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The Serbian Minister in London, Mateja Bošković, the Yugoslav Committee, and Serbia's Yugoslav Policy in the Great War 1914–1916

Abstract: This paper seeks to examine the outlook of the Serbian Minister in London, Mateja Mata Bošković, during the first half of the Great War on the South Slav (Yugoslav) question – a unification of all the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in a single state, which was Serbia's war aim. He found himself in close contact with the members of the Yugoslav Committee, an organisation of the irredentist Yugoslav émigrés from Austria-Hungary in which two Croat politicians, Frano Supilo and Ante Trumbić, were leading figures. In stark contrast to other Serbian diplomats, Bošković was not enthusiastic about Yugoslav unification. He suspected the Croat émigrés, especially Supilo, of pursuing exclusive Croat interests under the ruse of the Yugoslav programme. His dealings with them were made more difficult on account of the siding of a group of British "friends of Serbia", the most prominent of which were Robert William Seton-Watson and Henry Wickham Steed, with the Croat émigrés. Though not opposed in principle to an integral Yugoslav unification, Bošković preferred staunch defence of Serbian Macedonia from Bulgarian ambitions and the acquisition of Serb-populated provinces in southern Hungary, while in the west he seems to have been content with the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, part of Slavonia and an outlet to the Adriatic Sea in Dalmatia. Finally, the reception of and reaction to Bošković's reports on the part of the Serbian Prime Minister, Nikola Pašić, clearly shows that the latter was determined to persist in his Yugoslav policy, despite the Treaty of London which assigned large parts of the Slovene and Croat lands to Italy and made the creation of Yugoslavia an unlikely proposition. In other words, Pašić did not vacillate between the "small" and the "large programme", between Yugoslavia and Greater Serbia, as it has been often alleged in historiography and public discourse.

Keywords: Mateja Mata Bošković, Yugoslav Committee, Serbia, Yugoslavia, Nikola Pašić, British (English) friends of Serbia, R. W. Seton-Watson, First World War

Since the outbreak of the Great War the Serbian government set itself on the course of creating a large South Slav (Yugoslav) state which would unite all the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. It was on the second day of hostilities between

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Austria-Hungary and Serbia that Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Nikola Pašić, discussed in an inner circle the envisaged territorial scope of a state which would be formed after the successful conclusion of the war.¹ But it was not before 7 December 1914, during a critical phase of the Austro-Hungarian offensive, that the Serbian parliament declared *urbi et orbi* in the wartime capital Niš that a Yugoslav unification was Serbia's war aim.² This was a bold step as its realization practically presumed the disappearance of Austria-Hungary from the political map of Europe. For that, apart from the requirements of military situation, there was no political will whatsoever among the Entente Powers. The pursuit of Pašić's Yugoslav policy during the war has been a subject of much historiographical interest and controversy, as will be discussed later. The purpose of this essay is to contribute to the debate on that thorny question and, more broadly, on the run-up to the creation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (Yugoslavia) by focusing on three important and intertwined themes. The first one concerns the views and activities of the Serbian Minister in London after November 1913, Mateja Mata Bošković, which have been neglected so far by historians despite being of considerable interest in and of themselves. The second related theme is an exploration of insights into Pašić's Yugoslav policy from the perspective of his reception of and reaction to Bošković's reports, which cast doubts on the intentions and conduct of the Croat politicians who worked with the Serbian government for the formation of a Yugoslavia. Finally, the third theme covers the influence of a group of "British friends of Serbia", distinguished individuals and high profile public people, who propagated the Yugoslav idea and campaigned to associate the British government with the Yugoslav cause. Apart from their efforts in the press and what might be termed public sphere, which have been discussed elsewhere,³ they tried to impress their views on policy-makers largely by means of "the various memoranda and letters and reports which some of us fired off at the F[oreign] O[ffice]";⁴ as well as through personal contacts they made with government officials. But this paper looks specifically at the ways in which these people affected the work of important Yugoslav émigrés in Britain

¹ Panta Draškić, *Moji memoari*, ed. Dušan T. Bataković (Belgrade: Srpska književna zadruga, 1990), 87.

² Dragoslav Janković, "Niška deklaracija (nastajanje programa jugoslovenskog ujedinjenja u Srbiji 1914. godine)", *Istorija XX veka* X (1969), 7–111.

³ Harry Hanak, *Great Britain and Austria-Hungary during the First World War: A Study in the Formation of Public Opinion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962).

⁴ Arthur J. May, "Seton-Watson and the Treaty of London", *The Journal of Modern History* 29/1 (Mar. 1957), 42; see also Kenneth Calder, *Britain and the Origins of the New Europe, 1914–1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976); Hugh and Christopher Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe: R. W. Seton-Watson and the Last Years of Austria-Hungary* (London: Methuen, 1981).

and their relations with Bošković and, by implication, the Serbian government, which is another facet which has not been a subject of a sustained analysis.

Bošković was a diplomat who had been closely involved in Serbia's political and military successes in the two Balkan Wars of 1912-1913.⁵ As part of his six years as Minister in Athens, he had participated in the diplomatic preliminaries leading to the conclusion of the Balkan Alliance between Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece and Montenegro which had defeated the Ottoman Empire and ousted it from most of its Balkan territory. He had then negotiated with the Greek Prime Minister, Eleftherios Venizelos, and contributed to the making of the Serbo-Greek defensive treaty of 1 June 1913 which had prepared the ground for a victorious war against Bulgaria arising out of a conflict over the distribution of Ottoman territory. Bošković also proved his abilities in London during the July crisis: he sensed an imminent danger for Serbia and sent a clear warning to Pašić in marked contrast to the uncertainty of the Serbian Minister in Vienna, Jovan Jovanović nicknamed Pižon.⁶

Bošković made it clear to the Serbian Foreign Ministry (MID) that the prevailing opinion in the Foreign Office was that the maintenance of Austria-Hungary, perhaps with somewhat reduced territory, constituted a necessity for European balance of power. Since such conviction ran contrary to Serbian interests, he decided to work through prominent British publicists in order to create a faction in public opinion favourable to the idea of the demise of the Habsburg Monarchy and formation of nation-states in its place, which would in turn affect the government policy.⁷ The Minister also realised that the sympathetic British attitude towards Italy and Hungary, along with the mistrust for the Slavs, would cause much difficulties in respect to territorial settlement for Istria, Dalmatia and potential Hungary's access to sea in Fiume (Rijeka). It was exactly those musings that led Pašić to propose the urgent formation of a Yugoslav committee in London which would represent all the Yugoslav

⁵ For an account of Bošković's career, see forthcoming Dragan Bakić, "Mateja Mata Bošković: prilog za biografiju srpskog diplomate", in Ljubodrag Ristić, ed., *Srbija 1918: oslobodjenje domovine, povratak ratnika, život u novoj državi* (Čačak, Belgrade, Ljubljana: Medjuopštinski istorijski arhiv Čačak, Centar za istoriju Jugoslavije i savremenu nacionalnu istoriju, ZRC SAZU – Institut za kulturne in memorialne studije, 2019).

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Arhiv Jugoslavije (AJ) [Archives of Yugoslavia], Jovan Jovanović-Pižon Papers [collection no. 80], 80-2-10, Bošković to MID, 6 September 1914, no. 186. Dates in the archival documents and diaries are given according to the old style (Julian calendar), which was in official use in Serbia until 1919, unless that was not the case in the original text. In the main text of the article, dates are always given according to the new style (Gregorian calendar). The difference between the two is 13 days (6 September is 19 September according to the new style).

provinces and make propaganda in British and European public opinion.⁸ What Pašić had in mind was to transform a group of Yugoslav émigrés gathered in still neutral Italy into a more formal organisation. It all started with three Dalmatian politicians, Frano Supilo, Ante Trumbić and Remiggio Gazzari, who arrived in Venice after the outbreak of war and discussed what to do on a daily basis, largely animated by their fear of Italian agitation and pretensions on their native province. They were soon joined by other émigrés, among them a well-known sculptor, Ivan Meštrović, another Dalmatian who lived in Rome at the time. As it soon became apparent, Supilo, Trumbić and Meštrović were the three most prominent and important Croat figures. Their political campaign commenced in Rome where lively diplomatic activities were taking place and where they were met most cordially in the Serbian Legation by Charge d'Affaires, Ljubomir Mihailović (there was no appointed Minister at the time). It was Mihailović who introduced the Croat émigrés to the world of high politics: he arranged for their audiences with the French, Russian and British Ambassadors whom they apprised of the Yugoslav ethnic claim on Dalmatia and the desire of their compatriots to unite with Serbia. There were also plans for propaganda activities, namely publishing a brochure on the Yugoslav question and launching a French language journal in Switzerland. The émigrés appreciated themselves a need for organisation and, independently of Pašić, considered the possibility of forming an irredentist committee which would be joined by a number of people fleeing from Austria-Hungary. Nevertheless, the initiative rested with Pašić. He convened a private meeting in Niš during which he laid down his ideas and sent two Serbs from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Nikola Stojanović and Dušan Vasiljević, to work with the "Yugoslavs" and be a mouthpiece of the views and intentions of the Serbian government, and decided to provide financial support without which the work, and the sustenance, of many émigrés would not be possible. These were the origins of an organisation that would later become known as the Yugoslav Committee.⁹

⁸ AJ, 80-2-10, two telegrams from Bošković to MID on 23 September 1914 and Pašić's note, 12 October 1914; Nikola Stojanović, *Jugoslovenski odbor (članci i dokumenti)* (Zagreb: Nova Evropa, 1927), 10-11.

⁹ AJ, 80-21-106, Remiggio Gazzari to Jovan Jovanović, private, Rome, 10 January 1915; Dragovan Šepić, "Iz korespondencije Frana Supila", *Arhivski vjesnik* I/1 (1958), 252-254, 262-264; Dragovan Šepić, "Trumbićev 'Dnevnik'", *Historijski pregled* V (1959), 167-175. The most exhaustive work on the Yugoslav Committee remains that of the Czech historian Milada Paulova, *Jugoslavenski odbor u Londonu: povijest jugoslavenske emigracije za svjetskog rata od 1914-1918* (Zagreb: Prosvjetna nakladna zadruka, 1925). However, this work is not impartial to conflicts that emerged during the war between the Croat émigrés and Pašić. This has much to do with the fact that Paulova's most important source of information was the conversations she had with the members of the Yugoslav Committee after the war, mostly with its president Ante Trumbić. Moreover, Paulova even sent some chapters of her book to Trumbić to read

While the realisation of the Yugoslav programme was a matter of a more long-term perspective, Serbia faced a tangible danger that neutral Bulgaria might attack her from the rear tempted by an opportunity to snatch Macedonia. The Entente diplomacy made efforts to win over Bulgaria to enter into war on its side, for which Serbia was supposed to pay the price by ceding to Sofia at least part of her own territory in Macedonia - the diplomatic representatives of the Entente Powers sounded the Serbian government in this respect since the outbreak of war. Bošković believed that Bulgaria would not dare to attack Serbia if St. Petersburg made it clear that it would consider any such action an attack on Russia herself and if Greece was prepared to honour its commitment in accordance with the Greco-Serbian alliance treaty of 1913. On the other side, the Minister was certain that no assistance could be expected from Bulgaria against Austria-Hungary regardless of potential Serbian concessions in Macedonia. For that reason, he recommended, in case it was deemed necessary to make some concessions to Sofia, that those should be made only "in agreement with Greece and Romania and in proportion to concessions the latter two [countries] are willing to make to Bulgaria."¹⁰ The Serbian government found that Athens was obliged to provide military assistance if Bulgaria invaded Serbia and because of

them before publication. As she explained to the renowned Serbian geographer, Jovan Cvijić, Paulova believed that because of her conversations with the participants she "understood and was able to include in the book some of that spirit, which has gone today, and which others, under the impression of the present, cannot any longer and will not reproduce, like I have. In time others can also cover the facts - but they will hardly be able to do this." Even more importantly, Paulova was biased as she had neither the wish nor professional inclination to try to understand the standpoint of Pašić in his dispute with the Croat émigrés. She had no qualms about admitting that "the policy of Mr Pašić has not warmed me up in the slightest, and I have turned against it. For the sake of 'Yugoslavism!'" (Arhiv Srpske Akademije nauka i umetnosti (ASANU) [Archives of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts], Papers of Jovan Cvijić [collection no. 13484], 13484/946-2, Milada Paulova to Jovan Cvijić, 25 April 1923). Paulova thus accepted the stereotype imposed by Croat politicians, the members of the Yugoslav Committee - which would later be replicated uncritically in communist Yugoslav historiography - to the effect that Pašić's views in the matter of Yugoslav unification were exclusively (Greater) Serbian, whereas the Yugoslav émigrés, including the leading Croats, allegedly had a truly Yugoslav outlook. Other relevant works include Vaso Bogdanov, Ferdo Čulinović and Marko Kostrenčić, *Jugoslavenski odbor u Londonu: u povodu 50-godišnjice osnivanja* (Zagreb: JAZU, 1966); Gale Stokes, "The Role of the Yugoslav Committee in the Formation of Yugoslavia", in Dimitrije Djordjević, ed., *The Creation of Yugoslavia 1914-1918* (California: Clio Books, 1980), 51-71; Milorad Ekmečić, *Ratni ciljevi Srbije 1914*, 2nd ed. (Belgrade: Prosveta, 1990), 302-348; Djordje Stanković, *Nikola Pašić i jugoslovensko pitanje*, 2 vols (Belgrade: BIGZ, 1985), II, 11-38; Connie Robinson, "Yugoslavism in the Early Twentieth Century: The Politics of the Yugoslav Committee", in Dejan Djokić and James Ker-Lindsey, eds, *New Perspectives on Yugoslavia: Key Issues and Controversies* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 10-26.

¹⁰ AJ, 80-7-40, Bošković to Pašić, 8 September 1914, conf. no. 433.

that they were all the more concerned by the Greek government's interpretation to the effect that such obligation was non-existent in a situation in which the other side took part in a European-scale conflict. Having been one of the key participants in the conclusion of the Serbo-Greek treaty, Bošković stressed in early 1915 that such interpretation was "inaccurate and contrary to the text and spirit of the treaty, which has been concluded for general defence against external attacks no matter from which direction they might come, with the single exception [contained] in the attached declaration on Albania. And that specifically envisaged exception proves that *casus foederis* exists in all other cases."¹¹ More importantly, the intransigent attitude in the Macedonian question was, in view of the Minister, crucial to pre-empting the pressure on the part of the Entente Powers, which could otherwise reach a decision unfavourable to Serbia. The objective of Serbian diplomacy, as he saw it, was "to force [their hand] rather than expect and hope for a voluntary recognition of what is our right and national requirement of the highest order in Macedonia."¹²

In the meantime, efforts were made to ensure a benevolent attitude of the British press and public opinion in both Yugoslav and Macedonian matter with a view to influencing official circles. In this respect, Bošković mostly affected the coverage of these affairs in the press through paid services of Crawford Price, the *Times* correspondent from Greece, whom he had come to know personally during the Second Balkan War against Bulgaria.¹³ In propaganda, Bošković had major assistance from a group of noted scholars which the Serbian government sent to London, especially from the spring and summer of 1915 onwards. The most prominent of these were Jovan Cvijić, brothers Pavle and Bogdan Popović, literary critics, father Nikolaj Velimirović, a well-known Orthodox theologian, and the geologist Jovan Žujović.¹⁴ They worked tirelessly to win over British sympathies for Serbia by getting in touch with a number of persons from the press and public sphere, and also by making contact with the Foreign Office

¹¹ AJ, 80-8-41, Bošković to Pašić, 30 December 1914, conf. no. 587; also Arhiv Srbije (AS) [Archives of Serbia], Ministry for Foreign Affairs - Political Department [MID-PO], 1915, f[ascicle]. XXVIII, d[ossier]. IV, Bošković to Pašić, 8 October 1915, conf. no. 993.

¹² AJ, 80-8-41, Bošković to Pašić, 11 January 1915, conf. no. 40.

¹³ AJ, 80-2-10, Bošković's telegrams to MID on 27 December 1914, no. 579; 3 March 1915, no. 259; 11 March 1915, without number; 4 May 1915, no. 508; 80-8-41, Bošković to MID, 22 July 1915, without number; AS, MID-PO, f. XXVIII, d. IX, Bošković to MID, 20 November 1915, no. 1160; f. VI, d. VI, Bogdan Popović to Pašić, 9 March 1916.

¹⁴ Ljubinka Trgovčević, "Politička delatnost Jovana Cvijića u Londonu 1915. godine", *Istorijski časopis XX* (1973), 385–396; Ljubinka Trgovčević, *Naučnici Srbije i stvaranje Jugoslavije* (Belgrade: Narodna knjiga, 1986), 163–176; Dragoslav Janković, "Profesor Pavle Popović i jugoslovensko pitanje u Prvom svetskom ratu", *Letopis Matice srpske* 416/3 (1975), 219–233; Slobodan G. Markovich, "Activities of Father Nikolaj Velimirovich in Great Britain during the Great War," *Balcanica XLVIII* (2017), 143–190.

officials. They also carefully observed propaganda activities of the influential Bulgarophiles in Britain, particularly those gathered in the Balkan Committee, something of a pressure group in which two brothers and Liberal members of parliament, Noel and Charles Buxton, were instrumental. But despite this strong pro-Bulgarian current among chiefly liberal politicians, Bošković was not too much concerned about its impact. As he pointed out to Pašić, Serbia's importance as a military factor was too valuable for official Britain to allow for resorting to measures that might weaken her for the benefit of Bulgaria.¹⁵ He believed, however, that schemes about dispatching Anglo-French troops to Serbian Macedonia in connection with the negotiations about the Greek army's entry into war and support for Serbia were potentially dangerous, because their presence there would, so the British Bulgarophiles wished, facilitate granting territorial concessions to Bulgaria. Bošković thus underscored to Pašić that the only meaningful military assistance to Serbia was that provided on the main northern front against the Austro-Hungarians, while "we can easily defend ourselves the Macedonian parts and I think that we should not accept foreign assistance there from anyone and not even from Greece."¹⁶

As for realisation of the Yugoslav programme, and consequently cooperation between the Serbian government and Croat émigrés, the foremost difficulty concerned the very possibility that wartime combinations of the great powers would allow for the formation of a single Yugoslav state. Supilo learned in Rome from Charles Loiseau, the French press attaché, about the idea of an independent Croatia which would encompass Dalmatia, the Slovene lands and part of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Mihailović received confirmation of this information from the counsellor of the French Embassy in Rome, who also assured him that Serbia would, in such a case, be granted an outlet to sea next to the Greek coast or perhaps even as far up as the town of Split, an arrangement to which Italy would consent.¹⁷ Indeed, reports to that effect had already reached the Serbian government from other sources.¹⁸ Niš deplored an arrangement along these lines as it was designed to thwart a Yugoslav unification, Serbia's proclaimed war aim. The Croat émigrés viewed such a possibility from the standpoint of saving Dalmatia from annexation to Italy which was, to their mind, a worse outcome than remaining within Austria-Hungary. It would tear apart

¹⁵ AJ, 80-8-4I, Bošković to MID, 12 March 1915 (new style), conf. no. 240.

¹⁶ AJ, 80-8-4I, Bošković to Pašić, 2/15 March 1915, conf. no. 255; also AS, MID-PO, 1915, f. XI, d. VIII, Bošković to MID, 20 September 1915, no. 965.

¹⁷ Dragovan Šepić, "Srpska vlada i počeci Jugoslavenskog odbora", *Historijski zbornik XIII/1-4* (1960), 7; see also from the same author "Supilo u emigraciji: prvi dio studije o radu Frana Supila u emigraciji (srpanj 1914. – lipanj 1915)", *Jadranski zbornik: prilozi za povijest Istre, Rijeke i Hrvatskog primorja I* (1956), 48–50.

¹⁸ Ekmečić, *Ratni ciljevi Srbije*, 309–310.

the lands populated by Croats and expose the Croat population annexed to Italy to a great danger of assimilation which was non-existent in the multinational Habsburg Empire. For Supilo, the only feasible solution was the creation of a Yugoslavia and he thus rejected out of hand the notion of a separate Roman Catholic, Slovene-Croat state. Trumbić and Meštrović were not, however, disinclined to the idea, since they thought that a Yugoslav state might be impossible of achievement, if the Serbian government were not prepared to go to any length and the Entente Powers refused it out of consideration for Italy.¹⁹ But Supilo was so determined that they did not contradict him; he remained a moving spirit for some time to come. Besides, his policy was no doubt the most rational one for the Croats: if Italy took over the most important points in Dalmatia and Serbia gained a stretch of the Dalmatian coast, then Croatia would become “a victim”, as Trumbić later put it.²⁰ On other occasion, Trumbić concluded that Italian possession of the western Istria, together with Hungary’s likely access to sea in Fiume, meant that the war would result in the creation of a “Greater Serbia, along with the content Hungary and Italy”.²¹ The rest of territory left to constitute a Croat state would serve only as a tool for sparking constant conflicts among the South Slavs; because of that the Croat émigrés did not want such an independent state to come into being. In the words of Supilo, that was “the danger of an independent Croatia with a mission to be a splitting wedge and a bone of contention, which would be easy to accomplish with the sacrifice of Dalmatia, Istria.”²² It was clear then that Yugoslavia offered the best possibilities for safeguarding exclusive Croat interests, namely holding together all the territory which the Croats considered their own, and that any other policy could have been pursued only out of necessity.

Supilo headed to France and Great Britain to lobby against Italian imperialism and for unification of the Croats and Slovenes with Serbia. Just like Mihailović in Rome, the Serbian Minister in Paris, Milenko Vesnić, extended him a warm welcome upon his arrival in mid-September 1914 and arranged for Supilo’s audience with the Russian Ambassador, Alexander Izvolsky, and the French Foreign Minister, Théophile Delcassé.²³ Just like Mihailović, Vesnić praised Supilo’s efforts for the cause of “general national work” and he provided him, along with Izvolsky and Delcassé, with a letter of recommendation for his further journey to Britain in October. In retrospect, he was convinced that “this smart-looking patriot” had left “a very good impression” in both Paris

¹⁹ Šepić, “Trumbićev ‘Dnevnik’”, Rome, 1. X. 1914, 176–177.

²⁰ Šepić, “Iz korespondencije Frana Supila”, Trumbić to Supilo, Rome, 27. XI. 1914, 276–277.

²¹ Ibid., Trumbić to Supilo, Rome, 29. I. and 4. II. 1915, 353–357; see also Šepić, “Trumbićev ‘Dnevnik’”, Rome, 9. II. 1915, 188.

²² Šepić, “Iz korespondencije Frana Supila”, Trumbić to Supilo, Athens, 28. V. 1915, 363–367.

²³ AJ, 80-2-9, Milenko Vesnić to Jovan Jovanović-Pižon, 21 September 1914.

and London.²⁴ During his mission in Britain, Supilo got in touch with the Serbian Legation in London. His relations with the Serbian representative there appeared to be different from those in Italy and France: "The Serbian Minister, Mr Bošković, who has received me most kindly, does not take me anywhere or introduce me at my specific request; rather I make my way among Englishmen on my own as a Croat, a Catholic and a shoreman."²⁵ This was part of a tactical approach approved by Serbian Minister and Russian Ambassador, Alexander Benckendorff, for the purpose of stressing the home-grown nature of the South Slavs' aspirations and avoiding any involvement with official Serbian and Russian policies bound to cause weariness in the Russophobe and Slavophobe British environment. But it was Supilo's second visit to London in January 1915 that was more successful in establishing contact with the British government. With Bošković standing aside, it was two prominent Britons, Robert William Seton-Watson, a Scottish historian and renowned expert on south-eastern Europe, and Henry Wickham Steed, foreign editor of the *Times*, with whom Supilo had been acquainted long before the war, who were central to his success. In particular, Steed introduced Supilo to Prime Minister, Herbert Henry Asquith, and Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey.²⁶ Despite these opportunities to advocate the Yugoslav cause, the impression was that Britain was least receptive of all the Allies to the prospect of a Yugoslav unification, resembling "a dangerous stepmother" as the Croat émigré put it.²⁷ Aside from his conversations, Supilo was interested in the preparations for Meštrović's exhibition which was eagerly awaited as an excellent opportunity for Yugoslav propaganda. Supilo asked Bošković - acting "For the Yugoslav Committee of A[stro].-H[ungarian]. Émigrés", still not formally constituted - for financial support to Dimitrije Mitrinović, an avant-garde man of literature, "on account of his involvement with Meštrović's exhibition in London". After having been informed of this request, Pašić approved.²⁸

Difficult as it was, Serbia's situation became more complicated because of the intertwinement of the Yugoslav and Macedonian questions. The Entente Powers argued in Niš that Serbia should cede to Bulgaria at least that part of Macedonia which had been a contested zone prior to the Balkan Wars and the possession of which had been left for arbitration of the Russian Emperor

²⁴ AJ, 80-2-9, Vesnić to Pašić, Bordeaux, 4 November 1914.

²⁵ Dragovan Šepić, ed., *Pisma i memorandumumi Frana Supila* (Belgrade: Naučno delo, 1967), doc. 6, Frano Supilo to Nikola Pašić, London, 21. X. 1914, 8-13.

²⁶ Šepić, "Trumbićev 'Dnevnik'", Rome, 25. I. 1915, 184.

²⁷ Šepić, *Pisma i memorandumumi Frana Supila*, doc. 17, Supilo to Dušan Vasiljević, London, 3. I. 1915, 37-39.

²⁸ AS, MID, Legation London [PsL], f. 1, pov r 649/1915, Bošković to Pašić, 8-I-1915, conf. no. 31; Pašić to Bošković, 13/26-I-1915, conf. no. 347.

according to the 1912 alliance treaty between the two countries. In return, the Entente Powers offered Serbia concessions in the west at the expense of the Habsburg Monarchy, the minimum of which was an outright annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and an outlet to the Adriatic Sea after the successful conclusion of the war. In doing so, and without consulting the Serbian government in advance, they proposed a settlement on the basis of a territorial bargain which would, in their view, satisfy the essential Serbian requirements. None of the Entente Powers was interested in, or took seriously an integral Yugoslav unification. Pašić and the Serbian government were averse to accepting such an offer, but despite their protests and reservations they could hardly reject out of hand what was, after all, a unanimous demand of their allies. The Croat émigrés, on the other side, hoped that Serbia would be willing to renounce Macedonia in order to have the western Yugoslav provinces, above all Dalmatia, included in a future Yugoslav state rather than have them become an object of compensation in the transactions made by Entente Powers, mostly to meet Italy's requests. Although they could not, for obvious reasons, state openly their opinion to the Serbs, the latter were familiar with their attitude. "Trumbić once [...] very angry: let the Serbs cede Macedonia, just as long as Dalmatia is saved; Dalmatia is the main [thing]"; Pavle Popović found out.²⁹

The information on the Croat émigrés' utterances to the effect that Macedonia was of secondary importance to Serbia in relation to the western parts and that concessions could be given to Bulgaria in that province reached Bošković, as well as Cvijić and Pavle Popović, and caused his aversion to their activities. Bošković asked of Pašić himself to draw attention of the émigrés to the necessity of not making such statements, with which the Prime Minister agreed and issued instructions in that sense.³⁰ But the warnings had no effect and Bošković, just like Cvijić, came to think that the émigrés should best be removed from London and prevented from causing damage, and that they should be directed to organise an armed resistance to Italian pretensions in their own native provinces:

²⁹ Pavle Popović, *Iz dnevnika*, ed. by Bogdan Lj. Popović (Belgrade: Zavod za udžbenike, 2001), 11 June 1915, 186. Some ten months later, Supilo had no qualms about lecturing Pašić himself how Serbia which had "already solemnly renounced Macedonia" according to the 1912 agreement with Bulgaria, as he interpreted it, would now have "to make all possible compromises in order better and more solidly to resolve the great Yugoslav question" (AS, MID, PsL, f. I, pov r 831/1916, Supilo [Rome Legation] to Pašić, 3 April 1916, no. 495; Dragovan Šepić, *Supilo diplomat: rad Frana Supila u emigraciji 1914–1917. godine* (Zagreb: Naprijed, 1961), 183). With the fall of Serbia in late 1915, Supilo clearly thought that such advice to the exiled Serbian government would not be considered outrageous.

³⁰ AJ, 80-2-10, Bošković to MID, 17 March 1915, no. 310 and Pašić's note on the back, 18 March 1915.

Therefore, I share Cvijić's opinion that revolutionary work should commence and that Yugoslav leaders should be engaged with it, so that the people are prepared to resist Italian occupation, which would no doubt provide the best document [*sic*] for settling the question to our benefit. Presence and work of the Yugoslav émigrés there for the purpose of preparing a national movement for unification with Serbia could be much more useful than their staying here where the official circles are very well, and the public fairly, informed about the ethnographic situation in Dalmatia and Istria, and where the Yugoslav émigrés could be detrimental to [our] work for Serbia relating to the Macedonian question which is more difficult and important for us, because of their lack of understanding and depreciation of the Serbian state's interests in the central area of the Balkan peninsula. Supilo has good connections here, but he has already done [what he could] and gave all information where necessary, so I think he would also be more useful there in preparing the real reasons which could dispose favourably our allies for whom the most beautiful sheer words will hardly have that persuasive power that lies in a lively action. The solution of the western question cannot depend on settling relations with Bulgaria in Macedonia, because the factors of these questions are different and without mutual connection. These are two completely separate matters. [...] Thus it should not be thought that we will have more success in the west if we are giving way in Macedonia. We will succeed in the west insofar as Italy and the Triple Alliance feel a danger from further difficulties and conflicts on that side, in case injustice is done to the Yugoslavs, and not if they make concessions to the Bulgarians. Our Yugoslav brethren do not understand that and, wishing to have as much success in the west as possible, they are willing unconsciously to harm Serbia's great interests in Macedonia. Thus I find that they should be directed to work energetically for [the benefit of] their own parts and let us take care about preserving Serbia's rights in Macedonia for which prospects are quite good.³¹

In parallel with the Yugoslav question and the pressure exerted on her to make concessions in Macedonia, Serbia had to deal with another threat: there was a possibility that her allies might promise to Romania the entire province of the Banat in the course of secret negotiations with Bucharest to induce that country to join them in the war. Part of the Banat was populated by Serbs and obtaining it was envisaged as part of Serbia's war aims. To justify their conduct, the allies not only invoked the necessities of warfare, but also presented Serbia's sacrifice of the Banat as a reasonable concession which would be compensated in the western provinces. After having heard all Bošković's appeals that the allies should not make any decisions on Serbia's northern borders without consulting the Serbian government, the delivery of a memoir concerning the Banat and delimitation with Romania (a map made by Cvijić was attached to the memoir with the Serbian proposal for the Romanian border), Grey explicitly warned the Serbian Minister "that it would not be wise perhaps not to acquire Bosnia

³¹ AJ, 80-2-10, Bošković (and Cvijić) to Pašić, 4 April 1915, no. 387; also Bošković to Pašić, 15 April 1915, no. 430.

and [an outlet to] sea in case we do not succeed to beat the enemy.”³² Bošković recommended to Pašić that no effort should be spared to defend Serbian interests in St. Petersburg where negotiations with the Romanians were taking place. Anticipating that the allies would request from Serbia to assist the Italian and Romanian armies once they had started their operations, the Minister argued that should be refused without territorial compensations, making the most of the situation and redressing the border settlement with both countries. Cvijić appears to have spoken on his behalf as well when he advised that it was better to mark time and have a free hand at a decisive moment to settle matters in the field than to indulge in futile protests: “Do not make a fuss. Let us deal kindly with Italy, but in such manner as not to assume any commitment. In due course, when the General Staff considers it opportune, undertake a military action, but in Croatia rather than in Bosnia.”³³

Bošković believed that once the matter of Serbian-Romanian border had been settled the Entente Powers would increase their pressure on Serbia to make concessions to Bulgaria in Macedonia. In that case, Bošković suggested to Pašić to adopt a determined stance towards the allies. In his view, any Serbian weakness and conciliatoriness might encourage the allies to reach a unilateral solution and present Serbia with a *fait accompli*. “However, if we are resolved to defend the territory of our state from Bulgaria even by force of arms, I am firmly convinced,” Bošković wrote, “that we have already and finally won that game because the powers of the Triple Alliance, our allies, cannot in any case use physical force against Serbia, and they will not want to cause a fresh catastrophe in the Balkans in order to satisfy Bulgaria.”³⁴ Aside from that, the Minister recommended that Serbia cling to her alliance agreement with Greece, to the conclusion of which he had contributed considerably, in case of a Bulgarian attack. “Feeling that the critical moment is fast-approaching, I consider it my duty, just like I have done on several occasions before, in the face of dangers threatening Serbia, especially prior to the war against Bulgaria and last summer prior to Austria-Hungary’s preparations to attack Serbia, to present my opinion to you in this extremely important matter and to ask of you to pay attention to it.”³⁵

³² AJ, 80-2-10, Bošković’s telegrams to Pašić on 22 April 1915, no. 450; 24 April 1915, no. 479; 9 May 1915, no. 521 [quoted]; 29 June 1915, without number.

³³ Andrija Lainović, “Misija Jovana Cvijica u Londonu 1915. godine”, *Vranjski glasnik*, VII (1971), doc. 23, Cvijić to Pašić, 9 June 1915, conf. no. 628, 318-319; Trgovčević, “Politička delatnost Jovana Cvijica u Londonu 1915. godine”, 391-392.

³⁴ AJ, 80-2-10, Bošković to Pašić, 19 May 1915, no. 546. The Minister also suspected the British Minister in Niš, Sir Charles des Graz, of not relaying accurately either Pašić’s or the Foreign Office’s messages regarding Macedonia, toning down the former and amplifying the latter, in order to score a personal success by roping Pašić into accepting the Entente Powers’ demands (AS, MID-PO, 1915, f. XI, d. VIII, Bošković to Pašić, 22 May 1915, conf. no. 562).

³⁵ *Ibid.* Bošković’s opinion was in full agreement with that of Cvijić expressed in his telegram to Pašić (AJ, 80-2-10, 16 May 1915, no. 540). On that occasion, Cvijić provided a rather

In March and April 1915, the negotiations between Rome and the Entente Powers about Italy's entry into war were intensified in London. For all their secrecy, the Serbian government learned from several sources, including from Supilo who was then lobbying in St. Petersburg, that the allies were willing to agree to Italy's having not just Istria and Gorizia, but also a large part of Dalmatia in an attempt to step up Italian military intervention. Since Pašić believed that Italy could at most receive Trieste, Trentino and a half of Istria with the port of Pula and the Croat émigrés envisioned the Italian border as far north as along the Isonzo (Soča) river, it is not difficult to understand the horrific impression made by the extent of Italian ambitions.³⁶ Pašić reacted with resolve. After the Russian Foreign Ministry had rebuffed his intention to visit St. Petersburg to defend the Yugoslav cause, the Serbian government sent a note to their allies on 6 April with the request that "the Yugoslav provinces not be made an object of transactions between them and Italy at the expense of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and the peace of Europe."³⁷ The attitude of the British government was not encouraging either, as Bošković was given to understand that considerable concessions would have to be made to Italy. The Permanent Under-Secretary in the Foreign Office, Sir Arthur Nicolson, stated to him on behalf of Grey himself "that as a minimum of gains, Herzegovina and a wide stretch of Dalmatian coast will be secured for Serbia." Bošković did not respond to Nicolson's statement, which effectively ignored the Yugoslav programme of the Serbian government, and insisted on the significance of a favourable arrangement of the northern borders with Hungary and Romania. However, Pašić had no intention to abandon a Yugoslav unification. "What did [Nicolson] say about Bosnia? - And what did [he] say [about] Croatia, Slovenia? - And what about the Banat and

striking description of what all his attempts to present the Serbian view of the Macedonian problem to influential Britons amounted to: "After having admitted and accepted a well-known series of our reasons for the importance of the [river] Vardar communication for Serbia, for the inconvenience of letting Bulgaria drive a wedge between ourselves and Greece and making contact with Albania and Italy, and after some have even allowed for the possibility that the Macedonians are not Bulgarians, contrary to a deep-rooted opinion here, almost all of them still conclude that they rely on the judiciousness and conciliatoriness of our Government inasmuch they will find a way to satisfy the Bulgarians with [the town of] Bitolj for the sake of a future Balkan concord and because they need the Bulgarians for [waging war against] Turkey." It was exactly this British reliance on the conciliatoriness of the Pašić government that motivated both Bošković and Cvijić to make their case to convince the Serbian Prime Minister in the necessity for being inflexible.

³⁶ Šepić, "Iz korespondencije Frana Supila", Trumbić to Supilo, Rome, 5. I. 1915, 342-347; Dragovan Šepić, "Srpska vlada, Jugoslavenski odbor i pitanje kompromisne granice s Italijom", *Jugoslovenski istorijski časopis* 3 (1964), 37-40.

³⁷ Šepić, "Srpska vlada i počeci Jugoslavenskog odbora", 29.

Bačka? - If he did not say explicitly, did he think of those parts as well?" Pašić asked for further information.³⁸

In the circumstances when the greatest danger to the Yugoslav lands came from Italy, the moving of the émigrés out of Rome and that country was imperative. They left for Paris where the Yugoslav Committee was formally constituted on 30 April 1915 with Trumbić as its president - from that moment onwards he was a central figure in the work of Yugoslav irredentists.³⁹ Through the agency of Vesnić the émigrés went to see Delcassé the next day and handed him a memorandum on the aspirations of the Yugoslav people to form a single state. On 9 May, the Yugoslav Committee arrived in London which would become its headquarters for the rest of the war. London had long been envisioned as a centre for irredentist action by both Pašić and the émigrés - the Croats among the latter had their special reasons as they thought that Britain's capital would offer them best possibilities to safeguard their particular interests.⁴⁰ In this, as will be seen, they would be proven right. But the main impetus to move to London was the fact that the fate of Dalmatia and other Yugoslav lands was then being decided there. There were also other reasons:

1) it was predicted that Great Britain would have the most significant role in the war and at a peace conference; 2) our action was in large part based on the response our movement met with among [our] émigrés in the United States of America, with whom it was easiest to correspond from London; 3) the chances were that we would have most freedom to act in London, eventually even against the aspirations of the Italian government; 4) our great friends and renowned experts on the situation of Austria-Hungary, W. Steed and Seton-Watson, were there; 5) professor [Tomáš Garrigue] Masaryk [the leader of the Czech national movement] decided to move his seat from Geneva to London.⁴¹

Of these reasons, the role of the "English friends" of Serbia, as they were regularly referred to in Serbian diplomatic correspondence, should be specially noted. Along with Seton-Watson and Steed, it was the famous archaeologist, Sir Arthur John Evans, familiar with Balkan affairs since the 1875 uprising in Herzegovina - he had written a popular account of his personal experience of the area⁴² - and George Macaulay Trevelyan, another distinguished historian,

³⁸ AJ, 80-2-10, Bošković to Pašić, 22 April 1915, no. 455, and Pašić's note on the back, 23 April 1915.

³⁹ Hinko Hinković, *Iz velikog doba: moj rad i moji doživljaji za vrijeme svjetskog rata* (Zagreb: Komisionalna naklada Ćirilo-Methodske nakladne knjižare, 1927), 150.

⁴⁰ Stojanović, *Jugoslovenski odbor*, 11; Šepić, "Supilo u emigraciji", 62-63.

⁴¹ Stojanović, *Jugoslovenski odbor*, 14: also see discussion in Ekmečić, *Ratni ciljevi Srbije*, 345-347.

⁴² Arthur Evans, *Through Bosnia and the Herzegovina on Foot during the Insurrection, August and September 1875: with an historical review of Bosnia and a glimpse at the Croats, Slavonians,*

who mattered most. It was not a coincidence that these four prominent Britons, together with Cvijić, comprised "a committee for working in the English public opinion" which was supposed to "ask of the more eminent English politicians and writers who are regarded as being favourable to Serbia to present their views on the Yugoslav question and make them public."⁴³ These people had also played a major part in the founding and promotion of the Serbian Relief Fund which had been providing much humanitarian aid to Serbia after September 1914. They and a group of their supporters became distinct in the British public sphere as champions of the nationality principle, which meant that they advocated the break-up of Austria-Hungary and the right to freedom for the oppressed peoples under the Habsburgs, an objective alien to the British government until the last year of the war.

The moving spirit of their campaign, especially in the press, was Seton-Watson (also known by his pen name Scotus Viator) whose views on the nationality question in Austria-Hungary, Yugoslav unification and his personal commitment have been a matter of much discussion in historiography.⁴⁴ His attitude had evolved over time. At first he had been an advocate of the need to reform the Habsburg Empire in a liberal spirit, considering it an important and useful factor in European order. As he had grown disappointed with the methods of rule over the politically subdued Slavs and Romanians, especially on the part of Hungarian aristocracy, Seton-Watson had come to favour a trialist rearrangement of Austria-Hungary in which the South Slavs would have formed a third constitutional unit, along with Austria and Hungary, of a confederation.⁴⁵ On the basis of information that had reached him, Seton-Watson had pinned his hopes for transformation of the Habsburg Monarchy on the personality of

and the Ancient Republic of Ragusa (London: Longmans, Green, and Co, 1876).

⁴³ Lainovic, "Misija Jovana Cvijica u Londonu 1915. godine", doc. 3, Bošković to Pašić, 26 February 1915, 305.

⁴⁴ Hugh and Christopher Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe; Gábor Bátonyi, Britain and Central Europe, 1918–1933* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999); James Evans, *Great Britain and the Creation of Yugoslavia: Negotiating Balkan National Identity* (London and New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2008); May, "Seton-Watson and the Treaty of London", 42–47; Arthur J. May, "R. W. Seton-Watson and British Anti-Hapsburg Sentiment", *The American Slavic and East European Review* 20/1 (Feb., 1961), 40–54; Hugh Seton-Watson, "Robert William Seton-Watson i jugoslavensko pitanje", *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 2/2 (1970), 75–97; Nicholas J. Miller, "R. W. Seton-Watson and Serbia during the Reemergence of Yugoslavism, 1903–1914", *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism* XV/1-2 (1988), 59–69; László Péter, "R. W. Seton-Watson's Changing Views on the National Question of the Habsburg Monarchy and the European Balance of Power", *The Slavonic and East European Review* 82/3 (July 2004), 655–679.

⁴⁵ R. W. Seton-Watson, *The Southern Slav Question and the Hapsburg Monarchy* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1911).

Franz Ferdinand. As for Serbia, he had shared the wide-spread prejudices in Britain arising out of the disrepute in which that country had fallen following the brutal murder of the last Obrenović monarch and his wife in 1903. The animosity to corruption and wickedness of the Serbian regime, if not the entire society, served to reinforce his propensity for settling the Yugoslav matter within the framework of the Habsburg Monarchy. It was only after the outbreak of war and Vienna's definite siding with Germany that Seton-Watson embraced the notion of Austria-Hungary's demise and the creation of a large Yugoslav state, including Serbia and Montenegro. In a memorandum addressed to the Foreign Office on 1 October 1914, he put on record his vision of such a country which would be "a federal union" under the Serbian king and consist of the Triune Kingdom Croatia-Slavonia-Dalmatia, a nominal virtually non-existent autonomous unit within Austria-Hungary, and Serbia with which Montenegro would be merged, each unit having its own parliament. A common parliament would hold its sessions in alternating cities, or in Sarajevo as a permanent capital of a prospective Yugoslavia. This transfer of political centre from Belgrade to Sarajevo was designed to reflect the Yugoslav as opposed to Serbian character of a new state, a point which Seton-Watson stressed throughout his memorandum.⁴⁶ As far as the Slovenes were concerned, they were supposed to be incorporated in the Triune Kingdom rather than allowed to preserve their own political and cultural individuality. With this in view, it is clear that Seton-Watson envisaged a would-be Yugoslavia arranged in constitutional terms as something of a dualist Austria-Hungary on the ruins of which it was intended to emerge.

No wonder then that his vision tallied with that of a large number of Croat politicians whose frame of mind was grounded in the ideology of the nationalist Croatian Party of Right and who believed that all the Yugoslav lands of the Habsburg Monarchy could and should centre on Croatia. This resulted in the fusion of their ideas. It was no coincidence that the words of Croat émigrés often reflected Seton-Watson's conceptions,⁴⁷ the only real difference being that Scotus Viator could speak his mind openly, whereas they were constrained, to certain degree, out of regard for the position of the Serbian government. This sort of relationship between them also meant that the Croat émigrés were encouraged to show more determination and persistence in their dealing with

⁴⁶ R. W. Seton-Watson *i Jugoslaveni: Korespodencija, 1906–1941*, ed. Ljubo Boban et al., 2 vols (Zagreb, London: Sveučilište u Zagrebu – Institut za hrvatsku povijest i Britanska akademija), I (1906–1918), doc. 109, R. W. Seton-Watson to Foreign Office, I. X 1914, 180–186. A year later, at the moment when Serbia was under immense pressure from her allies to cede to Bulgaria part of her own territory, Seton-Watson underlined to Regent Alexander the necessity for Serbia to protect the constitutional rights and traditions of the Triune Kingdom and to refuse categorically any breach of its territorial integrity (doc. 151, Seton-Watson to Regent Alexander, 17. IX 1915, 237–240).

⁴⁷ This interplay is noted in Ekmečić, *Ratni ciljevi Srbije*, 356–367.

the Serbian Minister, and even the Pašić government. It is indeed difficult to overstate the extent of Seton-Watson's support for the Croat as opposed to the Serb view of a Yugoslav unification. A few instances are particularly revealing in this respect. In late 1914, en route to Niš, Seton-Watson and Trevelyan met with Trumbić in Rome. The former spent almost a whole day discussing the Yugoslav and Macedonian affairs with the Croat politician. "Since he is our great friend", Trumbić wrote to Supilo, "I told him outright our fears regarding an eventual Serbian particularism, which he duly noted as necessary [for him] to sound out in Niš and he will inform me of it on his way back."⁴⁸ Scotus Viator did as he had promised and reassured Trumbić as to the political mood in Serbia during their next meeting. As he was going to report in the Foreign Office on his journey to Serbia and the Balkans, Seton-Watson asked Trumbić if there was any message on his part he could pass on to Grey. The Croat émigré availed himself of this opportunity and let him know of the plans for the formation of an émigré committee in London. As for a Yugoslav unification, Trumbić explained that it was envisaged "with the aim of preventing the cession of our lands, now part of Austria-Hungary, to Italy, on the one side, and to Serbia and Montenegro, on the other [...] I recommended him, as a very important matter, which he understood and accepted to do so, to deliver this [message] to Grey."⁴⁹ As can be seen, Seton-Watson's views and actions may have easily been those of another Croat émigré. In political terms, notwithstanding his admirable humanitarian work for the Serbian people and the army, he was a friend of Croatia, not of Serbia. Against this backdrop, it is not that much surprising to see Seton-Watson in the spring of 1915, when the negotiations with the Italians involving extensive territorial concessions in Dalmatia were coming to the fore, dissatisfied with Bošković, of which more will be said later, consider "quite definitely working for an independent Croatia."⁵⁰ Given that this consideration was part of a memorandum Seton-Watson prepared for a conference with Yugoslav leaders, one can only guess what passed between them and what the depth of their intimate collaboration was.

Although the assistance that British public figures extended to the Yugoslav Committee is part of any narrative about the Yugoslav question during the war, it is clear from the above analysis that its full extent and impact on the Yugoslav émigrés, and their relations with the Serbian government, have not been fully appreciated. Seton-Watson and Steed were convinced that the Yugoslav representatives, above all Trumbić and Supilo, were making a serious mistake because they were not present in London while the secret talks between Italy and the allies were underway. They believed that the Committee's, and

⁴⁸ Šepić, "Iz korespondencije Frana Supila," Trumbić to Supilo, Rome, 24. XII. 1914, 283–286.

⁴⁹ Šepić, "Trumbićev 'Dnevnik'," Rome, 9. II. 1915, 186–189.

⁵⁰ May, "Seton-Watson and the Treaty of London", 43, note 10.

especially Supilo's, contact with the Foreign Office and the press, in which the two of them would provide substantial support, could have made a difference and prevented the extortionist territorial concessions to Italy on the eastern Adriatic coast.⁵¹ Seton-Watson's and Steed's assumption was certainly much exaggerated as the decision of the Entente Powers was dictated by urgent political and military requirements which left little room for ethnographic, moral or any other considerations. The "English friends" urged Trumbić to arrive immediately, but he was with the Serbian government in Niš, while Supilo was staying in St. Petersburg, operating under misapprehension that Russia rather than France and Britain bore the greatest responsibility for conceding to Italy so much and that it was there that he must exert all his powers of persuasion. It was a testament to their persistence that they "sent them [Yugoslav émigrés] an urgent wire every day for a week, on the plea that it was vital that they should publish their manifesto before the fait accompli of Italy's entry [into war]".⁵² In addition, the British friends also appealed to the "Yugoslavs" through Cvijić and Bošković to make an appearance in London and throw their weight in the scales. Their suggestion was to have Bošković introduce the Committee to Grey and the Serbian Minister was in agreement.⁵³ He also found that the moment was ripe for a decisive action and himself proposed to Pašić that a Yugoslav manifest be published - the Prime Minister agreed.⁵⁴ Just like distinguished Britons, Pašić thought that the time had come for the émigrés to base their activities in Britain: "The Yugoslav Committee should have its seat in London, and as necessary its people in Paris, Rome, St. Petersburg, America, also in Geneva." Its task would be to prepare an organisation of all Yugoslavs for the purpose of unification, since Pašić gauged that the realisation of a union after the successful war would

⁵¹ Henry Wickham Steed, *Through Thirty Years, 1892-1922: A Personal Narrative*, 2 vols (London: William Heinemann, 1924), II, 54; the introduction in *Seton-Watson i Jugoslaveni: Korespodencija*, I, 23-24; Hugh and Christopher Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe*, 131.

⁵² May, "Seton-Watson and the Treaty of London", 44.

⁵³ AJ, 80-2-10, Cvijić to Pašić, 23 April 1915, no. 462; 80-11-50, Bošković to Paris Legation, no date, conf. no. 449; Lainovic, "Misija Jovana Cvijica u Londonu 1915. godine", doc. 10, Cvijić to Pašić, 21 April 1915, 309. Vesnić sent a message to the London Legation on 23 April (no. 675), presumably for Seton-Watson, "that Trumbić and the others cannot leave tomorrow because of an unexpected hindrance." In reply to this delay, Cvijić relayed what nearly amounted to an ultimatum: "The English friends say that if Trumbić and the others do not arrive tomorrow evening, it is then too late and they will not be bothered about them any longer." Vesnić explained that the reason for their delay was a refusal of the British consulate to grant them visas (Cvijić to Paris Legation, 23 April 1915, conf. no. 464 and Vesnić to Cvijić, 25 April 1915, no. 686).

⁵⁴ AJ, 80-2-10, Bošković to Pašić, 8 April 1915, no. 405, and Pašić's note on the back, 9 April 1915.

“depend mostly on the people in Croatia and Slovenia.”⁵⁵ Besides, Bošković had been making practical preparations for the arrival of an émigré committee for some time. Expecting that around ten people would come to London from Rome, he had informed the Foreign Ministry that there was some office space in the Legation for their meetings and other activities, but he had asked for financial means to buy furniture and cover other expenses in the ever more pricy London. Pašić replied that the committee would have their own accommodation for which all the expenses would be met.⁵⁶ The Serbian government, therefore, also did their part to have the émigrés relocated to Britain, but the latter seem to have been more roused to action by their British friends.

Once it had arrived in London, the Yugoslav Committee found itself under Seton-Watson's and Steed's instant and even more intensive pressure to make its political programme public. They had urged both Cvijić and Bošković in mid-April to telegraph Supilo and ask him to draw up a programme which they would publish immediately.⁵⁷ Convinced in the infallibility of his judgement to remain in Russia, Supilo had not replied to their request and Seton-Watson had then turned to Hinko Hinković twelve days prior to the émigrés' moving to London, sending him a draft memorandum for further elaboration or to be forwarded to Supilo and Trumbić. Moreover, Seton-Watson had proposed a list of leading personalities to sign the Yugoslav programme, including Trumbić and Supilo.⁵⁸ Clearly, it was Supilo's unresponsiveness that made Scotus Viator increasingly take matters into his own hands. The strong initiative from Seton-Watson was also apparent from the fact that his draft memorandum included the statement that a future Yugoslavia would be a federation. However, that was left out from the final text as Vasiljević, a Serb from Bosnia-Herzegovina, must have opposed it – Stojanović would have also opposed it, but he was not in London – and the Croats must have had enough political acumen to appreciate that the time was not opportune for discussing such a delicate issue. The opposition of the two Herzegovinian Serbs had already prevented Trumbić from including the request for a plebiscite in the Yugoslav lands of Austria-Hungary in a

⁵⁵ Šepić, “Srpska vlada i počeci Jugoslavenskog odbora”, 34; Vojislav Vučković, “Iz odnosa Srbije i Jugoslovenskog odbora”, *Istorijski časopis XII-XIII* (1961–1962), 356.

⁵⁶ AJ, 80-8-41, Bošković to MID, 1/14 February 1915, without number; Pašić to Bošković, 2 February 1915, no. 1177. A little later Bošković consulted Pašić about whether he should rent furnished or unfurnished premises for the émigrés given the price difference and the possibility that the purchased furniture might remain later for the use in his Legation (10/23 March 1915, without number).

⁵⁷ *Seton-Watson i Jugoslaveni: Korespodencija*, I, doc. 129, R. W. Seton-Watson to Jovan Cvijić, [London], 15. IV 1915, 211; AJ, 80-11-51, Bošković to St. Petersburg Legation, 4 April 1915, conf. no. 389.

⁵⁸ *Seton-Watson i Jugoslaveni: Korespodencija*, I, doc. 133, R. W. Seton-Watson to Hinko Hinković, [London], 28. IV 1915, 215–216; doc. 137, a draft memorandum, 222.

memorandum prepared for and delivered to the French Foreign Ministry and the Russian Embassy in Paris on 10 May 1915 (not to be confused with the memorandum given to Delcassé nine days earlier).⁵⁹ Stojanović and Vasiljević could not possibly agree to proposals which ignored the reality that the Entente Powers had promised Serbia some territories, the largest of which was their own Bosnia-Herzegovina, or laid down the internal constitutional arrangement of a would-be country without consulting the Serbian government. This certainly helped avoid difficulties with the Serbian Minister, since Bošković pointed out to Pašić - and it is safe to assume that the latter was in full agreement - that "the question of relations between the Serbs and Croats as our common internal affair should not now be touched upon or placed before the public and the powers".⁶⁰ Nevertheless, Seton-Watson realised his main intention and the "Appeal to the British Nation and Parliament", in the writing of which he and Steed had taken part no less than the Yugoslav émigrés themselves, was published in the *Times* and other newspapers as early as 13 May.⁶¹ Ironically, all their efforts were in vain, as the London Treaty with Italy had been signed on 26 April. The Serbian government was not informed of that development either. It was only a day later that Bošković managed to find out from a private source "that France took initiative to make these concessions to Italy [...] and that England accepted the matter and helped make Russia, which had long resisted, go along."⁶²

While Pašić apparently hoped that the Yugoslav Committee would provide considerable assistance to the Serbian government to see the Yugoslav programme through, Bošković proved to have been much more sceptical. This probably stemmed from the fact that just two days before the arrival of the émigrés in London he had a conversation with Grey, as well as with the Russian and French Ambassadors, from which he gathered that the allies were prone to accept the proposition of an independent Croatia and that Italy was particularly insistent on such a scheme in order to keep the Croats separated from the Serbs and facilitate its entrenchment in the eastern Adriatic.⁶³ Moreover, Bošković came into conflict with the leading Croat émigrés from the very beginning of their stay in Britain. Dispute between them and the Serbian Minister arose out

⁵⁹ Stojanović, *Jugoslavenski odbor*, 15; Nikola Stojanović, *Mladost jednog pokoljenja (uspomene 1880–1920) i Dnevnik od godine 1914. do 1918.*, ed. Mile Stanić (Belgrade: Istorijski institut, 2015), 263.

⁶⁰ Dragovan Šepić, *Italija, saveznici i jugoslavensko pitanje, 1914–1918* (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1970), 94; Stanković, *Nikola Pašić i jugoslavensko pitanje*, II, 128–129.

⁶¹ "The Southern Slavs: Aims of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes", *The Manchester Guardian*, 13 May 1915, p. 8.

⁶² AJ, 80-8-41, Bošković's note, 2 May 1915 (new style), on the back of Pašić to London Legation, 14 April 1915, no. 4269.

⁶³ AJ, 80-2-10, Bošković to Pašić, 29 April 1915, no. 488.

of the publication of the above mentioned manifest of the Yugoslav Committee. Bošković explained this affair to Pašić as follows:

Before publication that text was not shown to me and they showed it to Cvijić yesterday at noon after they all had signed it. I found that the manifest did not take sufficient account of the role and importance of Serbia in the work for unification of the Croats and Slovenes with the Serbs and that it practically sacrificed the state idea of Serbia around which the South Slavs should gather together. As it might happen that Grey will not receive the committee without my request and perhaps my personal presence at the audience, and I cannot agree to the committee's advancing such ideas in my presence, as that would mean that the Serbian government are also in agreement, I need your instructions and your orders as to what attitude I should take. I think that the committee should present to us beforehand not just the text of the memoir [prepared] for Grey, but also all that they want to say to Grey during the audience and that we should approve of it. Otherwise the matter can turn out to be inconvenient and unpleasant to Serbia. I can tell you that Croat ideas and tendencies have already emerged from the committee, and the English friends are pushing it in that direction. It would be better if the committee could complete its business here as soon as possible without the participation of the Serbian Minister and leave as soon as possible.⁶⁴

Cvijić advised Prime Minister in a similar vein and Pašić decided that the émigrés would have to be in agreement with Bošković about things to be said to Grey, if the Minister was going to present them to the British Foreign Secretary.⁶⁵ But he neither commented on Bošković's dissatisfaction with the Croat émigrés' attitude nor Cvijić's reservations on account of their insistence on using the name Yugoslavia for a future country, though the Serbian government made no decision in that respect. He appears to have been inclined to agree with Cvijić's opinion that the existing difficulties emerged because the Yugoslav spirit had still not matured and that patience and circumspection on the Serbian side would contribute to harmonisation, especially once a common state had become a reality.

As soon as the Yugoslav manifest affair had been settled, Bošković became suspicious of Trumbić's and Hinković's second thoughts about whether they should be received by Grey in his presence, just like Vesnić had taken them to Delcassé in Paris. "I cannot comprehend their attitude and they leave me with the impression that they want to work on their own, while the Legation is supposed to accept everything and be solidary with their work with the English

⁶⁴ AJ, 80-2-10, Bošković to Pašić, 30 April 1915, no. 494; Janković, *Srbija i jugoslovensko pitanje*, 496-497.

⁶⁵ AJ, 80-2-10, Cvijić to Pašić, 30 April 1915, no. 495, and Pašić's note on the back, 2 May 1915; Šepić, *Italija, saveznici i jugoslovensko pitanje*, 97-98; Janković, *Srbija i jugoslovensko pitanje*, 497-498.

government”, he complained to Pašić.⁶⁶ After having returned from Paris, where they had been given opportunity to speak before the members of parliamentary commission for foreign affairs, the émigrés were willing to be introduced to Grey and hand him a memorandum on the Yugoslav question, a copy of what they had earlier given to Delcassé. In fact, the Foreign Office had promised Seton-Watson on 7 May that Grey would receive the representatives of the Yugoslav Committee on the same terms as the French Foreign Minister – that meant that the Serbian Minister had to be present.⁶⁷

The drafting of a memorandum led, however, to wrangle between Bošković and the Croat émigrés which reflected their different conceptions of a Yugoslav unification and, especially, the role Serbia was going to play in that process. Bošković raised objections to the memorandum prepared by the Yugoslav Committee concerning the usage of the name Yugoslavia and the treatment of Dalmatia. As has been seen, attention had already been drawn to the fact that the Serbian government had not approved the Yugoslav label for a prospective country. However, resistance to the name Yugoslavia among many Serbs cannot be understood without appreciating that, in their view, that name had been associated with the alleged Austrian conception of a Yugoslav unification within the Habsburg Monarchy restructured on the trialist basis.⁶⁸ This practically meant that Yugoslav unification within Austria-Hungary would have been completed against Belgrade’s ambitions and goals and that even the Serb population in the Habsburg lands would have remained permanently separated from Serbia. For that reason, a large number of Serbs, and Radicals in particular, were not sympathetic to that name, seeing in it, as Pašić’s deputy, Stojan Protić, explained during the 1917 conference between the Serbian government and the members of the Yugoslav Committee in Corfu, an Austrian product which had been “directed against the Serbian name”.⁶⁹ Contrary to the Serbs, the Croats favoured the name Yugoslavia because it underscored that a new state would not have an exclusive, or even predominant, Serbian character. In this respect, the clash between Bošković and the émigrés with regard to Meštrović’s exhibition held in the Victoria and Albert Museum in June 1915 was revealing. According

⁶⁶ AJ, 80-2-10, Bošković to Pašić, 7 May 1915, no. 516.

⁶⁷ Hugh and Cristopher Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe*, 132.

⁶⁸ Mirjana Gross, “Hrvatska politika velikoaustrijskog kruga oko prijestolonasljednika Franje Ferdinanda”, *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 2/2 (1970), 9–74; John Zarnetta, *Folly and Malice: The Habsburg Empire, the Balkans and the Start of World War One* (London: Shephard-Walwyn, 2017), 71–96.

⁶⁹ *Krfska konferencija* (Belgrade: Štamparija “Skerlić”, 1934), 82, 84. Pavle Popović later confirmed that the Serbs had been in general opposed to the name Yugoslavia and that he had also expressed such opinion to the members of the Yugoslav Committee (“Memorandum Jugoslovenskog odbora i poslanik Srbije”, *Srpski književni glasnik* XXI/1 (1927), 426–434).

to Meštrović's and Seton-Watson's recollections, the Minister shunned the opening of the exhibition after Meštrović had declined to present himself as a Serbian instead of a Serbo-Croatian, i.e. a Yugoslav, artist.⁷⁰ Bošković denied that this had been a true reason for his absence and alluded to the improper attitude of the Croat émigrés towards a prominent Briton with whom he had agreed to act as a patron of the exhibition.⁷¹ But given his views on the Yugoslav name there is no doubt that this was, at least, one of the contributory factors of his dissatisfaction. However, Vesnić wanted to be present because the event provided an opportunity for a public display of Serbian-British friendship; he proposed to Jovanović-Pižon he should go as a friend of Meštrović rather than in an official capacity out of regard for Bošković's position. Jovanović-Pižon agreed with his suggestion, probably after having consulted Pašić, and instructed Vesnić to go to London together with Jovan Žujović.⁷² Vesnić's presence at the opening of the exhibition certainly helped to mitigate the impression made by Bošković's absence, although neither Vesnić nor the Serbian Foreign Ministry were familiar with what was going on between the Minister in London and Meštrović, or could have anticipated that the former would not make an appearance at the event.

The second issue Bošković took with the memorandum concerned the stress it laid on a union between Dalmatia and Croatia (and Slavonia) on the basis of the Croatian state right. As he pointed out to Pašić, he endeavoured "not to have some Croatia's special and exclusive rights on Dalmatia emphasised, as it emerged from the committee's first draft. For if it occurs that Croatia must be organised as an autonomous [i.e. independent] state or province, then Serbia should preserve her rights on Dalmatia so that it cannot be said that we have admitted Croatia's claim by accepting such wording of the memoir and mediating for its submission to the English government."⁷³ Bošković later described his stance in an informal conversation as a struggle against an attempt on the part of the Croats from the Yugoslav Committee to "outline the borders of Croatia with

⁷⁰ Ivan Meštrović, *Uspomene na političke ljude i događaje* (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1969), 52–53; R. W. Seton-Watson, "Kako je postala Jugoslavija (Jugoslovenski odbor i Srbijanska Vlada u Londonu, za vreme Rata)", *Nova Evropa* XV/1, 11 January 1927, 6–18.

⁷¹ Mateja Bošković, "Jugoslovenski odbor i Srbijanska vlada", *Politika*, 13 May 1927, p. 2.

⁷² AJ, 80-2-9, Vesnić to Jovan Jovanović, Paris, 18/31 May 1915 and Jovanović's note on the back, 1 June 1915. Nevertheless, Bošković supported Meštrović's idea to exhibit his works in Russia in 1916, which he deemed an effective form of national propaganda (AJ, 80-11-51, Bošković to Miroslav Spalajković (St. Petersburg), 15/21 December 1915, conf. no. 1254). The Serbian government dropped the idea because of considerable expenses involved and the difficulties of transporting Meštrović's pieces (Dragoslav Janković, "O odnosima Jugoslovenskog odbora sa srpskom vladom u 1916. godini", *Historijski zbornik* 29-30 (1976-1977), 455, note 2).

⁷³ AJ, 80-8-41, Bošković to Pašić, 19 June 1915, conf. no. 653; Janković, *Srbija i jugoslovensko pitanje*, 499.

Dalmatia, Istria and Bosnia".⁷⁴ Dispute between him and the Croat émigrés, especially Trumbić, took a long time, was bitter and overcome mostly due to Pavle Popović's mediation.⁷⁵ The other Serbs in London had much tactfulness and patience, making allowance for the mentality of the Habsburg subjects, but they were essentially in agreement with Bošković, though they appear not to have shared his doubts about the "separatism" of the Croat émigrés. Speaking for the Serbs of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Stojanović and Vasiljević supported the Serbian Minister's standpoint.⁷⁶ Finally, Trumbić realised that power relations were such as to make it impossible for him and other Croats to impose their views on the diplomatic representative of Serbia. After having inquired of Pavle Popović whether Bošković was acting under instructions from Niš and having been replied that he was not aware that this was the case, Trumbić concluded, not entirely reassured, that they would do as required.⁷⁷

With the agreed text of the memorandum, it was not before 2 July 1915 that Bošković took eight members of the Yugoslav Committee to the Foreign Office where Lord Crewe received them instead of the indisposed Grey. It was only after this audience – during which Lord Crewe significantly warned the Yugoslavs that no nation had ever fulfilled all its aspirations and never would – that the Minister reported to Pašić on the differences which had emerged between himself and the émigrés, sent him both versions of the memorandum (that initially proposed by the Yugoslav Committee and the final one submitted to the Foreign Office) and expressed his expectation that his conduct would be approved.⁷⁸ Clearly, Pašić had not been aware of the conflict between Bošković and the émigrés while it had been going on prior to the audience with Lord Crewe. Once he had been apprised of what had transpired, the Prime Minister neither minuted nor replied to Bošković's report. The latter was consequently justified to take this as a tacit approval of his handling of the affair. The rift between Bošković and the Croat members of the Yugoslav Committee, though it had been settled, remained in the mind of both parties, as well as Seton-Watson, a serious incident which brought into relief the differences in their conceptions of Yugoslav unification and foreshadowed the conflicts to come. Some years after the war it was still central to an altercation between Bošković and Seton-Watson

⁷⁴ Jovan Žujović, *Dnevnik*, 2 vols (Belgrade: Arhiv Srbija, 1986), II, 30 August / 12 September 1915, 183.

⁷⁵ Popović, *Iz dnevnika*, 31 May 1915, 180; 1 June 1915, 181; 2 June 1915, 182.

⁷⁶ Stojanović, *Dnevnik od godine 1914. do 1918*, 265–266; Popović, *Iz dnevnika*, 10 June 1915, 185.

⁷⁷ Popović, *Iz dnevnika*, 1 June 1915, 181–182.

⁷⁸ AJ, 80-8-41, Bošković to Pašić, 19 June 1915, conf. no. 653. It should be noted that Bošković later claimed that the members of the Yugoslav Committee had not published the memorandum handed to Grey and that they had distributed the older one instead, clearly a version he had objected to (Žujović, *Dnevnik*, II, 7/20 September 1915, 187).

arising from their different interpretations of the past events in the pages of the Zagreb and Belgrade press.⁷⁹

As the summer of 1915 went by and military situation was increasingly deteriorating for the Entente Powers with the success of the German army against the Russians in Poland, the failure of the British on the Dardanelles and a stalemate on the Italian front, Serbia was exposed to the growing pressure to make territorial sacrifices in Macedonia and the Banat. Facing the unanimous demands of his allies, Pašić was forced to back down; he strove to extract as many concessions as possible in return for what Serbia would have to yield in Macedonia. Replying to the allied offer of 16 August which promised Bosnia-Herzegovina, Srem, Bačka and part of southern Dalmatia, perhaps Slavonia if possible at the end of the war, Pašić accepted on 1 September to give way in Macedonia, notwithstanding certain modifications in delimitation with Bulgaria, on condition that the allies agreed to assigning the western Banat and Croatia to Serbia and allowing the Slovenes to decide for themselves in the matter of unification with Serbia.⁸⁰ In effect, Pašić requested the Entente guarantee of a Yugoslav unification for concessions to be given in Macedonia. Bošković was, on the other hand, much more concerned with maintaining Serbian territory in the south than securing a Yugoslav union, despite his observance of the Prime Minister's instructions. He did not just doggedly defend the territorial integrity of Serbia in his conversations with Grey and other Foreign Office officials, only reluctantly consenting to minimal concessions to Bulgaria (between the Bregalnica and Vardar rivers), but also tried to impress his determination on Pašić. Speaking of the suggestions that Bulgaria should be given territory across the Vardar, he reminded the Prime Minister that he "has always been against it and I do not see what great benefits for Serbia would have to be on the other side to make me depart from my conviction."⁸¹ Bošković assessed that Grey would not resort to the utmost pressure or give concessions to Sofia without the consent of Serbia, of which he suspected the French and Russian governments, and he was hopeful that Serbia might stand her ground. Nevertheless, the allies seemed to make endless combinations at the expense of his country and the Minister came to fear "that the massacre of the Serbian people's interests will be complete."⁸² Once Bulgarian military action against Serbia had become certain, the only hope to avert disaster lay either in the urgent arrival of Anglo-French

⁷⁹ Janković, *Srbija i jugoslovensko pitanje*, 500–501.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* 127–130; Šepić, *Italija, saveznici i jugoslavensko pitanje*, 125–129, 137–140, 143–144; Andrej Mitrović, *Srbija u Prvom svetskom ratu* (Belgrade: Srpska književna zadruga, 1984), 245–246.

⁸¹ AJ, 80-8-41, Bošković to Pašić, 3 June 1915, conf. no. 711; 80-2-10, Bošković to Pašić, 10 July 1915, no 731; Bošković to Pašić, 17 July 1915, no. 752 [quoted].

⁸² AJ, 80-8-41, Bošković to Pašić, 1 August 1915, conf. no. 794.

troops or a preventive Serbian attack to thwart mobilisation of the Bulgarian army. Bošković's conversation with Lord Kitchener, War Secretary, laid bare the extent of self-deception of the allies which would soon cost Serbia dearly. Indicating that Serbia was about to receive a large-scale assistance from her allies and that Greece would assume a benevolent attitude and allow the transit of the allied troops through its territory, Kitchener believed that Bulgaria might reconsider her military engagement and was against a preventive Serbian attack as it could step up a German and Austro-Hungarian offensive before the arrival of Anglo-French troops. Fearful that Serbia would still be requested to make concessions to Bulgaria, Bošković expressed his personal opinion to Pašić that such a development, as well as allowing Bulgarian troops to enter Macedonia, would be disastrous for the morale of Serbian soldiers, whereas Bulgaria would remain an enemy just the same and mark her time until the beginning of an offensive from the north. "The Powers cannot give us sufficient guarantee that the demise and material destruction of Serbia would not be brought about in this way, since it must be clear in advance how the Bulgarian and German troops would treat the people in Serbia. Even if our allies win [the war] later, the Serbian people will not reap much benefit as Serbia will be devastated", he warned.⁸³

The tension in relations between the London Legation and Supilo carried on. When the latter had informed him about his conversation with Grey on 30 August 1915, and especially about Foreign Secretary's interest in Croatia and Slavonia, Bošković drew attention of Pašić, not for the first time, to the likelihood that this exchange arose from the idea of creating an independent Croatia. In the context of the ongoing negotiations about compensations that Serbia should receive for her ceding territory in Macedonia, the Minister explained the significance of that matter as follows:

If the idea of a Croatia prevails, there will certainly be a danger that Slavonia gets lost for Serbia, which would be a great pity for future Serbo-Croat relations in case it turns out that complete political unification cannot be realised as a result of this war. In my opinion, the unconditional acquiring of Slavonia for Serbia is a question of capital importance on which no transactions should be made, if a favourable further development of Serbo-Croat relations is to be secured. Therefore, I find that under no circumstances the idea should be accepted that Slavonia could freely decide, along with Croatia, if it wants [to unite] with Serbia or not. A request should be clearly made, among the conditions for our concessions to Bulgaria, that Slavonia have to go to Serbia unconditionally. Of course, this [should be the case] unless the whole of Croatia is required to unite with Serbia unconditionally rather than granting Croats the right to self-determination. This should not be agreed to in case of Slavonia: it [that province] needs to be attached to Serbia directly, and not through Croatia.

⁸³ AS, MID-PO, 1915, f. XI, d. VIII, Bošković to Pašić, 18 September 1915, no. 955.

If Dalmatia has not been consulted, what would be the need of doing so with Slavonia. If we do not pay attention to this question while there is time, we can easily have the same bitter experience we have suffered with Dalmatia and which awaits us with the Banat.⁸⁴

Bošković's analysis did not just concern the need to secure the possession of Slavonia if an independent Croatia was created instead of Yugoslavia. He also considered that a mere diplomatic acknowledgement of Slavonia as a preserve of Serbia, together with other territories which could become a matter of dispute between the Serbs and Croats, would practically force the latter to opt for a common South Slav state. "For if Croatia gets Dalmatia, Slavonia and north-west Bosnia, then she is dangerous. And if we get Bosnia and part of Dalmatia and part of Slavonia, then we are a point of gravity for Croatia and they have to go with us."⁸⁵ This was the meaning of the Minister's reference to the necessity of ensuring "a favourable further development of Serbo-Croat relations".

Bošković was particularly alarmed by the fact that proposal for a plebiscite to decide the fate of Bosnia-Herzegovina, southern Dalmatia, Slavonia and Croatia after the war had been mooted during the conversation between Supilo and the British Foreign Secretary. He was convinced "that such combinations, which open the possibility to dispute Serbia's right not just to Croatia, Dalmatia and Slavonia with Srem, but even to the Balkan peninsula [i. e. Bosnia-Herzegovina, a geographically inaccurate reference], could have occurred to neither Grey nor others." Bošković reminded Pašić that Grey had never discussed with him anything else apart from admitting to Serbia "the right to Bosnia and a wide stretch of the Dalmatian coast." "If that had not been the case", he wondered rather rhetorically, "how could have Serbia considered to cede even the smallest part of her present territory to Bulgaria. The idea suggested to the Foreign Office about attaching all the western Serb lands to the narrower Croatia [meaning the *Banska* Croatia as an autonomous unit within Hungary] is full of dangers for Serbia's interests."⁸⁶ The Minister was no doubt correct in his assessment of the origins of the plebiscite idea as the record of the conversation in the Foreign Office shows that it was Supilo who suggested it to Grey.⁸⁷ Bošković

⁸⁴ AJ, 80-2-10, Bošković to Pašić, 19 August 1915, no. 847.

⁸⁵ Popović, *Iz dnevnika*, 29 July 1916, 507-509.

⁸⁶ AJ, 80-2-10, Bošković to Pašić, 21 August 1915, br. 582.

⁸⁷ Hugh and Christopher Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe*, 139; Šepić, *Italija, saveznici i jugoslavensko pitanje*, 141-142. Moreover, Supilo stated to Grey in line with the old nationalist Croat view to which he subscribed that all the provinces in question were "inhabited by Croats" (quoted from the Foreign Office record in Šepić's book). For Britain's policy towards the Yugoslav unification, see Dragoljub Živojinović, "Velika Srbija ili Jugoslavija? Velika Britanija i jugoslovensko ujedinjenje 1914-1918. godine", in *Stvaranje jugoslovenske države 1918: zbornik radova i diskusija* (Belgrade: Institut za savremenu istoriju

was also correct with regard to the ominous nature of the proposal, because it concerned only those territories that could be contested between the Serbs and Croats, leaving aside northern Dalmatia, Istria and the Slovene lands claimed by Italy, on the one side, and Bačka and the Banat on Serbia's northern border, on the other. Aware of the weakness of his position, Supilo admitted to Pašić the deficiencies of "Grey's formula", but still recommended that it be accepted on the grounds that it would set the precedent for other Yugoslav territories.⁸⁸ In fact, following the Treaty of London and after having got wind of the Entente Powers' offer to Serbia of considerable compensations in the Austro-Hungarian territory for concessions in Macedonia, Supilo feared that the Croatian lands would be divided between Italy, Serbia and, possibly, Hungary.⁸⁹ His suggestion to Grey was made for the sole purpose of thwarting the assigning of the Habsburg territories to Serbia, which would make the creation of Yugoslavia, and even of an independent Croatia, an unlikely proposition.

Having been informed of the matter from both Bošković and the British Minister in Niš, Pašić was resolute in his adherence to the Yugoslav programme. The Prime Minister insisted on unification of Croatia with Serbia. If the allies did not accept such a solution because of Italy's opposition, he found that the right course of action was to work to ensure that "Croatia does not hesitate, but to make a decision [in favour of Yugoslavia] when the question of unification with Serbia is posed. Only if we work in this way, we can count on unification of all the Yugoslav lands." Pašić refused to consider any alternative policy certain that Italy stood behind all other combinations, "because we would open the door to all kinds of agitations and intrigues, and turn a safe basis [of our policy] into an uncertain business, the outcome of which we cannot predict."⁹⁰ This was also a rebuff to the plebiscite suggestion as conceived by Supilo. Discussion in the Yugoslav Committee that followed reflected a wide array of opinions on both Supilo's undertaking and Pašić's reply. Having been kept in the dark about Supilo's dealings with the Foreign Office and regarding them as going too far, Trumbić agreed with Pašić's views and geared the Yugoslav Committee towards supporting the Serbian government. It concluded that it was unnecessary in principle to have recourse to a plebiscite, but, if Great Powers were bent on

& Narodna knjiga, 1983), 153–171; Victor Rothwell, "British Policy on the South Slav Question during World War I", in *Jugoslovensko-britanski odnosi: Saopštenja sa okruglog stola, održanog 23–25. septembra 1987. godine u Kragujevcu, povodom 150 godina od dolaska prvog britanskog konzula u Srbiju* (Belgrade: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 1988), 167–190.

⁸⁸ Šepić, *Pisma i memorandumima Frana Supila*, doc. 67, Supilo Pašiću and doc. 68, Supilo Pašiću, London, I. IX. 1915, 103–105.

⁸⁹ Dragovan Šepić, "Hrvatska u koncepcijama Frana Supila o ujedinjenju", *Forum: časopis odjela za savremenu književnost JAZU VII/XV/2–3* (1968), 358–359.

⁹⁰ AJ, 80-2-10, Pašić to Bošković, 22 August 1915, conf. no. 9126.

it, demanded that a plebiscite be held not just in Croatia, but also in all other Yugoslav lands of Austria-Hungary.⁹¹ Supilo insisted on this modification of the plebiscite suggestion with a view to linking the future of Croatia with the rest of Yugoslav territories.

Pašić's attitude left no doubt that he would not depart from the decisions made by the Serbian government after the outbreak of war despite major difficulties Serbia faced in the summer of 1915, reflecting the unfavourable developments for the Entente Powers on the battlefields. Neither the conclusion of the Treaty of London with Italy nor negotiations of the Entente Powers with Bulgaria and Romania in which the interests, and even the territory, of Serbia served as a bargaining chip deterred Pašić from his Yugoslav policy. His stance was clearly different from that of Bošković, who was far from Pašić's resolve in the matter of Yugoslav unification. Although Bošković was not against a Yugoslav union as Serbia's maximal war aim, that was certainly not an indispensable programme in his view. The Minister believed that the vital interests of Serbia concerned the maintenance of Macedonia, or at least the right bank of the Vardar river, as part of the existing state territory and the acquisition of a large part of the Banat including the towns of Vršac and Timișoara (Temišvar). As for the western provinces, he believed, just like all other Serbian statesmen and diplomats, that annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina was a foregone conclusion and hoped for as wide an outlet to sea as possible in Dalmatia and perhaps on the Albanian coast.

A comparison between the views of Pašić and Bošković is especially interesting for the purpose of throwing additional light on the perennial dilemma in historiography as to what Pašić was really after during the Great War. It has been long argued that the Serbian Prime Minister kept two irons in the fire: he balanced between two complementary political programmes, the "large" and the "small" one, the former being a Yugoslav unification and the latter, a reserve option in case the creation of Yugoslavia proved unattainable, a Serb unification, meaning annexation to Serbia of all ethnically undisputable Serb lands and those which were regarded as Serb with more or less justification. Other authors have, on the contrary, emphasised the persistence and permanence of Pašić's championing of the Yugoslav programme.⁹² A careful examination of Pašić's

⁹¹ AJ, 80-2-10, Bošković to Pašić, 27 August 1915, without number; Stojanović, *Dnevnik od godine 1914. do 1918*, 272-275; Janković, *Srbija i jugoslovensko pitanje*, 217-220, 510-512; Šepić, *Italija, saveznici i jugoslovensko pitanje*, 142-143.

⁹² For the accounts which endorse the duality of the "large" and "small" programme see: Paulova, *Jugoslavenski odbor u Londonu*; Jovan M. Jovanović, *Stvaranje zajedničke države Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca*, 3 vols (Belgrade: Štamparija "Mlada Srbija", 1930), III, 82; Šepić, "Srpska vlada i počeci Jugoslovenskog odbora", 9, 39; Šepić, *Italija, saveznici i jugoslovensko pitanje*, 102, 105; Ivo Petrinović, *Ante Trumbić, politička shvaćanja i djelovanje*, 2nd ed. (Split: Književni krug, 1991); Ivo Goldstein, "Resistance to Centralism", in *Yugoslavia from a Historical*

instructions and minutes, on the one hand, and Bošković's reports in which he disclosed his personal opinions, on the other, shows that the "small" programme interpretation could be applied to the musings and recommendations of the latter. There were also other prominent and influential Serbs who were prone to this kind of reasoning given the complexities of diplomatic and military situation. For example, Cvijić was personally favourable to the Yugoslav programme of the Serbian government and he spared no effort to contribute to its realisation through his activities in London whether in contact with British public figures and government officials or in his dealing with the Yugoslav émigrés. Nevertheless, he advised Pašić that Serbia must be, in case of necessity, prepared for a different outcome: "If Croatia turns out to be detached [independent], then it is necessary to start working to secure the less extensive [border]line with Srem and part of Slavonia, along with other areas."⁹³ This preparedness was in line with the tenor of Bošković's recommendations to Pašić. But the Serbian Minister never received a reply from Pašić, for even a year later he did not know "whether our government have worked to get part of Slavonia in case of a separate Croatia."⁹⁴ From that, but also from every single undertaking of Serbian diplomacy, it is clear that Pašić took a different view: he unconditionally stood for unification of all the Yugoslav lands of Austria-Hungary with Serbia.

Pašić remained true to an integral Yugoslav union even after the downfall of Serbia in the autumn of 1915 and the retreat of the Serbian army, government and crown through Albania to the island of Corfu. His conversation with Pavle Popović in April 1916 was indicative in this respect. Having been told that the Serbs in London had "worked for Serbia since the invasion" – as opposed to working for a Yugoslav union – the Prime Minister succinctly replied: "That is one and the same, it should not be separated."⁹⁵ It is exactly in this sense of not differentiating between a Serb and Yugoslav unification that one should understand Pašić's well-known usage of the terms Serb and Yugoslav, as well as some others (Serbo-Croat, Serbo-Croat-Slovene), as synonymous rather

Perspective (Belgrade: Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, 2017), 128. On Pašić's Yugoslav orientation see: Dragoslav Janković, "Veliki i mali ratni program Nikole Pašića (1914–1918)", *Anali Pravnog fakulteta u Beogradu* XXI/2 (1973), 151–167; Ekmečić, *Ratni ciljevi Srbije*, 435–445; Alex Dragnich, *Serbia, Nikola Pašić and Yugoslavia* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1974), 129–130; Stanković, *Nikola Pašić i jugoslovensko pitanje*, II, (Belgrade: BIGZ, 1985); Djordje Stanković, *Srbija i stvaranje Jugoslavije* (Belgrade: Službeni glasnik, 2009), 77–97; Djordje Radenković, *Pašić i Jugoslavija* (Belgrade: Službeni list, 1999).

⁹³ Lainovic, "Misija Jovana Cvijica u Londonu 1915. godine", doc. 16, Cvijić to Pašić, 5 May 1915, 312–313.

⁹⁴ Popović, *Iz dnevnika*, 29 July 1916, 507–509.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* 4 April 1916, 414.

than reflecting certain confusion of these terms in his mind, as it has also been interpreted.⁹⁶ Besides, throughout 1916 relations between the Serbian government and the Yugoslav Committee were good in general, as they were based on the pursuance of the Yugoslav programme, despite differences which emerged in some matters such as recruitment of volunteers for the Serbian army, relations with Italy and the vision of a future common country.⁹⁷ In the summer of 1917, Serbia's support for Yugoslav unification was made manifest to all and sundry when Pašić and the leaders of the Yugoslav Committee signed the Corfu declaration, which laid down the principles on which Yugoslavia would be founded.⁹⁸

It was not before early 1918 that there were any signs that Pašić was willing to prepare the ground for the possibility that a Yugoslav state would not come into being. At that point, the British Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, and the American President, Woodrow Wilson (on 5 and 8 January respectively) publically suggested the possibility of the conclusion of a separate peace with Vienna and made it clear that the oppressed peoples of the Habsburg Monarchy would have to settle for an autonomous status within that country. Such prospect meant that the creation of a Yugoslavia would remain a pipe dream. In the circumstances, Pašić wanted to secure formal abolition of the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina to Austria-Hungary and the possession, at least, of that province for Serbia. After all, that was an understandable and rational political move: Pašić simply tried to secure Serbian interests as best as he could in the deteriorating international situation. It should be noted that his instructions to Ljubomir Mihailović, earlier Charge d'Affairs in Rome and now Minister in Washington, reflecting his concern for Bosnia-Herzegovina met with the latter's categorical rejection on the grounds that those denoted the abandonment of the Yugoslav programme.⁹⁹ On the other hand, the members of the Yugoslav Committee felt in the wake of Lloyd George's and Wilson's statements that they had nothing to lose any longer; consequently, they took an uncompromising attitude. The "Yugoslavs" started to pressurise Pašić and the Serbian government – and Regent Alexander – to maintain the full solidarity

⁹⁶ Janković, *Srbija i jugoslovensko pitanje*, 529; Mitrović, *Srbija u Prvom svetskom ratu*, 164–169. On confusion, see Stanković, *Nikola Pašić i jugoslovensko pitanje*, I, 186.

⁹⁷ Janković, "O odnosima Jugoslovenskog odbora sa srpskom vladom u 1916. godini", 455–468.

⁹⁸ Dragoslav Janković, *Jugoslovensko pitanje i Krfska deklaracija 1917. godine* (Belgrade: Savremena administracija, 1967).

⁹⁹ *Gradja o stvaranju jugoslovenske države (1. I–20. XII 1918)*, 2 vols, ed. Dragoslav Janković and Bogdan Krizman (Belgrade: Institut društvenih nauka, 1964), I, doc. 30, N. Pašić to Lj. Mihailović, Salonica, 22. I [1918], 44–45; doc. 34, Lj. Mihailović to N. Pašić, Washington, 23. I [1918], 48–49.

with their stance and, moreover, to fuse the Serbian parliament into something of a new representative body of the entire Yugoslav people.¹⁰⁰ Naturally, Pašić could not consent to abolishing the key elements of Serbia's statehood such as the parliament in the midst of war for the sake of manifesting fidelity to the Yugoslav idea, especially not at the moment when the Entente Powers seemed to have excluded it. Since detailed treatment of this troubled affair is out of scope of this study, it is important to note here that Pašić showed willingness to depart from the ideal of a Yugoslav unification towards the more narrowly defined Serbian national programme only at the juncture in which international situation forced his hand in the late phase of the war. With another change in the political situation after the spring of 1918, when the allies decided to wage war until the defeat of the Central Powers and to dismantle Austria-Hungary to that end, he reverted to the earlier Yugoslav policy – the creation of a large Yugoslav state. Therefore, there is no evidence to support the view that Pašić vacillated between the “large” and the “small” programme since the outbreak of the war.

Pašić's persistence in carrying out the policy on which he set his heart is perhaps best visible in his treatment of the reports on Supilo which he received from the Serbian Minister in London. Bošković's profound distrust of the Croat émigrés which evolved into his firm conviction that they were disloyal to the common cause seem to have been confirmed during a tête-à-tête he had with Supilo. The latter turned up in the Legation and said: “Serbia is abandoning Croatia, does not request her unification [with Serbia]. If that is the case, he as a Croat must demand a strong Croatia, the present-day one with Dalmatia and Bosnia, because without that no conditions for survival exist. The Catholic Bosnians have authorised him for his work. He is convinced that the Muslims will side with them. Mr Bošković told him to write about that to Mr Pašić as soon as possible; and he (Bošković) has telegraphed to him [Pašić] about that today.”¹⁰¹ A striking feature of this conversation was that Supilo did not just defend the territorial integrity of the Triune Kingdom, which was a unanimous stance of almost all the Croat émigrés, but also made claim to Bosnia-Herzegovina in which the Serbs constituted nearly a half of the population. Supilo seems to have never written to Pašić what he had said to Bošković, but the Minister did

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., I, doc. 11, A. Trumbić to Crown Prince Alexander, N. Pašić and A. Nikolić, London, 10. I [1918], 22–23; doc. 23, A. Trumbić to Crown Prince Alexander, London, 15. I [1918], 35; doc. 27, N. Pašić to Yugoslav Committee, Corfu, 17. I [1918], 41–42; doc. 29, Yugoslav Committee to Crown Prince Alexander, the Serbian Government and A. Nikolić, London, 21. I [1918], 43–44; doc. 32, A. Trumbić to Crown Prince Alexander, London, 22. I [1918], 46–47; doc. 50, N. Pašić to Yugoslav Committee, Corfu, 30. I [1918], 62–64; doc. 65, A Trumbić to N. Pašić, London, 5. II [1918], 82–84.

¹⁰¹ Žujović, *Dnevnik*, II, 3/16 September 1915, 184.

send his report to Niš. "I have a clear impression that Supilo and the likes of him are working to tie Slavonia and Dalmatia with part of Bosnia with the fate of Croatia", Bošković was adamant.¹⁰² In his view, there was no doubt that the Yugoslav programme of the Serbian government in reality developed into the struggle between the Serb and Croat aspirations reflected in the clash over the possession of Dalmatia and Slavonia, and even part of Bosnia. After receiving such a report, Pašić had to take some measures to counteract Supilo's agitation. He reacted by requesting Žujović, Velimirović, Pavle Popović and Stojanović to mediate and ensure harmony in the work of the Yugoslav Committee and in its relations with the Legation, "taking care that persons with Supilo's idea remain isolated."¹⁰³ This was in keeping with Pašić's pragmatic policy to have the Yugoslav emigration demand unification with Serbia in principle and leave all other potentially divisive questions aside to be dealt with after the war.

But no account of the conflict between Bošković and the Croat members of the Yugoslav Committee, especially Supilo, is complete without considering the role played by Seton-Watson and other British friends. Seton-Watson's absolute support for the Croat émigrés was even more pronounced due to his animosity, and even outright hostility, towards Bošković. In his correspondence and conversations held with the Serbian personages in London, Scotus Viator insisted that Serbia was poorly represented by her present Minister. Both he and Steed claimed that the British friends of Serbia found it impossible to work with Bošković, just like the members of the Yugoslav Committee, that the Foreign Office took a dim view of him, that the Minister himself did nothing on his own initiative and did not even bother to get up before the afternoon.¹⁰⁴ It is indeed difficult to tell whether the slandering of the Serbian Minister originated with the Croats from the Committee and was suggested to the distinguished Britons, or the former just used to repeat the argumentation of Seton-Watson and Steed while complaining to the Serbs in London.¹⁰⁵ In particular, Seton-

¹⁰² AJ, 80-2-10, Bošković to Pašić, no. 898 [only the last page has been preserved, without date, but definitely 3 September 1915 on the basis of the above quote from Žujović's diary]. The telegram was received in MID on 4 September 1915 and filed as strictly conf. no. 9606. Pašić wrote on the back: "Read it. I will reply when I get Supilo's letter." Bošković's telegram confirmed an earlier information from the Russian Ambassador Benckendorff to the effect that the Croats did not want a union with Serbia and that they protested "against eventual dismemberment of the parts of Croat lands /that should probably mean at least Dalmatia and Slavonia/" (AJ, 80-2-10, Bošković to Pašić, 27 August 1915, without number).

¹⁰³ Telegram from Niš, 6 September 1915, quoted in: Žujović, *Dnevnik*, II, 192.

¹⁰⁴ Popović, *Iz dnevnika*, 20 May 1915, 168-171; 28 August 1915, 234; 31 August 1915, 235-236; 5 September 1915, 240-242; Žujović, *Dnevnik*, II, 11/24 September 1915, 193-196; 22 September / 5 October 1915, 200.

¹⁰⁵ See, for example, the complaints made by Hinko Hinković and Meštrović, the members of the Committee, in: Žujović, *Dnevnik*, II, 15/28 June 1915, 130; 7/20 September 1915, 187.

Watson defamed Bošković to important persons in Serbian diplomacy, such as Jovanović-Pižon and Vesnić, with a view to bringing about his removal from London.¹⁰⁶ Steed sent a letter to Pašić with the same arguments and for the same purpose.¹⁰⁷ Both Britons pointed out Bošković's inimical attitude towards Supilo and, in order to prove the injustice of such a stance, declared an absolute confidence of all British friends of Serbia in the Croat politician. Seton-Watson's objections to the Serbian Minister were, in fact, unfounded. In his biography written by his own two sons, both noted historians themselves, it is admitted that the perusal of diplomatic material of Serbian and British provenance shows Bošković in a very different light - he was "an intelligent observer and a competent diplomat."¹⁰⁸ With his campaign of defamation, Scotus Viator only proved that he was prepared to turn against people whom he thought were standing in his way with the same zeal and ferocity he demonstrated while fighting for what he believed in.

The assessments made of Bošković by other competent observers, namely the Serbians engaged in national propaganda in Britain, who were more familiar with Serbian policy and the situation in the London Legation than British friends, are not helpful. They were more revealing of their own views on the Yugoslav question and the extent to which they agreed, or not, with the Minister than of his handling of the matters. Those among them who shared much of his views and appreciation of the Croat émigrés, like the Popović brothers, and were also friends with him, held Bošković's abilities in high regard.¹⁰⁹ On the other side, Cvijić was, despite being a friend and, to a large degree, in agreement with the substance of reports Bošković sent to Pašić, more optimistic with regard to Yugoslav unification and thus considered, so it seems, the Minister's opinion

¹⁰⁶ *Seton-Watson i Jugoslaveni: Korespondencija*, I, doc. 153, Seton-Watson to [Jovan M. Jovanović], 20. IX 1915, 242–243 and doc. 156, Seton-Watson to Milenko Vesnić, 26. IX 1915, 245–246.

¹⁰⁷ Hugh and Christopher Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe*, 140.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.* 133. Benckendorff stated in October 1915 that Bošković was well received in the Foreign Office because he spoke openly, although "a few months ago they were not satisfied" (Žujović, *Dnevnik*, II, 29 September / 12 October 1915, 203). Dissatisfaction mentioned by Benckendorff was, according to the Romanian Minister, Nikolae Mishu, caused by Bošković's intransigence concerning Macedonia (Jovan M. Jovanović Pižon, *Dnevnik (1896–1920)*, ed. Radoš Ljušić and Miladin Milošević (Novi Sad: Prometej, 2015), 8 October 1916, 183–184). The Russian Ambassador told Jovanović-Pižon: "Your predecessor has been a little nervous, but I am favourably disposed to him." (*Ibid.*, 29 September 1916, 174–175) Bošković appreciated his French colleague Paul Cambon and Mishu, whereas he said of Benckendorff that "he has never anticipated anything, but he has never tried to anticipate." (*Ibid.*, 11 September 1916, 162)

¹⁰⁹ Popović, *Iz dnevnika*, 27 May 1915, 176–177; Žujović, *Dnevnik*, II, 4/17 September 1915, 185; Janković, *Srbija i jugoslovensko pitanje*, 500–501.

exaggerated. Cvijić complained to Žujović “that Mr Bošković does little work and is interested in nothing except Macedonia”, and he had nothing good, according to the historian and publicist Grgur Jakšić, to report to Pašić concerning the Minister’s performance.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, Bošković’s job in London was made more difficult on account of indiscipline and lack of dedication of his secretaries in the Legation, of which Žujović warned him on three occasions.¹¹¹ It was characteristic of relations within the Legation that the first secretary, Vojislav Antonijević, one of the correspondents of Seton-Watson, spoke to Žujović no fewer than four times against his head of mission.¹¹²

Constant complaints and intrigues against Bošković were not without their effect in Niš. Jovanović-Pižon drew Bošković’s attention to the fact that the members of the Yugoslav Committee had complained about the lack of cordiality and intimacy in their reception in the London Legation in marked contrast to the earlier situation in the Serbian Legations in Rome and Paris. Pašić’s deputy suggested that the Minister should invite them more often to the Legation “together with the Englishmen, our friends”.¹¹³ Just two weeks later, Jovanović-Pižon reiterated in a telegram written by himself and signed by Pašić his request to Bošković to change his attitude towards the “Yugoslavs”, but this time he stressed the unfavourable impression made on the British friends.¹¹⁴ In doing so, he indicated the source of his information, at least some of it. Bošković rejected the said “denunciations” and “petty intrigues”, explaining the probity and appropriateness of his conduct; he surmised that “a discreet English friend”, who remained unnamed, stood behind the complaints. He certainly referred to Seton-Watson as it could be made out from his pointing out the dissatisfaction because British financial contributions for the Serbian sufferers were channelled through the Legation instead of the Serbian Relief Fund – in this matter the Minister reminded of the instructions he had been given by the Foreign Ministry. It seemed to him that the spleen which had emerged on that account was later vented “in the advices given to the main émigré committee.” More importantly,

¹¹⁰ Žujović, *Dnevnik*, II, 30 June / 13 July 1915, 146–147; 6/19 July 1915, 151; Popović, *Iz dnevnika*, 5 September, 240–241.

¹¹¹ Žujović, *Dnevnik*, II, 3/16 October 1915, 209–210; also Popović, *Iz dnevnika*, 2 December 1915, 301–302.

¹¹² Žujović, *Dnevnik*, II, 8/21 October 1915, 212. Shortly before Regent Alexander’s and Pašić’s visit to London next year Antonijević prepared a memorandum for the purpose of drawing attention to the main questions which Serbia would have to face until the end of the war and at a peace conference. His paper did not indicate much of its author’s analytical skills, but it was certainly revealing of Antonijević’s great personal ambitions (AS, MID-PO, f. X, d. II, memorandum by Vojislav Antonijević, 21 March 1916). After the war he became the Minister of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in Rome.

¹¹³ AJ, 80-2-10, Jovan Jovanović to Bošković, 28 July 1915 (dispatched next day, conf. no. 8268).

¹¹⁴ AJ, 80-2-10, Jovan Jovanović to Bošković, 12 August 1915, conf. no. 8738.

Bošković believed that the crux of the problem was in the question “whether the Legation should accept and carry out everything that the committee or some of its members ask for without [making] its own remarks. In that case, I think that I cannot be held responsible.”¹¹⁵ Bošković’s reply to the accusations made against him shows that he was aware that the “English friends”, and Seton-Watson above all, were among the causes of his difficulties with the Croat émigrés, though he appears not to have fully appreciated either the extent of their unconditional support for Supilo and Trumbić or the depth of their intolerance to himself. His position in the Legation was, however, not threatened as long as Scotus Viator’s and Steed’s endeavours met with no response from Pašić. In November 1915, just at the time of major crisis on the Serbian front due to the Bulgarian attack, the Prime Minister declined the crude insistence from London accompanied by the threat that the “English friends” would deny all further support to Serbia, pleading with them to bear in mind the critical situation.¹¹⁶

Nevertheless, Bošković appears to have sensed that his handling of the Croat émigrés was not well received in the Foreign Ministry, particularly on the part of Jovanović-Pižon, or that he was at least considered not sufficiently tactful and patient in his dealings with them. For that reason, he strove to smooth over the differences and avoid as much as he could any further clashes. When Žujović cautioned him to undertake energetic measures in order to impose order among the staff of the Legation, Bošković’s excuse for not doing so was “that all [of them] would join together against him and he would be guilty just like in the Yugoslav Committee affair.”¹¹⁷ The Minister went so far as trying to improve his relations with Supilo and show his superiors that there was no bad blood between them. Acting on Supilo’s complaint to Jovanović-Pižon that two letters which had been sent to him through the Legation had reached him with considerable delay, Bošković conducted an investigation among his staff and found out that the former clerk, certain Vojislav Petrović, had been negligent to his duties. Bošković also proposed, irrespectively of that matter as he underscored, “that it would be nice to be attentive to Mr Supilo on this occasion and offer him a sum of 2000 dinars [approximately 2000 French francs], all the more so as he has not wanted to take anything from Serbia so far, as far as I know and as he has told me.”¹¹⁸ Supilo and Trumbić were indeed noted exceptions among the members of the Yugoslav Committee, who kept their financial independence from the Serbian government, not just because they had sufficient means of their own, but also because they were anxious to maintain an independent political position.

¹¹⁵ AJ, 80-2-10, Bošković to Pašić, 16 August 1915, no. 838. For disputes concerning financial contributions, see Hugh and Cristopher Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe*, 140.

¹¹⁶ Hugh and Cristopher Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe*, 153.

¹¹⁷ Žujović, *Dnevnik*, II, 3/16 October 1915, 209–210.

¹¹⁸ AS, MID, PsL, f. I, pov r 1327/1915, Bošković to MID, 22 September 1915, confidential, without number.

Bošković referred to confiscation of Supilo's assets by the Austrian authorities as a reason for Niš to extend him financial assistance and show its good will.

After the "Albanian Golgotha" and the reorganisation of the Serbian army in Corfu, the next important task for Bošković was to prepare the ground for a visit which Regent Alexander intended to make to Britain as part of his diplomatic sojourn in all the allied capitals.¹¹⁹ The Regent and Pašić arrived in London on 31 March 1916 and over the next few days met with the British royalties, policy-makers and important public figures.¹²⁰ Seton-Watson placed high hopes in the Regent as a future bearer of Yugoslav policy, since he thought that Pašić was unable or unwilling to be so, and handed him a memorandum in which his and Steed's ideas of the principles on which a Yugoslavia should be founded were spelled out. On that occasion, he apparently raised all his well-known accusations against Bošković and extracted a promise from Alexander that the Minister would be soon removed from London and replaced by Jovanović–Pižon, a fervent advocate of a Yugoslav union.¹²¹ That is why Jovanović–Pižon could tell Pavle Popović with certainty: "Mata will fall; he is clever and intelligent, he has predicted [things] accurately, his reports are good, but it does not take more to make his position untenable than [the fact] that our sole friends – Seton-Watson – are against him."¹²² It is interesting to observe that Bošković himself had a substantially different impression of the reasons behind his dismissal once he had heard from Popović that it was discussed: "his report on Bulgaria, which is the main thing; then comes the Yugoslav Committee and Seton-Watson. It does not seem definite to him."¹²³ A reference to a report on Bulgaria concerned an exchange between him and Vojislav Marinković, an acting Prime Minister during Pašić's absence from Corfu. Marinković inveighed against the Minister in London because of his failure to report on the increased activities of British Bulgarophiles. This was neither a fair assessment of Bošković nor particularly relevant given that the alleged campaign had not been substantial and presented

¹¹⁹ AJ, 80-8-43, Pašić to Bošković, 21 February 1916, no. 1337 and Bošković's note on the back, 22 February 1916; Bošković to Pašić, 3/16 March 1916, conf. no. 162; AS, MID-PO, 1916, f. XI, d. VIII, Bošković to MID, 22 February 1916, no. 131; Bošković to MID, 27 February 1916, no. 144; Bošković to MID, 4 March 1916, no. 158; f. XI, d. IX, Bošković to Pašić, 7 March 1916, no. 172; Bošković to Pašić, 10 March 1916, no. 183; Bošković to Pašić, 12 March 1916, no. 187; Bošković to Paris Legation, 16 March 1916, no. 193.

¹²⁰ For the initial part of the visit, see AS, MID-PO, 1916, f. XI, d. VIII, Bošković to MID, 20 March 1916, without number; Pašić to MID, 20 March 1916, no. 3; for more details, see Čedomir Antić, *Neizabrana saveznica: Srbija i Velika Britanija u Prvom svetskom ratu* (Belgrade: Zavod za udžbenike, 2012), 290–292.

¹²¹ Hugh and Christopher Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe, 156–157*; Vučković, "Iz odnosa Srbije i Jugoslovenskog odbora", 363–365.

¹²² Popović, *Iz dnevnika*, 25 March 1916, 406–407.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 4 April 1916, 414–415.

not much of a danger to Serbia. But this affair was relatively novel, whereas the rift between the London Legation and the Yugoslav Committee was old news, and that explains why Bošković attached more importance to it than warranted in assessing reasons for his removal from Britain.¹²⁴

Be that as it may, he was relieved of his duties on 26 August 1916 when Antonijević took over as Charge d'Affairs until Jovanović–Pižon replaced him as the new Minister on 18 September.¹²⁵ Following the controversy over Supilo's suggestion to Grey of a plebiscite in the Yugoslav lands of Austria-Hungary, the Croat politician was increasingly estranged not just from the Serbian government, but also from the Yugoslav Committee until he finally resigned from the latter in June 1916. Other Croat émigrés, most notably Trumbić, realised that Supilo overstepped the bounds of diplomatic realities and he was left in the political wilderness for the remainder of his life – he died in 1917.¹²⁶ Damage caused by Supilo's actions and his consequent pursuit of the exclusive interests of Croatia was thus contained. Pašić and the Yugoslav Committee continued to work together for the common cause, their differences lying dormant, and, as has been briefly mentioned, it was not before 1918, in a profoundly different international environment, that their major clash emerged over diplomatic approach and, ultimately, the manner of a Yugoslav unification.

In the final analysis, Bošković left London as a rather distinctive personality in the wartime Serbian diplomacy. What sets him apart from other Serbian diplomats is his pronounced reservations to the Yugoslav programme, at least such as it was envisioned on the part of the Croat émigrés. It is small wonder then that the said émigrés were to a man dissatisfied with Bošković and complained, as one of them related to Pavle Popović, that "Mata is not like Ljuba Mihajlović [*sic*], M[ihailo]. Ristić [the new Minister in Rome], M. Vesnić."¹²⁷ The last mentioned diplomat professed his agreement with Seton-Watson when the Scottish historian inveighed against his colleague in London; moreover, he replied that he also despaired over Bošković's intrigues against Supilo.¹²⁸ Bošković was indeed not like other Serbian diplomats in their dealing with the Yugoslav Committee. It is not easy to pinpoint the reasons for his demeanour. In more recent historiography, it has been argued that his department stemmed from the fact that Bošković belonged to the liberal tradition which never had

¹²⁴ Forthcoming Bakić, "Mateja Mata Bošković: prilog za biografiju srpskog diplomate".

¹²⁵ AS, MID, PsL, f. I, pov r 791/1916, Antonijević to MID, 12 October 1916 (new style).

¹²⁶ Šepić, *Supilo diplomat*, 156–249.

¹²⁷ Popović, *Iz dnevnika*, 28 May 1915, 178.

¹²⁸ *Seton-Watson i Jugoslaveni: Korespondencija*, I, doc. 157, Milenko Vesnić to Seton-Watson, 29. IX 1915, 246.

much affection for the Yugoslav idea.¹²⁹ In retrospect, Bošković dismissed Seton-Watson's allegation that he had been hostile to the Yugoslav idea with the claim that "it could only cause a smile of astonishment with people who know me well and know that I have always been faithful to the thought of unification of the previously dismembered parts of our people by [virtue of] both family tradition and personal conviction."¹³⁰ Even if allowance is made for the need to justify his conduct, the fact remains – and tends to support his assertion – that Bošković had written about "the Yugoslav cause in the Balkans" eight years before the Great War.¹³¹ It seems that it was his direct experience with the Croat émigrés and familiarisation with their political views and vision of a Yugoslav unification that played a decisive role in the formation of his attitude. This certainly accounted for his mistrust of which he reported to Pašić in no uncertain terms. But it is also highly likely that as a tried diplomat Bošković was influenced by his own appraisal at the early stage of the war that international circumstances were such as not to favour the formation of a Yugoslav union. Bošković's pessimism in this sense was, apart from the conspicuous reservations of the Foreign Office, probably increased by the exchange of views with the Russian Ambassador Benckendorff who did not believe that Serbia could, in addition to Bosnia-Herzegovina, get more than part of the Dalmatian coast.¹³² But perhaps more striking than his motivation and reasoning is the apparent unqualified enthusiasm of other Serbian diplomats for the creation of a Yugoslavia. Together with Pašić's determination in pursuing Yugoslav policy despite discouraging international situation, it is an exploration of this frame of mind that might provide more fertile field for further studying of pro-Yugoslav proclivities in Serbian foreign policy rather than misleading dichotomy between forging Greater Serbia and Yugoslavia.

¹²⁹ Miloš Ković, "Liberalizam", in: Miloš Ković, ed., *Srbi 1903–1914: istorija ideja* (Belgrade: Clio, 2015), 192.

¹³⁰ Mateja Bošković, "Jugoslovenski odbor i Srbijanska vlada", *Politika*, 13 May 1927, p. 2.

¹³¹ Mateja S. Bošković, *Stara Srbija i reforme* (Belgrade: Štamparija Svetozara Nikolića, 1906), 28.

¹³² AJ, 80-2-10, Bošković to MID, 30 October 1914, without number.

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