodox Church in America and Canada]*, (Kragujevac, 1994). The Serbian Orthodox Church canonised him in 2015.

557 LPL, Bulletin No. 35, November 18, 1930, Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242–352; *Pravda*: Nov. 11, 1926, 7; *Politika*: Nov. 12, 1926, 5; Nov. 12, 1927, 3; Nov. 12, 1929, 6; *Vreme*, Nov. 12, 1928, 5; Nov. 11, 1929, 7; Nov. 12, 1931, 5.

558 LPL, Bell 217, ff. 260–1, Jugoslav [Yugoslav] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin No. 35. October – November 1931 by Percy Henry Smart Sitters, Anglican chaplain in Belgrade, Yugoslavia; YMCA Headquarters Belgrade, Yugoslavia to Council of Foreign Relations, CFR DOC 1/51–100 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, December 1935, 39–89 Bulletin No. 51 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia by P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters.

at the Kolarac National University, where Mabel Grujić, the wife of Slavko Grujić, Marshal of the Royal Court, delivered a speech. Jovan Jovanović, the former Minister in London, also attended.<sup>559</sup> This day was celebrated in the English-Yugoslav Club as well as in the Association of the Friends of Great Britain. As of 1937, Sitters served mass on this day in the Anglican Chaplaincy at 57 Gospodar Jevremova Street.<sup>560</sup> On Armistice Day 1938, traffic was shut down for the first time in the main streets of Belgrade for two minutes, at 11 a.m.<sup>561562</sup>



Armistice Day celebration in Belgrade. Formal sessions of the Association of Friends of Great Britain and the United States at Kolarac National University.<sup>562</sup>

559 *Vreme*, Nov. 12, 1934, 3–4.

560 *Politika*: Nov, 1936, 6; Nov. 12, 1937, 5; Dec. 11, 1938, 7; *Vreme*: Nov. 12, 1936, 10; „Dan primirja u engleskoj i američkoj koloniji” [“Armistice Day in the English and American Colony”], *Pravda*, Nov. 12, 1937, 3. The house in 57 Gospodar Jevremova Street was built by architect Danilo Vladisavljević in 1902 as a family building and was rebuilt by his son, Vladislav Vladisavljević, an architect, in 1936. The construction was completed in October 1936. The building had bright flats, all necessary installations, and steam heating. On the ground floor was the office of Lazar Vladisavljević, and on the fourth floor, there was Vladislav Vladisavljević’s design bureau. Maria Pokrajac, „Istorija kuće porodice Vladisavljević na uglu Gospodar Jevremove i Dositejeve ulice” [“The History of the Vladisavljević Family House on the Corner of Gospodar Jevremova and Dositejeva Streets”], *Nasledje* XVIII, (2017), 25–33.

561 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101–200CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, December 1938, 66A – 166A, Bulletin No. 60. Jugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin received from P. H. Sitters and Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade marked “Private and Confidential.”

562 *Vreme*, Nov. 12, 1934, 4.

### **Construction of the Memorial Hall for King Aleksandar I - The Unifier**

Just as the physical body was considered intimately related to the moral wellbeing of an individual, buildings were considered extremely important for the successful activity of the YMCA. The organization's institutional home was of importance for its attitude toward the public concept of the organization itself, and the design and construction of a YMCA building represented an important contribution to the promotion of its interests and goals. Buildings, both by their outside and inside appearance and by the arrangement of their rooms, and even their furniture, were supposed to be a testament to the ideals they represented. The building was supposed to serve a pedagogical purpose and its physical appearance was supposed to have an impact on morals. It was supposed to reflect, in its balanced proportions, the physical, intellectual, religious and social life of the individual and provide activities in all these aspects. Each section was supposed to be different, yet avoid being split into independent parts. When designing, it was also necessary to pay attention to effective monitoring. In many plans, the offices of the Secretary-General and the director in charge of physical activities were grouped and set up in such a way that they could see the entrance and various passages and stairs to all other parts of the building. As far as their principles were concerned, until the 1920s, the YMCA buildings in most of the big cities in China architecturally were often inseparable from those in the United States.<sup>563</sup>

The YMCAs in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, like in other countries, took great care to provide adequate facilities. New premises were arranged in Stari Sivic, Feketić, and Veliki Bečkerek. In Belgrade in 1924, there was an idea to build a war memorial that would also be the building of the YMCA, called "Home to the Living in Glory to the Fallen."<sup>564</sup> This plan was an issue for a

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563 Hodges, *op. cit.*

564 The intention was to construct a building in Belgrade where there would be a reading room, a library, a lecture room, a gym, a dining room, classrooms, a scout room and 25-30 rooms for young people and students without funds. According to the budget, the building was supposed to cost 3 million dinars and they hoped that the government would donate the plot. The Representative Office in England offered a gift of 300,000 di-



long time because they were forced to move frequently and change their addresses. In 1919, they had their premises in 1 Kneza Miloša St. From 1921 to 1926 they were located in 2 Pozorišna Street in an apartment that belonged to the Board of the Kolarac Endowment.<sup>565</sup> From November 1926 to the end of 1928, they were located in 11 Vasina Street.<sup>566</sup> A dozen rooms were located on the first floor where a student dorm had been.<sup>567</sup> They rearranged them into a large hall with a stage, a library with classics of English literature and philosophy, a tea room, a chess club, and so on.

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nars if the government, the Serbian Orthodox Church, and the citizens gave donations up to the required amount. *Vera i život*, 1, Nov. 1924, 4–5.

- 565 *Vera i život*, 10–11, Sep. – Oct. 1925. Today on this place stands the Central Serbian Army Club, built in 1931.
- 566 Montague Waldegrave came from England to attend the opening of the premises. A tea party was made for him, and Sitters talked about the previous work of the YMCA. One speaker was British Envoy Kennard, who pointed out that the YMCA was neither a political nor a sectarian but a religious institution. Subsequently, a lecture was given by Indian missionary Sadi John Nilsen Christ-An-Ananda. („Otvaranje prostorija HZMLj” [“Opening of YMCA Premises”], *Pravda*, Nov. 1, 1926, 3) Shortly after the opening of the premises, they were visited by Kosta Kumanudi, chair of Belgrade City Hall, who was particularly interested in the social and moral side of the program and showed interest in the departments of the first Student Christian Club. *Pravda*, Nov. 6, 1926, 5; *Vreme*, Nov. 6, 1926, 3.
- 567 Momčilo Mitrović, “Standard siromašnih studenata Liceja, Velike škole i Univerziteta u Beogradu od 1838–1926” [“The Standard of the Poor Students of Lice, the Grand School and the University of Belgrade from 1838-1926”], *Istorijski časopis*, XLVII (2000), 183–200.





*YMCA premises in Vasina Street in Belgrade in 1926*

The opening was attended by Bishop Nikolaj, British Envoy Sir Howard William Kennard,<sup>568</sup> and the US Deputy Chief of Legation, Austrian Envoy Hoffinger, Aleksander Z. Jovičić, Montague Waldegrave, Prof. Marko Leko, Dr. Niko Županić, Gertrude Carrington-Wilde, the Sitters couple, Archimandrite Sevastijan Dabović, and many others.<sup>569</sup> The new space also had a cinema, which they received as a gift from England, and in addition to books, the library contained the latest magazines and newspapers that came from Great Britain. Yet, after only two years, they had to relocate because they were informed that the building was being demolished for the purpose of expanding the streets. They moved into 46 Knez Mihailova Street, closer to the University, a building with a wide entrance, a stone staircase, and better windows.<sup>570</sup> The rent was high, 12,500 dinars



*Howard William Kennard*

568 H. W. Kennard (1878–1955) was a British diplomat and Envoy and Minister Plenipotentiary of Great Britain to the Kingdom of SCS 1925–1929.

569 *Vera i život*, 8, Sept. 1926, 10; Nov. 1926.

570 LPL, Bulletin No. 23, Y.M.C.A. April 20, 1928, Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Lambeth Conference 2, 263, 264.



a month, but they had no other choice.<sup>571</sup> They stayed there from January 1929 until the end of 1931.<sup>572</sup>

Under the pressure of the global financial market, Great Britain could not maintain the parity of its currency's exchange rate and was forced to abandon the gold standard in 1931. This and the fall of the pound<sup>573</sup> brought the work of the YMCA in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia into a complicated situation and forced an immediate reduction of costs. The premises in 46 Knez Mihailova Street, in which the YMCA in Belgrade had worked for three years, had to be abandoned.<sup>574</sup> The last gathering in the old premises was on December 29, 1931. The relocation was carried out during the following days, and the official opening was postponed until the premises were brought into order. They were located on the second floor of a building that faced the main street (Knez Mihailova), but one side of it with the entrance was in 19 Čika Ljubina

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571 LPL, Douglas 88, ff. 72, 74–6, 78–80, 187, 119–26, Sitters, Rev. Percy Henry Smart, director of the Young Men's Christian Association, Yugoslavia. 1926–1932, Letters to Bishop J. H. Greig.

572 The building that today is called „Kuća legata” [“Heritage House”] in No. 46 Knez Mihailova Street. The famous Belgrade merchant Veljko Savić built one of the first modern multi-floor townhouses on his plot in 1869. His son, diplomat Lazar Savić, left the building as a testament to the “Royal Serbian Academy of Sciences” for the development of Serbian science and culture in 1921.

573 In March 1931, the most powerful Austrian bank went bankrupt, which represented a shock for the European financial system. The domino effect pulled the second-largest German bank with it. European banks wanted to increase their gold reserves and began selling the pound, which jeopardized its value. The British pound was based on a gold standard, which meant that everyone could ask the Bank of England to seek a counter value in gold. The reserves of British banks quickly fell to a minimum and on 21 September 1931 Britain was forced to give up its gold standard. At the same time, the pound lost one-quarter of its value on the international money market. (Ian Kershaw, *To Hell and Back: Europe 1914–1949*, (Zagreb, 2017), 213). The domestic press reported in mid-October that the pound had fallen by 20%. Dr. Milorad Nedeljković, „Akcija na stišavanju uznemirenosti novčanog tržišta” [“Action to Ease the Distress of the Money Market”], *Beogradske opštinske novine*, Oct. 15, 1931, 1315.

574 LPL, Bell 217, ff. 260–1, Jugoslav [Yugoslav] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin No. 35, October – November 1931 by Percy Henry Smart Sitters, Anglican chaplain in Belgrade, Yugoslavia; 268–9, Jugoslav [Yugoslav] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin No. 37, January–February 1932, 1931–2, by Percy Henry Smart Sitters, Anglican chaplain in Belgrade, Yugoslavia.

St.<sup>575</sup> Space was much smaller. They had six sections: an office, a reception room, and a waiting room, a reading room, a room for board games, a lecture room, a room for English language study, and a room for younger children. On Sunday, January 24, 1932, they were officially opened and services were held by Miloš Parenta, accompanied by the choir of theology students. After the service, they read the message sent by His Royal Highness Prince Pavle, whose representative Miloš S. Botorić attended the opening.<sup>576</sup> Also present were the representatives of the Minister of Education, the Ministry of Foreign affairs and the University, a representative of the Belgrade Municipality, the chargé d'affaires of the British Legation, and others.<sup>577</sup> The President of the Belgrade YMCA, Vasa Lazarević, gave a speech and welcomed the members. Telegrams arrived from the YMCAs in Zagreb, Niš, Prokuplje, Negotin, and 24 centers in Bačka.<sup>578</sup> After the premises were opened, they planned to organize a "publicity week" so that anyone interested in the work of the YMCA could visit them, because there had been certain criticism about the YMCA's work being closed and restricted so that generally people were not familiar with its activities.<sup>579</sup>

In early May 1934, they moved to 17 Simina Street. They also had a backyard where members could play badminton and several balconies where they could read or play chess.<sup>580</sup> From 1936 to 1940 they were located at 19 Frankopanova Street (today Resavska Street). During the winter of 1937, they rearranged the premises and turned the three rooms into one that could accommodate up to 250 people. On Sundays, this space was always filled.<sup>581</sup> Finally, from 1 May 1940 until the beginning of the war, they

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575 The building in question is the Palace "Zora", which today houses the "Servantes" Spanish Cultural Center.

576 AY, Court, 74-196-278.

577 „Svečanost u HZMLj“ [“Celebration at the YMCA”], *Politika*, Jan. 25, 1932.

578 LPL, Bell 217, ff. 268-9, Jugoslav [Yugoslav] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin No. 37, January-February 1932), 1931-2, by Percy Henry Smart Sitters, Anglican chaplain in Belgrade, Yugoslavia.

579 *Pravda*, Jan. 24, 1932.

580 LPL, Bulletin No. 45, May-June 1934, Douglas 51-Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242-352. This building still exists on that number.

581 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101-200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1937, 29-129, Bulletin No. 56 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia Spring 1937 received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade marked "Private and Confidential."

were located at 36 Nemanjina Street.<sup>582</sup> The rooms were small and were considered as temporary.

During their annual visits to Great Britain and their fundraising campaign, the Sitters collected donations for the construction of the YMCA building in Belgrade. In London, in the summer of 1928, the National Council of the British YMCA donated 1,000 pounds for the new YMCA building. A hefty sum was also collected from various parts of the Kingdom of SCS.<sup>583</sup> In 1928, the Belgrade municipality authorities promised to help construct the building, so a request was sent to Vlada Ilić to give a location. Sitters noted that “the mayor and the municipality of Belgrade have allotted a plot of land for the YMCA in a very good part of the city, a healthy, airy part, suitable for the construction of a good building.”<sup>584</sup> However, the construction never got underway.

After the assassination of King Alexander, there was an idea that the future YMCA building would be named after him, the Memorial Building to the Late King Alexander I, the Unifier. In the case of the Yugoslav YMCA, for the second time, the construction of the memorial was connected to providing space for the organization’s work. A fundraising campaign was launched among the YMCAs. Sitters said in 1935 that everyone in the YMCA was interested in the plan for building a Belgrade center as a memorial to King Aleksandar “because he was beloved everywhere.” He added that if one of the village associations could not send a big enough contribution, the reason was not a lack of love, but a lack of money. A film was shown in Crvenka about Yugoslavia and the work of the YMCA, to a large number of villagers, and everyone paid for the tickets. The following morning, the senior members of the Reformed Church gathered at a committee meeting in the garden of Pastor Z. Keck and promised Sitters that for their YMCA’s silver anniversary they would donate 100 dinars for each of the 25 years. With tickets from the screening of the film, this amounted to about 3,000 dinars for the YMCA memorial building, collected in Crvenka alone. Sitters commented on these in the following way: “knowing the situation in the town, the unemployment,

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582 *Vreme*, May 14, 1940, 13.

583 *Vreme*: August 30, 1928, 2; Oct. 18, 1928, 9.

584 LPL, Bulletin No. 23, Y.M.C.A. April 20, 1928, Papers of J.A. Douglas concerning the Lambeth Conference 2, 263, 264.

heavy taxes, and the prevailing poverty during the winter, we value this sacrifice." After Crvenka, the film was also shown in the Stari Sivac for the purpose of raising funds for the memorial building.<sup>585</sup>



*Invitation sent to members of the YMCA to contribute money for a memorial building with a picture of King Alexander and his alleged message “Guard Me Yugoslavia”.*

Percy Sitters was encouraged by the pace of collecting aid but commented that “things are moving slowly here” and that there were still negotiations about the construction site. Individual gifts and promises were coming in, among them very generous promises from the YMCA in Poland. Each member was asked to contribute one zloty to help the Yugoslav brothers.

585 LPL, YMCA Headquarters Belgrade, Yugoslavia to Council of Foreign Relations, CFR DOC 1/51-100, CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1935, 23A – O.C. 24/C.F.R. 73A, Bulletin No. 49 January, February & March about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia in the first quarter of 1935 by P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters.

The result was supposed to be a sum of 44,000 dinars. A delegation from Poland was supposed to bring it to Belgrade, but there is no information about whether this ever happened. In 1935, the YMCA planned to give wallets with collected contributions to Princess Olga in Belgrade. They had blue wallets made with a golden monogram “A” and a crown above it. The total sum was expected to be around 400 pounds. This form of the bestowal of money was well known in England, but in Yugoslavia, it was supposed to be done for the first time.<sup>586</sup> In late November and early December 1935, when the money transaction was to be carried out, the President of the Women’s Section of the YMCA, Princess Olga Karadjordjević, was in London so that presenting the wallets to her for the memorial fund had to be postponed.<sup>587</sup>



*Queen Mary receives contributions from the YMCA for a memorial building in the Circle of Serbian Sisters in Belgrade*

On April 3, 1936, Queen Maria personally received contributions from the YMCA in the building of the Circle of Serbian Sisters in Belgrade. The speaker of the National Assembly, Stevan Ćirić, Education Minister Dobrivo-

586 LPL, YMCA Headquarters Belgrade, Yugoslavia to Council of Foreign Relations, CFR DOC 1/51-100 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1935, 36-86, Bulletin No. 50. Summer bulletin about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia by P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters.

587 LPL, YMCA Headquarters Belgrade, Yugoslavia to Council of Foreign Relations, CFR DOC 1/51-100 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, December 1935, 39-89 Bulletin No. 51 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia by P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters.

je Stošović, Bogdan Gavrilović, president of the Serbian Royal Academy, Vlada Ilić, president of the City Hall, the British Envoy and his wife, the wife of Prime Minister Milan Stojadinović, Bishop Filip Pop, Sandor Agoston, Miloš Parenta, and around 500 members. On a special platform there were 40 seats on each side where 80 people sat from different parts of the country, each carrying a blue wallet with a cross and a crown, and in each was money, either collected, or earned, and sometimes given personally. Money was also collected by boy scouts, the girls' junior section of the YMCA, various associations in Belgrade that maintained friendly relations with the YMCA, and others. At 16:00 hours the Queen arrived in the sounds of the national anthem. The welcoming speech was delivered by Vasa Lazarević, president of the Belgrade YMCA, who officially greeted the Queen. B. Kovandžić, Secretary of the National Association of the YMCA, described the building that was supposed to be constructed in Belgrade as the national headquarters of the YMCA in memory of King Aleksandar. On that occasion, Kovandžić mentioned that an additional 1,000 sterling would be received from England plus another 5,000 zlotys from the Polish YMCA through the Sitters couple. Finance Minister Dušan Letica, who was the treasurer of the construction fund, took the small blue bags from Queen Maria's hands. According to a local newspaper, the collected sum was 167,000 dinars, and according to another source, the sum was 173,000 dinars or about 700 pounds (1 pound = 240 dinars according to the Belgrade Stock Exchange in November 1936).<sup>588</sup> On that occasion, the Queen asked the Mayor of Belgrade to issue a permit for the land.<sup>589</sup> At the proposal of the Mayor of Belgrade, at the beginning of May 1936, the City Council decided to give the Belgrade YMCA a piece of land at 10 Takovska Street, with an area of 1,200 m<sup>2</sup>. The land was to be given back

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588 „Berza” [“Stock Exchange”], *Vreme*, Nov. 10, 1936, 8; *SSH*, 3, 1935, 1; 4, 1936, 1; „Nj. V. Kraljica Marija juče je primila priloge za dom HZMLj” [“H. M. Queen Maria Received Donations for the YMCA Home Yesterday”], *Politika*, April 4, 1936, 5; „Nj. V. Kraljici predati su prilozima za Spomen-dom Blaženopočivšeg Kralja Aleksandra. Spomen dom podiže HZMLj” [“HM the Queen was Presented with Contributions for the Memorial Hall Building of the Blessed King Aleksandar. YMCA to Build the Memorial ”], *Pravda*, April 5, 1936, 2.

589 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101-200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1936, 101, Bulletin No. 53 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia covering the period April to May received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade.

to the municipal authorities if the construction were not completed within two years.<sup>590</sup> Three years later, the Municipality of the City of Belgrade donated a neighboring plot in Tašmajdan park, in the area between St. Mark's church and the First Women's High School (at the corner of Aberdareva and Bitolska Streets), for the building of the pupil's mess hall of HRM Queen Maria and a dental clinic for high school students, according to the project made by architect Rajko Tatić. The construction of the building began on September 15 and the dedication ceremony was held on October 29, 1939.<sup>591</sup> Today, this space is occupied by the Serbian Radio Television building.

The session of the Committee for the Raising of the Memorial Building of Knightly King Alexander the Unifier, the National Union of the YMCA was held on November 17, 1936, under the chair ship of the Zagreb Metropolitan Dositej. The issue of drawing up plans for the building was discussed as well as the issue of organizing the ceremony of the second handover of collected contributions that was supposed to be held by the end of the year. A letter was read that Augusta Stojadinović, wife of the Prime Minister, sent to the President, Metropolitan Dositej, in informed them that, according to the request of the Committee, she would receive a bag for collecting contributions and hand it over during the ceremony for the collecting contributions. A delegation was appointed, headed by the President, Metropolitan Dositej, which intended, on behalf of the Committee, to visit Prime Minister Milan Stojadinović and inform him about the work of the Committee. A decision was also made to announce a competition as soon as possible for, creating a plan

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590 "At the proposal of its President, No. 12482 the City Council decided: to give part of the municipal land in 10 Takovska Street in Belgrade to the YMCA, with an area of 1,200 meters<sup>2</sup>. YMCA was obliged to build the memorial building on this land devoted to HM King Aleksandar I, the Unifier, within a deadline of at two years, counting from the day of the transfer of the title. The transfer of the title to the YMCA and its entry into the land register would be performed by the attorney of the Municipality of Belgrade. The condition of the transfer stipulated that if the YMCA did not build the memorial building within two years, the land would go back to being municipal property and the YMCA could not hand it over or transfer it to anyone else. Until the start of construction, the land remained municipal property. The Technical Directorate was assigned to demolish the existing buildings and facilities. The transfer fee fell to the Young Men's Christian Association." *Opštinske novine*, 18-19, May 1, 1936, 239.

591 *Beogradske oštinske novine*, Oct. 1, 1939; *Politika*, Oct. 30, 1939, 1, 5.



of the memorial building.<sup>592</sup> The second delivery of the wallets was planned for December but was postponed for the following year.<sup>593</sup>

In 1936, Percy Sitters wrote that it was not just about the memorial, the building allowing them to have more space, but also finally to get a hostel where they could gathering young people and “as a family, learn about Christ”. He pointed out the words of one YMCA member: “there are many organizations in Belgrade that do humanitarian work, but there is only one that endeavors to win our young people over for Christ, and that is the YMCA.”<sup>594</sup>



*Submission of the YMCA contributions to Princess Olga*

- 592 On 16 November 1936, Secretary B. Kovandžić asked that a delegation of the National YMCA Committee for the Raising of the Memorial Building of King Aleksandar I, the Unifier be received by Prime Minister Stojadinović. The deputation was made up of the President, Metropolitan Dositej and Retired Minister Vasa Lazarević, Ljubica D. Pešić, Stanko Miholić, University Professor, engineer Krsta Andjus, Zora M. Bodi, and Secretary B. M. Kovandžić. AY, Milan Stojadinović, 37–25–198; *Vreme*, Oct. 23, 1936; „Podizanje Spomen doma Hrišćanske zajednice mladih ljudi u Beogradu” [“The Erection of the Memorial House of the YMCA in Belgrade”], *Vreme*, Nov. 18, 1936.
- 593 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1936 C. F. R 111, Bulletin No. 54 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia covering the period October to November 1936, received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade.
- 594 LPL, YMCA Headquarters Belgrade, Yugoslavia to Council of Foreign Relations, CFR DOC 1/51–100 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, March 1936, 43–93 Bulletin No. 52



On April 4, 1937, in the formal ballroom of the Officers Club, a second handing over of collected contributions was made for the memorial building.<sup>595</sup> The contributions were collected by local YMCA committees and brought to Belgrade from Zagreb, Ljubljana, Negotin, Požarevac, Banja Luka, Crvenka and others. The ceremony was attended by Princess Olga, as the honorary chair of the Committee for the Raising of the Memorial Building and she received the contributions. Donations were also given by Augusta Stojadinović, wife of the Prime Minister; the wife of the English Deputy Head of Legation in Belgrade; Court lady Dora Dundjerski; the wife of Minister Dragiša Cvetković, and others. A total of 119,125 dinars, or about 500 pounds, was collected. A special program of spiritual music was performed with the participation of the FBSS choir. The occasion was chaired by Dr. Marko Kostrenčić, a former regional administrator from Zagreb, Vice-President of the YMCA.<sup>596</sup> Radmila Tomić signed up her husband for major charity to the YMCA, with a donation of 10,000 dinars for King Aleksandar's memorial building.<sup>597</sup> Later on, at a session of the Board of the National Council of the YMCA on November 28, 1937, a report was submitted on erecting the memorial building, but not very much information on the development of the activities has been preserved.<sup>598</sup>

There followed delays and postponements in the process of constructing the memorial building because it was difficult to collect the necessary

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about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia by P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters.

595 On 19 March 1937 they asked for Stojadinović's permission to recommend them to the Minister of Transport to grant them a 75% discount for the ceremony they were organized in Belgrade on April 4 in the presence of Princess Olga to collect donations for the Memorial Building so that as many people as possible would come from the interior. Their request was approved. *AY*, Milan Stojadinović, 37–25–198.

596 *Vreme*, April 2, 1937, 10; *Pravda*, April 2, 1937, 8; „Za Spomen dom kralja Aleksandra koji podiže H.Z.M.Lj. prikupljeno je dosad 119.125 dinara” [“For the Memorial Hall Building of King Aleksandar, Which is Being Raised by the YMCA, 119,125 dinars have been Collected so Far”], *Politika*, 5. 4. 1937, 5; „Priloge za Spomen-dom HZMLj prilikom jučerašnje svečanosti primala je Nj. Kr. Vis. Knjeginja Olga” [“The Contributions for the YMCA Memorial House at Yesterday's Ceremony were received by HRM Princess Olga”], *Vreme*, April 5, 1937, 4.

597 *Pravda*, Oct. 15, 1937.

598 *AY*, Court, 74–196–278; „Sednica Nacionalnog saveza HZMLj” [“Session of the National Alliance of the YMCA”], *Pravda*, Nov. 26, 1937, 18.

amount of money and nobody could devote themselves completely to that goal.<sup>599</sup> In the meantime, Prince Pavle and Princess Olga said they wanted the architecture style to be Yugoslav.<sup>600</sup> The architect hired to do the job was Milan Zloković,<sup>601</sup> assistant professor at the University of Belgrade, but he had to travel to Berlin, Brussels, and Paris to study children's hospitals,<sup>602</sup> so he extended his stay and went on to England to visit several YMCA buildings.<sup>603</sup>



*Architect Milan Zloković*

On February 2, 1938, Metropolitan Dositej reconvened the Committee for the Raising of the Memorial Building. Milan Zloković presented a report and showed some plans for the building. The collected funds, however,

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599 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101-200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1937, 29-129, Bulletin No. 56 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia, Spring 1937 received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade.

600 LPL, "Report of the Work of the Y. M. C. A. in Yugoslavia", November 1936, Douglas 51-Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 329.

601 Milan Zloković (1898-1965) was an architect and professor at the Faculty of Architecture in Belgrade. He studied in Belgrade and Paris. He was one of the founders of the Group of Architects of Modern Direction in 1928 (GAMP), which operated until 1934.

602 Architect Zloković designed the University Children's Clinic in Belgrade (1933; 1936-1940).

603 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101-200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1937, 17-117, Bulletin No. 55 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia covering the period December 1936-January 1937 received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade.



were still insufficient to begin construction.<sup>604</sup> Although the land was supposed to return to the ownership of the Belgrade Municipality by 1938, this did not happen until February 1940. At that time, a text in *Vreme* announced that a “representative memorial building” was being built on the lot in Takovska Street, which would have five floors, containing the premises of the YMCA and the National Alliance. According to the article in this magazine, the cost of construction was estimated at 4 million dinars. On the first floor would be a reading room, a library, and classrooms, offices of the board of directors of the National Alliance, meeting rooms, and big auditorium. On the ground floor would be a snack bar, a foyer for the auditorium, and rooms for the women’s section. On the second floor, above the auditorium, there would be a terrace, rooms for the junior members, and workshops. On the second floor, there were would also be rooms for selected trainees of the various regional administrations and, if necessary, of the YMCA itself. The third and

604 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, June 1938 59–159 Bulletin No. 58 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade.

fourth floors would be identical. They were planned to be used as rooms (hostels) and an office for the secretary. Finally, the report emphasized that the YMCA still did not have adequate funds for constructing this building and that several new fundraising events had to be organized. Donors were promised, "Tastefully made diplomas with the signatures of Their Royal Highnesses Prince Pavle and Princess Olga."<sup>605</sup> All further implementation of the plans was disrupted by the war.

### **Student Section**

The Student Christian Movement at the University of Belgrade was initiated several times, without much success. The first time was in 1911, during Mott's visit, then in 1919, and the third time during Mott's second visit in 1924. At the end of February 1925, a meeting of the Student Christian Movement was held, with about 30 people, 10 of whom were Russian students. Participants and speakers were Stevan Ilić, Nikolai Zernov<sup>606</sup>, and Mirko Jevtić, representatives of the Student Christian Movement at the World Conference in Manchester. Another speaker was Marko Leko, honorary President of the Student Christian Movement and Archpriest Dimitrije Pejović, president of the YMCA in Niš. During the same year, the YMCA decided that their work should not be limited to children only but should also be extended to

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605 „Hrišćanska zajednica mladih ljudi podiže Spomen-dom” [“The YMCA Raises the Memorial Building”], *Vreme*, Feb. 11, 1940, 8. Apparently, the plans of architect Milan Zloković to construct the Memorial Building were not preserved. In the Historical Archives of Belgrade, there is no data about these plans. Regarding request no. R 1430/18 dated 16 April 2018, I was told that on 4/18 that the Legacy of the architect Milan Zloković was not in the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of the City of Belgrade. In the Documentation Department of this Institute, only documentation is kept with the Register of Cultural Property, i.e. the dossier of cultural goods of the University Children's Clinic and the House of Architect Milan Zloković, which he himself designed.

606 Nikolai Zernov (*Nikolaï Mihaïlovič Zernov*) (1898–1980), after leaving Russia, arrived in the Kingdom of SCS and graduated at the Faculty of Theology in Belgrade in 1925. In 1926, he moved with his family to Paris. From 1926 to 1929 he was Secretary of the Russian Student Christian Movement in Paris. In 1927 and 1928, Zernov was in Great Britain organizing two Anglo-Russian student conferences, and in 1928 he became the founder of the Anglican-Orthodox ecumenical group, the Fellowship of Saint Alban and Saint Sergius. He received his doctorate in Oxford in 1932 and taught there since 1947.

the University. Initially, they were assisted by emigrant Russian students, headed by Nikolai Zernov. The Russian students received free English lessons in the YMCA and could also use study facilities.

The first session of the YMCA student members was held in December 1925, after which time the YMCA student section was formally instituted. It worked only in Belgrade and had about 40 members. They used the space of the YMCA, as their section, but in fact, they were formally a separate body.<sup>607</sup> Branislav Kovandžić, one of the students at that time and subsequently leader of the YMCA, was especially engaged in working with the student colleagues. He was preparing a “quiet room” for writing so that students could use it between University lectures instead of sitting in pubs or coffee bars, and he also worked on forming a photography club. At the request of the students, Sitters held a lecture on what students were doing in the YMCA in other parts of the world.<sup>608</sup>

YMCA student delegations attended conferences abroad from time to time. A member of one such delegation at the Bucharest conference in 1928 was Dr. Jovan Stojanović.<sup>609</sup> Students were extended help with attending study programs or other forms of residence in the United States, England, or Scotland.<sup>610</sup> Among them were a theologian and catechist Jovan Dajković, Ratibor Djurdjević, Mihailo Jurišić, son of Army General Pantelija Jurišić,<sup>611</sup> and many others.

In September 1930, North American YMCA Secretary Donald A. Lowrie, a long-time participant in work with Russian emigrant in Europe and with students in Czechoslovakia, re-launched a program for students of the

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607 „Hrišćanska zajednica studenata” [“Christian Student Association“], *Vera i život*, 5, March 1925 and 6, June 1927.

608 LPL, Bulletin No. 29, December 1, 1929, Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Lambeth Conference 2, 276–277.

609 LPL, Bulletin No. 23, Y.M.C.A. April 20, 1928. Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Lambeth Conference 2, 263, 264.

610 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1. Winter 1937 44–144 Bulletin No. 57 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade.

611 Army General P. Jurišić was a commander of the 4. Army Group in Zagreb in 1938. LPL, CFR DOC 1/101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1. October 1938, 66–166 Bulletin No. 59. Yugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade.

University of Belgrade after the conference in Athens. His work was an attempt to demonstrate the principles adopted on that occasion. Lowrie began his work with students under the authority of the British YMCA and was able to use two rooms in their building in Belgrade. He started by forming leadership with the help of the Orthodox hierarchy. He organized meetings and debates, social gatherings and games.<sup>612</sup> He expanded the program organizing study groups, and by the end of 1931, there were four discussion groups: religious-philosophical, international relations, contemporary social problems, and a group for excursions (Go and See Club).<sup>613</sup> The average attendance per group was about 60 students. He also organized a meeting between Serbian and Bulgarian students in a monastery near the border with Bulgaria. He headed a group of students to the Monastery of St. Roman near Niš, where Bishop Nikolaj was posted so that the students could conduct talks with him.<sup>614</sup>

Among other things, Lowrie monitored the increase of communist and anti-religious propaganda in Eastern Europe. His long-term goal was to develop a student center in Belgrade that would be “adapted especially to Orthodox students.” He also planned a network with YMCA staff in other Orthodox countries. He wrote to friends: “In Belgrade, the prevailing atmosphere is fundamentally Orthodox and we hope that we will repeat here the very successful experience we had with the Russians in Western Europe. If we can do that, the results will be obvious in the Balkans, in the new life of the church, and in the new Christian leadership in public affairs.” He emphasized that he had received the support of Bishop Nikolai as an influential leader. He also met with the Patriarch and was given permission to conduct

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612 LPL, Bulletin No. 32, December, Douglas 51-Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242-352.

613 The Go-and-See Club visited the airfield in Zemun with Donald Lowrie and Taggart. LPL, Bulletin No. 34, June 1931, Douglas 51-Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242-352.

614 LPL, Bulletin No. 34, June 1931, Douglas 51-Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242-352.

his planned student work. As director of the student section of the YMCA, he occasionally held lectures at the Anglo-American-Yugoslav Club.<sup>615</sup>

However, Lowrie's plan remained unfulfilled, since he was recalled back to the United States in August 1932 due to a lack of funding for his work in Yugoslavia.<sup>616</sup> He hoped that funds could be provided in two or three years so he could secure the students' work, but that did not come to pass.<sup>617</sup>

After Lowrie's departure, the YMCA continued its work with students.<sup>618</sup> This was considered particularly important "because most of the future national leaders came mainly from universities."<sup>619</sup> Meetings were held together to discuss the program of work, but there were also discussions and lectures by domestic lecturers and guests from abroad. One such lecturer was the Bishop of Gibraltar.<sup>620</sup> L. Arnio, Secretary-General of the World Federation of the Students' Christian Movement from Geneva, held a lecture in 1932 with the theme: "Students and Today's Crisis."<sup>621</sup> Carl von Prosch, a representative of the World Alliance of YMCAs, held lectures and meetings

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615 The topic of the lecture was "We and the Conference on Disarmament", and was presided over by US Deputy Prince. *Vreme*, Nov. 4, 1931, 9.

616 Miller, *The American YMCA and Russian Culture*, 229–231. Correspondence, reports, financial documents, pamphlets and other records on the North American international work of the YMCA in Yugoslavia, primarily by Donald A. Lowrie is preserved at the University of Minnesota, USA. The chronological boundaries were 1919 and 1959, but most of the collection focuses on the period from 1930 to 1932, when Lowrie worked with the British National Council in Belgrade. Another important focus within the same time period includes the financial difficulties that the North American YMCA faced during the Great Depression and the effects that these difficulties had on the foreign service of the YMCA, including the decision to withdraw Lowrie from Yugoslavia and leave the student work there. University of Minnesota Archival Collection, Catalog Record ID number: 6698519 <http://archives.lib.umn.edu/repositories/7/resources/972>

617 LPL, Bulletin No. 38, June 1932, Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242–352.

618 *Pravda*, June 30, 1932, 3.

619 Sitters, *op. cit.*, 25–26.

620 LPL, YMCA Headquarters Belgrade, Yugoslavia to Council of Foreign Relations, CFR DOC 1/51–100 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1935, CFR DOC 1/51–100, 39–89 Bulletin No. 51 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia by P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters.

621 *Vreme*, March 11, 1932; *Pravda*, Oct. 29, 1933, 22; *Vreme*, Feb. 7, 1940, 11; Feb. 14, 1940, 11.

with students in 1934.<sup>622</sup> Two years later the first cycle of student discussions was organized, entitled: "Does the teaching of Christ contain a remedy for today's social illnesses"<sup>623</sup> and then, at the end of the year, also on the topic of "Christianity and War." An introductory lecture was held by a theologian, Jovan Dajković.<sup>624</sup> As a form of entertainment and socializing, they also organized "cocoa parties," which ceased with the approaching exam deadline.<sup>625</sup>

The YMCA held summer student conferences every year. The first one was organized from 5 to 9 July 1931 at the Kalenić Monastery, with 25 students in attendance. Conference participants included: Nikolai Velimirović, Bishop of Ohrid, Dositej, Bishop of Niš, Dr. Djordje Radin from New York,<sup>626</sup>

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622 *Vreme*: Nov. 23, 1934, 9; Nov. 26, 1934, 5; *Pravda*, Nov. 24, 1934, 13.

623 *Vreme*, Feb. 7, 1936, 6.

624 *Vreme*, Dec. 10, 1936, 10.

625 LPL, CFR DOC 1/201-310 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, May 1940, 4-204, Bulletin No. 64. Yugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade.

626 Djordje Radin (1896-1981), a lawyer, was the son of Dobrivoje and Persida Radin. He went to the United States in 1911 or 1912. He graduated from the University of Columbia in 1924. Radin married Katarina Hadži-Popović in 1928. He specialized in international law. He had offices in Belgrade, Zurich and New York. Between the two world wars, he worked on the establishment of the Health Cooperative Movement in Yugoslavia as an assistant to Dr. John A. Kingsbury, who was President of the Serbian Relief Committee. In 1932, Kingsbury stayed in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia at the assembly of the League of Health Cooperatives on the occasion of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the movement. (*Vreme*, Sept. 16, 1932, 4; Victor O. Freeburg, "Yugoslavia Leaders in Rural Health Centers", *The Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly*, Volume 12, Issue 1, 1934, 15-27, Accessed: 22. 08. 2018, <https://www.milbank.org/wp.../12-1-Yugoslavia-Leads-in-Rural-Health-Centers.pdf>). John Kingsbury was the President of the American-Yugoslav Society of New York, where Radin was the Director and Executive Secretary (1923-1935). In that function, Radin held a lecture on the development of relations between the United States and Yugoslavia in the Anglo-Yugoslav Club in 1930. („Predavanje o razvijanju odnosa između Amerike i Jugoslavije“ [“Lecture on the Development of Relations between America and Yugoslavia”], *Pravda*, May 22, 1930). That same year he spent two weeks as a guest of Bishop Nikolaj's in Ohrid. (*Vreme*, August 16, 1930). During World War II, he moved to Washington, where he was Special Representative of King Peter II until 1946. He was the founder and president of the International Development Foundation, a privately funded organization that helped developing countries through self-help projects. He founded the Serbian Research Foundation (1972-1981) in the United States for the study of the history and culture of the Yugoslav nations. He was a member of two bar associations, in New York and Washington, associate of the American Society of International Lawyers, a member of the Metropolitan Club



Dr. Veselin Čajkanović, Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy, and others. The theme of the conference was: "The Student as Today's Christian Citizen".<sup>627</sup> The conference held at the Ljubostinja Monastery in July 1932 lasted six days and students from abroad also attended. Patriarch Varnava gave his blessing.<sup>628</sup> They had morning and evening lectures, and afternoons were reserved for sports competitions and parties. This conference was again attended by bishops Nikolaj and Dositej, as well as Borislav Lorenc, professor at the Faculty of Law, Steva Dimitrijević, professor at the Faculty of Theology, Dimitrije Ljotić, and others. The six-day student tuition cost 100 dinars.<sup>629</sup> Upon their return, they had a reunion of students who attended the summer camp and a conference attended by students from Belgrade, Zagreb, Negotin, Sombor, Feketić, Subotica, Senta, and other towns.<sup>630</sup>

In 1933, there was a proposal idea to publish a magazine to be shared at the University, but apparently, the idea never came to fruition.<sup>631</sup> It is not possible to determine the number of students who were involved in the YMCA's activities, but there were about 100 students present at the opening of the Student Section in Belgrade in the winter of 1936.<sup>632</sup> If we know that there

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and the Congressional Country Club, and was an adviser to the US Government on economic aid programs. He lived in the Wardman Park Hotel in Washington from 1946 to 1976 when he retired to a nursing home where he died in 1981 at the age of 86. The *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* were dedicated special obituaries to him (*New York Times*, Jan. 7, 1981; *The Washington Post*, Jan 8, 1981). With historian Charles A. Beard, he was the author of *The Balkan Pivot. Yugoslavia. A Study in Government and Administration*, (The Macmillan Co, 1929). He also wrote *Economic Reconstruction in Yugoslavia; a practical plan for the Balkans*, published by Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, (New York, 1946).

627 „Prva studentska konferencija X. 3. M. Lj. u Jugoslaviji” [“First YMCA Student Conference in Yugoslavia”] *Vreme*, June 22, 1931.

628 LPL, Bulletin No. 42, 1933, Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242–352.

629 *Pravda*, June 30, 1932, 3.

630 LPL, Bulletin No. 41, January–February 1933, Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242–352.

631 *Ibid.*

632 LPL, “Report of the Work of the Y. M. C. A. In Yugoslavia”, November 1936, Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 329.

were about 8,500 students at the University of Belgrade at that time,<sup>633</sup> then that one percent seems completely negligible.

Curbing communist ideas among students was one of the key tasks of the YMCA. But Percy Sitters was convinced that students in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia were motivated for communism purely for social welfare reasons, in other words, that they were not communists “in the Russian sense”, but out of “hunger” and the difficulties that resulted from poverty, so that they were “ready to accept any new system as a form of salvation.”<sup>634</sup> In the reports from the period of 1936 and 1937, he said that there was a lot of suffering among the YMCA-member students for not being able to pay personal medical treatment or treatment of family members who were dying of tuberculosis. Sitters cited the example of a student who had a “rough experience” because he was expelled from the sanatorium for not being able to stand the communist attitudes of other patients. With the help of the YMCA, he was placed in a state hospital.<sup>635</sup>

Sitters also described the situation in the student canteens and said that they had 300 students per day and that only 120 of them could pay the monthly amount for meals. Those 120 students shared their meals with 120 who had no money. The remaining 50 or 60 waited for the end of the meal to eat any leftovers. The Rector of the University gave help whenever he could, but the canteen was under threat of being closed down for bankruptcy.<sup>636</sup> The YMCA decided to pay meals for 10 students, and after they shared their food

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633 During the school year 1934/1935 there were 8,350 students enrolled; 1939/1940 there were 9,800 students and 1940/41, 10,930 students. Djordje Stanković, *Studenti i Univerzitet 1914–1954 [Students and the University 1914–1954]*, (Beograd, 2000), 54.

634 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1936, 101, Bulletin No. 53 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia covering the period April to May received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade.

635 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1937, 17–117, Bulletin No. 55 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia covering the period December 1936–January 1937 received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade.

636 Since Sitters is probably referring to the General student lunchroom, which was opened in 1934, according to the data given by Momčilo Mitrović, this lunchroom was operating with losses and the financial opportunities of the students were “very difficult”. In December 1936, the General student lunchroom fed around 250 students, with only 110 of them paying. The University’s aid, according to one student act, “smelled of irony.” Momčilo Mitrović, *Domovi i menze studenata Beogradskog univerziteta 1838–1998 [University of Belgrade’s Students’ Dorms and Canteens 1838–1998]*, (Beograd, 2002), 71, 77.

with 10 more, the YMCA considered that 20 students were covered for at least a few months. Sitters later wrote that all those students said they were communists but that he thought this was a special kind of communism. Some of those students who were active in the YMCA changed their views, so he thought that others would also stop being afraid of hunger when they realized that the YMCA was taking care of them and would abandon their communist ideas.<sup>637</sup>

A conference of YMCA-member students from Ljubljana was held at the Petran Hotel at Lake Bled on 22 October 1938. The conference was chaired by Sitters, the director of the National Alliance of YMCA's, and attended, also on behalf of the National Alliance, by Dr. Stanko Miholić and Branislav Kovandžić. They discussed constructing a YMCA building in Ljubljana and making a holiday resort in the vicinity of Lake Bled.<sup>638</sup> An international student conference was opened at the YMCA premises in Belgrade in February 1940, with delegates from Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Yugoslavia. The wife of Minister Cincar-Marković organized a tea party for the conference participants.<sup>639</sup> The representatives of the Yugoslav YMCA also sent a delegation to attend the conference of the "Pro Christo" Student Christian Movement in Hungary in June 1940. The delegation included engineer Ratibor Djurdjević, secretary of the Belgrade YMCA, Borivoje Hanauska,<sup>640</sup> law student, B. Toth, a medical student, and Neda Geržinić, a law student from Ljubljana. The Yugoslav representatives were paying a return visit to the Hungarian students who were guests of the YMCA conference in Selce, near Sušak.<sup>641</sup>

The Sitters occasionally invited students and organized gatherings at their home, where they conducted religious discussions.<sup>642</sup> In December 1934,

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637 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101-200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1936, 101, Bulletin No. 53 April-May 1936, Bulletin about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia covering the period April to May received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade.

638 *Pravda*, Oct. 23, 1938, 6.

639 *Vreme*, Feb. 18, 1940, 9.

640 Borivoje Hanauska (1915-1968) was a drama director, born in a Czech immigrant family. Since 1935, he studied law in Belgrade and Theater Department of the Academy of Music in the class of Petar Konjović, and he also graduated from the Acting school in 1936-1938. He also attended a Seminar for Theater art at the Faculty of Philosophy in Prague.

641 *Pravda*, June 26, 1940, 5.

642 LPL, YMCA Headquarters Belgrade, Yugoslavia to Council of Foreign Relations, CFR DOC 1/51-100 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, March 1936, 43-93 Bulletin No. 52

they contacted a group of 11 US-born students who had been sent through the Serb National Federation (SNF) from the United States to their parents' homeland to learn the language and continue their studies in Belgrade.<sup>643</sup> The Sitters invited them home on several occasions with a number of other students. P. Sitters was convinced that they had been attracted primarily by the enthusiasm of B. Kovandžić. These students quickly became popular among the YMCA friends and supporters and began to receive invitations to more and more home parties. When the US Envoy heard about this, he invited them to the Legation to meet with the members of the American colony. Some of them decided to join the student conference in Selce in April 1935.<sup>644</sup> The founding assembly of the "Mihailo Pupin" American Students Association was held at the YMCA premises in Belgrade on December 30, 1937. The assembly was opened by US student Mihailo (Michael) Rajačić.<sup>645</sup> Mihailo Rajačić was probably the student Sitters referred to in one of his reports as Mike, whom he said was born in the United States and was indifferent to religion when he came to study in Belgrade. After participating in four student conferences in Selce and attending the student Bible classes, they "saw him turn to the path of righteousness." He returned to the United States after being offered a job there.<sup>646</sup>

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about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia by P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters. Private and Confidential.

643 Vesna Djikanović states that ten members of the SNF, students, arrived in Yugoslavia in late September 1934 and that the group consisted of two students who intended to continue their education in theology in S. Karlovci. Read more in Vesna Djikanović, „Naš dolazak nije bio uočen, a cilj našeg dolaska niko nije razumeo. Američki studenti jugoslovenskog (srpskog) porekla u KJ 1934–1941” [“Our Arrival was not Noticed, and Nobody Understood the Aim of our Arrival. American Students of Yugoslav (Serbian) Origin in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia 1934–1941”]. *Tradicija i transformacije. Transnacionalna iskustva jugoslovenske istorije [Tradition and Transformation. Transnational Experiences of Yugoslav History]*, 2, eds. O. Manojlović-Pintar, V. Gudac-Dodić, S. Petrović-Todosijević, (Beograd, 2019), 67–100.

644 LPL, YMCA Headquarters Belgrade, Yugoslavia to Council of Foreign Relations, CFR DOC 1/51–100, CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1935, 23A – O.C. 24/C.F.R. 73A, Bulletin No. 49 January, February & March about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia in the first quarter of 1935 by P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters.

645 Djikanović, *op. cit.*

646 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1. October 1938, 66–166, Bulletin No. 59. Yugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade.



*US students at a social gathering with hosts. In the background in the middle is Vladimir Dedijer.<sup>647</sup>*



<sup>647</sup> *Conference of the YMCA students in Selce*

One of the most important endeavors in YMCA's student activities was the organization of six student conferences in Selce, near Crikvenica, from 1935 to 1940, in the home of Mabel Gordon Dunlop and Slavko Grujić.<sup>648</sup>

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<sup>647</sup> Michael Rajachich, "Social and Club News", *Srbobran*, March 28, 1935. (The photo was obtained from Dr. Vesna Djikanović).

<sup>648</sup> Mabel Grujić (1872–1956) was the wife of Serbian diplomat Slavko J. Grujić (1871–1937), a Serbian charity and a volunteer nurse at the Red Cross during World War I. With her husband, she established the summer American home for Serbian orphans in Selce on the Adriatic coast, in 1923. The house was founded by renting a villa, which was adapted and fully fit. It was dedicated to memories of Americans who died in the South Slavic area during the war, and Mabel was personally engaged as a director of the home and oversaw its



*Slavko and Mabel Grujić*

The first conference was held from 18 to 26 April 1935 to cover both Easters. The Grujić estate at Selce had a landscaped garden, playgrounds, beach, villa and several annexes. For the conference, they provided two houses, a tennis court, and a garden and organized receptions for the conference participants in their villa. The girls were accommodated in a smaller house, and the boys, the Sitters, and Kovandžić were in the bigger one. The students had a travel discount provided by the Minister of Transport, who visited them during the conference. They also received discounts for sailing ships. The Grujić couple left Yugoslavia during the conference because Grujić had been appointed Envoy in London. When they left, they were seen off by a group of YMCA students.

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work. The home was conceived as an infirmary for the recovery of sickly and anemic war orphans. In it were originally 40 children, and during the first year, 240 children from Belgrade and other parts of Serbia, as well as the Kingdom of SCS, passed through the home. Ljubinka Trgovčević, "Mabel Grujić - an American in Serbia. Contributions to her humanitarian work during World War One", *125 years of diplomatic relations between the USA and Serbia*, (Belgrade 2008), 311–325; Milanović Jasmina, „Mabel Grujić i Delfa Ivanić - dobročiniteljke srpskog naroda” [“Mabel Grujić and Delfa Ivanić - The Serbian People' Benefactors”], *Istorija 20. veka*, 1, 2014, 9–26; *SBR*, 2, (Novi Sad, 2006), 840.

Slavko J. Grujić (1871–1937) was a lawyer, diplomat, humanitarian. He was admitted to the diplomatic service in 1894. He was in positions of responsibility in the missions of the Kingdom of Serbia in Constantinople, Athens, Petrograd, London and Bern. In the middle of 1918, he was appointed Envoy to Washington, where he served from January 1919 to September 1922. He returned to the country actively participating in the work of various humanitarian societies. After the death of King Aleksandar Karadjordjević, he became Marshal of the Royal Court, but in mid-1935 he was appointed Envoy in the UK and at the same time accredited in the Netherlands.

A total of 51 students were present, 43 young men and eight young women. They arrived from the universities of Belgrade, Zagreb, and Ljubljana, and one group consisted of eight US-born students who came to study in Yugoslavia. Among the participants were Branko Rapajić, Zora Bodi, Zdravko Jagodić, student of theology from Belgrade, Zvonimir Kušević and Jasna Pervan from Zagreb, and others. The aim of the conference was to make students mix and socialize as much as possible, but also to better understand the work and goals of the YMCA. Sitters also emphasized that the conference had two other important points: national and religious. According to his view, Yugoslavs were one soul and one body and not only a transient political combination, but malevolent undercurrents created divisions. According to him, the task of the YMCA was to fight against these fiendish forces. A film was made of the conference in Selce.<sup>649/650</sup>



*Delegates at the Third Conference in Selce in 1937<sup>650</sup>*

649 LPL, May 1935, Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 330; YMCA Headquarters Belgrade, Yugoslavia to Council of Foreign Relations, CFR DOC 1/51–100 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1935, 36–86, Bulletin No. 50. Summer bulletin about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia by P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters; YMCA Headquarters Belgrade, Yugoslavia to Council of Foreign Relations, CFR DOC 1/51–100, CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, December 1935, 39–89 Bulletin No. 51 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia by P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters.

650 SSH, 8, June 16<sup>th</sup>–30<sup>th</sup> 1937.



The following year they had a second conference in Selce, again thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Grujić, but without their presence. There were 10 young women and 37 young men in addition to Kovandžić, Zora Bodi and the Sitters.<sup>651</sup>

A conference was also being prepared in 1937. Mabel Grujić spent a short time in Selce before going to England and the United States and Sitters traveled there to discuss with her plans for students to stay for Easter.<sup>652</sup> After they reached an agreement, the students attended the Third Conference, from April 30 to May 8. There were 55 students from Belgrade, Zagreb, and Ljubljana.<sup>653</sup> This time too, as stated in the help requests, the goal was for the students get to know each other, make friends, discuss everyday common problems from the Christian point of view, since they were members of various religions (Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant). They organized lectures with discussions, excursions, and sports events. Lecturers, in addition to the Sitters, were Frigate Lieutenant Miholić, who spoke about the Yugoslav Navy, a certain Bogović, director of the civic school in Crikvenica, who spoke about the families of Zrinski and Frankopan, Ret. Colonel Milić, who spoke about Yugoslavism, Nada Hladnik from Ljubljana, who addressed the crisis of family and upbringing, Čedomir Drašković, who spoke about "Christ and international friendship," and others. Sitters organized tea parties. A film was also shown, titled "The Daily Life of Our Young King and the Most Beautiful Parts of our Fatherland." They commemorated forty days since the death of Dr. Slavko Grujić, the Yugoslav Minister Plenipotentiary in London, who allowed with his wife to YMCA delegates to come in his home in Selce for the third time. The delegates at the conference were the first group to visit "Fi-

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651 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101-200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1936, 101, Bulletin No. 53 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia covering the period April to May received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade.

652 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101-200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1. Winter 1937 44-144 Bulletin No. 57 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade.

653 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101-200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1937, 29-129, Bulletin No. 56 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia, spring 1937 received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade.



ume and Abbazia" (Rijeka and Opatija) since the signing of the "Gentleman's Agreement" between Italy and Yugoslavia.<sup>654</sup>

The fourth conference in Selce was held from 15 to 27 April 1938, with 70 students. Branko Rapajić was present again, and Mabel Grujić once again was their hostess and let them use three of her houses.<sup>655</sup> Financial assistance for the organization of the conference was regularly received from Prince Pavle and occasionally from Prime Minister Stojadinović. They were also given certain discounts for travel.<sup>656</sup> At the end of April 1938, Prime Minister Stojadinović received the participants of the YMCA conference in Selce, headed by Jovan Dajković, the catechist of the VII Boy's High School in Belgrade. Among the students were also those from the USA.<sup>657</sup>

The fifth annual conference in Selce was held in 1939, with the participation of 69 students from Yugoslavia and five Bulgarians studying in Yu-

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654 The agreement signed between Italian Foreign Minister Galeazzo Ciano and Yugoslav Prime Minister Milan Stojadinović in Belgrade on March 25, 1937. The official name was the Agreement on Non-Aggression and Friendship (Yugoslavia and Italy 1937), but it was also called the Ciano-Stojadinović Pact, the Easter Pact, the Belgrade Agreement, or the Gentlemen's Agreement (named after the British-Italian Gentlemen's Agreement of January 2, 1937). AY, Ministry of Education, 66-412-664; *Vreme*, April 24, 1937, 13; *Pravda*: April 25, 1937, 7; May 7, 1937, 9; May 16, 1937, 12; *SSH*, 8, 1937, 3; *Studentska konferencija Selce 1937 [Selce Student Conference 1937]*, (Beograd: HZMLJ u Kraljevini Jugoslaviji, 1937).

655 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101-200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, June 1938 59-159 Bulletin No. 58 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia.

656 AY, Ministry of Education, 66-412-664; Court, 74-196-278.

657 The delegation included: Stevan Mirković, candidate of medicine, Čeda Drašković, candidate of theology, Ljuba Ivancević, candidate of theology, Ratomir Milovanović, student of technology, Milutin Devrnja, candidate of theology, Pera Jovanović, student of theology, Obrad Danilović, student of theology, Artur Leve, law student, Sergije Seneković, law student, Mihailo Rajačić, law student, Jovan Kalifatić, student of theology, Nikola Vukčević, student of theology, Dragoslav Vlahović, law student, Valter Prica, medical student, Petar Svorak, student of technique, Velimir Nikolić, student, Vaso Pulija, student of technique, Raka Nikitović, student of theology, Zlata Vačić, student of philosophy, Tatjana Kurilo, law student, Jelena Knežević, student of philosophy, Doroti Trbojević, student of philosophy, Jelka Knežević, student of theology, Jelena Maksimova, student of theology, Olga Lazarević, student of technique, Dušanka Milovanović, student of music, Mila Leve, student, Nina Delari, student of medicine, Tatjana Biron, student of theology, Stevan Brankovan, student of theology. AY, Milan Stojadinović, 37-25-198.

goslavia.<sup>658</sup> The sixth annual student conference in Selce in 1940 was shorter than usual, lasting only five days. In the meantime, the cost of living had increased by 30%, which was attributed to a heavy winter. It was difficult getting even staple goods such as milk, bread, and potatoes. There were 70 students from Yugoslavia and guests from Hungary and Bulgaria. The conference was headed by B. Kovandžić and Ratibor Djurdjević.<sup>659</sup>

Prince Pavle Karadjordjević gave financial help in July 1939 to enable a seven-member delegation to attend the International Youth Congress in Amsterdam. Another 5,000 dinars was donated by the Ministry of Education.<sup>660</sup>

It is interesting to note that the members of the CCS and the YMCA who were active during their youth and student days were later affiliated with completely different ideological alternatives, from communists (Vladimir Dedijer), to right-wingers (Dimitrije Ljotić, Ratibor Djurdjević, Jovan Rapačić) and also Jews, such as liberal leftist Jaša Davičo,<sup>661</sup> the older brother of novelist and poet Oskar Davičo. Also, priest Miloš Parenta, one of the longest-standing associates of the YMCA, had four children and all of them were supporters or participants of the NOR [National Liberation War] and two were members of the CPY. His son Nenad was a member of the CPY since 1938 (as was his wife Slavka and his sister Gordana). He was executed in 1941 and proclaimed a national hero after the war. Both of his sisters, Olga and Gordana, were killed during the war.<sup>662</sup> Is all this proof of the latitude of the YMCA, which accepted into its ranks people of completely different ideologies, or is it proof of the failure of its efforts in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia? This remains an open question.

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658 LPL, CFR DOC 1/201–310, CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, June 1939 C.F.R. 201, Bulletin No. 61. Yugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A.

659 LPL, CFR DOC 1/201–310 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, May 1940, 4–204, Bulletin No. 64. Yugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A.

660 AY, Ministry of Education, 66–479–755.

661 Dimitrije M. Knežev, *Beograd naše mladosti 1918–1841 [The Belgrade of Our Youth 1918–1841]*, (Beograd: Filip Višnjić, 2001), 26.

662 *Mesta stradanja i antifašističke borbe u Beogradu 1941–44. Priručnik za čitanje grada [Places of Suffering and Anti-Fascist Struggle in Belgrade 1941–44. A Handbook on Reading the City]*, eds. Rena Rädle, Milovan Pissarri, (Beograd: M. Radanović, 2013), 114.

## Women's Branch

From 1928 to 1936, Ruth Trouton led a women's and girls' section and a female student section. On Sundays, they had Bible classes and on Wednesdays, they organized entertainment with various games.<sup>663</sup> At the Rector's approval, K. Sitters and R. Trouton held a lecture on the YMCA for the female students of the University of Belgrade at the professorial hall in early 1930.<sup>664</sup> According to Sitters, by forging friendships with the female students at the University, R. Trouton endeavored to expand the "new concept of the Christian idea". Initially, they used two rooms for the work of the women's section of the YMCA,<sup>665</sup> but due to insufficient space after numerous relocations, as of 1932 R. Trouton held discussions in her own apartment, because there was no longer any place for her section in the YMCA.<sup>666</sup> Occasionally, however, meetings of the Women's Society were held at the YMCA premises, attended by K. Sitters.<sup>667</sup> Trouton returned to England in 1936 and on that occasion, a tea party was held in her honor, but occasionally she came to Belgrade again several more times.<sup>668</sup>

As of 1929, the English custom of organizing sales exhibitions was introduced and the profits were used to finance other YMCA activities. The women's branch, with the help of other members, was in charge of organizing these sales exhibitions. The first such exhibition was held in 46 Knez Mihailova Street, in May 1929, and it was formally opened by Princess Olga.<sup>669</sup>

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663 LPL, Bulletin No. 29, December 1, 1929, Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Lambeth Conference 2, 276–277.

664 *Vera i život*, 1, Feb. 1930.

665 LPL, Bulletin No. 26, March 23, 1929, Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Lambeth Conference 2, 270–271.

666 LPL, Bulletin No. 40, November–December 1932, Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242–352.

667 LPL, Bulletin No. 23, Y.M.C.A. April 20, 1928 Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Lambeth Conference 2, 263–264.

668 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1936 C. F. R 111, Bulletin No. 54 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia covering the period October to November 1936; C.F.R. 117 Bulletin No. 55 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia covering the period December 1936–January 1937 received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade; C.F.R. June 1938 59 – CFR 159 Bulletin No. 58 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia.

669 *Vreme*: May 9, 1929, 9; May 14, 1929, 7. Princess Olga Karadjordjević (1903–1997) was the oldest daughter of Prince Nicholas of Greece and Denmark, son of King George I of

The following year the exhibition was postponed because of the death of Patriarch Dimitrije.<sup>670</sup> The opening of the exhibition on April 16, 1931, was attended by Queen Maria, accompanied by court lady Teodora Dundjerski<sup>671</sup> and the King's adjutant, Lieutenant Commander Branko Pogačnik. The sale was again opened by Princess Olga, the honorary president of the women's section of the YMCA, with her sister Marina.<sup>672</sup> The guests were greeted by 20 Belgrade, English, and American ladies, dressed in old English outfits and a troop of lined-up scouts. In the hall of the YMCA in Knez Mihailova Street, the exhibition was arranged in the original layout of an English market. The English table was arranged by Mrs. Wiles<sup>673</sup> and Mary Stansfield-Popović<sup>674</sup> "in soft pink and bluish tones." Mrs. Hanau arranged the English tea room, and Mrs. Lowrie<sup>675</sup> arranged the "American table." In one of the largest sections, on eight tables were arranged the items for sale: food, baby items, sweets, aprons, kitchen utensils, wallets, and so on. A large number of Yugoslav and English handicrafts were donated to the YMCA, and it was planned to use the profits from the sales to support the YMCA sanatorium in Mlini

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Greece and Russian Grand Duchess Elena Vladimirovna. She was wed to Prince Pavle Karadjordjević in 1923.

670 *Vreme*, April 8, 1930, 3.

671 Teodora Dundjerski (1887/8–1965) was the wife of industrialist and landowner Gedeon Dundjerski.

672 Marina, the younger sister of Princess Olga, was wed to Prince George (1902–1942), the fourth son of British King George V and brother of the kings Edward VIII and George VI. She became the Duchess of Kent in 1934. LPL, Bulletin No. 33, March 1931, Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242–352; Bulletin No. 34, June 1931, Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. .

673 Wife of lecturer at Belgrade University James Wiles, member of British and Foreign B. D. She died in 1936 after living in Belgrade for nearly thirty years. LPL, Bell 217, ff. 260–1, Yugoslavia [Yugoslavia] 268–9 - Yugoslavia [Yugoslav] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin No. 37, January–February 1932, 1931–2, by Percy Henry Smart Sitters, Anglican chaplain in Belgrade, Yugoslavia; CFR DOC 1 / 101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents 1, 1936 C. F. R 111, Bulletin No. 54 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia covering the period October to November 1936, received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade.

674 Docent Mary Stansfield-Popović (1899–1989), wife and associate of Prof. Vladeta Popović.

675 Wife of Donald A Lowrie.

near Dubrovnik. The collected sum was around 100 pounds. National Committee Director Sitters with his wife and the British Envoy, Henderson, took the guests around the exhibition area. Also present was Belgrade YMCA Secretary R. Taggart and priest Kosta Luković. Sitters greeted them all in English and then served tea and showed a film about the work of the YMCA.<sup>676</sup>



*Princess Olga with P. H. Sitters and wife of the US Envoy Prince at the YMCA sales exhibition in Belgrade.*

Princess Olga occasionally participated in preparing the exhibitions and regularly opened them every year until 1940. She was sometimes accompanied by her sisters Elizabeth and Marina, and sometimes by her son Aleksandar. Queen Maria attended only one more exhibition organized in 1933 but continued to donate money as a gift.<sup>677</sup> In the organization and preparation of the sales exhibitions, which were also called “Bring and Buy,” other participants, in addition to K. Sitters were Ljubica, the wife of General Pešić, and another Ljubica, the wife of Senator M. Ž. Jovanović, plus the wives of US Minister Prince and the first secretary of the British Legation, plus Ruth Trouton, Lena A. Jovičić, Andja Hristić, Idalija Cincar-Marković, Zora Bodi,

676 AY, Court, 74-196-278; „Nj. V. Kraljica Maria, Knjeginje Olga i Marina, na Engleskom vašaru Hrišćanske zajednice” [“H. M. Queen Maria, Princesses Olga and Marina, at the YMCA English Fair”], *Vreme*, April 17, 1931, 1; „Pijaca Hrišćanske zajednice mladih ljudi” [“YMCA Open Market”], *Politika*, April 17, 1931, 5.

677 LPL, Bulletin No. 42, 1933, Bulletin No. 43, May and June 1933, Douglas 51-Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242-352.

**Пијаца Хришћанске заједнице младих људи**  
Њ. В. Краљица и Њ. В. Принцеза и Олга присуствоваће 6. у пролеће



Њ. В. Краљица Марија, Кнегиња  
Олга и Марина, на Енглеском  
вањару Хришћанске заједнице



**ВРЕМЕ**

Београд, 9. априла 1931.

**Њ. Нр. Вис. Кнегиња Олга**  
отворила је добротворну продају  
Женске хришћанске заједнице младих људи



*Queen Maria and Princess Olga at the YMCA English fairs.<sup>678</sup>*

Zora Lazarević, Stana Kovandžić, Stanka Lozanić, president of the Belgrade Women's Society, and others.<sup>678</sup>

These sales exhibitions were organized in various places, in 19 Čika Ljubina Street, in the big hall of the Circle of Serbian Sisters at 11 Frankopanova (Resavska) Street, and others. The press wrote in detail about what the ladies from the Royal Family were buying.<sup>679</sup> In addition to organizing tables or pavilions, which were given thematic names (Bosnian, English, Ministerial, The Table of the Diplomatic Corps, etc.),<sup>680</sup> they occasionally invited friends of the YMCA, who were asked to bring some useful items for sale and then buy some other item or the "lady friends of the movement" brought

678 *Žena i svet*, 6, 1929, 4; *Vreme*, April 17, 1931; *Politika*, April 17, 1931, 5; *Vreme*, April 9, 1940, 10.

679 *Vreme*, March 25, 1933, 7; *Pravda*, March 26, 1933, 9; May 11, 1933, 2.

680 *Pravda*, May 22, 1934, 5.

items for sale that they sold among each other. Packages for sale or contributions were also donated by Augusta Stojadinović and Vera Perović, the wife of Ivo Perović, Spomena Ninčić (wife of Momčilo Ninčić),<sup>681</sup> and other Belgrade ladies. The total sum of money collected ranged from 5,000 to 30,000 dinars or from 17 to 150 pounds.<sup>682</sup> Among the visitors and guests at the opening were the Bishop of Gibraltar and his chaplain, Foreign Minister Aleksandar Cincar-Marković,<sup>683</sup> Bishop Irinej Ćirić, Transport Minister Nikola Bešlić, Justice Minister Laza Marković, US Envoy Arthur Bliss Lane,<sup>684</sup> Greek Envoy Raoul Bibica Rosetti, the wife of the British Envoy, and the wives of other foreign diplomats.<sup>685</sup>

### Work In the Yugoslav Army

Percy and Kathleen Sitters had their first contacts with the representatives of the army in January 1939 when they were in Zagreb and were invited to show a film at a military gathering on January 19, 1939.<sup>686</sup> Then they showed films about Yugoslavia and King Peter II at the Military Riding School in Zagreb to around 4,000 soldiers. According to Sitters, the scenes showing the king exercising with friends, riding with officers or swimming in Lake

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681 Djuro Ninčić, son of Momčilo Ninčić, was in the YMCA youth in 1925. *Vera i život*, 8, June 1925.

682 „Uspela dobrotvorna čajanka u Hrišćanskoj zajednici mladih ljudi” [“Successful Charity Tea Party in the YMCA”], *Vreme*, Nov. 27, 1937, 11; LPL, YMCA Headquarters Belgrade, Yugoslavia to Council of Foreign Relations, CFR DOC 1/51–100, CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, December 1935, 39–89 Bulletin No. 51 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia by P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters; CFR DOC 1/101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1. Winter 1937 44–144 Bulletin No. 57 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade.

683 LPL, CFR DOC 1/201–310, CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, June 1939 C.F.R. 201, Bulletin No. 61. Yugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A.

684 US Envoy in Belgrade from 1937 to 1941.

685 *Vreme*: April 3, 1940, 10; April 9, 1940, 10; *Politika*: April 9, 1940; *Pravda*: April 7, 1940; LPL, CFR DOC 1/201–310, CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, May 1940, 4–204, Bulletin No. 64. Yugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A.

686 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, December 1938, 66A – 166A Bulletin No. 60. Yugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A.

Bled, were interrupted by applause.<sup>687</sup> Soon thereafter P. Sitters began to negotiate with the Ministry of the Army and Navy of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia about organizing the work of the YMCA among the troops.<sup>688</sup> He submitted an outline of the project that the YMCA intended to implement in military centers, but the receipt of a favorable decision was heavily influenced by the intervention of Prince Regent Pavle and Princess Olga. After that, Minister Milan Dj. Nedić and other officers recognized the need for what the YMCA was offering. In autumn of 1939, they started working in the military barracks of the Navy and the Air Force. The beginning of the work was marked on November 28 at the Officers' Club Belgrade. Patriarch Gavriilo was present, Minister Milan Nedić and others, as well as Princess Olga Karadjordjević. Dr. Stanko Miholić, vice-president of the National Council of the YMCAs, and Branislav Kovandžić held speeches. P. Sitters showed a film about King Peter II with musical accompaniment. A performance was staged showing the work of the YMCA, based on what they used in England immediately after World War One. YMCA members participated; the text was written by Zora Bodi, and one of the roles was played by Lena Jovičić. The event also included songs performed by a church choir.<sup>689</sup>

According to an agreement between the YMCA and the Minister of the Army and the Navy, in early 1940 a series of educational-national lectures got underway for soldiers of the Belgrade Garrison, accompanied by an appropriate entertainment program aimed at familiarizing the Yugoslav Army with the work of the YMCA. The first lecture was held in Zemun at the airport on March 29, 1940. Then there were visits to the barracks, followed by lectures, choral concerts, film screenings, recitals, etc. The program began with prayer, and there were occasional discussions that had "one purpose:

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687 LPL, CFR DOC 1/201-310, CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, June 1939 C.F.R. 201, Bulletin No. 61. Yugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A.

688 LPL, Headlam Papers MS 2646 f. 219, Douglas (Canon John Albert), Hon. General Secretary to the CFR, 1939, Letter from Sitters (Percy Henry Smart), Chaplain in Belgrade (copy).

689 LPL, Y.M.C.A. Bulletin No. 63, December 6<sup>th</sup>, 1939, Douglas 51-Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 349.



to let the officers and the men know whom to believe in." There was an average ranging between 300 and 5,000 soldiers present. In addition to Belgrade, the programs were also held in Pančevo, Novi Sad, and Zagreb. They were also invited to visit garrisons near Ljubljana, Niš, and Skopje. During the summer, meetings were held outdoors.<sup>690</sup>

A problem was the lack of experienced workers and funding. A large number of young people from the YMCA had already been called up for military training. In the YMCA they hoped to be able to build barracks or rooms in barracks that would be open throughout the day and would include a mess hall. As Sitters wrote in an article in July 1940: "An interesting development in the YMCA over the past few months is the beginning of work with the army, which could well become an important factor of maintaining high morale among the military. For now, the program is limited to organizing lectures, concerts, showing films, distributing literature, etc. But the intention is to open a building in each camp in which there would be light snacks, games, reading rooms, etc. for the soldiers."<sup>691</sup>

Princess Olga expressed the desire for soldiers to be supplied with Bibles and encouraged to read them. The first thing that was printed was the Lord's Prayer on cards given to all the soldiers.<sup>692</sup> On April 18, 1940, Branislav Kovandžić sent a "Guideline for Instructors" prescribing that: lectures should be expressed in simple language; lasting not more than 20 minutes; omitting expressions or examples referring to "individual ethnic groups: Serbs, Croats or Slovenes." He also advised using the words: we, our country, our homeland, our nation, our people, our history, etc. Lecturers had to bear in mind that they were speaking to people of different religions and therefore always had to "try to introduce expressions of faithfulness and loyalty to the King, the people and the homeland, and its moral and physical strength and greatness." Finally, it recommends "not to speak about the impending dangers of war." Lectures were delivered by Dr. Vitomir Marković, the physi-

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690 LPL, 2615-2650 - Headlam Papers, MS 2639 ff. 205, 221, 236, Sitters (Percy Henry Smart), Chaplain in Belgrade, Correspondence with the Bishop of Gloucester.

691 Sitters, *op. cit.*, 25-26.

692 LPL, CFR DOC 1/201-310 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, May 1940, 4-204, Bulletin No. 64. Jugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A.

cian in the Royal Guard, on February 11, 1940, on the topic of "Physical and spiritual education." On March 6, 1940, Ilija Beleslin, a retired priest, held a lecture in Zemun on the topic of "Feeling of Duty to the Fatherland." On March 13, 1940, Nikola Petrović, director of the Trade School, spoke in the camp of Prince Andrej about the topic of "Heroism," and so on.<sup>693</sup>

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693 AY, Central Press Bureau of the Presidency of the Ministerial Council of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, 38-773-197.



## CHAPTER IV

### LINKS AND RELATIONS WITH CHURCHES

#### Reformed and Lutheran Churches

In the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the activity of the Evangelical Churches (Lutherans) and the Reformed Churches (Calvinists) were regulated by the Law on Evangelical Christian Churches and the Reformed Christian Church of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, of April 17, 1930.<sup>694</sup> At that time, there were two separate, mutually independent, Evangelical Christian churches of the Augsburg Confession - the Slovak Evangelical Church, based in Bački Petrovac, and the German Evangelical Church, based in Zagreb. The first bishop of the Slovak Evangelical Augsburg Confession was Adam Vereš (1883–1931), based in Ilok. The head of the German Evangelical Church was Bishop Dr. Filip Pop (1893–1945) and it had about 130,000 followers. In 1928, the Reformed Christian Church of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia had 65,751 followers, predominantly of Hungarian nationality.<sup>695</sup> The bishop of the Reformed Church was Sandor / Aleksandar Agoston.

The Reformed Church had the longest period of cooperation with the YMCA in the Kingdom of SCS. The YMCA in Crvenka was founded in 1900 and it was the oldest YMCA in the country, and Pastor Zsigmund Keck was its long-standing president.<sup>696</sup> In June 1924, they joined the Alliance of YMCAs.<sup>697</sup>

694 „Zakon o Evangeličko-hrišćanskim crkvama i o Reformovanoj hrišćanskoj crkvi Kraljevine Jugoslavije” [“Evangelical-Christian Churches and the Reformed Christian Church of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia Law“], *Sl. novine Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, 95, 30.

695 The church had this name from 1920 to 1941. From 1941, until 1944, it became part of the Reformed Church in Hungary. After the war, the church continued its work as the Reformed Christian Church in Yugoslavia.

696 Keck Zsigmond (1861–1944) studied theology in Budapest, Vienna, and Utrecht. Kallapis Zoltán, *Életrajzi Kalauz II. H-Ő*, (2003), 120–122; LPL, Bulletin No. 38, June 1932, Douglas 51-Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serbian Orthodox Church, ff. 242–352.

697 *Vera i život*, 1, Nov. 1924; 5, March 1925; 2, March 1930.

Sandor Agoston often came from Feketić to Belgrade to talk to Percy Sitters about plans for their joint work.<sup>698</sup> In May 1928, Sitters, Slavko Hranisavljević, inspector in the Ministry of Religion, and Károly Dobos, secretary of the YMCA in Budapest, traveled to Subotica and held a conference attended by many priests of the Reformed Church.<sup>699</sup> At this conference, they decided to accept work of the Paris YMCA as a basis for working with young people in the Reformed Church and they sent a request to the YMCA headquarters in Belgrade to admit them into to the movement. That same year, a conference was held in Pačir, attended by almost all the YMCA members in the centers of the Reformed Church with Bishop Agoston. By early 1929, 14 branches had been organized (in Feketić, Maradik, Pančevo, Veliki Bečkerek, and others), with more than 100 members in Subotica alone. The branch in Sombor started working in 1929. In each of the towns, the church provided workspace, and the leaders were usually members of the clergy. In Subotica and Feketić they organized Serbian language classes and in Subotica also courses in stenography. They also maintained schools for training leaders, sale of works, various celebrations, discussions, etc.<sup>700</sup>



*Pastor Keck, President of the YMCA in Crvenka*

In December 1928, the Subotica branch organized an exhibition of handicrafts and collected money for its further work. After a trial period, 20 associates became active members that year. The probationary work included daily prayers, Bible studies, attending YMCA meetings, and serving to others. An acceptance ritual was held during which the future active members stood in a circle with the Bible in one hand and the other hand on the shoulder of the adjacent member, thus expressing faith in Christ and their resolve to serve Him in communion with others. During the ritual, Sitters pinned

698 LPL, Bulletin No. 38, June 1932, Douglas 51—Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242–352.

699 LPL, “Liliac-Time in Jugoslavia”, Mr. & Mrs. P. H. Sitters, May 1928, Douglas 88, ff. 119, Sitters, Rev. Percy Henry Smart, director of the Young Men’s Christian Association, Yugoslavia, 1926–1932, Letters to Bishop J. H. Greig.

700 *Vera i život*, 1, Feb. 1930.

badges on them, which only active members were allowed to wear. Among the first active members in Subotica were the local pastor and his wife, as well as the bank director and his wife.<sup>701</sup> In cooperation with the YMCA, particularly active, besides Z. Keck, was Subotica pastor Székely [Sekelj]. The Reformed Church sent a theologian to study in the United States, and another to Hungary, to prepare for work in the YMCA.<sup>702</sup>

In Stari Sivac, the Reformed Church not only provided premises for the YMCA, but they also collected money for its reconstruction. They had a large room or hall and two smaller rooms. They bought a piece of land in Kikinda with the intention of erecting a building.<sup>703</sup> In Feketić, after 13 years, the YMCA managed to reclaim the school building of the Reformed Church, which the Yugoslav authorities had appropriated for a school.<sup>704</sup> The building was renovated and a regular YMCA meeting was held there at the formal opening in February 1935. The premises were decorated with flags and pictures of King Aleksandar, as well as the inscription Jesus, to which Sitters commented that when He was in the first place, all borders and prejudices disappeared. The ceremony included a film screening, a welcome speech, and tea.<sup>705</sup>

In 1933, Sandor Agoston became the first Bishop of the Reformed Church in Yugoslavia. He regularly visited groups of young people from Bačka who worked and studied in Belgrade.<sup>706</sup> Celebrations and tea parties were

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701 LPL, Bulletin, No. 25, January 10, 1929, Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Lambeth Conference 2, 268.

702 *Vera i život*, 2, March 1930.

703 LPL, Bulletin No. 43, May and June 1933, Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242–352.

704 LPL, Bulletin No. 34, June 1931, Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242–352.

705 LPL, Bulletin No. 40, November–December 1932, Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242–352; YMCA Headquarters Belgrade, Yugoslavia to Council of Foreign Relations, CFR DOC 1/51–100, CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1935, O.C. 24/C.F.R. 73A, Bulletin No. 49 January, February & March about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia in the first quarter of 1935 by P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters.

706 LPL, YMCA Headquarters Belgrade, Yugoslavia to Council of Foreign Relations, CFR DOC 1/51–100 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, December 1935, 39–89 Bulletin No. 51 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia by P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters.

organized in the Belgrade YMCA for young people from the north of the country.<sup>707</sup>

New premises were also arranged in Veliki Bečkerek. They had a large hall and a classroom for smaller gatherings. Brother and sister, Aleksandar/Sandor and Irina Kovacs, supervised the work with boys and girls. They planned to expand their rooms in time because they owned the land. In 1934 Aleksandar/Sandor Kovacs went to the YMCA conference in Oxford. When he got married in 1935, he asked Sitters to be his best man.<sup>708</sup> The Sitters were also present at a wedding in Feketić, when the daughter of Agoston, the president of the YMCA, was wed to Károly Dobos, secretary of the Association in Budapest. They met at the camp in Mlini and were married by the bride's father.<sup>709</sup>

During 1938, two YMCA regional conferences were held in the Reformed Church. At one of them, Miloš Parenta held a lecture in German about the best ways to help young people. He was also in Feketić with B. Kovandžić and P. Sitters at a celebration of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the YMCA.<sup>710</sup>

Cooperation with the Slovak and German evangelical churches developed somewhat more slowly. The Slovak Evangelical Church held its Synod in Stara Pazova in January 1935, and Kovandžić and Sitters were invited to address the gathering. That was one of the steps in the negotiations that were supposed to lead to being admitted into the YMCA. Two or three YMCA

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707 LPL, Bulletin No 44, January 1934, Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242–352; CFR DOC 1/101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1937, 17–117 Bulletin No. 55 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia covering the period December 1936–January 1937 received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade.

708 LPL, YMCA Headquarters Belgrade, Yugoslavia to Council of Foreign Relations, CFR DOC 1/51–100, CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1935, 23A – O.C. 24/C.F.R. 73A, Bulletin No. 49 January, February & March about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia in the first quarter of 1935 by P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters. Aleksandar / Šandor Kovač (Šandor Kovácsy, 1892–1968) studied theology in Budapest. Since 1922 he was a pastor in Subotica. Here he organized the YMCA (KIE) and initiated the church magazine. He was expelled from the Kingdom of Yugoslavia as a foreign citizen in the mid-thirties. *Bácsfeketehegyi Református Egyházközség Honlapja*, <https://honlap.parokia.hu/lap/bacsfeketehegyi-reformatus-egyhazi-kozseg-honlapja/cikk/mutat/a-gyuleket-lelkipasztorai/>

709 *Vera i život*, 1, Feb. 1930.

710 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, June 1938 59 – 159 Bulletin No. 58 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade.

branches were established, and they occasionally sent their representatives to Belgrade to conferences, but the cooperation never reached the level of cooperation as it did with the Reformed Church.<sup>711</sup> As far as the German Evangelical Church was concerned, contacts were maintained through Filip Pop, who was active in the Zagreb YMCA.

### **Old Catholic Church**

At the Vatican Council of 1870, Pope Pius IX announced the dogma of Papal infallibility. This decision was opposed by a part of the bishops and theologians who made a decision in 1871 to establish the Old Catholic Church. Soon thereafter national Old Catholic Churches were founded in Germany, Switzerland, Austria-Hungary, etc. After the First World War, there appeared in Croatia a reform movement of a part of the Roman Catholic clergy whose demands were rejected by the Roman Catholic Church, which condemned the movement at the Bishop's Conference in 1920. At the request of Archbishop Antun Bauer, the government in Belgrade refused to legalize this reform movement. Nevertheless, in 1923, a council of the Croatian Catholic Church was held and elected its Constitution. The Ministry of Religion of the Kingdom of SCS banned the work of the Croatian Catholic Church by a decree dated 12 October 1923. The Split parish priest Marko Kalogjera (1877–1956) took over the helm of the movement and conducted talks with the Old Catholic Church of Austria. From it, based on the recognition of the Old Catholic Church in Austria-Hungary from 1874, he received autonomy in late 1923 and began work under the name of the Croatian Old Catholic Church (COCC). On the basis of this document, this church was officially recognized by the Kingdom of SCS on December 18, 1923. The first meeting of the Synod of the Croatian Old Catholic Church on January 21 and 22, 1924, elected Bishop Marko Kalogjera. Bishop Kalogjera was ordained by the Dutch Archbishop of the Old Catholic Church in Utrecht on February 25, 1924. Old Catholics were ecumenical from the beginning, and their

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711 LPL, YMCA Headquarters Belgrade, Yugoslavia to Council of Foreign Relations, CFR DOC 1/51–100, CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1935, 23A – 24/C.F.R. 73A, Bulletin No. 49 January, February & March about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia in the first quarter of 1935 by P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters.



dialogue went the furthest with the Anglicans, and in Bonn in 1931, intercommunion was proclaimed between the Anglicans and the Old Catholics.<sup>712</sup>

The YMCA and the COCC cooperated successfully in the Kingdom of SCS/the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, especially in establishing the YMCA branch in Zagreb, where Old Catholic Bishop Marko Kalogjera was one of the administrators and his cousin Vladislav Kalogjera was a secretary.<sup>713</sup> However, during 1933 and 1934, Percy Sitters became involved in a conflict that broke out between the COCC and the Utrecht Union. In late March 1933, the press wrote that the Bishops' Conference of the Utrecht Union, held in Munich on March 14, had "removed from office" Bishop Marko Kalogjera. The conference was attended by bishops from Czechoslovakia, Germany, the Netherlands, Austria, and Switzerland.<sup>714</sup> Vicar Bishop Niko Kalogjera from the Bishop's Office of the Old Catholic Church in Belgrade issued a denial stating that the Old Catholic Church was independent and that it was never a member of the Utrecht Union. Therefore, the Union was not "competent to be involved in any internal affairs of the Old Catholic churches." It was also added that Bishop Marko Kalogjera enjoyed the full trust of the entire COCC in Yugoslavia. Niko Kalogjera further writes: "The Synod of the Old Catholic Church in Yugoslavia, as the supreme administration of the Church, has asked our bishop to break off any connections with the German bishops of the Utrecht Union, which he had already decided anyway, since the Union had committed a transgression with its hatred and attacks on the Slavic bishops and churches, especially on our church, in Yugoslavia."<sup>715</sup>

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712 Tomislav Branković, „Starokatolička crkva u Jugoslaviji” [“Old Catholic Church in Yugoslavia”], *Religija i tolerancija*, 1/2004, 2, 97–100; Filip Škiljan, „Starokatolička crkva u Nezavisnoj Državi Hrvatskoj” [“Old Catholic Church in the Independent State of Croatia”], *Historijski zbornik*, 2014, 1, 195–213; Mislav Miholek, „Hrvatska starokatolička crkva u Srbiji i Vojvodini od 1926. do 1944.” [“Croatian Old Catholic Church in Serbia and Vojvodina from 1926 to 1944”], *Religija i tolerancija*, Novi Sad, Vol. XII, January–June 2014, 83–107.

713 *Pravda*, Dec. 6, 1930, 10; „Poseta g. Sitera HZMLJ u Zagrebu” [“Mr Sitters Visit to YMCA in Zagreb”], *Pravda*, Dec. 17, 1930, 18.

714 „Biskup g. Kalodjera smenjen sa položaja biskupa starokatoličke crkve” [“Bishop Mr. Kalodjera Removed from the Position of Bishop of the Old Catholic Church”], *Pravda*, March 22, 1933.

715 Dr. Niko Kalodjera, „Starokatolični biskup g. Marko Kalodjera nije smenjen sa svog položaja” [“The Old Catholic Bishop Mr. Marko Kalodjera not Removed from his Position”], *Pravda*, March 24, 1933.



*Bishop Kalogjera with the members of the Old Catholic Church.*

On August 19, 1933, Percy Sitters wrote to the Bishop of Gloucester saying that two priests of the Old Catholic Church had come to visit him in July to complain about the difficult position of this church in Yugoslavia. These priests were opposed to Marko Kalogjera and formed a group that was asking the Bishop to resign. Following the decision of the Bishop's Conference of the Utrecht Union of March 14, 1933, after which Bishop Kalogjera was replaced, he nevertheless convoked the Synod in Zagreb, attended by about 30 priests and laymen, and they passed a resolution that he should ignore the decision of the Bishop's Conference of the Utrecht Union and continue to be a Bishop and separate the Old Catholic Church in Yugoslavia from the Utrecht Union. The priests who disagreed with this decision wrote a petition to the Ministry of Justice, and since the Church of Christ was admitted to the congregation with the Anglican Church, they visited Sitters to seek advice. He promised to make inquiries and report to them. He suggested that they send a statement to the archbishop of Utrecht about what they had done.<sup>716</sup>

The Bishop of Gibraltar was inclined to support those who had remained faithful to Utrecht, but he also thought that Prince Pavle Karadjordjević should be consulted and asked for advice and assistance in connection with the Old

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<sup>716</sup> LPL, 2615-2650 – Headlam Papers, MSS – Manuscripts, MS 2649 ff. 126-8, 130, 142, 147. Sitters (Percy Henry Smart), Chaplain in Belgrade. Correspondence with the Bishop of Gloucester.

Catholics in Yugoslavia. Sitters continued to report on the situation in the Old Catholic Church. He wrote to the Bishop of Gibraltar on January 1, 1934, and he mentioned the bishop's letter of December 8, 1933, and the conversation that took place in London before Sitters returned to Belgrade. He said that, as he had explained to him in their conversation, he did not take sides when visiting the two Old Catholic priests who did not want to leave the Utrecht Union and who thought Sitters could help them. He wrote to the bishop that he had answered that he was only a lay reader without any authority to deal with these issues.<sup>717</sup>

Sitters wrote to the Bishop of Gibraltar again on February 1, 1934, and sent a copy of that letter to the Bishop of Gloucester. He pointed out that the whole situation was unsatisfactory and that he had also discussed this with Metropolitan Dositej during his visit to Zagreb. The Metropolitan told him that the continued recognition of Bishop Kalogjera by the Yugoslav authorities could easily give rise to a very unfavorable opinion abroad because it could be taken to mean that the reasons the Utrecht Union was forced to take action against him were not being accepted. Sitters added that he had conveyed to the Metropolitan the opinion of the Bishop of Gibraltar that the Archbishop of Utrecht should send a representative to Belgrade, with which he agreed. In the end, Sitters said he could not see any negative attitudes toward Kalogjera during his stay in Zagreb, and suggested that this visit be done as soon as possible and followed up with a decision.<sup>718</sup>

Disgruntled Old Catholic priests, headed by Ante Donković, separated in 1936 and formed the Croatian Old Catholic Church of the Utrecht Union, which was recognized by the Utrecht Union, while the COCC was expelled from the Union and internationally isolated, but continued to be active in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.<sup>719</sup>

### **Serbian Orthodox Church**

Contacts between the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Anglican Church began in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and were intensified during

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717 *Ibid.*

718 LPL, Headlam Papers MS 2649 f. 148, Buxton (Harold Jocelyn), Bishop of Gibraltar, Letter from Sitters (Percy Henry Smart), Chaplain in Belgrade (copy) 1934.

719 Miholek, *op. cit.*, 83–107.

World War One thanks to Nikolaj Velimirović, Metropolitan Dimitrije, priest Voja Janić, and a number of other priests, theologians and clergymen of the Serbian Church, who found shelter in England or Scotland during the war or continued their education there.<sup>720</sup> The contacts between the representatives of the SOC and the Anglican Church would continue after the war, both in terms of negotiations on the convergence of the two churches and in other aspects as well. As of 1920, individuals or delegations from the Anglican Church or some prominent religious representatives from Great Britain and the United States, visited the SOC almost every year. In late 1922, Dr. John Grieg, the Bishop of Gibralt-



*John Grieg*

720 For more on relations between the Anglican Church and the Serbian Orthodox Church see: Irinej [Čirić], „Lozanska Konferencija”, *Bogoslovlje*, 4, 1927, 241–259; “Towards Cooperation of the Anglican & Orthodox Churches”, *SSH*, 7, June 3, 1935, 2; “Belgrade Calling”, *SSH*, 19, Dec. 2, 1935, 2; Dušan Glumac, „O odnosima Pravoslavne crkve sa Anglikanskom i njezinoj hirotoniji” [“About the Orthodox Church’s Relations with Anglican Church and its Hirotonie”], *Zbornik Pravoslavnog bogoslovskeg fakulteta*, II, 1951, 433–494; Ljubomir Durković–Jakšić, „Počeci odnosa između Srpske i Anglikanske crkve u XIX veku” [“The Beginnings of Relations between the Serbian and Anglican Church in the XIX century”], *Zbornik Pravoslavnog bogoslovskeg fakulteta*, II, 1951, 375–393; Jovan Dajković, „Dogmatske razlike između Pravoslavne i Anglikanske crkve” [“Dogmatic Differences between the Orthodox and the Anglican Church”], *Glasnik SPC*, 1952, 182–186; Dragoslav Stranjaković, „Uspostavljanje odnosa između Srpske pravoslavne crkve i Anglikanske crkve za vreme mitropolita Mihaila” [“Establishing Relations between the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Anglican Church in the time of Metropolitan Mihailo”], *Glasnik SPC*, 1961, 87–92; Radomir Rakić, „Anglikanska crkva–istorijat” [“Anglican Church–history”], *Glasnik SPC*, 6, June 1996; Radmila Radić, „Odnosi SPC sa Anglikanskom crkvom” [“Relationships of the SOC with the Anglican Church”], *Jugoslavenski istorijski časopis (JIČ)*, 1–2, 2000, 99–113; Nikola S. Žutić, „Srpska i Anglikanska crkva u prvoj polovini 20. veka” [“The Serbian and the Anglican Church in the First Half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century”], *Istorija 20. veka*, 21:2 (2003); Bogdan Lubardić, „Justin Popović u Oksfordu”, 75–197; *Ibid*, “Srpski bogoslovi u Velikoj Britaniji”, 52–127; Slobodan G. Markovich, “Activities of Father Nikolai Velimirovich in Great Britain during the Great War”, *Balkanica XLVIII* (2017), 143–190; Radić, *Vojislav Janić (1890–1944)*, 113–144.

tar, visited the representatives of the Orthodox churches in Constantinople, Athens, Sofia, Bucharest, and Belgrade and later held a lecture on his impressions from the tour at Sion College in London on January 25, 1923. The lecture was organized by the Anglican and Eastern Churches Association. He said that the visits were conducted as part of a special mission assigned to him in for the purpose of working to achieve convergence. He pointed out that the doors in the Balkans were open for the work of the Anglican Church. He met with the Serbian clergy in Sremski Karlovci.<sup>721</sup> Bishop Grieg came back in November 1925 and attended a meeting at the YMCA, also attended by Bishop Nikolaj. Grieg made another visit to S. Karlovci.<sup>722</sup> The Bishops of Gibraltar also visited the Kingdom of SCS/Yugoslavia in 1926, 1928, 1930, 1934, 1936, 1937, 1939, and 1940.<sup>723 724</sup>



*John Grieg, the Bishop of Gibraltar and later of Guildford at the Belgrade railway station with Bishop Dositej Vasić, Bishop Irinej Ćirić, Sitters and priest Sava Trlajić.<sup>724</sup>*

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721 AY, Legation in London, 341-1-2; Ministry of Religion, 69-11-26-34.

722 *Vera i život*, 13-14, Nov. - Dec. 1925.

723 Bishops of Gibraltar of the Anglican Church were: John Greig (1921-1927), Frederick Hicks (1927-1932) and Harold Buxton (1933-1947). The Diocese of Gibraltar of the English Church included the Balkans, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain, southern France, parts of Russia and Turkey.

724 *Vreme*, April 26, 1929.

In early May 1923, Charles Gore,<sup>725</sup> the Bishop of Oxford, also came to Belgrade. On that occasion, a wider conference was held at the hall of the Serbian Patriarchy, attended by Bishop Dositej of Niš, Metropolitan Josif of Skopje, Nikolay N. Glubkovski, professor of theology at the Orthodox Faculty in Belgrade, Patriarch Dimitrije, and Bishop Nikolaj. Bishop Nikolaj introduced Bishop Gore and spoke about his merits in helping Patriarch Dimitrije and Serbian theologians during the First World War. Bishop Gore emphasized in his speech that the Serbian Orthodox Church had recently done a few acts that were more than courteous. The Patriarch had allowed the American Bishop to conduct services for his adherents in St. Michael's Cathedral Church in Belgrade. Anglican bishops were received with full bishopric dignity. He spoke about the work on recognizing Anglican chirotony and the difficulties in that regard.<sup>726</sup>



*Charles Gore*

In May 1926, Dr. Arthur Headlam, the Bishop of Gloucester, also visited the Kingdom of SCS. He gave a lecture in Belgrade on relations between The Church of England and the Serbian Orthodox Church, and on that occasion, he also visited Niš.<sup>727</sup>

In July 1926, Sitters reacted to a certain memorandum in connection with the Serbian Orthodox Church that originated in England. The author of this report is not mentioned by name. He wrote to Bishop Grieg saying that he felt it was not a correct conclusion that among the Serbs there was a "total absence of any true religious feeling in the Church and among



*Arthur Headlam*

725 Charles Gore (1853–1932) was an English theologian, an Anglican bishop, and a representative of the liberal tendency within the Anglo-Catholic movement. He was the Bishop of Worcester, Birmingham, and Oxford since 1911. He resigned in 1919 and moved to London. He taught at Kings College and was Dean of the Theological School at the University of London (1924–1928).

726 „Oko ujedinjenja crkava“ [“About the Unification of Churches“], *Vesnik*, June 1, 1923.

727 *Vreme*: April 15, 1926, 6; May 12, 1940, 7.

the people". He added that well-informed Serbs had told him that the "true spirit of Serbia" could be found among the peasantry and that in the national poems and stories in Serbia, as far as he was able to read, the vital and honest religious feelings were visible. Wherever they traveled, either to towns or the countryside, they came upon important answers regarding the life of Christ. He added that the churches in Belgrade were often full and packed and not empty as the memorandum claims. Furthermore, he pointed out that he had among his friends several Serbs who had mystical and deep spiritual feelings and who were devoted members of the Serbian Orthodox Church. Since he knew them intimately, he felt that he was capable of speaking from experience. Based on this two-year experience, Sitters claimed that there were many people who were religious and dedicated throughout the country. He could not determine their spiritual values, but to some people in the YMCA, it seemed that this was a nucleus that could bring new life to the entire church.<sup>728</sup>

In March 1927, Irish Bishop Robert Miller with a delegation<sup>729</sup> arrived in a visit. He received a reception at the YMCA, where tea was served for over 100 people. Priest Kosta Luković gave a welcome speech. A service was held at the English-American-Yugoslav Club (EAYC) on 20 March, which was rare in Belgrade at the time because they did not have a permanent chaplain. On the same day, Patriarch Dimitrije received the delegation and invited them to visit him in S. Karlovci. Bishop Miller met with the Patriarch again, accompanied by Sitters and M. Waldegrave on



Robert Miller

March 27. During the visit, Bishop Millar also went to see the correctional home in Belgrade where they greeted him with the song "It's a Long Way to Tipperary," because he was Irish and part of his diocese was in the county

728 LPL, Douglas 88, ff. 72, 74–6, 78–80, 187, 119–26 Sitters, Rev. Percy Henry Smart, director of the Young Men's Christian Association, Yugoslavia 1926–1932, Letters to Bishop J. H. Greig.

729 Robert Miller (1866–1931) was the Bishop of (Cashel, Emly, Waterford, and Lismore) from 1919. to 1931. He was succeeded by John Frederick MacNeice (1866–1942). „Odlazak g. dr. Milera” [“The Departure of Mr. Dr. Miller“], *Pravda*, April 5, 1927, 4; *Vera i život*, 5, May 1927.



of Tipperary. He also visited Niš, where Bishop Dositej met with him, and on April 4 he held a lecture in Ljubljana.<sup>730</sup>

On December 25, 1927, eight Anglicans received communion from Patriarch Dimitrije in St. Michael's Cathedral Church in Belgrade. Namely, before this event, the Metropolitan of Skopje had been asked to allow an Englishman to receive communion on Christmas in an Orthodox church and this request was approved. When he learned about it, Dr. John Dyneley Prince, Envoy and US Plenipotentiary Minister in the Kingdom of SCS, asked Metropolitan Josif if he and some other Anglicans could also receive communion. The Anglicans in Belgrade, mostly, officials of the US and British Legations, were able to get religious services only during



*John Dyneley Prince*

the occasional visits of the English chaplain from Trieste. The Metropolitan of Skopje conveyed this request to Patriarch Dimitrije, who approved it and so the Prince couple (who belonged to the American Episcopal Church), Montague Waldegrave, Edith Fursey, Frank Steele, D. Lorne McGibbon, a woman from Canada, and the Sitters couple (all members of the Anglican Church), received communion from the Patriarch personally.<sup>731</sup> P. H. Sitters described the event in a letter to clergyman John Douglas on January 18, 1928: "The usual morning service was in progress, so the Patriarch's action got full publicity. After several minutes of prayer in the church, a priest led us to the iconostasis, where the Patriarch, with the assistance of several bishops and priests, gave communion in the Orthodox custom, after which we all kneeled for a few minutes at a short distance from the iconostasis. After it was over, we learned that all this hugely impressed the audience, as a sign of respect and honesty. It is not customary for the Serbs to kneel. The only condition

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730 LPL, Headlam Papers MS 2642 ff. 61–6, Report of a visit to Yugoslavia by McNeice (John Frederick), Bishop of Cashel and Waterford, and Sitters (Percy Henry Smart), Chaplain in Belgrade. In the description of the document, it is written that it is the visit of Bishop MacNeice, and this is the visit of his predecessor Robert Miller.

731 „Juče je Patrijarh g. Dimitrije pričestio američkog poslanika g Prinsa i nekoliko uglednih članova engleske kolonije” [“Patriarch Dimitrije Yesterday gave Sacraments to US Envoy Prince and Several Distinguished Members of the English Colony”], *Vreme*, Dec. 17, 1927, 3.



that the Patriarch had set was that all were Anglicans (or members of the American Episcopal Church). He did not mention fasting or confession as a condition.” In the same letter, Sitters pointed out that he could not but compare this joyful event and the spirit that enabled it, to the circumstances that prevailed when he arrived for the first time almost four years ago. When he took over the job of national advisory secretary for the YMCA in Yugoslavia he found himself in an atmosphere of mistrust and suspicion. The growth of the YMCA, without any attempt at converting anyone to Anglicanism, as well as the visits of people such as the Bishop of Guildford and Prebendary Woods, with the sympathies and respect they expressed toward the Serbian Orthodox Church, led to positive changes: the Anglican service on Sunday morning (for which Sitters was responsible), which was held for the British and American citizens, began to be viewed with sympathy and understanding. Sitters pointed out that the YMCA had the support of Bishop Dositej and Bishop Nikolaj who, with some Orthodox priests, expressed friendly words and actions from time to time. In this report to Douglas, Sitters attached a number of translated texts from local newspapers, such as *Pravda*, *Vreme*, and *Politika*, concerning the event of December 1927.<sup>732</sup>

Not everyone in Belgrade was thrilled with this act, even though it was not the first such instance. Priest and writer William Denton noted that Metropolitan Mihailo had led him to the altar of the church and gave him his blessing in 1862 and that he received communion from Studenica Archimandrite Sevastian, in 1865, and there were similar cases during World War One at the Salonika Front.<sup>733</sup> The communion of the Anglicans in Belgrade was widely

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732 LPL, Bell 217, Correspondence as Bishop of Chichester.

733 C. H. Palmer, “Admission of Anglicans to Serbian Communion Not Without Precedent”, *Project Canterbury: The Living Church*, February 18, 1928, 541–542, Accessed: 19. 09. 2018, [http://anglicanhistory.org/orthodoxy/serbian\\_communion1928.html](http://anglicanhistory.org/orthodoxy/serbian_communion1928.html). - On Easter 1915, priest Percy Dearmer arrived in Serbia as a chaplain in the British hospital mission and stayed until mid-July. Dr P. Dearmer also took the help of a hundred guineas. In Niš, this money was handed over to the Metropolitan Dimitrije, to be divided among the poor in Serbia. At that time, one of the mission’s sisters, Miss Ferris, died. The Serbian authorities organized a military-honor funeral and asked the mission whether they would like to conduct services in the Kragujevac church. The Metropolitan gave permission. When Dearmer’s wife also died a week later, the Anglican service was held in a temporary chapel camp, and her body was then taken to a church where the Orthodox service

commented in the foreign press but while this was welcomed in Great Britain<sup>734</sup> in certain Orthodox churches Patriarch Dimitrije was criticized for acting too rashly.<sup>735</sup> The church in Athens commented that the Patriarch had heeded the suggestions of Metropolitan Antony of Kyiv,<sup>736</sup> president of the Synod of the ROCOR, who radically changed the attitude toward the Anglicans and even published a text that same year in favor of recognizing Anglican rules.<sup>737</sup>

In *The Christian East*, Canon Douglas published an article about this event titled "Oeconomy and Communion in Belgrade," pointing out that this was a case that was not isolated after the war but a significant precedent because it was done by the Patriarch himself, and because it was the first such case in the Orthodox Church, which, with regard to intercommunion has the same attitude as the Roman Catholic Church, since the Orthodox theologians uphold the principle that private individuals of a Church that is not in formal unity with the Orthodox Church, cannot be given holy sacraments.<sup>738</sup> Doug-

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was held, while both rituals were performed at the funeral. Project Canterbury: *The Anglican and Eastern Churches: A Historical Record 1914–1921*, (London: Published for the Anglican and Eastern Churches Association by the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, 1921); William Denton, *Srbija i Srbi*, 19, 100.

734 "Anglican and Orthodox", *The Daily Telegraph*, January 9, 1928.

735 LPL, Douglas 50 – Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church in Yugoslavia, ff. 278, 291–3, 357–8, Papers concerning Rev. P. H. S. Sitters, director of the Y. M. C. A., Yugoslavia, and correspondence with Douglas.

736 Metropolitan Antony Khrapovitsky (1863–1936), Bishop of Kharkov, Kyiv and Galicia, Rector of the Third Russian Spiritual Academy, candidate for the Sverdlovsk Patriarchy (1917), head of the ROCOR, came to the Kingdom of SCS in February 1921. He stayed in the Patriarchal Court in Sremski Karlovci. He presided over the First Federal Assembly of the ROCOR (November 20 - December 3, 1921), when he became President of the Synod, and from 1922 he was the head of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia. Ipodakon Andrey Tarasev, "Metropolitan Antony Hrapovsky (1863–1936)", *Orthodoxy*, number 1065-1067, Accessed: 21. 08. 2018, [www.pravoslavie.ru](http://www.pravoslavie.ru), [http://www.spc.rs/sr/mitropolit\\_antonije\\_hrapovicki\\_18631936](http://www.spc.rs/sr/mitropolit_antonije_hrapovicki_18631936); Dr. Miroslav Jovanović, „Sveštenik i društvo – eto parole: Ruska pravoslavna zagranična crkva na Balkanu 1920–1940” [“Priest and Society - There’ a Slogan”: Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia in the Balkans 1920-1940”], *Tokovi istorije*, 3–4 / 2005, 67–100.

737 Metropolitan Anthony Khrapovitsky (President of the Synod of Karlovtsi), "Why Anglican Clergy Could Be Received in Their Orders", *Project Canterbury: The Christian East*, March 1927, 60–69; Emhardt, *Historical Contact of the Eastern Orthodox and Anglican Churches*.

738 C. H. Palmer, "Admission of Anglicans to Serbian Communion Not without Precedent", 541–542; „Anglikanac o pričešćivanju anglikanaca u našoj crkvi” [“An Anglican about the Communion of the Anglicans in our Church”], *Vesnik Srpske crkve*, May–June 1928,

las published another text on the same subject in *The Daily Telegraph* of January 9, 1928, under the title "Anglican and Orthodox". Commenting on this text, Sitters notes in a letter to Douglas that Waldegrave and Steele were not associated with the British Legation. The former was visiting the YMCA as a representative of the English National Council of the YMCA and Steele was in Belgrade in a private capacity as a tutor of the son of the British Envoy. Sitters says he mentions this because he knew that the British Envoy did not want to involve the Legation in the whole thing for official reasons, and the YMCA did not want the Serbs to think that Waldegrave was officially linked to the British diplomatic service.<sup>739</sup>

John Douglas, who expected sharp criticism of the Patriarch's Dimitrije action in many Eastern Orthodox countries and in Serbia itself, wrote to Sitters on March 2, 1928, about the attacks on the Patriarch in religious journals that were published in Athens, Alexandria and Bucharest, commenting that the Orthodox Church would still discuss this a long time before making decisions regarding oecumenism but he hoped they would eventually be favorable.<sup>740</sup> In April 1928, John Douglas personally visited the Kingdom of SCS and the YMCA. Since Sitters was out of Belgrade at the time, the organization of the visit was handled by Dr. Jovan D. Stojanović and priest Kosta Luković.<sup>741</sup>

The Patriarch himself regarded this as an act of mercy that had no bearing on the main issue of unification between the Orthodox and Anglican churches. The Serbian Orthodox Church did not officially make any decision on the matter of unification and most of the bishops did not agree with this act by the Patriarch.<sup>742</sup> The members of the Synod were revolted and demanded

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458; „Sme li srpski patrijarh da pričešćuje nepravoslavne hrišćane“ [“Can a Serbian Patriarch give Communion to non-Orthodox Christians?”], *Vesnik*, 3, Jan. 22, 1928.

739 LPL, Bell 217 – Correspondence as Bishop of Chichester; Radić, *Vojislav Janić (1890–1944)*, 132.

740 LPL, Douglas 50–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church in Yugoslavia, ff. 278, 291–3, 357–8, Papers concerning Rev. Percy Henry Smart Sitters, director of the Young Men's Christian Association, Yugoslavia, and correspondence with Douglas.

741 LPL, Bulletin No. 23, Y.M.C.A. April 20, 1928. Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Lambeth Conference 2, 262.

742 „Pričešće Anglikanaca u našoj crkvi i strana štampa“ [“Anglicans' Communion in our Church and Foreign Press“], *Vesnik Srpske crkve*, Jan. 1928, 74.

a discussion about it.<sup>743</sup> Voja Janić, former Minister of Religion, disagreed with the bishops and approached this act by the Patriarch. He made a statement reiterating that Dimitrije Pavlović (as Metropolitan) held a speech in St. Paul's Cathedral in London during the World War One and that Nikolaj Velimirović and Dr. Irinej Djordjević had been given permission to preach there. He added that these were the first cases of Orthodox clergy being allowed to hold sermon in an Anglican church.<sup>744</sup> Gibraltar Bishop Frederick Hicks came to Belgrade in the autumn of 1928 with the goal of visiting the English colony, but also to meet with representatives of the Serbian Orthodox Church as part of the activities of bringing the two churches closer together. On the occasion of this visit, V. Janić again gave a statement to *Vreme* magazine, talking once again about the connections between the two churches and the significance of the role of Bishop Nikolaj.<sup>745</sup> Bishop Hicks came back in 1930, at which time he attended a session of the council of the Serbian Orthodox Church.<sup>746</sup>



*Frederick Hicks, Bishop of Gibraltar, visits Belgrade.*<sup>746</sup>

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743 „Hronika” [“Chronicle”], *Vesnik Srpske crkve*, Nov.–Dec. 1927, 697–698.

744 „Približenje pravoslavne i anglikanske crkve” [“The Approaching of the Orthodox and Anglican Church”], *Vreme*, Dec. 29, 1927, 4; *Vesnik*, 3, Jan. 22, 1928.

745 „Pokret za zbliženje anglikanske i pravoslavne crkve” [“Movement for the Convergence of the Anglican and Orthodox Church”], *Vreme*, Oct. 28, 1928.

746 *Ibid.*

On the first day of Orthodox Christmas in 1929, the Sitters and US Envoy Prince went to congratulate the Patriarch and handed him a Bible in the Serbian language, bound with leather and gold, containing the signatures of the eight people who received communion. "The Patriarch said he was very pleased to have enabled us to receive Holy Communion and said that he had consulted the Synod before that and received its consent: and even though he had anticipated criticism in some circles, he decided not only that we should receive communion, but that he would give it to us - which was not usual for him." In return, they received a gift, a portrait of the Patriarch in oil.<sup>747</sup>

P. H. Sitters was also at a lunch hosted by Patriarch Dimitrije in April 1929, during the visit of Dr. H. Grieg, the Bishop of Guildford.<sup>748</sup> During his stay, he gave speeches about the need for increased understanding between the Anglican and Serbian Orthodox churches.<sup>749</sup> On the occasion of the death of Patriarch Dimitrije on April 6, 1930, P. H. Sitters, at a YMCA meeting held two days later, informed the members that they had prayed for him before his death on Sunday morning at the Anglican chaplaincy in Belgrade and that he, on behalf of the congregation of the Anglican Church in Belgrade, visited Metropolitan Gavriilo and expressed his concern about the illness, and then attended the commemoration in St. Michael's Cathedral Church. Once more he evoked December 25, 1927, when the members of the Anglican Church received Holy Communion from the Patriarch.<sup>750</sup> Kathleen Sitters sent a letter to John Douglas describing the Patriarch's funeral.<sup>751</sup>

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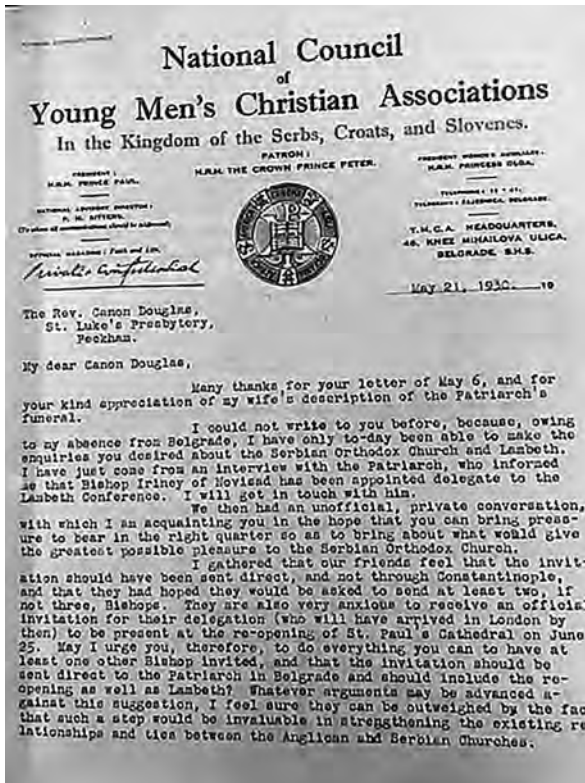
747 LPL, Bell 217 – Correspondence as Bishop of Chichester; *Pravda*, Jan. 10, 1928, 10.

748 AY, Legation in London, 341-71-206; *Vesnik*, April 28, 1929. The Bishop of Niš, Dositej, writes to the Metropolitan of Skopje, Varnava on April 21, 1929, that Bishop of Guildford, Dr. John Grieg "a great friend of our church and our people", arrives in Skopje. He begs him to welcome Bishop Grieg as better as possible so that he returns from the road with the most pleasant impressions. He states that Dr. John Grieg will stay in Niš for one day and then go to Belgrade. *Hristu veran do smrti*, 172.

749 *Vreme*: April 14, 1929; April 25, 1929; April 22, 1929, 1.

750 *Vreme*, April 8, 1930, 3; *Pravda*, April 7, 1930, 3.

751 LPL, Lambeth Conferences, Correspondence and papers, LC 153 f. 59 Letter from Sitters (Percy Henry Smart), director of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia. 1930.



The YMCA maintained close ties with Dositej, the Bishop of Niš, later Metropolitan of Zagreb. The Sitters couple and B. Kovandžić attended Bishop Dositej's send-off from Niš to Zagreb in 1933.<sup>752</sup> They also maintained a close relationship with Irinej Ćirić, Bishop of Bačka, whom they visited occasionally as his guests in Novi Sad, and also with Georgije Letić, Bishop of Timisoara, to whom Taggart gave English lessons.<sup>753</sup>

752 *Pravda*, March 31, 1933; LPL, Bulletin No. 42, 1933, Douglas 51—Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242–352.

753 LPL, Bulletin, No. 25, January 10, 1929, Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Lambeth Conference 2, 268.



*Irinej (Ćirić),  
Bishop of Bačka*



*Georgije (Letić), Bishop of  
Timisoara*

The seventh conference in Lambeth, which began on July 5, 1930, was chaired by Archbishop Cosmo Lang. There were 307 bishops out of the 400 that were invited. The conference was opened at Fulham Palace, the residence of the Bishop of London. It lasted five weeks and adopted 75 resolutions. Resolution 15 allowed the use of contraception in marriage. Resolution 22 confirmed the conviction of the Conference that all believers regardless of race or color should have access to any church. Resolution 25 emphasized that war as a way of resolving international problems was not in accordance with the teaching and example of Jesus Christ. Resolution 26 welcomed the work of the League of Nations. Resolutions 31–47 supported efforts to encourage the unity of the Church in all parts of the world, etc.<sup>754</sup>

Several months before the conference, preparations were made in which Percy Sitters had been indirectly involved. The correspondence between Percy Sitters and John Douglas during April and May 1930, gives a partial depiction of how the preparations were taking place. On April 21, 1930, Percy Sitters asked Douglas to help publish an article that his wife had sent

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754 *The Lambeth Conference 1930: Encyclical Letter from the Bishops with Resolutions and Reports*, (London: Society for Promotion of Christian Knowledge, 1930), 35; *English Church Union and the Lambeth Conference*, (London: English Church Union, 1931) – via Project Canterbury; Notare Theresa, *A Revolution in Christian Morals: Lambeth 1930 – Resolution #15. History & Reception*, (The Catholic University of America, ProQuest, UMI Dissertations Publishing, 2008), 1, 311.



to *The Guardian* about the Patriarch's funeral, which, in his opinion, would please the clergy in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. He added that the new Patriarch, Varnava Rosić, had told him that he would work on creating close cooperation between the Serbian Orthodox Church and the YMCA. Douglas replied to Sitters on May 6 that he had done everything to see the *Church Times* publish Kathleen Sitters' text but had failed. Douglas did not believe that *The Guardian* would publish anything about the Near East.<sup>755</sup> The newspapers had fallen on hard times financially and could offer very little publishing space, but there was a possibility of paying for the publication of the text. They also had a small circulation of about 10 to 20,000 copies while the *Church Times* had a large circulation of about a 100,000 but the text arrived too late. He promised to try to publish it in the next issue of the *Christian East*. In addition, Douglas asked Sitters for a service that required delicacy and was confidential. In January, the Archbishops Faith and Order Committee, which had been preparing the Lambeth conference agenda, had proposed to the Archbishop to invite all the autocephalous churches to take part in the formation of a delegation for the conference in order to discuss practical problems that concerned the two churches. However, Archbishop Germanos of Thyatira<sup>756</sup>

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755 Prior to World War I, the term Near East was used in English to denote the territory of the Balkans and the Ottoman Empire, while the Middle East was used to denote Iran, the Caucasus, Afghanistan, Central Asia, and Turkestan. By contrast, the Far East referred to the countries of East Asia. With the disappearance of the Ottoman Empire in 1918, the term the Middle East was getting less used in English, while the term the Middle East began to apply to countries in the Islamic world. *Near East*, Accessed: 29. 08. 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Near-East>

756 Germanos Strenopoulos of Thyateira (1872–1951), was the first Metropolitan of the Constantinople Patriarchate in Western Europe, 1922–1951, based in London. He was a member of the Committee for fourteen years, who opened the way for joining the movement "Faith and Order" and „Life and Work" in the World Council of Churches. During the same period, German actively participated in the movement as a representative of the Constantinople Patriarchate and the President of Orthodox delegations. He argued with Douglas about some issues in 1929, and on that occasion, Douglas wrote that Germanos did not miss the opportunity to emphasize that the reunification of the two churches is unthinkable, except on the basis of a full dogmatic agreement. Canon J. A. Douglas, "Archbishop Germanos on Anglicanism", *Project Canterbury: The Christian East*, Spring, 1929, 11–20. This text is an answer to the text of the archbishop of Germanos: Archbishop Germanos of Thyatira, "Progress towards the Reunion of the Orthodox and Anglican Churches", *The Christian East*, Spring, 1929, 20–31.



saw to it that in the end the invitation be sent only to the Patriarch of Constantinople and that he be asked to put together the delegation. Douglas emphasized to Sitters not to write on behalf of the Archbishop but on his own behalf and that he did not want it to be known that he was involved in the affairs of the Archbishop but said that those who were interested in the Anglican-Orthodox movement wanted to prepare the whole thing in the right way. No response to the call ever arrived in Lambeth. From the correspondence that Douglas had with Athens, Alexandria, and Bucharest, it appeared that such an invitation had not even arrived from the Patriarch of Constantinople. He said he knew that it was the practice in the Near East for things to be left until the last moment and asked Sitters if he could ask Patriarch Varnava delicately and diplomatically whether he had received such an invitation. If Sitters could do this, he should inform the Patriarch that it was Douglas who was asking around and not the Archbishop that such an invitation was sent to the Patriarch of Constantinople, and that Patriarch Varnava should be ready to send a representative, possibly Dositej of Niš. He further added that it was crucial who would be in the delegation for negotiations, that is, what the composition of the delegation would be. Lastly, he said that the choice of an appropriate Serbian bishop would be a matter of great importance and asked Sitters to show the letter to Envoy Prince in Belgrade.<sup>757</sup>

Sitters responded to John Douglas on May 21, 1930, saying that Patriarch Varnava told him that Bishop Irinej Ćirić had been appointed as a delegate to the conference in Lambeth. He added that he would contact the Bishop of Bačka. He had an unofficial private conversation with the Patriarch, during which he informed him that everything would be done to satisfy the Serbian Orthodox Church. Douglas reported that he understood that "our friends" felt that the conference invitation should come directly to them rather than through Constantinople and that they hoped to be asked to send at least two, if not three, bishops. They wanted to receive an official invitation for their delegation, which would be present at the re-opening of St. Paul's Cathedral in London on June 25<sup>th</sup>. Sitters, therefore, asks for at least another

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757 LPL, Douglas 51—Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242–352.

er bishop to be invited, that the invitation be sent directly to the Patriarch, and that it included the opening of the cathedral as well as the conference in Lambeth. He added that whatever reasons might be asserted against this, he believed that such a step would contribute to strengthening the connections between the two churches.<sup>758</sup>

A month before the start of the Lambeth Conference, Percy Sitters wrote again to John Douglas on June 2, 1930, saying he had lunch with the Patriarch and members of the Synod and then made a film about them. The representatives of the Serbian Orthodox Church expressed hope they would find a way to be presented with a larger delegation, not with just one bishop. Bishop Irinej Ćirić was present at the lunch and as he was appointed as the official delegate from Belgrade at the Lambeth Conference, he talked a lot about it. Sitters replied that he understood Douglas's remark about the expanded hospitality and possible accommodation, but said he was certain, knowing the modest life and habits of the Serbian bishops, that the Royal College hostel would be quite convenient. Sitters also met with Prime Minister Petar Živković that same morning. Both the Prime Minister and the Patriarch expressed their desire for Dr. Milan Srškić, Minister of Religion, be invited to attend the re-opening of St. Paul's Cathedral.<sup>759</sup> The Minister had planned to go to London for two or three days and cover his own costs. Sitters felt that this desire should be supported and was ready to provide the necessary accommodation costs. He wrote the Bishop of Guildford, who knew Srškić well. He also sent a telegram to Bishop Grieg with a request to send Srškić an invitation. Sitters asked Douglas to talk to the bishop about the matter on the phone, saying that Srškić could help very much in the future in fostering closer ties between the two countries.<sup>760</sup>

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758 LPL, Lambeth Conferences, Correspondence and papers, LC 153 f. 59 Letter from Sitters (Percy Henry Smart), director of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia. 1930.

759 St. Paul's Cathedral in London was closed from 1925 to 1930 for works on reinforcing its construction. The opening was marked by a Thanksgiving Service on June 25, 1930. Martin Stancliffe, "Conservation of the Fabric", *St. Paul's: The Cathedral Church of London* 604–2004, eds. Derek Keene, Arthur Burns, and Andrew Saint, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 300.

760 LPL, Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Lambeth Conference 2, ff. 462, 464, 470–1, 473–6, Papers concerning Rev. Percy Henry Smart Sitters, director of the Young Men's Christian Association, Yugoslavia, and correspondence with Douglas.



*Prime Minister General Petar Živković, Minister of the Army General Hadžić, and Justice Minister Milan Srškić at the entrance to St. Michael's Cathedral Church in April 1930 on the occasion of the election of Patriarch Varnava (Rosić).<sup>761</sup>*

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*Milan Srškić*



*The re-opening ceremony of St. Paul's Cathedral in London in 1930*

John Douglas responded to Sitters on June 7 that he had some difficulties because the Archbishop was absent at the doctor's orders and would not conduct services on June 25<sup>th</sup>.<sup>762</sup> He nevertheless managed to provide an

761 *Pravda*, April 13, 1930.

762 Archbishop Lang was ill before the Lambeth Conference and was absent during June to prepare for his presidency in July.

invitation to Srškić for the opening. He could choose a seat with the diplomatic corps or with the Orthodox clergy as advised by the British Foreign Office. Douglas noted that the Archbishop would not be able to receive him because he would be out of the office until June 30<sup>th</sup>. But Douglas promised to arrange a lunch or a ceremonial dinner for Srškić, where the Bishop of Guildford would be present and would put him in a hotel of his choice. Sitters was in London at that time for the death of his wife's father and wrote to Srškić to report to him when he would arrive so that he could meet him at Victoria Station. On June 19, 1930, John Douglas informed Sitters that the Bishop of Guildford would host Srškić. He also informed him that Bishop Irinej was arriving at Victoria Station on June 20 and asked Sitters to meet him. The Bishop was originally supposed to be accommodated in St. Edward's House, College Street, S.W. from 1 to 27 June when he was to move into the Kings College Hostel at Vincent Square. He also asked Sitters to provide a place for the Bishop at the re-opening of the cathedral.<sup>763</sup>

During the 1930s, Basil Staunton Batty, the Bishop of Fulham, and many others visited the Kingdom of Yugoslavia as guests of the Serbian Orthodox Church. Work on bringing the two churches together continued, albeit with slightly less enthusiasm than in previous years. Hopes of unifying the Anglican and Orthodox churches had been mired in political intrigues, real and fictitious, from the very beginning. Political divisions within Anglicanism, as well as within Orthodoxy, led many in both camps to begin to doubt the sincerity of those who had most strongly advocated a reunification. It is therefore not surprising that theologians at formal and informal meetings of Anglicans and Orthodox Christians, which continued in the thirties, tried to focus their discussions on theology and spirituality rather than politics. The advocates of Anglican-Orthodox unification retained some optimism, but instead of unification, what happened was a continued process of separation, both within the Orthodox world and within the Anglican Church.<sup>764</sup>

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763 LPL, Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Lambeth Conference 2, ff. 462, 464, 470-1, 473-6, Papers concerning Rev. Percy Henry Smart Sitters, director of the YMCA Yugoslavia, and correspondence with Douglas.

764 Bryn Geffert, "Anglican Orders and Orthodox Politics", *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 2006, 270-300, doi:10.1017/S0022046905006251

The links between the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Anglican Church, the exchange of visits and joint conferences and correspondence still continued in the years until the war. During the interwar years, the YMCA youth took part on various occasions at church celebrations of the Serbian Orthodox Church or organized them by themselves. On behalf of the YMCA Executive Committee, President Aleksandar Z. Jovičić wrote to the Minister of Education on March 22, 1924, that they had decided to make the Vrbica [Lazarus Saturday] procession as modest as possible, to make the “difference between the rich and the orphaned children less obvious.”<sup>765</sup> The YMCA youth participated in the celebration of the feast of St. Sava at the Kolarac People’s University.<sup>766</sup>

At the behest of B. Jevtić, President of the Ministerial Council and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bishop Irinej Djordjević traveled to London in 1934 to restore the links he had established during the war.<sup>767</sup> Arthur Headlam, the Bishop of Gloucester, came to Belgrade again in early 1935. Kathleen Sitters wrote to the bishop that they were looking forward to his visit because since 9 October 1934 (the assassination of King Aleksandar) there was only sadness everywhere in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.<sup>768</sup> In February–March 1935, the official delegation of the Church of England visited the Romanian Ortho-

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765 AY, Ministry of Education, 66–479–755.

766 *Vreme*, Jan. 25, 1941, 9.

767 B. Jevtić, President of the Ministerial Council and Minister of Foreign Affairs, told the Legation in London that Irinej would stay in England for about two months, that he should be discreetly at hand, and that the purpose of his journey should be explained as private and for study in English libraries. The encrypted letter arrived in London on 24 March 1934. Irinej wrote on 27 April 1934 from the Royal Palace Hotel in Kensington and requested that his absence be extended until June 10 because he had not completed his work. His request for extension of leave was approved and he remained in London until June 1, 1934. Half a year later, on 16 January 1935, the bishop wrote to B. Jevtić that during his three-month stay in England in the first half of 1934, he had come into contact with many persons and organizations in that country and that he was tasked with assessing the work and attitude of these people toward the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Given that they have done “enormous and priceless services for us,” Irinej Djordjević proposed to decorate ten representatives of the Anglican Church. All his proposals were accepted. AY, Legation in London, 341–7–25 and 341–63–189.

768 LPL, Headlam Papers, MS 2639 ff. 37, 43, 57, 92, 183, 237, Sitters (Kathleen), wife of Sitters (Percy Henry Smart), Chaplain in Belgrade, Correspondence with the Bishop of Gloucester

dox Church. The delegation was appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury at the invitation of the Romanian Patriarch to discuss issues related to the proposals of the Orthodox delegation made at the Lambeth conference in 1930. The delegation, which arrived in Bucharest on May 31, consisted of Bishop of Lincoln, Hicks as President, the bishops of Fulham, Gibraltar, and Jerusalem, and the priest John Douglas.<sup>769</sup> The Romanian Patriarch was due to return the visit to London as the guest of the Archbishop of Canterbury in early July the same year. Before departing, Douglas inquired with Sitters whether it would be a good idea to spend some time in Belgrade on the way to Bucharest and visit Patriarch Varnava and the Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church. He was interested in whether it would be good to hold an official or semi-official conference with the Serbian theologians, whose aim would be to show that there were no special relations between Lambeth and Bucharest. He asked Sitters to inquire with bishops Irinej, Nikolaj and Dositej, as well as the Patriarch himself, about the possibility of a visit.<sup>770</sup> It is not known what the answer was, but the delegation did not arrive in Belgrade. However, in 1935, a Serbian Orthodox Church committee was established in Belgrade for the possibility of cooperation with the Anglican Church and remov-

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769 After the conference in Lambeth in 1930, at which the Orthodox delegates presented several questions prepared by the Committee of the Anglican Bishops, there was some delay in the talks until 1934. The Patriarch and the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church and a commission entrusted with the consideration of the Anglican question proposed one more meeting of the Anglicans and the Orthodox. At the invitation of Patriarch Miron, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Cosmo Lang, appointed the representatives of the Anglicans who visited Bucharest in 1935. The delegation was accompanied by the Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Gregg, and Professor Dr. Frank Gavin from the American Church. The conference was held in early June. Patriarch Miron Christea proposed the exchange of theology students at that time. *Project Canterbury: Report of the Conference at Bucarest from June 1st to June 8th, 1935, between the Rumanian Commission on Relations with the Anglican Communion and the Church of England Delegation Appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury Circulated to Members of the Convocation by permission of His Grace the President.* (Press and Publications Board of the Church Assembly, Church House, Westminster, S.W.I, May 1936), Accessed: 19. 09. 2018, <http://anglicanhistory.org/orthodoxy/bucharest1935.html>; Harold Jocelyn Buxton, *A Mediterranean Window: Fourteen Years in the Gibraltar Diocese.* (Biddles: Guildford, 1954), 19–20.

770 LPL, Bulletin No. 49, January, February & March 1935 Douglas 51–Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242–352.

ing any remaining differences.<sup>771</sup> The Bishop of Gloucester and his chaplain Philip Usher, the Bishop of Gibraltar Buxton and his chaplain, Claud Webster, arrived in 1936, but there was no significant breakthrough in the talks.<sup>772</sup>

The Serbian Orthodox Church sought the help of the Anglican Church in its campaign against the Concordat. On March 18, 1937, Bishop Irinej Djordjević wrote to Arthur Headlam, Bishop of Gloucester, urging him to express concern for the Serbian Orthodox Church before the Council of Foreign Relations of the Church of England, to write to the press and send copies of his articles for distribution in Yugoslavia. Headlam submitted the material to the Council on Foreign Relations and on May 4, 1937, published an article in *The Times* entitled "Yugoslavia and Rome: an astonishing concordat."<sup>773</sup> The Anglican and Eastern Churches Association journal *The Christian East* has published several articles in support of the SOC.<sup>774</sup>

The Anglicans did not have their permanent church in Belgrade, but religious rituals and annual meetings of the Anglican Church were held in the English-American-Yugoslav Club, which helped the church with donations,

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771 "Belgrade Calling", *SSH*, 19, vol. IV, Dec. 2, 1935, 2.

772 LPL, "Report of the Work of the Y. M. C. A. In Yugoslavia", November 1936, Private & Confidential, Douglas 51-Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 329; „Engleski episkop g. dr. Bakston u Beogradu", *Vreme*, Oct. 16, 1936, 4.

773 AY, Milan Stojadinović, 37-73-450; Jovan Jovanović Pižon, 80-35-170; Peter C. Kent, "The 'Proffered Gift': The Vatican and the Abortive Yugoslav Concordat of 1935-37," eds. Dick Richardson and Glyn Stone, *Decisions and Diplomacy: Essays in Twentieth-Century International History*, (London: Routledge, 1995), 111-128.

774 "Concordat; The Proposed Concordat between the Holy See and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, Signed July 25<sup>th</sup>, 1935, and First Published and Submitted to the Skuptchina, July 1937", *Christian East*, 17, 1-2, 1937, 11-17; Patriarch Varnava, "The Serb Patriarch's Protest against the Concordat," *Christian East* 17, 1-2, 1937, 18-24; Metropolitan Dositheios, "An Interview with the Locum Tenens of Serbian Patriarchate, the Metropolitan Dositheios," *Christian East* 17, 1-2, 1937, 86-88. The Anglican and Eastern Churches Association is a religious organisation founded as the Eastern Church Association in 1864. The purpose was to pray and work for the reunion of the Eastern Orthodox churches and the Anglican Communion. In 1914 it adopted the present name when it merged with the Anglican and Eastern Orthodox Churches Union. It published, a quarterly magazine, *The Christian East*, from 1920 to 1954, suspended from 1938 to 1950.



in the chapel of the Patriarchate, and even at the Officers Club in Belgrade.<sup>775</sup> In 1926 there were some plans to conduct services in one of the churches that were far away from the center of Belgrade, but Sitters was afraid that this would reduce the number of congregation members. Services were conducted by Sitters, but occasionally clergymen came from Trieste: Cheesman, Beamish, Linthon, and Sharp.<sup>776</sup> Services were also conducted by the bish-



*A group of members of the YMCA during the visit of Princess Olga and Princess Elizabeth, British Envoy Kennard and US Envoy Prince.<sup>778</sup>*

ops who came to visit Belgrade.<sup>777 778</sup>

During the mid-1930s the Anglican community rented space for performing its church rituals.<sup>779</sup> The dirge for King George V was held on January 28, 1936, in the main hall of the Officers Club in Belgrade. Preparations for the ceremony were carried out by the wife of British Envoy Campbell. The

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775 LPL, CFR DOC 1/51–100 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, March 1936, 43–93 Bulletin No. 52 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia by P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters. Private and Confidential; *Vreme*, Jan. 18, 1932., 6.

776 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, Winter 1937 44–144 Bulletin No. 57 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade; CFR DOC 1/201–310, CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, June 1939 C.F.R. 201, Bulletin No. 61. Jugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade.

777 LPL, Douglas 88, ff. 72, 74–6, 78–80, 187, 119–26, Sitters, Rev. Percy Henry Smart, director of the Young Men's Christian Association, Yugoslavia. 1926–1932, Letters to Bishop J. H. Greig.

778 *Ilustrovani list*, 5, Feb. 5, 1928, 2.

779 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101–200 17 – CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1937, C. F. R. 117 Bulletin No. 55, December 1936–January 1937; 29–129 Bulletin No. 56 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia, spring 1937.





*Sitter's serves the service at the EAYC on the Armistice Day, and the British Envoy Campbell is reading the Gospel on the same occasion.*



*British and USA Envoys with wives, chaplain Sitters, military attaches, Legations staff and members of the Anglican colony after the worship at the Anglican temple in Belgrade*

choir of St. Michael's Cathedral Church in Belgrade also participated. Queen Mary, Princess Olga, a representative of the Patriarch, the Papal nuncio, the chief rabbi, representatives of the army and the government were all present. Sitters read the service and delivered a speech.<sup>780</sup>

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<sup>780</sup> LPL, YMCA Headquarters Belgrade, Yugoslavia to Council of Foreign Relations, CFR DOC 1/51-100 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, March 1936, 43-93 Bulletin No. 52 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia by P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters. Private and Confidential.

Harold Jocelyn Buxton<sup>781</sup> came to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia several times during the 1930s (1933, 1934, 1936, 1937, 1939, and 1940). He made plans for building an Anglican church in Belgrade that was supposed to accommodate up to 100 people and asked for donations for this purpose. James

781 Buxton states that he first came to Serbia in 1912 at the time of the Balkan Wars when he joined the Red Cross Unit in Belgrade with Mr. and Mrs. Stobart-Greenhalgh. He says that after eleven years he stayed as the chaplain of Charles Gore in Belgrade again for several days. He then referred to a visit from 1939, and a little later on from the 1936 (Buxton, *A Mediterranean Window*, 25–27 and 36). Bishop Buxton, however, stayed much more often in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. In November 1933, an “English Evening” was held at the Kolarac University on the occasion of his arrival, organized by the Friends of Great Britain and America and the YMCA, and the sponsors were Foreign Minister Bogoljub Jevtić and British Envoy Neville Henderson. Buxton gave a lecture on relations between England and Yugoslavia. The English evening was opened by Vasa Lazarević, president of the Belgrade YMCA, and Metropolitan of Zagreb Dositej presented Bishop Buxton to the audience. A performance was given by the First Belgrade Singing Society („Gibraltarski episkop dr. Harold Bakston u Beogradu” [“Gibraltar Bishop Dr. Harold Buxton in Belgrade”], *Vreme*, Nov. 29, 1933, 7; „Englesko veče u Kolarčevoj zadužbini” [“English Evening at the Kolarac Endowment”], *Pravda*, 30, Nov. 1933, 6; „Englesko veče” [“English Evening”], *Pravda*, 3 Dec. 12, 1933, 7; „Englesko veče na Kolarčevom univerzitetu” [“English Evening at the Kolarac University”], *Pravda*, Dec. 5, 1933, 4). Lunch was also organized at the EYAC, where British Envoy Neville Henderson was present, as well as many other officials. In his speech, Bishop Buxton emphasized the need to work on bringing the two churches closer together. („Ručak u engleskom klubu u čast engleskog episkopa g. Bakstona” [“Lunch at the English Club in Honor of the English Bishop Mr. Buxton”], *Pravda*, 4, Dec. 1933, 2). Buxton returned to Belgrade in December 1934, when he visited Patriarch Varnava, and was received by Queen Maria. He visited Bishop Irinej in Novi Sad. He also placed a wreath on the tomb of King Aleksandar at Oplenac on behalf of the Church of England. He also lectured at the YMCA. („Gibraltarski episkop u Beogradu” [“Bishop of Gibraltar in Belgrade”], *Pravda*: Dec. 12, 1934, 9; Dec. 14, 1934, 1; Dec. 16, 1934, 19; *Vreme*: Dec. 13, 1934, 2; Dec. 16, 1934, 13). In mid-October 1936 he resided in Belgrade with his secretary, Priest Webster, and held a lecture at the YMCA. („Engleski episkop g. dr. Bakston u Beogradu” [“English Bishop, Dr. Buxton in Belgrade”], *Vreme*, October 16, 1936, 4). In October 1939, he was in Niš, where he attended a lecture by P. Sitters in the high school auditorium with the screening of a film about the life of King Petar II. He visited Patriarch Gavriilo and Justice Minister Lazar Marković in Belgrade and Bishop Nikolaj in Žiča and held services for King Aleksandar at Oplenac. („Anglikanski episkop g. dr. Hardy Bakston obilazeći Balkan stigao u Niš” [“Anglican Bishop, Mr. Dr. Hardy Buxton, visiting the Balkans, arrived in Niš”], *Vreme*, Oct. 13, 1939, 2; „Gibraltarski episkop g. dr. Bakston u Žiči” [“Bishop of Gibraltar, Mr. Dr. Buxton in Žiča”], *Vreme*, Oct. 17, 1939, 9; *Pravda*: Oct. 20, 1939, 6; Oct. 21, 1939, 6). In 1940, he stayed in Belgrade in May as a member of the delegation of the Anglican Church and again in November of the same year. („Pretstavnici anglikanske crkve doputovali su juče u Beograd” [“The Representatives of the Anglican Church Arrived to Belgrade Yesterday”] *Vreme*, May 4, 1940, 10; „Pod predsedništvom episkopa g. dr. Irineja juče je održana konferencija pretstavnikā Anglikanske i pravoslavne crkve” [“A conference of Representatives of the Anglican and Orthodox Churches was Held Yesterday under the Chairmanship of Mr. Dr. Bishop Irinej”], *Pravda*, May 8, 1940, 7).

Wiles was also a member of the committee for the construction of the Anglican Church. The church was supposed to be built in 1937 in the district of Neimar.<sup>782</sup> Buxton said that the Anglican Church wanted to reach a close relationship with the Serbian Orthodox Church because both churches had the same principles and went along the same path.<sup>783</sup> He returned to Belgrade again in 1937 (after visiting the Adriatic coast and Zagreb) when he visited members of the English colony, served in the Anglican chaplaincy, visited Metropolitan Dositej and the YMCA. In the home of the Sitters couple, he held a meeting of the members of the YMCA.<sup>784</sup>



H. J. Buxton

In his report on the work of the Anglo-Balkan church unification for 1937, it said that a fund had been established and that steps had been taken to establish a church and provide extended space. In the report, the Bishop concluded that “the establishment of a church in Belgrade could have a far-reaching impact on relations with the church in Yugoslavia. It is a venture of faith.”<sup>785</sup> The bishop managed to ensure that the English congregation had a room for itself that was used as a church.<sup>786</sup>

Plans for the construction of an Anglican place of worship in Belgrade did not run as expected, probably because no sufficient funds were collected. This is supported by the fact that in 1937 a call from the Church Committee in Belgrade was sent to the Anglo-American colony for collecting money to

782 Petar Valić, „Važna izjava g. Harolda Bakstona, vladike anglikanske crkve” [“An Important Statement by Mr. Harold Buxton, the Bishop of the Anglican church”], *Pravda*, Dec. 2, 1933, 3; *Vreme*, Dec. 3, 1933, 2; “Bishop on Peace”, *SSH*, 20, Dec. 19, 1934, 1; “Anglican Church Move”, *SSH*, 16, Oct. 16–31, 1936, 1; “Belgrade Calling”, *SSH*, 20, Dec. 16–31, 1936, 2; *Vreme*, Oct. 20, 1937, 8.

783 *Ibid.*

784 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, Winter 1937 44 – 144 Bulletin No. 57 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia; „Bavljenje engleskog episkopa g. dr. Bakstona u Beogradu” [“The Engagements of the English Bishop Dr. Buxton in Belgrade”], *Vreme*: Oct. 29, 1937, 8; *Pravda*, Oct. 11, 1937, 4; Oct. 23, 1937, 3.

785 “Christian Reunion”, *SSH*, 23, 1937, 2.

786 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1936 C. F. R 111, Bulletin No. 54 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia covering the period October to November 1936, received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade.

equip the premises of the Anglican Church, but the response was not as expected. Only 58 pounds was collected, which was half of the amount needed.<sup>787</sup>

**Београд слави крунсање**  
**Њ. В. Краљица Марија**  
на крунидбеном богослужењу у Београду



*Queen Maria at the Crowning service in the Anglican Chaplaincy with P. H. Sitters and at a reception at the British Legation on the occasion of the crowning ceremonies on May 14, 1937.<sup>787</sup>*

On Christmas 1937, the English colony first used its small chaplaincy to hold services. It was decorated in accordance with the occasion.<sup>788</sup> It

<sup>787</sup> *Politika*, May 13, 1937; *Pravda*, May 13 and 14, 1937.

<sup>788</sup> *SSH*, 22, 1937, 3.

was located in 57 Gospodar Jevremova Street. Services were also held on the day of the crowning of King George VI and were performed by P. H. Sitters.<sup>789</sup> Queen Maria, along with the members of the English colony headed by Envoy R. H. Campbell,<sup>790</sup> attended the services.<sup>791</sup> The Legation held a garden party where the queen was also present.<sup>792</sup> Every year, regular meetings of the congregation were held, chaired by the British Envoy.<sup>793</sup> He attended the services and was also present on Sunday, May 26, when they listened to the King's speech and when the church room was too small to receive the whole congregation.<sup>794</sup>

The reports of the Sitters couple mention that certain Jewish families were involved in YMCA activities. In December 1938, in one of the bulletins, the Sitters noted that until recently the Yugoslav border had been open to Jews fleeing from Germany and that some of them had managed to spend a shorter time in the country. They pointed out that the difficulty of the position of the Jews was common knowledge. On Sunday, some of them came to the English service and two or three times read a prayer for them or a few words about them, which they received with joy. Some came seeking help,

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789 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101-200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1937, 17-117, Bulletin No. 55 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia covering the period December 1936-January 1937 received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade.

790 *Pravda*, May 12, 1937, 2.

791 *Pravda*, May 13, 1937, 5.

792 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101-200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1937, 29-129, Bulletin No. 56 about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia, spring 1937 received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade.

793 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101-200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, December 1938, 66A - 166A, Bulletin No. 60. Jugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade marked "Private and Confidential."

794 LPL, CFR DOC 1/201-310 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, May 1940, 4-204, Bulletin No. 64. Jugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade. That day, the evacuation of the British expedition forces began in Dunkirk. King George VI asked that day to be declared national prayer day. Together with members of the Cabinet, the King visited Westminster Abbey and called on the population of Britain and the Empire to pray for salvation and a just purpose. The event was broadcast on the radio.

usually some small services that they could do for them. In the end, they wrote: "Their patience and endurance are incredible."<sup>795</sup>

On March 23rd, 1938, the Archbishop of Canterbury sent a congratulatory note to Gavriilo Dožić for being elected as the new Patriarch. Patriarch answered to the Archbishop on April 12, 1938.<sup>796</sup> Kathleen Sitters sent an article to *The Christian East* and a photo of Patriarch Gavriilo, but the newspaper was closed down and the article went unpublished, although John Douglas promised on October 13, 1938, that it would be published.<sup>797</sup>

Percy and Kathleen Sitters were in contact with Bishop Nikolaj, who helped their work. K. Sitters said in a letter to Douglas on October 6, 1938, that Bishop Nikolaj was constantly asking them for copies of English newspapers and she asked Douglas to see that the Bishop would have a regular supply. Regarding this question, John Douglas personally wrote to Bishop

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795 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, December 1938, 66A–166A Bulletin No. 60. Yugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade marked "Private and Confidential."

In the period 1933–1941, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was a large transit station for over 55,000 Middle Eastern Jews on their way to emigration, caused by Nazi persecution and anti-Semitic politics. The first emigrants from Germany began to arrive in Yugoslavia immediately after the arrival of the Nazis in February 1933. The new major waves of Jewish refugees followed the Anschluss of Austria, March 1938, and the occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1939 and then from Hungary and Romania in 1940. Read more in: Milan Ristović, "Jugoslavija i jevrejske izbeglice 1938–1941" ["Yugoslavia and Jewish Refugees 1938–1941"], *Istorija 20. veka*, 1 (1996), 21–44; Nebojša Popović, *Jevreji u Srbiji 1918–1941 [Jews in Serbia 1918–1941]*, (Beograd: ISI, 1997); Milan Koljanin, *Jevreji i antisemitizam u Kraljevini Jugoslaviji 1918–1941 [Jews and Anti-Semitism in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia 1918–1941]*, (Beograd: ISI, 2008); Željko Lazić, Martin Matijašević, "Društveni kontekst i jačanje antisemitizma u Kraljevini Jugoslaviji" ["Social Context and the Strengthening of Anti-Semitism in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia"], *Kultura polisa*, XIV (2017), 32, 35–51.

796 LPL, CFR, OC 250/2, Individual Orthodox Churches: Serbia: Patriarch Gavriilo, 1938–47, Including correspondence and message of greeting to the new Patriarch (ff. 1–4), correspondence re. Ronald Campbell and Rev. P. H. Sitters' visit to Patriarch Gavriilo, Feb. 1940 (ff. 5–11).

797 *The Christian East* was a quarterly journal of the Anglican and Eastern Churches Association. It was published from 1920 to 1937 and again from 1950 to 1954. *The Oxford History of Anglicanism*, Vol. 5, Ed. by William L. Sachs, (Oxford University Press, 2017), 309; LPL, CFR OC 256/2. Individual Orthodox Churches: Serbia: Contacts: Serbian Bishops. Correspondence between Douglas, Kathleen Sitters and Bishop Nikolai Velimirović wanting to receive copies of English church newspapers, 1938 (ff. 1–5).

Nikolaj on October 11, 1938, that he had just heard from Mrs. Sitters about him not receiving copies of church papers and said he was working on the *Church Times* and *The Guardian* being sent to him as soon as possible. He also asked him whether he wanted any other newspapers, adding he was sorry he heard so little from him and saying he would like them to be in permanent contact. He asked Bishop Nikolaj whether the Serbian Patriarch would ever invite them to send a delegation to Belgrade, commenting that he would be very happy to be part of such a delegation. Two days later, on October 13, Douglas wrote to K. Sitters about how he was working on seeing the newspapers delivered to Bishop Nikolaj as soon as possible. Nikolaj Velimirović replied to Douglas on October 22, 1938, thanking him for arranging to send the newspapers. As for the visit, he said that Douglas was always a welcome guest but advised him to officially apply to the Patriarchate in Belgrade, saying that he was “rarely stopping by there nowadays.” Finally, he wrote: “Compelled by circumstances, I am now active in my diocese. That is the consequence of last year’s fighting for the defense of our Orthodox Church -- you know from whom.”<sup>798</sup>

Sitters, probably referring to the Munich agreement,<sup>799</sup> wrote to John Douglas on November 17, 1938, that they needed the right kind of propaganda in which facts would be available to those who do not understand why England has worked the way it has. “The time has passed when we could sit and not pay attention to what other countries thought of us. We must make our country and our activities better known to the ‘man on the street’ in the rest of Europe, as well as to ourselves.”<sup>800</sup>

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798 LPL, CFR OC 256/2. Individual Orthodox Churches: Serbia: Contacts: Serbian Bishops. Correspondence between Douglas, Kathleen Sitters and Bishop Nikolai Velimirović wanting to receive copies of English church newspapers, 1938 (ff.1–5).

799 The Munich Agreement was signed on 29 September 1938 between France, G. Britain, Italy, and Germany, which granted Germany the right to the Sudetenland.

800 LPL, CFR OC 257 Individual Orthodox Churches: Serbia: Contacts: Serbian Bishops, Correspondence regarding Reverend P. H Sitters including the suggestion that he be awarded a Lambeth Degree; Rev. P. H. Sitters, 1938–43.





*Prince-Regent Pavle on the cover page of Time Magazine in 1938.*

In early January 1939, Douglas sent Christmas greetings to Sitters and wrote that the visit of Prince-Regent Pavle<sup>801</sup> to London was a great success. He asked Sitters about the positions of Bishop Irinej of Dalmatia and Bishop Nikolaj and said he would like to know what was happening to them and whether or not they had been permanently purged from the Patriarchate.<sup>802</sup> At the end of the same year, December 30, John Douglas wrote to Sitters announcing a visit of an Anglican Church delegation in spring of next year and again expressed interest regarding the divisions within the Serbian Orthodox Church. He wrote that he was personally interested in doing everything to settle the conflict and added that he believed that he had a certain influence over both Irinej Ćirić and Irinej Djordjević. He wrote letters to both of them enclosed in a letter to Sitters, whom he asked to deliver them to the addresses of the two bishops after having read them himself.<sup>803</sup>

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801 In late November 1938, Prince Pavle and Princess Olga visited Great Britain.

802 LPL, CFR OC 257. Individual Orthodox Churches: Serbia: Contacts: Serbian Bishops, Correspondence regarding Reverend P. H Sitters including the suggestion that he be awarded a Lambeth Degree; Rev. P. H. Sitters, 1938–43.

803 LPL, Ms Headlam Papers 2650 ff. 61, 83, 88 Sitters (Percy Henry Smart), Chaplain in Belgrade, Correspondence with the Bishop of Gloucester.



### **Percy Henry Smart Sitters in the Service of the Anglican Church**

Percy Sitters was not only a National Advisory Secretary and Director of the YMCA in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and a lay reader of the Anglican community, but also a man through whom links were maintained between the Anglican and Serbian Orthodox churches in the interwar period, especially in the second half of the 1930s, up to the outbreak of World War Two. Percy and Kathleen Sitters often commented on the situation and relations in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in their regular reports and newsletters, and to the centers of the YMCA in England and Ireland, to John Douglas, the Bishop of Gloucester and to the Bishop of Gibraltar. Kathleen Sitters wrote on March 18, 1933, that despite much improvement and progress in education, transport, and hygiene, the construction of the country was not progressing and would not take place for some time, because it was burdened by the ancient evils of avariciousness, protectionism, and corruption. Explaining the state of affairs in the country, she said that many "reasonable people" in Zagreb had told them that from the Croatian point of view, Croats and Serbs belonged to one race and language and that both were willing to join forces at the end of the war. Over time, the feeling was that the Serbs "overpowered" the Croats and, despite having a more inferior culture, they held all the reins of power and gave all other good positions in the country to other Serbs. The Croats protested against it, but the ties that bound the two sides were strong and the situation improved until the assassination of Stjepan Radić returned everything backward. Since then, things did not improve. The Croats still respected King Aleksandar "whom they always loved and still love because of his courage and sincerity in establishing the dictatorship." Some of them wanted the dictatorship to be resumed or to be reinstated. At the September 1931 election, K. Sitters said some Croats had complained about the election process. When they asked whether those feelings were widespread or limited to a small group of intellectuals and ordinary people, they received the answer that they were rather widespread, strengthened even more among the peasantry than among the intellectuals, because the latter were corrupted by government positions. However, she wrote, they hoped that the King would find a way out of the situation. Re-

garding the Serbs, she further stated that those who were reasonable and well informed said that the Croatian views did make some sense. There were serious cases and complaints, but nothing that time and tolerance could not resolve. In the end, she concluded that Serbs and Croats are one nation. All the existing differences were interpreted as being influenced by various foreign administrations and she writes that they were new and artificial in comparison with the connections that held this nation together. They were also bound more tightly by mixed marriages, common interests, and trade. Croatian banks thrived in Serbia and the Serbs did not oppose that, although Serbian banks did not expand in Croatia. The money system lay more in the hands of the Croats. A Croatian bookstore with Latin books was opened in Belgrade and did very well. No Serbs, despite their love of Cyrillic, opposed it. On the other hand, the Serbian newspaper *Politika* sold well on the Dalmatian coast. Foreigners tried to "profit" from the fact that Croats were forbidden from using their flag, but they did not understand, wrote K. Sitters, that "The Serb citizens were also not allowed to display their flag." All three flags were put aside in favor of a common flag that represented everything. In her opinion, the political influence was harmful, and the English press helped in this. It encouraged the ideas of separation. She cites an example of a report circulating in Zagreb alleging that a number of Croatian children were in a hospital with broken fingers because they had been beaten by Serb teachers for not being able to read the Cyrillic alphabet. An American woman visited all the hospitals in Zagreb investigating the case, but could not find any evidence supporting such claims.<sup>804</sup>

Later on, on May 18, 1933, K. Sitters sent another report, apparently responding to some previously asked questions, saying that in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia there was no desire for war, although from time to time one could feel a certain fear of war and whispering about what Italy or Hungary might do. The King Aleksandar and the ministers want peace and they have shown a peaceful spirit, even under provocation. As one such proof, she cited the conference of the Serbian and Bulgarian Orthodox churches in Sofia.

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804 LPL, Headlam Papers, MS 2639 f. 57, Sitters (Kathleen), wife of Sitters (Percy Henry Smart), Chaplain in Belgrade, Correspondence with the Bishop of Gloucester.

She added that they did not come across as anything that could be called serious opposition to the then government, although there was dissatisfaction. They did not even have information about any general persecution or bad treatment. There had been some incidents in Zagreb and in prisons, but not overall. She put side complaints about taxes, in cities and in the countryside, because she considers this as a consequence of the crisis and a lack of money. In the end, she wrote that, when she came to England, she would be better able to explain certain things through conversations.<sup>805</sup>

Sitters also had his role in the mentioned process of bringing the Serbian and Bulgarian Orthodox churches closer together.<sup>806</sup> In March 1935, a deputation made up of Vasa Lazarević, president of the Belgrade YMCA, B. Kovandžić, and Sitters went to Sofia at the request of the Bulgarian YMCA and spent two days there. Travel costs were covered by the governments of both countries and receptions were organized in the British and Yugoslav Legations. At the reception in his Legation, Charles Bentinck, the British Envoy in Bulgaria, enabled Sitters and Lazarević to present the goals and purpose of the YMCA. A film about Yugoslavia was shown, which inspired the Bulgarian YMCA to start making a film about Sofia.<sup>807</sup> The representatives of the YMCA from abroad supported the process of rapport between the two churches, and D. Davis, secretary of the World Alliance of YMCAs in Geneva,

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805 *Ibid.*

806 More about the process of converting two churches in Priit Rohtmetts and Radmila Radić, "The Process of Religious and Political Rapprochement between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia in 1920s and 1930s – An International Ecumenical Perspective", *Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 1 (January 2016), 42–89; Priit Rohtmetts and Radmila Radić, "The World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches and Religious and Political Rapprochement between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia in the 1920s and 1930s", *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, Volume 50, Number 4 (Fall 2015), 583–605. *Project MUSE*, doi:10.1353/ecu.2015.0066; Radmila Radić, „Odnosi između Srpske i Bugarske pravoslavne crkve u periodu 1918–1941. godine”, *Tradicija i transformacija* 1, ed. V. Jovanović, (Beograd: INIS, 2015), 131–159.

807 LPL, YMCA Headquarters Belgrade, Yugoslavia to Council of Foreign Relations, CFR DOC 1/51–100, CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, 1935, 23A – O.C. 24/C.F.R. 73A, Bulletin No. 49 January, February & March about the work of the Y.M.C.A. in Yugoslavia in the first quarter of 1935 by P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters.

gave a lecture on the life of students in Romania, Bulgaria, and Greece during a concert by a Bulgarian artist in Belgrade.<sup>808</sup>

At that time, John Douglas, Secretary-General of the Church of England Council on Foreign Relations, suggested to Sitters on March 28, 1935, that if he was ready to continue his work, in the future, in addition to receiving personal confidential reports sent to him from time to time about ongoing issues, he would also continue to send reports to the Orthodox committee of Church of England CFR. The Council was willing to pay the funds for the cost of sending the report.<sup>809</sup> In November 1936 Percy Sitters sent a report on the work of the YMCA in Yugoslavia to the Church of England CFR. He wrote that the progress in the work had been encouraging throughout the year. There had been difficulties, not only those that are common to the work of the YMCA all over the world, but also those that emerged from the special circumstances of life in the Balkans. Sitters said there was no country where public and personal life was more intimately influenced by the swing of the political pendulum than Yugoslavia. Therefore, even strictly non-political organizations such as the YMCA were affected by these consequences. He added that the government was implementing much more rigorous control of institutional life that would ever be possible in England, but added that it had to be said that the YMCA in Yugoslavia, with its inter-religious and non-political base and program, enjoyed the confidence of the authorities to a certain degree. However, the fact that permits had to be granted from time to time for certain undertakings, produced delays that were unheard of in England. Then Sitters followed up with an illustration of how progress in the implementing of created programs was often impeded, not because of any lack of sympathy toward the objectives of the YMCA. He wrote that a few months ago the education minister had given permission to the YMCA to visit all the schools in the country, to show a film about its activities and collect money for the Memorial Building by having each student pay a dinar. That would, Sitters says, not only raise funds, but it would also be valuable publicity for the YMCA. Everything was carefully planned, but then, with-

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808 *Pravda*, May 24, 1934, 3.

809 LPL, Douglas 51—Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 299–329. Papers concerning Rev. Percy Henry Smart Sitters, director of the Young Men's Christian Association, Yugoslavia, and correspondence with Douglas.

out warning, there was a cabinet crisis, the Minister changed and they had to start everything from the beginning. When they secured a meeting with the new Minister, he told them that this issue could only be considered by the end of the year, but Sitters added that no one could know if the same Minister would even be in office in December. He said that he mentioned this example as something they had to face but he did not want to leave the impression that they were discouraged or pessimistic. All those involved in the project were convinced that God was leading them and that despite many difficulties (including the serious economic crisis through which the country was going), they would eventually triumph. New wage and pension cuts (the second time since the crisis had begun), the government's intention to introduce yet more cuts, higher taxes and increased costs of living, made their position even more difficult. The general conditions also affected the income for the normal operation of local associations. Payment of the membership fee was difficult. Sitters asked what that should say, for example, to a student, a long-standing member of the Association, who after many years of study had become a doctor but could not provide a place in a hospital with no pay, just for a free bed, light, and heating. Another doctor, a true friend of the YMCA, after completing a course in England, was able to secure a salary of about 75 pounds a year in a state hospital. Finally, Sitters concluded that the role of the YMCA and its impact on unification in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was an important contribution to the life of the country and that those who knew how severe feelings among the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes could be, were able to understand this.<sup>810</sup>

During the Sudeten crisis and before the signing of the Munich Agreement, in mid-1938, Sitters wrote about their common feeling of insecurity, fear of how Yugoslavia would conduct itself and on which side it would be, whether it would be neutral or not, whether they could still remain in Belgrade while England was in danger. He added that F. J. Chamberlain, CBE, English National Secretary of the YMCA in London, had contacted them by telephone telling them to extend their stay in Yugoslavia.<sup>811</sup>

810 LPL, "Report of the Work of the Y. M. C. A. in Yugoslavia", November 1936, Private & Confidential, Douglas 51—Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 329.

811 LPL, CFR DOC 1/101–200 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1. October 1938, 66 – 166, Bulletin No. 59. Yugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade.

Sitters wrote to Douglas on January 11, 1939, that he had had tea with Prince Pavle the day after he returned from London and was very pleased with the conversation. The reason for the visit was the insistence of Princess Helena Victoria<sup>812</sup> that Sitters should consult Prince Pavle before making a decision on the proposal he received from the Council of the YMCA in London to become Assistant National Secretary in England. The result of Sitters' conversation with the Prince-Regent, which followed a meeting with the British Envoy, was not to accept the offer, because they both considered it to be great damage if he were to leave Yugoslavia. Sitters was due to travel to London again in late January to discuss this offer. In the meantime, he met with Patriarch Gavriilo, who heard about the offer and asked him not to leave the country, because, as he said, there were many Sitters in England who could fill that position, but no one can fill Sitters' place in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.<sup>813</sup>



*The Anglican Church of St. George in Venice*

On May 9, 1939, Harold Buxton, the Bishop of Gibraltar, ordained P. H. Sitters in the English Church of St. George in Venice, as soon as he was ad-

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812 Princess Helena Victoria of Schleswig-Holstein (1870–1948) was the granddaughter of Queen Victoria. She helped the work of the YMCA and particularly the YWCA.

813 LPL, CFR OC 257. Individual Orthodox Churches: Serbia: Contacts: Serbian Bishops, Correspondence regarding Reverend P. H. Sitters including the suggestion that he be awarded a Lambeth Degree; Rev. P. H. Sitters, 1938–43.

mitted to the diaconate, and the next day, at the special bidding of Archbishop of Canterbury, he was elevated to the rank of priest. According to the religious press in London, this Anglican ordaining was a unique event in the history of the Anglican Church in Italy.<sup>814</sup> During this act, Bishop Buxton was assisted by another priest, Herbert Brown, a chaplain in Trieste, who until then had been responsible for carrying out religious rituals in Belgrade, as well as chaplains from Genoa, Rome and Florence (Rev. H. J. Coles, Rev. A. L. Harkness, and Rev. F. G. Orchard). On that occasion, the Bishop spoke about the special circumstances that led to this act and the candidate's rich experience in the Christian Social Service for Youth in Europe, about Sitters' work for the YMCA during World War One in France and Belgium, about the decorations he received for his merits, and about his work in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia since 1924. Lastly, Bishop Buxton emphasized Sitters' "special and valuable experiences among young people and students (social, educational and spiritual)" and added that his work as a lay reader in Belgrade testified to Sitters' "honest respect for church order and loyalty to church doctrine," by which he showed that he possessed the gift of a pastor.<sup>815</sup>

Sitters' writes to the Bishop of Gloucester on May 30, 1939, reminding him that in 1938 he had donated 2 pounds for the work of the YMCA in Yugoslavia, which he sent through the London office. Pray him to help again. He also asked him whether he had heard that he was ordained in Venice and

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814 The Anglican Communion was founded in London in 1867 and represents an international community of national and regional churches in various countries that are in full association with the Church of England. The Church of England is the state church in England and the "mother church" of the Anglican Communion. The Archbishop of Canterbury is the spiritual leader of the Anglican Communion. The first Lambeth Conference, which gathered all the Anglican bishops in the world and had an advisory role, was held in 1867. Since 1878, these conferences have been held every ten years. The Church of England is divided into two provinces of Canterbury and York, in addition to the diocese in Europe. The Gibraltar diocese in Europe, formed in 1842, is the largest diocese of the Church of England and the largest diocese in the Anglican Communion, covering the whole of Europe except Great Britain and Ireland. Its seat is located in the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in Gibraltar. There are two more cathedrals in Malta and Brussels. The bishopric is led by the Bishop of Gibraltar and belongs to the province of Canterbury.

815 LPL, Lang 177, ff. 375–407, P. H. S. Sitters, Chaplain in Belgrade, Yugoslavia 1940–1941, awarded a Lambeth degree; "Bishop's Striking tribute to Mr. Sitters", *SSH*, Vol. VIII, No. 8–9 (July 1939), 2.

added that he felt that this was the right step and believed that it would enrich his ministry in the church. He wrote that the event was celebrated by the Patriarch and many of his friends in Yugoslavia. Prince Pavle and Princess Olga, with whom he had spent some time a week earlier, were particularly pleased. Queen Maria, whom he and his wife had received on May 29, also expressed her satisfaction.<sup>816</sup>

Sitters was in London in June 1939 at consultations in the YMCA headquarters. He also visited the associations in Dublin, Belfast, Dartford, and other places. He met with the young princes Aleksandar and Nikola, the sons of Prince Pavle, who were engaged in the YMCA Center in London. In addition, the British Council had asked him to watch films about life in England and choose those that would be suitable to send abroad.<sup>817</sup>

Shortly after the outbreak of war in 1939, the Bishop of Gibraltar, who then traveled through Southeast Europe, wrote Canon Douglas a letter containing several questions and suggestions, including the following: that the Council on Foreign Relations or another body send English church newspapers every week to selected friends that Sitters would distribute, and that the Council invite Nikolaj Velimirović and Irinej Ćirić to a one-month visit to England. In the opinion of the Bishop, such an invitation should leave a good impression in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia because Irinej of Novi Sad was friends with Patriarch Gavrilo, while Bishop Nikolaj at that time was isolated from the Synod and was not in good relations with the Patriarch.<sup>818</sup> In his view, an invitation to both of them could help restore unity between these two groups. He suggested that a similar invitation be sent to the Bulgarian Metropolitan Stefan and that all three be awarded the Cross of the Archbishop of Canterbury.<sup>819</sup>

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816 LPL, 2615-2650 – Headlam Papers, MS 2639 ff. 205, 221, 236, Sitters (Percy Henry Smart), Chaplain in Belgrade, Correspondence with the Bishop of Gloucester.

817 LPL, CFR DOC 1/201-310, CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, June 1939 C.F.R. 201, Bulletin No. 61. Jugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade.

818 More about the conflict and reconciliation of Bishop Nicholas and Patriarch Gavrilo in: Radić, *Život u vremenima*, 342-343.

819 Dr Mjuriel Hepel [Dr. Muriel Heppell], *Džordž Bel i Nikolaj Velimirović. Priča o jednom prijateljstvu* [George Bell and Nikolai Velimirovic. *The Story of a Friendship*], (Cetinje, 2003), 94-95.



On October 21<sup>st</sup> Sitters wrote to the Bishop of Gloucester and thanks to him for his recommendations regarding his ordainment. He adds that he was surprised by the cordial reception of the Patriarch and Bishops who supported this step. He noted that the last two visits by the Bishop of Gibraltar were marked as successful, both in terms of bringing the two churches closer together and on the issue of the war and the goals of the allies.<sup>820</sup>

In the fall of 1939, P. Sitters was offered a managerial position in the YMCA in the British Expeditionary Force in France, considering his experience in this country during World War One. He was indecisive about what to do because it was difficult for him to refuse the offer. The Bishop of Gloucester felt that it would be a big mistake if Sitters left Yugoslavia, where he had great influence not only in church but also in political circles, and was “intimate with Prince Pavle and his family” and had a lot of opportunities to present the British view of things to people who were important in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The Archbishop of Canterbury personally wrote to Sitters on November 2, 1939, saying that the bishop of Gibraltar informed him that YMCA had invited him to take over the administration in France. He advised him to give the matter serious thought and added that there were others who could take over the job in France and that he was someone who was hard to replace in Yugoslavia.<sup>821</sup> Sitters informed the Bishop of Gloucester on December 11, 1939, that he had turned down the offer to go to France.<sup>822</sup> A week later, on December 19, John Douglas proposed for Sitters to be awarded a Lambeth MA (or Lambeth BA)<sup>823</sup> diploma for his excellent work and “expert knowledge of Yugoslav culture and the Serbian Orthodox Church” and

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820 LPL, 2615–2650 – Headlam Papers, 122–304 – Papers concerning a proposed theological delegation to be led by Headlam to Warsaw, Sophia, and Athens to consider relations between the Anglican and Orthodox Churches, MS 2646 ff. 187, 218 Sitters (Percy Henry Smart), Chaplain in Belgrade Correspondence with the Bishop of Gloucester.

821 LPL, Lang 174, ff. 19–21, Percy Henry Smart Sitters, Chaplain in Belgrade, Yugoslavia 1939, requested to continue as a chaplain.

822 LPL, 2615–2650 – Headlam Papers, MS 2639 ff. 205, 221, 236, Sitters (Percy Henry Smart), Chaplain in Belgrade, Correspondence with the Bishop of Gloucester.

823 The Lambeth Diploma is an academic title awarded by the Archbishop of Canterbury. There are several types of these diplomas and they come with a certain type of academic apparel. Diplomas are awarded for church service.

that he should wear appropriate clothing that befitted this degree when he took part in Orthodox services or accompanied Anglican dignitaries.<sup>824 825</sup>



*Sitters and Kovandžić at a meeting of high school students from the YMCA of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.*<sup>825</sup>

The Archbishop of Canterbury expressed his readiness to award Sitters. In early February 1940, the Bishop of Gibraltar wrote a formal request for Sitters to be awarded the Lambeth M. A. degree. The request was signed by J. Douglas. On February 14, 1940, the Archbishop replied to the Bishop of Gibraltar that he had received a petition for awarding Sitters, whom he knew well and valued highly. He expressed his readiness to award him and was about to write to Sitters. However, there was a problem regarding the costs of the award, which were around 60 pounds. It was suggested that the money be collected by Sitters' friends and, in particular, the members of the Council on Foreign Relations, but this delayed the process. In his letter to the Archbishop, Sitters himself expressed his reluctance to receive the degree because he felt that he lacked the necessary educational qualifications. The

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824 LPL, CFR OC 257. Individual Orthodox Churches: Serbia: Contacts: Serbian Bishops, Correspondence regarding Reverend P. H Sitters including the suggestion that he be awarded a Lambeth Degree; Rev. P. H. Sitters, 1938–43.

825 *Vreme*, Feb. 3, 1940, 16.

Archbishop was touched by Sitters' humbleness, but explained to him that the goal of awarding him this degree was not only in recognition of his work in the past (work in the YMCA; the connections he established with the Serbian Patriarch and the Episcopate, links between the YMCA and academic organizations in the country; close relations with Queen Maria, young King Peter, the Prince Regent, his wife, and children), but also for strengthening his position in Yugoslavia.<sup>826</sup> Sitters then said he would receive the degree, but due to the war situation, the delivery of the award became a problem. Sitters could not travel to London and the Bishop of Gibraltar was prevented from coming to Belgrade, so the British Envoy was asked to award the degree to Sitters on behalf of the Archbishop of Canterbury. In October 1940, the Envoy sent a telegram saying he was delighted and honored to have the opportunity to award Sitters the degree on behalf of the Archbishop. The documents were sent by diplomatic post from London to Belgrade in mid-December, but by April 6, 1941, they did not arrive.<sup>827</sup> Whether the documents were lost or arrived in Belgrade but the deputy had neither the time nor the will to deal with it, remains unclear, but the fact remains that Sitters never received the promotion. However, the story about this was not over and continued months later in South Africa.

It was already mentioned that as early as October 1938, John Douglas asked Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović about the possibility of a visit by a delegation of the Anglican Church. In January 1939 he wrote to Sitters that he liked the idea for them to visit Belgrade next year.<sup>828</sup> Sitters replied to Douglas on October 21, 1939, that he had received his letter of 5 October and that he had spoken about it to the Bishop of Gibraltar, who was spending some time in Belgrade and Zagreb on his way to Italy. Sitters wrote that he thought the arrival of the delegation would be supported by some people from Yugoslav Government and that a suitable delegation could make worthwhile

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826 LPL, Lang 177, ff. 375–407, Percy Henry Smart Sitters, Chaplain in Belgrade, Yugoslavia 1940–1941. Awarded a Lambeth degree.

827 LPL, CFR OC 257. Individual Orthodox Churches: Serbia: Contacts: Serbian Bishops, 110–113 Correspondence regarding Reverend P. H Sitters including the suggestion that he be awarded a Lambeth Degree, Rev. P. H. Sitters, 1938–43.

828 *Ibid.*

progress, but that due to weather conditions the trip should be postponed for the spring of 1940. In the same letter, Sitters responded to some questions Douglas asked. First, the Bishop of Gibraltar and he believed that the Patriarch and the Bishops of Niš, Jovan, of Bačka Irinej, and of Žiča, Nikolaj, were not Germanophiles, but very sympathetic to England. Sitters added that he thought this was also the case with Metropolitan Dositej and Voja Janić. This was also true of most laypeople, and he said that he could also add those whom Douglas referred to as "the highest in the country." Furthermore, the reaction to the surrender of part of Poland to the USSR was not favorable and created great bitterness with the Russian bishop, considering the financial assistance given to them for their work in Berlin in the anti-Comintern days. Sitters wrote that the prevailing feeling in Yugoslavia was anti-Hitler. The general feeling was that the country would be able to avoid war at least until the spring.<sup>829</sup>

H. Buxton, the Bishop Gibraltar, arrived in October 1939 to establish contacts with Patriarch Gavrilo and Bishop Irinej of Bačka and to send them a message from the Archbishop of Canterbury about the postponement of a planned visit to the Balkans by a delegation of the Church of England due to the international situation. He wrote that this news had disappointed his hosts, which was surprising to him since he had not seen in the Serbian Church any meaningful enthusiasm for closer relations with the Anglicans. However, he said he realized that "our Serbian friends were not concerned so much about the formal theological conference" but wanted to find out the attitude of religious leaders in England toward the war and regarding moral issues. Buxton also said that he had the opportunity to see the seriousness of German propaganda in the Balkans. He learned that German Lutheran Bishop Theodor Heckel<sup>830</sup> had visited Belgrade and Athens with offers of

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829 LPL, Headlam Papers MS 2646 f. 219, Douglas (Canon John Albert), Hon. General Secretary to the CFR, 1939, Letter from Sitters (Percy Henry Smart), Chaplain in Belgrade (copy); Douglas 51-Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church, ff. 242-352.

830 Theodor Heckel was Director of the church external office of the German Evangelist church (DEK) for foreign affairs from 1934 to 1945. He had the title of bishop. Since 1935, Eugen Gerstenmaier was his assistant. For Gerstenmaier see Milan Ristović, "The

Tel. 22-756

*Anglican Chaplaincy, Belgrade*  
(The Diocese of Sremski Karlovci).

From: P. H. S. Sitters,  
Hon. English Chaplain  
to the Anglican Congregations at Belgrade  
and throughout Yugoslavia.

Trgadesa Jovanova 51,  
Belgrade,  
Yugoslavia.

February 8th, 1940.

His Grace The Archbishop of Canterbury,  
The Palace,  
Canterbury.

Dear Archbishop of Canterbury,

Yesterday I accompanied the British Minister, Mr. Ronald Campbell, when he went to pay a call on the Patriarch of the Orthodox Church.

Perhaps you will be interested to know from me something of what was said, although I think the Minister will be writing to you himself to convey a special message sent to you by His Beatitude.

I have never been present at an interview with the Patriarch which went so cordially or pleasantly; and I believe that after reading the attached report you will see how very important it is that the personnel of the proposed Anglican delegation, which I understand is to come out in the spring, should be made up of those who are fully qualified to strengthen further the existing ties between the two Churches.

Yours sincerely,

*P. H. S. Sitters*  
P. H. Sitters.

*Sitters' letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury about visiting Patriarch Gavrilo in February 1940*

free scholarships for Serbian and Greek Orthodox students at German universities. The response of the clergy and the students was discouraging. The Bishop went on to say that the then British Government did tiny to present the true state of affairs to the Serbian people (a press representative in Belgrade was responsible for the British propoganda for both Yugoslavia and Bulgaria), unlike the German Legation in Belgrade, which was extremely active.<sup>831</sup>

On December 30, 1939, in a letter to Sitters, John Douglas said he regretted not being able to come this autumn as agreed, but that one they were

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Third Reich and Orthodox Churches in the Balkans in the Second World War", *Dijalog povjesničara - istoričara* 2. (Zagreb, 2000), 551-568.

831 Buxton, *A Mediterranean Window*, 27-28.

working on having one delegation visit the Balkan countries in the spring of next year around Easter, hoping he would be in that delegation.<sup>832</sup>

In the fall of 1939, British Envoy Ronald Hugh Campbell left Belgrade and assumed the post of Ambassador in Paris. The new Envoy in Belgrade became Ronald Ian Campbell.<sup>833</sup> On February 7, 1940, Patriarch Gavriilo Dožić received the Envoy Campbell for the first time accompanied by P. Sitters and B.



Kovandžić.<sup>834</sup> Sitters sent a report to the Archbishop of Canterbury on February 8, 1940, saying they had been received warmly and stressing the importance of the planned arrival of the delegation. The Patriarch told Sitters about the situation of the Orthodox people in the countries occupied by Germany, (Czechoslovakia and Poland). According to the Patriarch's words, which were transmitted by Sitters, in Poland, the Orthodox Christians were placed under the jurisdiction of the Orthodox Bishop Seraphim<sup>835</sup> in Ber-

832 LPL, Ms Headlam Papers 2650 ff. 61, 83, 88 Sitters (Percy Henry Smart), Chaplain in Belgrade, Correspondence with the Bishop of Gloucester.

833 Ronald Ian Campbell (1890–1983) British Envoy in Belgrade 1939–1941. LPL, CFR DOC 1/201–310. CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, May 1940, 4–204, Bulletin No. 64. Yugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A.

834 *Vreme*, Feb. 8, 1940; „Engleski poslanik g. Kembel kod Nj. Sv. Patrijarha” [“English Envoy Mr. Campbell at H. H. the Patriarch”] *Politika*, Feb. 8, 1940, 7.

835 Seraphim (Karl Georg Albert Lade, 1883–1950), Bishop and Metropolitan of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia. He was born in Leipzig in a Protestant family and in 1904 he converted to Orthodoxy. He studied in Russia. In 1938, he was appointed Head of the Orthodox Church in the Third Reich. After the German seizure of the Czech and Moravian cities in March 1939, the Germans tried to put all Orthodox Christians under his jurisdiction. After the conquest of Poland by the Third Reich, he led the Orthodox Church in the General Government since the Metropolitan of Warsaw had to withdraw from his position under pressure. Seraphim (Lade) was removed from this position on September 23, 1940, when the Metropolitan of Warsaw Dionizy Waledyński declared loyalty to the Nazi authorities. At a special session of the SOC Parliament, in November 1940, when discussing the condition of the church in the German Reich, the work of Bishop Seraphim was severely condemned. From 1942, he led the Central Europe-

lin. The Metropolitan of Warsaw<sup>836</sup> was forced to leave the city, because, as the Patriarch said, neither the Germans nor the Russians would allow him to stay. He lived somewhere near Warsaw in misery and begged the Serbian Orthodox Church for help. The Patriarch told them that it was not true that the Bolsheviks had changed but were the same as before, and in the occupied areas they behaved very badly toward the Orthodox. He said that in one monastery, which had 300 people, many monks had been killed and the others expelled. The Russians seized all church property and many churches were destroyed. In Czechoslovakia, where the Serbian Orthodox Church had a special interest in the Orthodox regions, the Germans insisted that all Orthodox Christians be placed under the jurisdiction of Bishop Seraphim in Berlin, so the Germans could exercise their influence over them. Bishop Seraphim had connections with the Russian emigrant Bishop Anastasy,<sup>837</sup> who was in Yugoslavia, and the Serbian Orthodox Church tried to influence him, but without success, because the influence of the German authorities over

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an Metropolitanate of the Russian Orthodox Church. Read more in Paul B. Anderson, "The Eastern Orthodox Church Today II. In the Reich and Occupied Territory", *The Living Church*, October 25, 1942, 22-24; Михаил Шкаровский, *Нацистичка Германија и Православна Црква*, (Москва: Крутицкое подворье, 2002) [Mikhail V. Shkarovsky, *Nazi Germany and the Orthodox Church: Nazi policy with respect to the Orthodox Church and religious revival in the occupied territory of the USSR*. (Moscow: Krutitsy Patriarchal Compound, 2002.)]; Radić, *Život u vremenima*, 340–342.

836 Metropolitan Dionizy (Waledinsky) was Archbishop of Warsaw, Metropolitan of Poland and Hierarch of the Autocephalous Polish Church from 1923 to 1960.

837 Anastasy (Aleksandr Alekseyevich Gribanovsky) (1873–1965), Metropolitan of the ROCOR. Since 1915, a Bishop, and since 1916, Archbishop of Kishinev and Khotin. He emigrated in 1919, and from 1920 to 1924, he headed the Representative Office of the Provisional Authority of the Church of the Southeast of Russia (later, the ROCOR) at the Constantinople Patriarchate. From 1924 to 1935, he headed the Russian spiritual mission in Palestine. In 1935, he was appointed Assistant to the Metropolitan Antony (Khrapovitsky), and in 1936 he was elected President of the Archbishop's Synod of the ROCOR. He was head of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia until 1964 (retired). He died in 1965 in the United States. Vladislav P. Puzović, *Istorijsko-kanonski aspekti odnosa karlovačke uprave Ruske zagradične crkve i Moskovske patrijaršije*, (Doktorska disertacija, Univerzitet u Beogradu, Pravoslavni bogoslovski fakultet, 2012), [*Historical-Canonical Aspects of the Relationship between the Karlovac Administration of the ROCOR and the Moscow Patriarchate* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Belgrade, Orthodox Theological Faculty, 2012)], 31.



Bishop Seraphim was greater. As for the problem of the Orthodox Church in the Reich, the Patriarch said that in 1939, before the outbreak of war, visited him Theodor Heckel, who presented himself as Hitler's minister of religion and provided him with a written plan of future cooperation. Heckel suggested that a number of Orthodox students go to study in Germany and that German students come to study in Yugoslavia in exchange. The Patriarch responded that it was not a good time and that talks on this issue, as well as the entire plan proposed by Heckel, should be left aside until the situation was settled. Bishop Filip Pop from the Lutheran Church in Yugoslavia later pressured Patriarch to accept the plan, but Patriarch responded that it was not time to discuss or make decisions. At the same time, Bishop Pop told the Patriarch that the speech of the Archbishop of Canterbury in the House of Lords had a political purpose of portraying Hitler as a man who was against



*Lunch at the Patriarch's residence in Sremski Karlovci in honor of the representatives of the Anglican Church*



*Representatives of the Church of England and Envoy Campbell in conversation with news reporters*



the church but, Pop added, he knows how much Hitler helps the church in Germany, both morally and materially, allocating huge sums for its needs during the year. The Patriarch responded that he believed the speech of the Archbishop of Canterbury had the purpose of bringing all Christians together in order to preserve Europe and Christian culture. He regretted that Pop was not cooperating with the other representatives of Christian churches. We must, the Patriarch continued, work on the foundations of the Bible's commandments and its teachings if we want to preserve humanity, and in our pastoral work, we must stay out of politics. Bishop Pop suggested that some steps had to be taken in connection with the Archbishop's speech. In connection with this, the Patriarch informed the Envoy that he had told Minister Cincar-Marković, that it was not necessary for the Serbian Orthodox Church to do anything because it had not been informed about the speech officially. The Patriarch also added that the motive of the Archbishop's speech was misinterpreted by some people and that he fully agreed with Sitters' explanation of the real meaning of the speech. The head of the Serbian Orthodox Church sincerely thanked the Envoy for his visit and invited him to S. Karlovci for Easter. In conclusion, he said that the British nation had helped our people in the most difficult times and that he prayed like other bishops for the just goal to prevail. On February 22, 1940, the Archbishop of Canterbury thanked Sitters for the report on his conversation with the Patriarch. He particularly thanked Sitters for dissuading the Patriarch regarding the political purpose of his speech. The Archbishop wrote that he was aware of how he was interpreted in Germany and elsewhere but that he was interested in preserving peace. Unfortunately, this proved to be impossible, and therefore he felt it important to maintain contacts with leaders of religion in the Near East so that they would understand the reasons that compelled Great Britain to take up arms.<sup>838</sup>

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838 On February 12, 1940, British Envoy R. Campbell sent the Archbishop of Canterbury a report on the visit to the Patriarch of the Serbian Orthodox Church. LPL, CFR OC 250/2 Individual Orthodox Churches: Serbia: Patriarch Gavrilo, 1938-47, including correspondence and message of the greeting to the new Patriarch (ff. 1-4), correspondence re. Ronald Campbell and Rev. P. H. Sitters' visit to Patriarch Gavrilo, Feb. 1940 (ff. 5-11).



*Patriarch Gavrilo with the representatives of the Anglican Church and Envoy Campbell*

In May that year, the Patriarch also received in his S. Karlovci residence, a delegation of the representatives of the Anglican Church, headed by the Bishop of Gloucester, who was president, the Bishops of Southwark and Gibraltar, as well as priests J. Douglas, P. Usher, and W. Hannah. The delegation was accompanied by P. H. Sitters.<sup>839</sup> The delegation visited Greece and

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839 *Vreme*, May 6, 1940, 6. More in: Radić, *Život u vremenima*, 340–342.

Bishop Buxton writes about this visit that two decades of talks about the coming of the churches have passed, that the answers were obtained from the Patriarchate of Constantinople, as well as Patriarchy in Alexandria, Jerusalem, Cyprus, and Romania between 1922 and 1935. But they did not arrive from Belgrade, Sofia or Athens. In his words, the goal of the delegation was to inquire about the likelihood of receiving answers from these three churches. They arrived in Belgrade on May 3rd. On Saturday, May 4<sup>th</sup>, they met with representatives of the British Legation and journalists. The next day (Sunday) they spent at the Patriarchal Palace in Sremski Karlovci, as guests of Patriarch Gavrilo and attended liturgy and lunch. On Monday they laid a wreath at the tomb of King Aleksandar at Oplenac and met with Bishop Nikolaj. The following day, the conference, which was held in the new building of the Synod in Belgrade, after prayer in the Patriarch's chapel, was opened by Bishop Irinej Ćirić, who chaired the meeting. H. Buxton says they wanted to find out whether the representatives of the Serbian Orthodox Church were ready to take the step that the Patriarchate of Constantinople had taken and in 1935 also the Romanian Patriarchate - a step toward mutual recognition of ordination. The answer of the Bishop of Bačka was definitive: The Serbian Church, as he explained, never approved the action of the Constantinople Patriarchate of 1922, nor the Pro-Synod in Constantinople, in connection with the recognition of the Anglican ordination. According to his explanation, no decision on the issue of such importance should

Bulgaria during this tour.<sup>840</sup> The Bishop of Gibraltar and Sitters also visited Prince Pavle.<sup>841</sup> Recent research in the United Kingdom has shed more light on the purpose and organization of this visit. The UK Ministry of Information, the government's central service in charge of propaganda, was formed on September 4, 1939, one day after Great Britain declared war. Within this Ministry, the Religions Division operated under the leadership of General Kenneth MacLennan, the former General Secretary of the Conference of British Missionary Societies. The purpose of the Ministry of Information's Religious Division was presented as a promotion of friendly cooperation and helping missionaries to cope with problems arising from the war. Church leaders and the Ministry agreed that the response of churches to war must contain the aspect of moral independence and that the Ministry should not be accused of using the church as a channel for propaganda. For this reason, a formula was found according to which priests acted as individuals rather than as representatives of the church. The reports that came out at that time from the Anglican Church's Foreign Relations Council, indicated how Hitler had advanced very far in his plans to manipulate religious forces to ensure control of the continent. The Council was convinced that it could help promote resistance to Hitler in the Balkan region. They were certain that an impor-

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be made without the convening of the Pan-Orthodox Assembly. The delegation of the Anglican Church replied that they were only seeking "acceptance" until a meeting of the Pan-Orthodox Assembly was held, and not full recognition. Buxton further states that it was obvious that the Orthodox Bishops did not have the right information about the Anglican Church, and that they knew what they knew, through the Russian church literature, which misrepresents Anglicans as one of the blocs of Protestant sects. Although the conference did not give concrete results, it encouraged the adoption of a resolution signed by Bishop of Bačka and the Bishop of Gloucester, which left the door open for future discussions. Harold Buxton writes that the cumulative effect of the visit was greater than they expected. In the press and on the radio, German comments reached the zenith of fantastic abuse, crowned by the statement that the members of the delegation had prayed on the knees of the Patriarch to influence their government to oppose the allied goal. Buxton, *A Mediterranean Window*, 29-32.

840 On the way to Sofia, the delegation in Niš attended in the consecration of the monument of G. Carrington Wilde. They were guests of the Bishop of Niš, Jovan. *Vreme*, May 12, 1940, 7; *Pravda*, May 12, 1940, 7.

841 LPL, CFR DOC 1/201-310 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, May 1940, 4-204, Bulletin No. 64. Jugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade.

tant component of Hitler's plans were the efforts to put under its control of the ROCOR in Sremski Karlovci, and in the future, the creation of an Orthodox center in Germany to which all Orthodox Christians in the Balkans and beyond would gravitate. The leading representatives of the Anglican Church, concerned about such activities, sought counteraction. They proposed providing financial assistance to the St. Sergius Orthodox Theological Institute in Paris to counteract attempts to establish a Russian Orthodox Institute in Breslau under the control of Seraphim Lade,<sup>842</sup> an Orthodox Metropolitan in Berlin, appointed by the ROCOR in S. Karlovci. The Ministry of Information and the Council believed that opposition to Hitler was inside the Orthodox churches in the Balkans and that they should reach out to them because they had a profound influence on both public opinion and government policy. P. H. Sitters, the Anglican chaplain in Belgrade, believed that the Anglican influence must be utilized not only in Yugoslavia but also in Bulgaria, Romania, and Greece. Many major figures in the Anglican Church agreed with his view. The Department for the Balkans of the Ministry of Information contacted John Douglas, an Orthodox Church specialist with a long list of valuable contacts, who agreed to cooperate. He recommended the bishops of Gloucester and Lincoln, and Philip Usher, assistant secretary of the Council. The Department of Religious Affairs of the Ministry of Information established an Orthodox and an Old Catholic subsector. The Orthodox subsector was initially established on an interim basis, but when the importance of its work was assessed, it was estimated that "no relationship that we can develop with the Orthodox Church should be neglected: if they are used skillfully, they can be extremely valuable. This applies to all European countries

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842 In the autumn of 1938, Professor Hans Koch, the Director of the Institute for Eastern European Institute in Breslau (Osteuropa-Institut, Breslau), launched the idea of opening the Theological Orthodox Academy in the Third Reich, which, according to him, should have a very favorable psychological influence in connection with the attempts of the Anglican Church to establish ties with the Eastern Church. From 1937 to 1940 he was a professor of Eastern European history at the University of Wrocław. He was a professor of Eastern European history at the University of Vienna in 1940, Visiting Professor and Director of the German Research Institute in Sofia (Bulgaria). In the end, the Breslau Institute was not established at all. Read more in Михаил Шкаровский, *Нацистичка Германия и Православная Церковь*, (Москва: Крутицкое подворье, 2002); M. Shkarovskij, *Die Kirchenpolitik des Dritten Reiches gegenüber den orthodoxen Kirchen in Osteuropa (1939-1945)*. (Münster, 2004).

southeast of Germany, except for Hungary and the Catholic regions of Yugoslavia (Croatia, Dalmatia, and Slovenia).” In the organization of this subsector, the purpose of the visit in May 1940 was the fight against German propaganda in order to gain support from Orthodox believers. The delegation’s activities were appraised as successful.<sup>843</sup>

In May, Sitters sent a regular report saying: “It is better for us not to talk about the current situation in the Bulletin. You know very well what our thoughts are.”<sup>844</sup> Nevertheless, on May 20, 1940, he wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury and sent him a letter from the Patriarch, translated by his wife, noting that he would be able to see from it how the Patriarch was pleased with the visit of the Anglican Church delegation and how much the other Bishops sympathized with the “just cause.” The bishops of Gibraltar, Gloucester, and Southwark, who were part of the delegation, told Sitters to inform him that their visit to Belgrade was the most successful in the Balkan tour.<sup>845</sup>



In early June 1940, Sitters informed the Bishop of Gloucester that many things had happened since his visit but that everyone believed that their goal will triumph in the end. He added that he heard that the Orthodox friends welcomed the visit, but also that the Germans had carried out all

843 Dianne Kirby, “The Church of England and ‘Religions Division’ during the Second World War: Church–State Relations and the Anglo–Soviet Alliance”, *Electronic Journal of International History* (4), (University of London, School of Advanced Study, 2002), [Journal\\_of\\_International\\_History\\_2000\\_n4\\_Kirby.pdf \(2/15/2018\)](#)

844 LPL, CFR DOC 1/201–310 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, May 1940, 4–204, Bulletin No. 64. Yugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade.

845 LPL, CFR DOC 1/201–310 CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, May 1940, 4–204, Bulletin No. 64. Yugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters in Belgrade; Lang 177, ff. 375–407, Percy Henry Smart Sitters, Chaplain in Belgrade, Yugoslavia 1940–1941, awarded a Lambeth degree.

kinds of propaganda about this visit and that one of their unexpected reports was that the Anglican bishops visited a nightclub in Belgrade.<sup>846</sup>

Exactly one year after the visit of the delegation of the Anglican Church to Belgrade, during the occupation in May 1941, the *Opštinske novine* [*Municipal Newspaper*] published an article by Hans Schwarz van Berk, a German journalist and Goebbels' chief propagandist,<sup>847</sup> from the German *Das Reich* about the alleged start of English war policies in Serbia conducted through the Church. According to this text, the idea for the visit of the English bishops in May 1940 was proposed by Percy Sitters, a priest of British Legation in Belgrade. This text refers to Sitters as a "prominent political agent," a friend of Bishop Nikolaj. "Sitters and Nikolaj kept their game firmly and prolonged it. When the Greek-Italian war broke out in Albania, they made a move on Gavriilo, telling him about the united front of Orthodox churches. They persuaded the Patriarch and gained their first foothold for initiating war. Gavriilo began to visit the country and rouse people with political speeches. At the same time, one of his men, priest Janjić, was in charge of the Belgrade radio. 'The National Hour', a skillfully arranged sequence of speeches, historically interpreted the words of Gavriilo."<sup>848</sup> At the time of the publication of this text, Sitters had already left Yugoslavia and was on his way to South Africa. The Patriarch was arrested and interned in the Rakovica monastery, Voja Janić was also arrested and interrogated,<sup>849</sup> and a few months later, in July 1941, Nikolai Velimirović was to undergo the same fate. Among other reasons, they were all interrogated for their cooperation with the Anglican Church and suspected of being English spies.

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846 LPL, Ms Headlam Papers 2650 ff. 61, 83, 88 Sitters (Percy Henry Smart), Chaplain in Belgrade, Correspondence with the Bishop of Gloucester.

847 Horst Boog, Gerhard Krebs, Detlef Vogel, *Germany and the Second World War: Volume VII: The Strategic Air War in Europe and the War in the West and East Asia, 1943–1944/5*, (Oxford University Press, 2006), 423.

848 "Politika patrijarha Gavriila" ["Patriarch Gavriilo's Policy"], *Opštinske novine*, May 8, 1941, 3; Radić, *Vojislav Janić*, 373–374.

849 Radić, *Život u vremenima*, 364.



## EPILOGUE

### Leaving the Kingdom of Yugoslavia

The Church of England Foreign Affairs Council, signed by the Bishop of Gloucester, sent a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury on June 15, 1940, saying that the issue of English chaplains in Belgrade, Sofia, and Bucharest was discussed at the June 12 meeting. P. H. Sitters had been an honorary (unpaid) chaplain<sup>850</sup> in the Legation and in the British community in Belgrade since 1939. Since Council felt that there was no one who did more for the peoples of Yugoslavia or for the English influence in the Balkans than him, they asked the Archbishop to persuade the British Foreign Office<sup>851</sup> to appoint him to a real position with remuneration as the Legation's chaplain. They expressed their conviction that this would also result in a strengthening of the British position in Sofia and a possible appointment of a chaplain in the Legation and the community in Bulgaria. There was a chaplain in Bucharest, but without an official position. On June 21, 1940, the Bishop of Gloucester received a response to this request from the office of the Archbishop of Canterbury stating that the Archbishop should meet with Edward Frederick Lindley Wood, 1st Earl of Halifax,<sup>852</sup> and that he would point out the issues that had been raised at the meeting of the Foreign Affairs Council with regard to the status of the English chaplains in Belgrade, Sofia, and Bucharest.<sup>853</sup>

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850 A chaplain is a spiritual representative in a secular institution. They can be, but are not necessarily, confirmed or have a theological education. Chaplains perform weddings or funeral ceremonies, manage the community, provide spiritual messages, hold prayers at public meetings, conducts consultations, can be employed in the military, hospitals, police services and fire brigades, political bodies, sports teams, and educational institutions.

851 The Foreign Office was formed in March 1782. After its reorganization in 1968, it was named the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

852 Edward Frederick Lindley Wood (1881–1959), 1st Earl of Halifax, a conservative British politician from the 30s, between 1938 and 1940 was a foreign minister and between 1941 and 1946, he was the British ambassador in Washington.

853 LPL, 1-186 - Correspondence, Lang 175, ff. 117–19 passim, Bulgaria - appointment of a chaplain in Sofia/Percy Henry Smart Sitters, Chaplain in Belgrade, Yugoslavia - re-



Lord Halifax responded to the Archbishop on November 25, 1940, informing him that a decision had been made to appoint official chaplains in Belgrade and Sofia and to appoint the chaplain of the British community in Bucharest as honorary chaplain of the Legation. Sitters was appointed as an official chaplain with diplomatic privileges.<sup>854</sup> This was done in a great hurry because they feared that the Germans or Italians would coerce the Yugoslav Government to expel Sitters because of his work with the YMCA. They felt the best way of avoiding this was to assign Sitters official status. The posts in Belgrade and Sofia included wages, but the amount did not exceed 250 pounds a year, which means that the priest who represented the Anglican Church in the Orthodox countries had less pay than the Foreign Office paid a junior official.<sup>855</sup> Therefore, on the eve of war in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, Percy Sitters was the official chaplain of the British Legation and the British community, with diplomatic status, and also chair of the Board of Directors of the British Council.<sup>856</sup>

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requested to continue as chaplain, 1940 (William Edmond Hopkins, Chaplain in Bucharest, Rumania - appointment as chaplain to the British Legation in Bucharest; Percy Henry Smart Sitters, Chaplain in Belgrade, Yugoslavia - requested to continue as a chaplain).

854 LPL, 1-186-Correspondence Lang 178, ff. 15-17 passim, Bulgaria - appointment of a chaplain in Sofia/P. H. S. Sitters, Chaplain in Belgrade, Yugoslavia - requested to continue as chaplain 1940; CFR DOC 1/201-310, CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, January 1941, 7-207, Jugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin No. 66 received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters, Belgrade; CFR OC 257. Individual Orthodox Churches: Serbia: Contacts: Serbian Bishops, Correspondence regarding Reverend P. H. Sitters including the suggestion that he be awarded a Lambeth Degree; Rev. P. H. Sitters, 1938 - 43; 1-186 - Correspondence, Lang 175 ff. 117-19 passim, Bulgaria - appointment of a chaplain in Sofia/Percy Henry Smart Sitters, Chaplain in Belgrade, Yugoslavia - requested to continue as chaplain, 1940.

855 LPL, 1-186-Correspondence Lang 178, ff. 15-17 passim, Bulgaria - appointment of a chaplain in Sofia/Percy Henry Smart Sitters, Chaplain in Belgrade, Yugoslavia - requested to continue as chaplain 1940 William Edmond Hopkins, Chaplain in Bucharest, Rumania - appointment as chaplain to the British Legation in Bucharest.

856 LPL, CFR DOC 1/201-310, CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, January 1941, 7-207, Jugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin No. 66 received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters, Belgrade; CFR OC 257, Individual Orthodox Churches: Serbia: Con-

According to reports of the Sitters couple, the autumn of 1940 brought fear and uncertainty as prices jumped, especially the prices of staple goods. Connections with Great Britain gradually flagged and stopped. They were no longer receiving newspapers, letters were rare, but they listened to Radio London regularly. In late November 1940, Bishop Buxton came to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia for the last time before the war and stayed until the end of the year. In the meantime, Sitters went to Zagreb to hold services on the Sunday before Christmas and the Bishop stayed in Belgrade and conducted services.<sup>857</sup> During his stay, he visited Patriarch Gavriilo, Bishop Irinej Ćirić, and the Dr. Katherine McPhail Hospital in Sremska Kamenica.<sup>858</sup>

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tacts: Serbian Bishops, Correspondence regarding Reverend P. H. Sitters including the suggestion that he be awarded a Lambeth Degree; Rev. P. H. Sitters, 1938–43.

The British Council was established in November 1934 and opened the office on 13 January 1940 in Belgrade, called the Yugoslav-British Institute. Belgrade was one of the first eight cities to start its work. The British Council occupied a space of two floors in the Anglo-American-Yugoslav club located in the "Albania" palace. David Shillan, "Confidential to British Council. Report – Evacuation from Belgrade, 1941", *The South Slav Journal*, Vol. 34, No. 1–2, 2015, 87–108.

- 857 LPL, CFR DOC 1/201–310, CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, January 1941, 7–207, Yugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin No. 66 received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters, Belgrade.
- 858 Katherine MacPhail (1887–1974) and her sister Isabel, completed medical studies, and when World War I broke out, they offered their services to the Scottish Women's Hospital. They arrived in Serbia in 1915. After the war, Katherine MacPhail stayed in Serbia and led her own Anglo-Serb Children's Hospital in Belgrade. The hospital had about 50 beds and a day clinic. The head of the surgical department was Dr. Dim. Jovičić. The hospital was supported by the London-based Save the Children Fund. They were also assisted by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Social Policy. (B. Kovandžić, „Englesko-srpska dečja bolnica u Beogradu” [“English-Serbian Children's Hospital in Belgrade”], *Vera i život*, April 6, 1925). She founded in 1934, an English-Yugoslav hospital for the treatment of tuberculosis in S. Kamenica. Katherine MacPhail was captured by the Germans in 1941. Repatriated to G. Britain but returned to Belgrade in 1945, where she remained until the nationalization of the hospital in 1949 when she went to Scotland. *Surgeon Katherine S. Macphail* University of Glasgow, Accessed: 21. 09. 2018, <https://www.universitystory.gla.ac.uk/ww1-biography/?id=4499>; Francesca M. Wilson. *In the margins of chaos*, (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1945), 10–11, 103–104, 271.

In November 1940, an RAF plane on its way from Greece through Albania fell near Danilovgrad, killing five passengers, including an American journalist. Initial information indicated that it was a Blenheim<sup>859</sup> type air-

859 The daily news *Politika* issued an official announcement regarding the fall of the airplane stating that the twin-engine Blenheim had crashed into Mt. Veliki Garač, quota 1316, near Danilovgrad (Zeta Banovina) on Nov. 18 at 3.50 and scattered over an area of 300 meters. After the crash, the plane exploded and the entire fuselage, as well as the wings, was completely burnt. According to the report, four bodies were found in the plane and were identified as those of pilot Graham Bennett, Frederick Lawrence Savage (probably a machine gunner), Three bodies were completely incinerated while one remained complete. The plane was armed with four machine guns and bombs, which all exploded but one. According to a *Politika* correspondent at the scene of the accident, the plane had taken off with another one from Albania flew over Ulcinj, Bar, and Podgorica at high speed. As they approached Danilovgrad, both planes circled for some time over Danilovgrad, over the mountain of Prekornica and above the village of Grlić. At that time there was a raging thunderstorm and showers. One plane managed to cross over Mt. Garač, while the other one, at an altitude of 1300 meters hit the mountain ridge with its left wing and crashed. On impact, the petrol tank exploded, as did the bombs that the plane had been carrying. The deafening explosion alarmed the residents of Danilovgrad and the villages in the Bjelopavlička Valley. The plane had four crew members, although it had only three seats. The fourth member was sitting in the machine gun turret. The corpse of wireless operator Frederik Savage was found (apparently they could not determine the names and number of those killed with certainty, so the names and the number of crew members differ), as well as his radio-telegraph ID. (Jovan Vukčević, „Dopisnik *Politike* na Garaču na mestu katastrofe bombardera“ [*Politika* Correspondent on Garač at the Site of the Bombarder Crash“], *Politika*, 11662, 19 November 1940). *Politika* reporter Vukčević wrote that the military authorities of Ulcinj informed Podgorica about the flight of the unknown aircraft over Yugoslav territory as soon as they heard the buzzing of the engines, and issued an order to turn off electrical lighting and take other measures. (Jovan Vukčević, “Kako su u Garaču više Danilovgrada poginula četvorica avijatičara u katastrofi bombardera „Blenhajm“ [“How Four Aviators Died in Garach near Danilovgrad in the Blenheim Bomber Disaster“], *Politika*, 11663, Nov. 20, 1940, 4) *Vreme* also wrote on November 20 that it the British Blenheim airplane had crashed into Mt. Garač near Danilovgrad and that three English aviators and a journalist were killed. The Yugoslav Air Force Command formed a commission headed by a single aviation captain and a lieutenant who was supposed to examine the cause of the disaster. The bodies were transferred to Podgorica for the funeral. According to the same newspaper, it was found that aviators Bennett Krappord, Frederik Savage, and Ralph Barnes were killed. The funeral was scheduled to take place on November 21, 1940, at 9 AM. The air force captain and the officers of the garrison in Podgorica made preparations for the funeral. („Prvi novinar – žrtva italijansko-grčkog rata“ [“The first journalist - the Victim of the Italian-Greek War“], „Sahrana britanskih avijatičara“ [“The Funeral of the British Aviators“], *Vreme*, Nov. 21, 1940, 5) The State Department issued

craft. This plane crash killed Ralph Waldo Barnes, a US journalist from Oregon, known as a foreign correspondent from Europe during the thirties. He worked for the *New York Herald Tribune* since 1924. He was a correspondent from Paris, Rome, Moscow, and Berlin. When Italy attacked Greece, Barnes and other correspondents followed the British forces in Greece stationed on warships. On November 17, 1940, Barnes was granted permission to accompany the Royal Air Force (RAF) in a night raid. Weather conditions took the plane off course and caused it to crash into a mountain chain in Yugoslavia. Barnes was the first war correspondent killed in the Second World War. According to some recent research, the plane was a Wellington IC T2827, 70 Squadron RAF, 202 Group detained in Greece, which was sent into an attack on Durres in Albania. Others killed in addition to Barnes were: wireless operator Geoffrey Green, 628871, 70 Squadron, RAF, pilot Graham Bennett, Sergeant (pilot) John Samborne Palmer, Sergeant (wireless operator) Frederick Lawrence Savage, and Sergeant G. B. Hawksley. After the plane crash, Colonel Louis Fortier, US military attaché, the British military air force attaché, and P. Sitters as a priest, went from Belgrade to Podgorica to organize the funer-

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a statement saying that the US Envoy to Yugoslavia, Arthur Bliss Lane, reported that, according to information obtained by the US military attaché from the Yugoslav military authorities, an American citizen, R. Barnes, was killed in the crash as well as the three other persons who were on the British plane when it crashed on the morning of November 18 near Danilovgrad in Montenegro. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed the identity of R. Barnes. Lane sent official representatives to carry out a complete investigation at the scene of the crash. According to reports, the plane was carrying a large number of bombs, and the bodies of four passengers were found over a radius of 300 meters in front of a broken plane. (*The Foreign Service, Europe, Accidental Death of the American Correspondent in Yugoslavia, Department of State Bulletin*, Accessed: 30. 09. 2018, [https://archive.org/stream/departmentofstat340unit/departmentofstat340unit\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/departmentofstat340unit/departmentofstat340unit_djvu.txt); "Guide to the Ralph W. Barnes papers 1918-1943", Mark O. Hatfield Library, Accessed: 30. 09. 2018, <http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv94616>; *La Liberté*, 19 November 1940, 5; "US Reporter Dies in Bomber Crash", *The New York Times*, Nov. 20, 1940, 7; "Ralph W. Barnes Dies in Bomber Crash," *Editor & Publisher*, November 23, 1940, 4). A local newspaper, *The Lima News* from Ohio, reported unofficial information on November 18 that an Italian bomber had crashed near Danilovgrad after the intervention of the Yugoslav Air Defense, but there was no official confirmation of this report. The newspaper adds that Italian uniforms and insignia were found in the wreck and that the Yugoslav authorities had started an investigation at the site of the accident. (*The Lima News*, November 18, 1940, 1).

al. The journalist and crew of the aircraft were buried in the Orthodox cemetery with military honors. Barns' remains were transferred after the war to the US cemetery in Florence, while the graves of the others can be found at the Military Cemetery in Belgrade.<sup>860</sup>

The year 1941 began as described by Sitters in the last Bulletin, no. 66, sent from the Kingdom of Yugoslavia: "The New Year does not look cheerful at this moment: with icy weather and plates of black snow plates scattered in the streets: with scarce fuel and bread: war is getting closer."<sup>861</sup> They sent the next Bulletin, no. 67, to the YMCA headquarters in London after leaving the Kingdom but, since it never arrived, they resent it on March 29, 1942, from Cape Town in South Africa. In it, they described what happened to them when Yugoslavia was attacked. According to their allegations, before the unexpected bombing of "open and undefended Belgrade on Palm Sunday",<sup>862</sup> April 6, 1941, almost all the British women, except those married to Yugoslavs, had already left the city, as well as those men whose presence was not essential. The Sitters explained to the British Envoy Campbell that they should stay because the opportunities for the YMCA operating in the military had just become opened and in order to avoid an unfavorable opinion

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860 „Žrtve avionske nesreće na Velikom Garču biće danas sahranjene u Podgorici“ [“The Victims of the Plane Crash at Veliki Grač will be Buried in Podgorica Today”], *Politika*, 11664, November 21, 1940, 3; LPL, CFR DOC 1 / 201-310, CFR Meetings: bound documents [1], October 1940, 8-208, Yugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin No. 65 received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters, Belgrade; David Gunby, Pelham Temple, *RAF Bomber Losses*, vol. 1: *Middle East and Mediterranean 1939-1942 (RAF Bomber Command Losses)*, (Publicado por Crecy Publishing, United Kingdom, 2007); Christopher Shores, Brian Cull, *Air War for Yugoslavia Greece and Crete 1940-41*, (Grub Street Publishing, 2008).

861 LPL, CFR DOC 1/201-310, CFR Meetings: bound documents series 1, January 1941, 7-207, Yugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin No. 66 received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters, Belgrade.

862 Palm Sunday is a holiday celebrated on the Sunday before Easter, marking the entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem when in many Christian churches processions carrying palm branches or sprigs or willow branches in areas where there were no palm trees. Catholics and Protestants celebrated Easter in 1941 on April 13 and Orthodox Christians celebrated it on April 20. The date for Easter is always separately calculated and has nothing to do with the Gregorian or Julian calendars. The Catholic date counts against the spring equinox and the first full month after it, while Orthodox Christians believe that Easter must always be after Jewish Passover.

forming in the wake of their departure, and he agreed with that. However, in order to continue work in the military, it was necessary to obtain approval from the new Minister of the Army (Bogoljub Ilić) who took office after the coup. The attack came while waiting for permission. As evidence that they did not expect the attack, the Sitters claimed that on that day B. Kovandžić had gone to spend the weekend with his family in a village near Belgrade. As for the attack itself, they said that the bombing began at 7 AM and was accompanied by gunshots and people firing on the streets and markets. It was repeated three times that day and at regular intervals over the next four days, and, as they remarked, the only reason the air raids had not been more frequent was the blizzard and fog. They estimated that 60 percent of the buildings in the city center were demolished and more than 20,000 people were killed. After the first attack, during which they stayed inside their house, the British Envoy sent a car to pick them up and instructed them to immediately go into the Legation for safety. They said they left their apartment without luggage, believing they would be back soon. It took them only a few minutes to go to Legation under normal conditions, but now it took them about half an hour because of the bomb craters and debris from the razed buildings. After arriving there, they found out that the Envoy had gone to the suburbs and left instructions for them to report to him. They were transported to a small town, three or four hours from Belgrade. They passed through villages where the horrified inhabitants inquired about their families and friends in the city. Having recovered from the shock and the urgent departure, Percy Sitters asked to be allowed to return to Belgrade and see if it was possible to establish some help-related work, but this was rejected, as were some similar requests later. The reason was given to them a few days later. After further talks, they agreed to go to Greece and establish contacts with the British YMCA there and try to secure some mobile kitchens with which they could return and help the Yugoslav Army. Just as they were about to leave, the Germans cut off the only remaining road to the south and they had to turn West in the hope of reaching the road to Greece.<sup>863</sup> They went through

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863 From Vrnjačka Banja, the Sitters travelled by car driven by David Shillan, Director of the British Council (Yugoslav-British Institute). With them were also Roberts (Senior Council teacher at the Institute) and Anthony Robinson, Council teacher and Reader in Eng-

Bosnia and Montenegro and arrived in Kotor and Risan. They claimed that the Envoy was taking care of everyone. From there, they were evacuated to Athens by hydroplane (*Sunderland*) that had been sent at the request of the British Legation. In Athens, they met up with the Bishop of Gibraltar and members of the British-Australian and New Zealand YMCA. They were ordered to go with the bishop to Alexandria by a Greek ship on April 22. With them on the ship were about 300 refugees. During the trip, they spent five days in Crete until April 29 and arrived in Alexandria in early May.<sup>864</sup> When they arrived in Egypt, they had to plan what to do next. The Bishop of Gibraltar proposed to Sitters to organize help for refugee children from Yugoslavia, as had been done in the previous war, and when they arrived in Jerusalem the Yugoslav Government planned to send all refugees to Canada and asked whether they could go with them. King Petar also asked them to do this and the British Embassy in Cairo supported this plan. They started planning a trip with a group of refugees from Yugoslavia. In addition to the children, there were many members of the diplomatic corps. They organized English lessons. But the plan was changed and they arrived by ship with the Yugoslav refugees to Cape Town on July 7, 1941. Upon their arrival, they established the Yugoslav Red Cross, but it also functioned as a "YMCA in exile". Sitters became ill after arriving in Cape Town and had to take some time to recover. They received reports that in Yugoslavia after the enemy invasion, many of their friends had been placed on lists to be shot. They heard that

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lish at Ljubljana. They traveled through Kraljevo, Čačak, Užice, Višegrad, and Rogatica to Sarajevo. Shillan, *op. cit.*, 87–108.

864 Bishop Buxton writes: "On the morning of that terrible Palm Sunday, April 6<sup>th</sup>, 1941, Mr. Dew and Mr. Garran went together to 57 Jevremova St. (Anglican chapel), and carried off the Chaplain and Mrs. Sitters to join the Legation Staff who, at a later hour, were removed to the safety of Avala. All having anticipated an early return to their homes, little or no baggage accompanied them. The Minister insisted that the whole party keep together on the journey to the coast. From there, some of the evacuees - selected by the Minister - including the Sitters, were conveyed by air to Athens". At the Athens, they met up with Bishop Buxton. From there, through the port of Piraeus, Bishop Buxton, the Sitters, and Miss R. Mundahl, an English nanny from Belgrade, were transported by ship to Alexandria via Crete. Buxton, *A Mediterranean Window*, 38, 45–47.

Kovandžić and Jovan Crnogorac survived the bombing as well as Lena Jovičić, Krsta Andjus and Zora Bodi.<sup>865</sup>

In the summer of 1941, the correspondence in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, interrupted at the beginning of the war, about awarding an academic degree to Percy Sitters, was resumed. John Douglas worked on getting Russell Darbyshire, the Archbishop of Cape Town, to take Sitters' oath of loyalty to the king, which was customary when awarding this degree and, after obtaining the necessary authorization from the Archbishop of Canterbury, to award him the diploma. Meanwhile, Douglas learned from someone in British Foreign Office that the award documents had arrived in Belgrade and had been seen on the desk of R. Campbell, but despite all attempts, he failed to contact the Envoy to clarify this issue. Finally, the Archbishop of Canterbury sent a letter to the Archbishop of Cape Town on August 14, 1941, informing him that Sitters, the chaplain of the British community Belgrade, had arrived in Cape Town. In the letter, he sent his recommendations for him and explained the events that had preceded the awarding the academic degree. The Archbishop explained that having in view Sitters' excellent work, he had agreed to award Sitters the Lambeth M. A. Degree and sent all the necessary documents to the British Envoy in Belgrade. He added he knew those two documents had reached the Envoy, but that they were unfortunately lost in the maelstrom following the German blitz, so the Envoy was unable to award Sitters the degree on behalf of archbishop. After Sitters arrived in South Africa, he sent the Archbishop of Canterbury a cablegram regarding the awarding of the degree. The Archbishop granted permission, pending his sworn oath to the king. So, he asked the Archbishop of South Africa to administer the oath and, on his behalf, award Sitters the Master of Arts degree. The Archbishop noted that he believed it was not necessary to resend all the papers that had already gone to Belgrade and added that all taxes had been paid. He asked Archbishop Darbyshire to meet with Sitters and bestow upon him all the necessary courtesy because he was worthy of it. The Archbishop of Canterbury added that a minister in the Royal Government of Yugoslavia, who

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865 LPL, CFR DOC 1/201-310, 29 March 1942, 35-235, Yugoslavia [Yugoslavia] Y.M.C.A. Bulletin No. 67 received from P. H. Sitters and Kathleen M. Sitters, Cape Town, marked "Private and Confidential."



was in England, had told him that a host of children refugees from Yugoslavia were under Sitters' care in Cape Town. He asked the Archbishop of Cape Town to provide assistance in the education of these children.<sup>866</sup>

Having arrived in South Africa, the Sitters couple settled in the Cape Town suburb of Rondebosch, where Sitters served in the Anglican Church of the South African Anglican Diocese of Cape Town Rondebosch and conducted radio broadcasts.<sup>867</sup> In 1944, Percy Sitters was appointed as permanent chaplain of the University of Cape Town (for Anglicans and the YMCA), where he remained until his death.<sup>868</sup>

During the first few years after arriving in South Africa, the Sitters still had hopes of returning to Yugoslavia after the war. In 1943, they experienced an embarrassment that caused many problems. Sitters wrote to the Bishop of Gibraltar on March 18, 1943, and enclosed his correspondence with Cape Town lawyer Morris Alexander,<sup>869</sup> regarding statements that appeared in Flavia Kingscote's book about their conduct during their evacuation.<sup>870</sup> The lawyer told him that although the statements were not offensive,

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866 LPL, Lang 177, ff. 375–407, Percy Henry Smart Sitters, Chaplain in Belgrade, Yugoslavia 1940–1941, awarded a Lambeth degree.

867 YMCA and Toc H, Broadcast Talk by Reverend P. H. S. Sitters, 20 November 1941; 'A Call from the Men of the Hour', Y.M.C.A and Toc H War Fund Appeal, YMCA South African War Work Fund, Johannesburg, March 1940; Fankie Lucas Monama, *Wartime Propaganda in the Union of South Africa, 1939–1945*, (Dissertation presented for the degree of History in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Stellenbosch University, April 2014), Accessed: 18. 07. 2018, <http://scholar.sun.ac.za>; St Paul's Church, Rondebosch Parish Newsletter, Caritas August 2017, Diocesan Synod 17-19<sup>th</sup> August, [caritasaugust2017.pdf](http://caritasaugust2017.pdf)

868 "Sitters, Percy Henry Smart, Grotto Hill, Stanley Road, Rondebosch, Cape, South Africa, Minister of Religion, 1st April 1956", *The London Gazette*, 40927, Nov. 16, 1956, 6544; History of the Anglican Chaplaincy at UCT, <http://www.stpaulsrondebosch.co.za/uctchap.htm>; History of the Anglican Chaplaincy at UCT, Accessed: 20. 07. 2018, <http://www.stpaulsrondebosch.co.za/uctchap.htm>

869 Morris Alexander (1878–1946) was a lawyer, a Member of Parliament and one of the most important Jewish leaders in South Africa. Enid Alexander, *Morris Alexander: A Biography*, (Cape Town: Juta, 1953).

870 Flavia Sybil Adeva Kingscote Sassoon, (1911–1946) writes in her book about her impressions of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in the period before the war (from 1938), on March 27, about her experiences from the first days of the war and the departure from Zagreb. On page 29 she states: "As everywhere in Southeastern Europe, Zagreb was flooded with German propaganda, and as usual, British efforts were far behind. Our pro-

they could influence his work in Belgrade after the war unless they were refunded. The entire documentation was forwarded to the lawyer's brother, who was also a lawyer in London, who was supposed to take over the case and contact the publisher. Sitters further wrote that the young lady had confused them with another person, a foreign diplomat and his wife who came to Sarajevo and later went to Perast and Risan and who also awaited a plane to be evacuated. The couple's seats were reserved in the first plane and the Sitters were supposed to be in the second, and they had a "heap of luggage," which the Sitters thought were mostly official documents and equipment which they were just taking out of the country. Sitters also said that during a visit to Cape Town, Hugh Nicholas Seton-Watson told a diplomatic correspondent (whose address in Lisbon he enclosed) that they saw this diplomat with his luggage in Perast and that it raised negative comments. Sitters added at the end, that he was only seeking an apology from Flavia Kingscote. Later, on April 5, 1943, the Archbishop of Cape Town wrote to Sitters that he was not happy about being burdened with things he'd rather forget but that as a friend he wanted to draw his attention to the fact that he and his wife were being mentioned in a way that was offensive in the book *Balkan Exit*, by Flavia Kingscote. He sent him the address of the publisher and referred him to pages 94, 101, 127 and 132. Due to the allusions made regarding the "English clergyman from Belgrade and his wife," the Bishop felt they should protest against such a tone and the insinuation that the priest and his wife had so much luggage and only cared about their personal safety and occupied three precious seats on the plane.<sup>871</sup>

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paganda would be ridiculous that it was not so tragically ineffective." She moved from Zagreb to the Sarajevo by train itself, where she joined a part of the English convoy that reached Perast through Sandžak and Montenegro, from where she continued her journey to Durres in Albania, and then to Italy. (Flavia Kingscote, *Balkan Exit*, (Published by Geoffrey Bles, 1942). David Shillan mentioned her as Miss Kingscote, formerly private teacher in Croatia, and assistant of English Reading Room in Zagreb and says she had journey alone from Zagreb. She traveled from Ilidža to the coast with Shillan, driving a car. Shillan, *op. cit.*, 87-108.

871 LPL, CFR OC 257. Individual Orthodox Churches: Serbia: Contacts: Serbian Bishops, Correspondence regarding Reverend P. H Sitters including the suggestion that he be awarded a Lambeth Degree; Rev. P. H. Sitters, 1938-43.

Sitters replied to the Archbishop on April 7, 1943, saying they were touched by his kindness, that they had seen the book and were shocked by its content. He explained that he had consulted Morris Alexander and given him his statement and that Alexander had taken steps to resolve it. He asked the Archbishop whether it would be possible to ask that the book be withdrawn from the public library. He noted that it would be useful for the Archbishop to protest with the publisher, as he was sure that his Bishop would also do. The Bishop could support him in his statement about the luggage because he met them when they arrived in Athens and gave them money to buy clothes and other things they needed. He went on to describe that they met Flavia Kingscote for the first time in a café in Sarajevo and never again. They met through Sonja, who was mentioned in the book *The Land of the Silent People* by Robert St. John, which speaks of them very highly.<sup>872</sup> On June

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872 Robert William St. John, (1902–2003), a Chicago journalist, switches to Europe in 1939 to report to the *Associated Press*. Two years he sent reports from the Balkans. After April 6, 1941, he fled from Belgrade, through Vrnjačka Banja, Užice, Sarajevo, Pljevlja, Podgorica, Danilovgrad, Nikšić, to Budva and Kotor, on the Adriatic coast. With Russell Hill, *New York Herald Tribune* correspondent, Leigh White from the *Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS)*, Terence Atherton, who reported for *The Daily Mail* and Milan Francišković from Petrovac na Moru, in a small ship without a compass and only with black bread, managed to reach Durres and then on to Corfu. Milan Francišković was killed and Robert St. John and White were wounded. T. Atherton later returned in Yugoslavia during the Operation Hydra and was killed. R. St. John arrived in New York and wrote and published his first bestseller *From the Land of Silent People* in 1942. He wrote about March 27, the bombing of Belgrade, the evacuation of the city's population, and his escape. He mentioned the Sitters on page 131. Of interest is his account of the coup and the demonstrations on March 27 from an American journalist's viewpoint: "In every country, the story was followed by the same old pattern. When we had orders to buy air tickets for Bucharest or Sofia or Belgrade because a new crisis developed, we knew exactly what that meant. Weeks of questions "Will they? Not? "... The weeks of writing two or three reports daily in an attempt to keep the story alive, while we were waiting for the inevitable ... We went through the same thing in Bucharest, waiting for German troops to enter Romania. And in Sofia, waiting for Bulgaria to kneel to Berlin and let the Nazi army descend over the Danube. Now we again passed that in Belgrade. But, finally, the nasty days were over. Yugoslavia gave Hitler the green light; sold its body, its soul, and its railway lines. We wrote our stories about capitulation, packed bags and discussed where the next crisis would likely come. Turkey was my choice. I waited only for permission from the *Associated Press* to continue on. But then something happened that made us accelerate our typewriters and dig up copies of the paper from our suitcases and we start

7, 1943, Sitters wrote to John Douglas, saying he sent a long letter to him in September 1942 with news about the Yugoslavs and the activities that they organized in Cape Town. Since there was no answer, Sitters assumed there were problems with the mail. He re-enclosed the correspondence regarding the statements in the *Balkan Exit* and asked him to help him if he knew the publisher, David Geoffrey Bles.<sup>873</sup> He said they would not have been concerned about that had they not been advised to clarify the false allegations that could affect their entire work in Yugoslavia after the war. He said the number of Yugoslavs in Cape Town had been reduced and that they organized the Yugoslav Relief Society in which he was honorary secretary-general. They had sent 2,000 pounds to the Yugoslav Government in London to transfer them to the International Red Cross in Geneva for the work of their representatives in Belgrade. He said his health did not allow him to do more because his nervous system had been "rattled." He concluded by saying he could hardly wait to host Douglas in Belgrade again. Douglas responded with a telegram on August 5, 1943, that it was necessary to act swiftly and vigorously in relation to the said book.<sup>874</sup>

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working again in Belgrade. It was a totally crazy development. It was not at all consistent with the old patterns of Romania, Bulgaria and other countries that capitulated. This, of course, has become great news. Despite public speeches, despite what the controlled radio and poor Yugoslav press told us. We all knew that Prime Minister Cvetković, at best, had only 20 percent of the population behind him when he joined Yugoslavia in the Axis. But that was the same in Romania. 80 percent of it remained stupid. And we all expected that the same pattern would be in Yugoslavia. There was no reason to believe that 80 percent would dare talk about the cancellation. However, none of us considered the possibility of a "Children's Revolution". However, that's exactly what happened - a children's revolution ... Belgrade has never been more proud of its young people since that day in March when its youth said things the whole city wanted to say but did not dare. The crowds of parents gathered in the schools and quietly smiled in a sign of encouragement in the direction of a window of full children." Robert St. John, *From the Land of Silent People*, (London, Toronto, Bombay, Sydney: Doubleday, George G. Harrap and CO. LTD, 1942).

873 David Geoffrey Bles (1886–1957) was a British publisher based in London, with a reputation for discovering new talents.

874 LPL, CFR OC 257 Individual Orthodox Churches: Serbia: Contacts: Serbian Bishops, Correspondence regarding Reverend P. H Sitters including the suggestion that he be awarded a Lambeth Degree; Rev. P. H. Sitters, 1938–43.

The Law Office *Lewis & Lewis and Gisborne & Co.* wrote to Douglas (CFR) on October 13, 1943, that Morris Alexander from Cape Town had contacted attorney Henry Paterson Gisborne<sup>875</sup> in connection with Sitters' complaints. At the request of Alexander, they contacted the author, the publishers and the printers of the book and were in communication with lawyers. Alexander informed Gisborne that all necessary steps had been undertaken on behalf of Sitters. In this regard, the Bishop of Gibraltar also wrote to Douglas on October 22, 1943, that he had ordered the book, that the comments were indeed malicious even though it did not mention them by name, but that it clearly indicated them. He added that the question had also been raised by Mrs. Sitters' sister, commenting that Sitters was taking everything too much to heart but that he was a "nervous person by nature." Nevertheless, on October 29, 1943, the Diocese of Gibraltar replied to Douglas that they would also react and take action regarding Sitters. The bishop himself was very interested in protecting Sitters and the diocese.<sup>876</sup>

On November 26, 1943, Sitters sent his comments to Flavia Kingscote personally regarding her allegations in the *Balkan Exit*. Sitters wrote that the book mentioned an "English priest and his wife from Belgrade" and that according to this description, anyone who knew anything about the English community and church life in Belgrade, would know exactly whom the book was referring to. Her allegation revealed the intention on her part to create in the minds of readers the impression that the culpability of those two people was absolutely contemptible. In his view, her interpretation of some events was completely false. Sitters saw this as a consequence of the mental and physical exertions she herself spoke about, which had created the confusion in her head. He said that he and his wife kept records of events on a daily basis from the moment they left Belgrade and that he did not rely solely on memory. He then quoted a passage from the book in which F. Kingscote wrote that an English priest from Belgrade was sitting in a café in Sarajevo with

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875 Henry Paterson Gisborne (1888–1953) was a prominent British solicitor and member of the Liberal Party.

876 LPL, CFR OC 257 Individual Orthodox Churches: Serbia: Contacts: Serbian Bishops, Correspondence regarding Reverend P. H Sitters including the suggestion that he be awarded a Lambeth Degree; Rev. P. H. Sitters, 1938–43.

a woman with a bag of luggage taking up valuable space in one of the cars, including a "canvas bag full of chinking metal." While one of them "jealously guarded" the bag, while sitting two hours, the other was "rushing around attempting to pull some connections in order to speed up their departure." Sitters said the pile of baggage belonged to some refugees who were sitting next to them in the tavern and who had arrived too late to book rooms. She [Kingscote] could not see their luggage because it was on the third floor of the hotel in a room they had been given when they arrived. There were two beds in the room, one used by Sitters' wife and the other one they gave to Mrs. Simonović<sup>877</sup> when they found out she had no place to sleep. He and his wife spent most of their time in the hotel's café because they had been instructed by their leader from the British Legation's convoy to be available at all times in the event that orders were received for the convoy to move on. The mysterious cloth sack full of chinking metal contained 1,000 dinars (the equivalent of four pounds sterling) in small denominations. A member of the convoy had suggested that small denominations were more acceptable than banknotes for peasants if they had to buy food along the road to the coast. Sitters said he took a change for 100 dinars before they came to Sarajevo. It was supposed to be for all the passengers in the convoy, but nobody wanted to take care of that heavy bag, so they were given the task of taking care of it. Before leaving Sarajevo, they changed the metal coins for banknotes and gave them to refugees from Belgrade who were without money. He further stated that as members of the British Legation in Belgrade they had seats in the convoy and had no need to worry about their departure. If, as Kingscote alleged, they were rushing around, it was not for their own sake but for other reasons. Neither she nor the two other two Englishwomen - Mrs. Simonović and Mrs. Knight, that they had been trying to use their connections to transport them in Legation's convoy. When they were told that this was impossible because all the places had been taken, they asked permission to give their two seats to them while they would go by train to Dubrovnik, where

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877 Mrs. Simonović (secretary of the Anglo-American Yugoslav Club, Belgrade), the wife of engineer Milosav Simonović, traveling as Mrs. Milburn (her maiden name), and joined the Legation convoy after a difficult independent journey to Sarajevo. David Shillan, *op. cit.*, 87-108.

the convoy was headed. They thought it would be easier for them, as they had diplomatic passports. When they got permission, they went to the station, but the last train to Dubrovnik had already left. They were in a very difficult situation on Saturday afternoon when the convoy left Sarajevo, left behind in the hotel without knowing how to continue their journey. By chance they met the British consul who persuaded two Czechs, promising them safe passage to the coast with the English, so they were placed in their already heavily burdened little car and followed the consul to Ilidža, where a part of the convoy was had already left.<sup>878</sup> Sitters quoted F. Kingscote, who said in her book that they returned to the tavern around 8 o'clock and denied that she could have seen them at that time because they had left Sarajevo for Ilidža shortly after 5 o'clock. Later that evening, the consul returned to Sarajevo and then she probably saw him, but she could not have seen them. He denied that they were in Perast. Part of the convoy with which they were retreating, of which the British consul was in charge, came to Risan, which is far from Perast. He added that it was not true that they discovered at the last moment there were vacant seats in one plane and that they occupied two seats the third was for their luggage. Sitters claimed that it was impossible to find vacant places at the last minute, because 25 hours before the arrival of the aircraft, the British Envoy sent a secretary to consult the consul. After the secretary left, the consul pulled Sitters aside and told him in confidence that the secretary had brought instructions from the Envoy that he and his wife would be evacuated by plane. They were not supposed to say anything about that and be ready to leave immediately after midnight. Sitters wrote that he first thought that only the two of them would be evacuated by plane, so he asked why they would not stay and be transported with the others, on a destroyer which, as they understood, had come to pick them up. The consul informed him that the Envoy had decided that certain persons, whose names, including his, were known to be on the German list, had to go by plane. He added that the Legation did not want to tell him this earlier because they did not want to alarm them. Sitters said he was surprised because he had "nev-

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878 Shillan writes about the trip from Ilidža "I still had Roberts and Robinson with me but Mrs. Simonović and another had replaced the Sitters who had found a faster car". Shillan, *op. cit.*, 87-108.

er interfered in politics in Belgrade." He concluded that they had known 24 hours earlier that they would have two seats on the plane. As for luggage, they were prepared to leave it behind, but the consul informed them that every traveler could carry a suitcase. They carried two bags, neither of which occupied a seat, as the author alleged.<sup>879</sup> There was no information on how the dispute ended, but it seems that it continued in 1944.<sup>880</sup> The book was not withdrawn from the press.

Ratibor Djurdjević, secretary of the Student Section of the YMCA in Belgrade, wrote on September 27, 1945, to the Sitters from the camp in Eboli<sup>881</sup> that he had already sent several letters through London and the YMCA but that apparently those letters either never reached Sitters or Sitter's replies never reached Djurdjević. The arrival of Kovandžić's son Vasa encouraged him to write again. Vasa had fled from Yugoslavia two weeks earlier. Before that, he spent two months in Obrenovac where he arrived from a German concentration camp. He had to leave the country because the OZNA<sup>882</sup>

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879 LPL, CFR OC 257, Individual Orthodox Churches: Serbia: Contacts: Serbian Bishops, Correspondence regarding Reverend P. H Sitters including the suggestion that he be awarded a Lambeth Degree; Rev. P. H. Sitters, 1938–43

880 The National Archives, Kew, FO 369/3068, Accusation brought by Miss Flavia Kingscote in her book 'Balkan Exit' against the Rev. Percy Sitters. Code 292, file 12827, 1944.

881 On May 7, 1945, the Western Allies disarmed the Chetnik units, among which the Dinaric Chetnik Division was the most numerous. After disarming, they were first transferred to the Cesena and Forli Camps at Ravenna on the 8<sup>th</sup> of May and in mid-September 1945 to the Eboli Camp near Naples. In this Camp, they would remain until April 1947. The jurisdiction over the camp was owned by the British military authorities, headed by Colonel F. A. Hanson. A large number of formations were housed there, and the Headquarters of the forward part of their Supreme Command was established, under the command of General Miodrag Damjanović. Under his command were: the Šumadija Division (former Serbian Volunteer Corps under Dimitrije Ljotić), Command of Lika Chetnik units under Voyvode Dobrosav Jevdejić, the Dinaric Chetnik Division with the Voyvode Momčilo Djujić, and the Drina Brigade, composed of fighters from Serbia. In the Camp were, among others: Djoko Slijepčević, Ratko Parežanin, Borivoje M. Karapandžić, and others. Veljko Djurić Mišina, „Delatnost jugoslovenske obavestajne, kontraobaveštajne i diplomatske službe 1945–1946” [“Activities of the Yugoslav Intelligence, Counterintelligence and Diplomatic Service 1945–1946”], *Istorija 20. veka*, 1, 2004, 49–64; Stojanović, *op. cit.*, 339–374.

882 OZNA (Department for the Protection of the People) was the counter-intelligence service of the National Liberation Army of Yugoslavia (NOV). It was established on May 13, 1944, as a single body of the entire intelligence and counter-intelligence organiza-



was inquiring about him. His sister Mila was imprisoned at that time for two months due to her connections with the British Intelligence Service, which, as Djurdjević wrote, they meant the YMCA and the Sitters. Vasa Kovandžić intended to stay with Djurdjević pending news from Sitters. He cut short his schooling after being arrested and wanted to continue in England. He felt an obligation to his family because he was the only male survivor of the war. Djurdjević added that Vasa's father Branislav, his uncle, and his stepmother Caja, were probably killed by the Gestapo. There had been some information that they were taken to a Norwegian labor camp, but there was no news from them although the war had ended four months earlier. Djurdjević asked Sitters to inquire whether they might be in Norway. He said that they might not be allowed to come home for fear of their family being persecuted because they were members of the units of General Mihailović.<sup>883</sup> He added that if Vasa Kovandžić were to go to England, he should be provided with some kind of certificate. Djurdjević went on that another member of the YMCA, Milan Crnogorac was also in Eboli, as were two other boys who had previously stayed in a camp on Mt. Tara. Sava and Jovan Crnogorac were with Mihailović somewhere in Bosnia. According to Djurdjević's information, Jovan Rapajić was also there, as a member of the Central Committee. Jovan Dajković was in Belgrade. He was discharged from school as an Anglophile. Djurdjević

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tion. On March 1946, it was reorganized into the UDBA (State Security Service) and KOS (Counterintelligence Service) of the Yugoslav Army. Kosta Nikolić, *Mač revolucije: OZNA u Jugoslaviji 1944–1946. [The Sword of the Revolution: The OZNA in Yugoslavia 1944–1946]*, (Beograd: Službeni glasnik, 2014).

- 883 Dragoljub Draža Mihailović (1893–1946) was an Army General and Chief of the Supreme Command of the Yugoslav Army's Military Command in the Fatherland (JVuO) and Minister of the Army, Navy and Air Force of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia during World War II. Mihailović refused to recognize the capitulation of the Yugoslav army and retreated to Ravna Gora, where he founded the Chetnik Detachments of the Yugoslav Army (later renamed the "Yugoslav Army in the Homeland") as a movement of royalists and nationalists, unlike Josip Broz Tito's partisans, who were communists. At first, these two groups functioned in parallel, but at the end of 1941 D. Mihailovic directed most of his activities at destroying the partisans, giving up the open struggle against the occupying forces. That is why Mihailović lost the support of Western allies in early 1944. After World War II, he was sentenced for collaborating and war crimes and executed in Belgrade. On May 14, 2015, Mihailović was rehabilitated after a decision of the Supreme Court of Cassation, the highest appeals court in Serbia.

went on to write about the need to send help to certain people in Serbia. Sitters replied the same day to Djurdjević that he would do everything to help him. He wrote to the Church of England Council on Foreign Relations saying that Branislav Kovandžić had been secretary of the YMCA in Yugoslavia and that he worked officially for 14 years and in fact even longer. Sitters stated that he studied medicine and owned a house and some land in Obrenovac. In World War I, he and his father crossed Albania to Corfu and after that, he was sent to England at the age of 12. Sitters further explained that Branislav had two children, Milo and Vasa, who were 18 and 16 respectively in 1941. Jovan Crnogorac was about 30 years old and had been general secretary of the Belgrade YMCA. He had a degree in law. Jovan Rapajić was also about 30 years old and had been a member of the YMCA's Belgrade student hospital and had been very helpful at student conferences. Sitters wrote how they had hoped he would become secretary of the YMCA, but that he chose the clergy, and in 1940 he worked with Bishop Nikolaj. Jovan Dajković was about 30 years old and a leading member of the Student group in Belgrade. He had been sent to study theology in England. When he returned, he was a professor of religious education at the high school. "All the people whom Djurdjević mentioned in his letter were members of the Serbian Orthodox Church and each one in his own way was a source of strength for the YMCA in Yugoslavia," Sitters concluded.<sup>884</sup>

On October 19, 1945, Sitters also wrote to Adam Scott (National Council of YMCA, London), claims that he had previously sent a telegram asking him to help Djurdjević. In his letter, he emphasized that they had a moral responsibility to help the son of B. Kovandžić, Vasa, whose father was considered the best of all Yugoslavs. He asked him to help him get to England to take up his studies. He said he had also written about all this to the Bishop of Gibraltar. In conclusion, he added that the YMCA in Yugoslavia was not an in-

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884 LPL, Private and Confidential. The Church of England Council on Foreign Relations Yugoslav Student Exiles Appeal forwarded through the Rev. P. H. Sitters; CFR OC DOC 1-100 Orthodox Churches: bound documents 27 September 1945, O.C.77/S.C.39 Yugoslav Student Exiles. Appeal forwarded through Rev. P. H. Sitters. Letter from Ratibor M. Djurdjevic, Chetnik Camp. G.H.Q., Ebolli, Italy, dated September 27<sup>th</sup>, 1945, to the Rev. P. H. Sitters, c/o YMCA, Cape Town, South Africa.

telligence service that it always stayed away from politics, and that because of that, despite the frequent government shuffles, the work of the YMCA had always been allowed. He added that when he read the book by Paul Super<sup>885</sup> from Poland, which shows how close their ties were between the YMCA and the government, he realized how dissimilar their relations with the authorities in Yugoslavia had been. He asked him to inquire in Norway whether they had any information about Kovandžić and his brother and to find a way to send help to Momčilo and Ljubica Djurdjević (parents of R. Djurdjević) who lived in Belgrade, and Stana and Stanka Kovandžić who lived in Obrenovac. In Conclusion, he asked whether the British YMCA in Rome could allow Djurdjević to open a YMCA in Eboli camp.<sup>886</sup> These efforts were successful and the YMCA began working at the end of 1945 with the help it received from the British YMCA.<sup>887</sup>

Ratibor M. Djurdjević received a small printing press, which was put at his disposal by the YMCA, and his associates organized a religious service for Yugoslav emigrants and founded the Orthodox Theological Seminar, whose students were mainly members of the Zbor.<sup>888</sup> Vasa Kovandžić is also mentioned among theologians who graduated in Eboli. Books, board games, sports equipment, etc. were purchased. Various courses were held, and the YMCA print shop published several books and brochures for the Eboli prisoners. The YMCA organized and financially helped a group of young followers of Ljotić from Eboli to attend theological studies in England, as well as two

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885 Paul Super (1880–1949) was a member and activist of the International Committee of the YMCA, the organizer and general director of the YMCA in Poland (1922–1949).

886 LPL, 51 – Papers of J. A. Douglas concerning the Serb Orthodox Church Douglas 51, f. 110 – Appreciation of Rev. Percy Henry Smart Sitters, director of the Young Men's Christian Association, Yugoslavia by Bishop H. J. Buxton, 1939.

887 Dragan Subotić, *Srpska politička emigracija u analima jugoslovenske diplomatije (1945–1971). Prilozi za diplomatiju i diplomatsku istoriju [Serbian Political Emigration in the Annals of Yugoslav Diplomacy (1945–1971). Contributions for Diplomacy and Diplomatic History]*, I, (Beograd: Institut za političke studije, 2004), 243.

888 ZBOR (Združena borbena organizacija rada, United Militant Labour Organization), also known as the Yugoslav People's Movement "ZBOR" (during the war, changed its name to the National Movement ZBOR), a right-wing authoritarian organization in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia led by Dimitrije Ljotić. During the war, the followers of Ljotić enjoyed the support of the German occupying forces and formed the Serbian Volunteer Corps (SDK), which was part of the armed forces of General Milan Nedić.

smaller groups in France and Switzerland. Borko Borčić, Vasilije Kuburović, and Pero Radoš went to Bern. In addition, the Serbian National Defense from the United States financed a group of students in Switzerland, again through the YMCA in Geneva. A group of six students traveled from Eboli to Paris on June 13, 1947, to study with the help of the YMCA, headed by an engineer, Milan Stojanović. In that group were Aleksandar Trifunović, Velizar Gajić, Marko Marković, Dragoljub Krapčević, and Milan Darda.<sup>889</sup>

Bishop Buxton said in his 1954 book that he met with Patriarch Gavrilo in Rome on November 14, but he did not say what year, so it can be assumed, based on the content of the text, that this was not possible in 1946, because Patriarch Gavrilo was already at that time in Czechoslovakia and was about to return to Yugoslavia. The meeting was probably a year earlier in November 1945 when Patriarch Gavrilo returned from London to Rome. At that time the Patriarch refused the offer of Jaša Ljotić to visit the Eboli camp.<sup>890</sup> Buxton claimed that the Patriarch had invited him to visit Eboli camp on that occasion because he was forbidden from going there. H. Buxton further wrote that during a visit to the camp he held a conference with the Serbian clergy. After the visit, he wrote that a group of Orthodox Serbs in Italy was expelled without being guilty and that the moral duty of the representatives of the Gibraltar Diocese was to help the clergy, professors, and students of theology. The Committee of the Christian Reconstruction in Europe was asked to provide funding and 30 students arrived in Dorchester College in early 1947. Geoffrey Francis Fisher, the Archbishop of Canterbury, showed personal interest in this project and provided assistance. As the patron, he appointed a

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889 Mateja Matejić, *Srpska pravoslavna bogoslovija u Eboliju, Italija [Serbian Orthodox Theology in Eboli, Italy]*, Accessed: 30. 09. 2018, <http://borbazaveru.info/content/view/1836/9/>; Subotić, 156, 194–196, 207; Borivoje Karapandžić, *Dnevnik jednog emigranta [An Immigrant's Diary]*, (Beograd: Hrišćanska misao, 2006), 148, 159–161; Kosta Nikolić, *General Miodrag Damjanović 1893–1956. Biografija [General Miodrag Damjanović 1893–1956. Biography]*, (London, 2007), 90, 92, 104, 311, 367; Aleks. Simić, *The beginnings of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the UK*, April 5, May 21, July 1, September 7, 2015, Accessed: 02. 10. 2018, <http://www.ebritic.com/?p=468231>; Stojanović, *op. cit.*, 339–374.

890 Radić, *Život u vremenima: Patrijarh Gavrilo Dožić (1881–1950)*, 475.

Provisional Committee whose task was to oversee the work of the Serbian Theological College in cooperation with the manager and prominent Ljotić follower Dimitrije Najdanović. The Provisional Committee was chaired by the Bishop of Gibraltar, the Vice-President was Dr. A. J. MacDonald, while other members were Rev. R. M. French,<sup>891</sup> Rev. Austin Oakley, Rev. Herbert M. Waddams,<sup>892</sup> and Rev. J. B. Dakin.<sup>893</sup> They were assisted by Dr. Elizabeth Hill, J. A. Douglas, Bishop Irinej Djordjević, London priest Miloje Nikolić, the Bishop of Dorchester, and others. The first group of students was brought from Italy accompanied by priest Dakin and they arrived in London on January 1, 1947. They were received by Bishop Harold Buxton and Arthur Foster from the World Council of Churches. Arthur Foster took over as treasurer. The college was sponsored by the Church of England and was promptly provided 5,000 pounds for this purpose. In this group were: Dimitrije Najdanović, archpriest Radovan Miljković, priest Nikola Stoisavljević, deacon Lazić, and teachers: theologian Milivoje Stanković and Jovan Jovetić, professor of theology from Cetinje. Among the students were: Dragoljub Sokić, Prvoslav Djulić, Veselin Kesić, Mihailo Jovanović, Slaviša Lukić, Dušan Milovanović,

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891 Priest R. M. Reginald Michael French was manager at the Hostel of St. Sava and St George in Oxford, where the Serbian students stayed during their studies in G. Britain after the World War I. Before that, French was chaplain in St. Petersburg, and during the war, he was a military chaplain in Romania and Serbia. He translated several parts of Nikolai Berdyeu, wrote a study about the Orthodox Church (*The Eastern Orthodox Church*, (London, New York: The Hutchinson's University Library, 1951), a study on Serbian forms of Orthodox worship (*Serbian Church Life*, (London - New York: SPCK - Macmillan, 1942) and some other works. Radić, *Vojislav Janić (1890-1944)*, 84.

892 From 1945 to 1959 he was a general secretary in the Church of England's Council on Foreign Relations. He visited the Serbian Orthodox Church in 1953. Radmila Radić, *Država i verske zajednice 1945-1970*, I, (Beograd, 2002), 239, 331, 361, 364, 368.

893 Priest Dakin was not the secretary of the Bishop of Gibraltar, as was stated in literature, but rather assistant secretary-general to Rev. L. W. Harland, who was at the head of the Bureau of Christian Reconstruction in Europe. In May 1945, the British and Irish churches established an organization under this name, which had the goal of raising funds to help rebuild Europe after the war ended. It began raising funds and working with refugees and migrants. In 1948, the work of this organization became part of the British Council of Churches, known as Inter-Church Aid and Refugee Service. Today it is known as Christian Aid. Kevin O'Donnell, *A Pocket Guide to Christian History*, (Lion Books, 2013), 198.

Rastko Marčetić, Djordje Novaković, Petar Novaković, Milinko Ognjanović, Vasilije Sotirović, Nenad Resanović, Vasilije Kovandžić, Nikola Ćurčić, Živosin Prvulović, Božidar Ašanin, and Miodrag Živić. Miljković's wife, daughter, and son, and wife of Dimitrije Najdanović arrived with the group. Two professors and ten other students were brought from the British zone to Germany on January 1, 1948. Among them were historians Miodrag Purković, Milorad Jovanović, Milan Kovačević (later Metropolitan Irinej), Djordje Lukić, Milan Popović, Milan Nenadović, Omiljko Popadić, Bogdan Mišković, B. Milanović, Cirilo Stefanović, Milan Savić, and Mihajlo Čubrilo. The college was closed in 1949.<sup>894</sup>

The YMCA also operated in other camps for displaced persons in the British occupation zone in Germany.<sup>895</sup> Early in June 1947, Bishop Har-

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894 Buxton, *A Mediterranean Window*, 75–77.

The Dorchester College of Oxfordshire County was located in the Burcot House built in the Georgian style during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It was used by Serbian priests during World War I. Lubardić, "Justin Popović u Oksfordu", 128–129.

895 Commander of the 6th Army in the April War, Army General Dimitrije Živković (1884–1961), was imprisoned in the Osnabrück military prison camp during the war. There, he was the initiator for the establishment of a special, so-called, penal camp D, in which more than a hundred officers and generals were sent, holders of resistance to the German occupier and fighters for the cultural autonomy of the inmates. Later in the camp in Voerde, (North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany) the Command of the Royal Yugoslav Army was formed for Germany and Bavaria, again on the initiative of General Živković, headed by him in 1945 and 1946. Then, in 1946 and 1947, he headed the Headquarters of the Yugoslav DP camps in the British occupation zone in Germany. On 27 September 1947, Živković wrote to the YMCA (An Der Schanze-Friedrichsort, Kiel) from Voerde that he had received their statement of 9 September, informing all commanders of Yugoslav camps in the British occupation zone of Germany about the steps taken by the British authorities in terms of youth education. He states that he thinks their initiative is commendable, but that he has already been in charge of correspondence with the British authorities who are concerned on teaching in the British occupation zone. Živković adds that it is not convenient that on the same plan and program for the entire British zone there are more representatives on the same question. He instructs them to contact Professor Stanoje Nedeljković (before the war Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry, and full professor of geodesy at the University of Belgrade), who was a referent for teaching at the Headquarters, in order to develop a unique plan. Archives of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SANU), Nikola Kosić's legacy -14733, box 10.

old Buxton visited<sup>896</sup> one of these camps in Münster, where a larger group of Serb emigrants was also housed.<sup>897</sup>

Kathleen Sitters wrote again to John Douglas on May 7, 1948, from South Africa that they had received his letter and that she had previously written to him twice without a reply. She was nostalgic thinking of the happy days in Yugoslavia “that are now so far away”. She mentioned that from time to time they received news from Yugoslavia that was not encouraging, at least as far as their old friends were concerned. She added that they had been temporarily stationed, but that they were ready and would be happy to return to Belgrade if the way opened for them, but she thought that the way things looked, this chapter had been closed for them forever. They were happy with their work with students at the University there. Sitters was an Anglican chaplain and since 1946 he was the Secretary-General of the Student YMCA. According to her, the bishop helped them very much.<sup>898</sup>

Kathleen Sitters sent another letter to Douglas on August 2, 1948, saying she had written a book and was interested in what would be with its publication. Regarding Douglas’ question, she said it was true that it was not possible to obtain a permit for Yugoslavs to enter South Africa. Some of them managed to do this, but they also helped them cope. Regarding those who had settled in Johannesburg, she said there had been different things; some became involved in shady transactions and others were making an honest living. There were few of them in Cape Town. There was Milosav Simonović, a former member of the English-American-Yugoslavian club, with his wife and daughter. He was a traffic engineer. There were two other Serbs, one of whom was unemployed, but he had the resources to support himself for a

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896 Harold Buxton was consecrated as the ninth Lord Bishop of Gibraltar in 1933 and stayed there until the spring of 1947 when he resigned but served until 1948 until his deputy was appointed.

897 “Relief. \$348,807.39 Allocated to Europe and Asia, The Living Church”, *The Living Church*, Vo. CXVI, No. 22, May 30, 1948; “World Relief. Theological Scholarships for 1948-1949”, *The Living Church*, Vol. CXVIII, No. 1, January 2, 1949; Matejić, *op. cit.*; Dragan Subotić, *op. cit.*, 156, 194-196, 207; Karapandžić, *op. cit.*, 148, 159-161; Kosta Nikolić, *General Miodrag Damjanović*, 90, 92, 104, 311, 367; Simić, *op. cit.*; Stojanović, *op. cit.*, 339-374.

898 LPL, Douglas 51, f. 352, Sitters, Kathleen M., wife of the Rev. P. H. S. Sitters 1948 Letter to Douglas.

while, and the other one was a former colonel, who worked in the chemical industry. She said these were good people, but she did not mention their names. She went on to say that in Germany some of their former friends were working in camps for displaced persons, but added that they were afraid that the displaced persons were very frightened because of the situation in Berlin.<sup>899</sup> In conclusion, she asked what was going on her book *Seventeen Pears Instead of Two*, which her sister had sent to the publisher four months earlier. She was ready to condense it by one chapter if necessary.<sup>900</sup> There was no information on whether this book had been published.

Percy Henry Sitters died in South Africa on April 1, 1956.<sup>901</sup> Kathleen Sitters died on December 2, 1975, in Guildford, Surrey, England, where she was born 90 years earlier.<sup>902</sup>

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899 The blockade of Berlin was one of the first major international Cold War crises. On June 24, 1948, the USSR blocked railway and automobile access to the Berlin sectors controlled by the Western allies. In response, the Western allies organized a Berlin air-lift for supplies to the citizens of Berlin. The USSR abolished the blockade of the city, which lasted for more than 320 days, on 12 May 1949. Berlin's division was consolidated in October 1949 by the creation of two German states - East Berlin became the capital of DR of Germany and West Berlin FR of Germany.

900 LPL, Douglas 51, f. 352, Sitters, Kathleen M., wife of the Rev. P. H. S. Sitters 1948 Letter to Douglas.

901 "Sitters, Percy Henry Smart, Grotto Hill, Stanley Road, Rondebosch, Cape, South Africa, Minister of Religion, 1st April 1956", *The London Gazette*, Nov. 16, 1956, 40927, 6544. *The London Gazette*, Nov. 16, 1956, 40927, 6544,

902 "Deaths," *The Times*, December 3, 1975, 30.





## CONCLUSION

The YMCA was active in the Kingdom of SCS/Yugoslavia between 1918 and 1941 under the patronage of the United Kingdom and the leadership of the British representatives, with the exception of a brief period between November 1920 and April 1924, when the administration consisted of local representatives. The activity of the YMCA during that time was fraught with disorientation and insufficient knowledge of the methods of work, and a lack of leadership and partners. So the YMCA Executive Committee from the Kingdom of SCS asked the general secretary of the English Center to send his representatives to Belgrade. In 1924, the Central Committee in England appointed Percy Henry Sitters as the representative of the National Committee in London and the advisory secretary of all YMCA's in the Kingdom of SCS. In addition, the Bishop of Gibraltar gave Sitters permission to take on the duty of lay reader of the English colony in Belgrade. Percy Sitters came with his wife, Kathleen. The original plan was for them to stay in the Kingdom of SCS for only three years. Following a request sent from Belgrade, during their stay in England in the summer of 1927, the decision was made for them to continue their work. Since the start of the YMCA's activity, and especially since the arrival of Sitter's couple, the Kingdom of SCS was visited by numerous representatives of the YMCA from abroad, who followed their work and provided immediate assistance. The leadership of the British representatives over the YMCA in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was the only such example in Europe. This, however, was not the first attempt of British missionary work in Serbia and the South Slavic territories. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there had been isolated attempts to establish closer ties between the Serbian and the Anglican churches as well as missionary work.

The expansion of the YMCA already started in 1900 in the Protestant parts in the north of the future Kingdom of SCS/Yugoslavia (at that time Austria-Hungary) and in 1911 in the Kingdom of Serbia. During World War I, contacts between the YMCA and the Serbian authorities and certain representatives of the Serbian Church continued. The Committee of the World Alliance of YMCAs entered into negotiations with the Serbian Government through

the Serbian Red Cross in June 1915 and transmitted the demands of the Austro-Hungarian Government for reciprocity regarding the treatment of prisoners of war. The Serbian Government granted the YMCA a permit to launch services to prisoners of war on its territory, but this permit was too late because the joint German-Austro-Hungarian-Bulgarian offensive was already underway in October 1915. During World War I, the YMCA cooperated with the representatives of the government of the Kingdom of Serbia in Russia regarding the transportation of Serbian refugees, particularly children and students to the United States. During the war, the YMCA also worked in the prison camps of the Central Powers (the Quadruple Alliance), where prisoners of war from the Kingdom of Serbia had the opportunity to get to know its work. In addition, the British YMCA was also present among the Serbian soldiers on the Salonika Front. Serbian monks, priests, and theologians, who had evacuated to Great Britain during the war, also had the opportunity to get to know more about the work of the YMCA. With the help of the British who came with the troops from Thessaloniki soon after the armistice, YMCA centers were opened in Skopje and Niš. Interrupted during the war, the work of the YMCA was also reestablished in the Jagodina Teachers' School in 1919. Work in Belgrade started a little later, with the financial and organizational support of the Central Committee of the YMCA in London.

The number of newly opened branches kept growing, and the number of YMCA members increased from around 1,000 at the beginning of the twenties to close to 50,000 members in 1940, although there were more participants in its various activities than there were registered members. In July 1935, at the meeting of the Committee of the World Alliance of YMCAs in Geneva, the Yugoslav YMCA was accepted as a member of the World Alliance of YMCAs. They had complete autonomy in their work and enjoyed the protection and occasional material assistance of the Royal family with which they established close ties. They also maintained regular contacts with government officials, including prime ministers, ministers, regional administrators, mayors, and various other officials. They were exempted from paying taxes and occasionally granted financial assistance.

Registered initially as a cultural association "aimed at the Christianization of society and its cultural and educational spiritual revival," the YMCA

developed its work in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia through its traditional Protestant methods of spiritual, mental and physical development of young people. In addition to offering spiritual training and various social services, they organized sports activities and engaged in humanitarian work. In addition, the British also worked through the YMCA on promoting certain values, customs, and symbols from the environment from which they came, which were not exclusively religious or related solely to the work of the YMCA.

Although Percy Sitters often expressed satisfaction with his work and achievements, the YMCA still had limited results that did not leave any long-term results. The reasons were numerous. Despite the generally good relations with the Serbian Orthodox Church, in the course of the twenties, there were those that impeded the desire to cooperate with Protestants and Western Christianity in general. The principle of "interconfessionalism" (believing in Christ as the only connecting factor) and the use of Protestant methods prompted accusations of proselytism. Criticism of the YMCA was particularly strong among the most conservative Russian Orthodox émigré leaders based in the Kingdom of SCS/Yugoslavia (but also among their representatives in Bulgaria, Romania, and other countries). Some individuals openly opposed the work of the YMCA as a subversive organization. The worst accusation was that the YMCA was a Masonic conspiracy, a demonic movement or a hypocritical Protestant enlightenment program. In 1926, the Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia in Sremski Karlovci and the Synod of the Bulgarian Church banned their youth from participating in the activities of the YMCA. And even within the Serbian Orthodox Church, individuals began to express doubts about the motives of the YMCA's activities. In order to clarify the misunderstandings and policies of the YMCA in the Orthodox countries and remove any doubts about proselytism, three unofficial conferences were organized between the YMCA and the Orthodox bishops in Sofia in 1928, Athens in 1930, and Bucharest in 1933. As a result of these conferences, the YMCA agreed to adapt to the specific conditions in the Orthodox countries. They agreed that the work of the YMCA in the Balkans should be Orthodox in character to enable the work of confessional subgroups, reject proselytism, and make Bible studies in the spirit and in line with the Orthodox understanding of the Bible. The deal won the blessings of the Romani-

an, Serbian, Bulgarian, Greek, Alexandrian, and Russian émigré hierarchies (except for the Synod of the ROCOR in Sremski Karlovci) and opened the way for cooperation. The YMCA tried to adapt its methods to Orthodox Christianity and the local culture, although their activities were still open to all. Criticism of their work was no longer as loud as before, but a certain degree of suspicion remained in some circles.

In parallel with the YMCA in the Kingdom of SCS/Yugoslavia, several similar organizations operated during the interim period under the auspices of the Serbian Orthodox Church. One of them was the National Christian Community or the God Worshipper Movement. Although it originated as an autochthonous movement, its name was modeled on the YMCA and although the God Worshippers regularly noted that they had no interconnected relationships, uninformed contemporaries often confused them. There were many similarities in their work, although the God Worshippers were under other influences (Nazarenes, Spiritists). Some names have been mentioned as active in the work of both organizations: Marko Leko, Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović, Jovan (Branko) Rapajić, Priest Dragutin Tufegdžić, Ratibor Djurdjević, and others. The basic differences between the NCC and the YMCA were that the former was not interconfessional or ecumenically oriented, and mainly rallied large segments of the rural population. The influence of the YMCA was also felt in the work of the Women's Christian Movement, officially founded in Belgrade in 1920. The goal of the WCM was "raising the morale of Christ's religion" and philanthropic work. The WCM practiced almost identical activities as the YMCA. The National Christian Community and the WCM directly competed with the YMCA, which definitely influenced the possibilities of its expansion.

Other reasons that hindered the successful work and significant impact of the YMCA can be found in the attempts to impose themselves with the help of Crown and from the top government circles, and also in their insufficient knowledge of the political, cultural, and spiritual space and goals that were insufficiently clear to the environment in which they worked, which left room for different interpretations.

In addition to Percy Sitters, the British YMCA staff during the 1930s consisted of Reginald Taggart, secretary-general of the Belgrade association,

and two volunteers, Kathleen Sitters, and Ruth Trouton, who led the women's and girls' section and the women's branch of the student section. The Yugoslav personnel in Belgrade and other centers comprised six paid and 30 honorary secretaries. However, the YMCA in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia never was able to achieve independence or act without the presence of the foreign representatives in the country, nor did it ever succeed in supporting itself solely from domestic sources without financial assistance from abroad.

YMCA membership was limited to the eastern parts of the country, with mainly Serbian Orthodox and, in the northern areas, Protestant, mainly Hungarian and partly German and Slovak, populations, which was mainly due to its successful cooperation with the Serbian Orthodox, Reformed, Lutheran, German and Slovak evangelical churches. In areas with a dominant Roman Catholic population, they were unable to achieve any significant influence because of the negative attitude of the Vatican and the Roman Catholic Church on the territory of Slovenia and Croatia. The establishment of subsidiaries in Zagreb and Ljubljana, achieved partly thanks to cooperation with the Croatian Old Catholic Church, did not contribute to the YMCA's further development in the western regions of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

The social structure of the membership was largely limited to members of the scarce middle class of the urban population, including priests of various religions, university professors, rentiers, doctors, lawyers, clerks, wives of generals and ministers, students, etc. Due to the lack of original documents, it is difficult to say how many among the members were completely devoted to the spiritual goals of the YMCA and guided by religious motives, and how many joined for their anglophilia, purely personal interests, or even just to be trendy. Hubert Butler, who stayed in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia from 1934 to 1937 as a scholarship recipient of the School for Slavic Studies in London and held English classes at the English-American-Yugoslav Club, stated that at that time "being an anglophile was quite fashionable; people felt that they were very democratic if they went to the club and read *The Illustrated London News*."

Among the student population, despite several attempts, the YMCA failed to achieve any significant results. One of their main proclaimed goals, the fight against communism, also failed. The Student Christian Movement

at the University of Belgrade was initiated several times - unsuccessfully (1911, 1919, 1924), and finally, a student section of the YMCA was established in 1925. In September 1930, Donald Alexander Lowrie, secretary of the North American YMCA, launched a special program for students of the University of Belgrade under the auspices of the YMCA. Since Lowrie was recalled to the United States in August 1932 due to a lack of funds to support his work in Yugoslavia, he continued to work with students within the framework of the YMCA. One of the most important undertakings in the student activities was the organization of six student conferences in Selce, near Crikvenica, from 1935 to 1940, but those were activities of a limited character. It is not possible to ascertain the number of students engaged in YMCA activities, but the opening of the Student Section in Belgrade in the winter of 1936 was attended by about 100 students. Considering that at that time there were about 8,500 students at the University of Belgrade, this number seems completely negligible.

Active youth and student YMCA members were later supporters of completely opposite ideological positions, including communists (Vladimir Dedijer), right-wingers (Dimitrije Ljotić, Ratibor Djurdjević, Jovan Rapajić), as well as Jews, for example, Jaša Davičo, older brother of Oskar Davičo, a liberal leftist. Whether this was due to the wide scope of the YMCA, or its failed efforts in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, remains an open question. A special example is the case of Miloš Parenta, a priest and rector of the St. Sava Serbian Orthodox School of Theology, who was one of the longest-standing associates of the YMCA. Two of his four children were members of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia.

Activity related to working with female students and young women also failed to yield any particular results. After several years, the women's section lost its space within the YMCA and its work was reduced to organizing sales exhibitions.

The YMCA did not succeed in building its own premises in Belgrade, although this idea had been present since 1924 until the beginning of the war. One of the main reasons was their inability to raise the necessary financial resources, even though they had received construction land from the Belgrade municipality. As the chaplain of the Anglican community, Percy Sitters

was involved in the plans to build an Anglican shrine in Belgrade, which was also not realized due to insufficient funding.

In retrospect, it seems that the role that Percy Sitters, or even the YMCA, played during their work in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was more significant from the standpoint of connections established with the royal family and the hierarchy of the Serbian Orthodox Church as a kind of transmission in relation to the representatives of Church of England, especially in the years before and after the outbreak of World War II. Percy and Kathleen Sitters sent regular reports and bulletins to the YMCA centers in England and Ireland, to John Douglas (the Council on Foreign Relations of the Church England as of 1935), to the Bishop of Gloucester, the Bishop of Gibraltar, and others. Their reports and letters dealt with the work and difficulties of the YMCA, but also the political and economic situation in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the relations between the Serbs and Croats, elections, the introduction of the royal dictatorship, relations in the Serbian Orthodox Church, etc. Their comments and conclusions on certain issues show insufficient knowledge of issues (which may have been the consequence of not knowing the language, because P. Sitters, unlike his wife, never learned the language of the country in which he resided), even occasional naiveté, such as their conviction that the YMCA had a major influence on unification in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and therefore made an important contribution to the life of the country. Or, their comments on poverty being the reason for students joining the Communist Party of Yugoslavia.

At the beginning of 1939, Percy and Kathleen Sitters made contacts with representatives of the army and navy of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and soon began talking about organizing YMCA work among the troops. In November 1939, they started working in the military barracks of the Navy and Air Force. The same year, P. H. Sitters was admitted to the diaconate and at the special bidding of the Archbishop of Canterbury, elevated to the rank of priest. During 1939 and 1940 he was involved in the preparation and organization of the visit of the delegation of representatives of the Anglican Church to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Behind this visit was the idea of the UK's Ministry of Information, the central government service responsible for propaganda, to use the opposition to Hitler that existed within Orthodox churches in



the Balkans. They thought they needed access because they had a profound impact on both public opinion and politics in their countries. P. H. Sitters was the one who suggested using Anglican influence on this issue not only in Yugoslavia but also in Bulgaria, Romania, and Greece. With his view, a line of personalities in the Anglican Church agreed. The purpose of the visit in May 1940 was to fight against German propaganda in order to gain support from Orthodox believers. The delegation's activities were assessed as successful and Belgrade's visit as the most successful in the Balkan tour.

In January 1941, Percy Sitters was appointed as the official chaplain of the British Legation and the British community, with diplomatic status, and also as chair of the Board of Directors of the British Council. After the bombing of Belgrade on April 6, 1941, the Sitters left the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and went to South Africa. During the first few years after their departure, the Sitters still hoped to return after the war and continue their work. They maintained occasional contacts with former YMCA associates from the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and sought to help those who had fled the country after the war and lived in refugee camps in Europe to settle their status or continue their education in Great Britain. However, the work of the YMCA was not renewed, and the activity of this British Legation did not leave any deeper traces in domestic sources or in any other forms of memory. The reasons are numerous, but they should definitely be sought in the postwar circumstances in socialist Yugoslavia, where the status of churches and religious communities changed radically and their activities were restricted; in anti-religious propaganda; in the gradual disappearance of the upper and middle class from the country's pre-war society; in the termination of activities of the anglophile organizations; and in the new governments strict control over links between the Serbian Orthodox and the Anglican Church which led to their gradual estrangement, etc.

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*Jutro*

*Novosti*

*Obzor*

*Opštinske novine* (Cyrillic)

*Politika* (Cyrillic)

*Pravda* (Cyrillic)

*Službene novine Kraljevine Jugoslavije* (Cyrillic)

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Dr. Radmila Radić  
THE MISSION OF THE BRITISH YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN  
ASSOCIATION IN THE KINGDOM OF YUGOSLAVIA

*Publisher*  
Institute for Recent History of Serbia

*Printing house*  
Čigoja štampa, d.o.o.

*Printing*  
300 copies

CIP - Каталогизacija у публикацији  
Народна библиотека Србије, Београд

27-675(100)"1918/1941"  
274/279:061.2-057.87(497.11+497.1)"1918/1941"

RADIĆ, Radmila, 1958-

The Mission of the British Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia / Radmila Radić ; [translation into English Bojan Drndić]. - Belgrade : Institute for Recent History of Serbia, 2019 (Belgrade : Čigoja štampa). - 341 str. : ilustr. ; 21 cm. - (Library Studies and Monographs / [Institute for Recent History of Serbia] ; book 118)

Tiraž 300. - Napomene i bibliografske reference uz tekst.  
- Bibliografija: str. 313-326. - Registar.

ISBN 978-86-7005-161-4

a) Хришћанска заједница младих људи - Србија (20в) b) Хришћанска  
заједница младих људи - Југославија - 20в

COBISS.SR-ID 277165324