

THE WORK OF THE CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT IN THE
BALKANS AFTER WORLD WAR ONE: THE UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY OF BELGRADE, 1919-1926

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Keywords: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, University Library Belgrade, building

*Mr. Carnegie's name and fame are inseparably associated with his gifts for the construction of libraries in many lands. He had a profound belief in the power of education and of public libraries in their relation to the instruction of public opinion in democratically organized communities. It seems therefore peculiarly fitting to erect this library in Belgrade, the capital of Serbia...which was twice captured by the enemy during the Great War, as the gift of the Carnegie Endowment in commemoration of the heroic defense made by the Serbian people.*¹ These words were written by Nicholas Butler (1862-1947) director of intercourse and education at the Carnegie Endowment and a decisive actor in the library project. This limited but significant project belongs to the wide body of work on the reconstruction of Europe in the aftermath of World War I. At that time, the Carnegie Endowment revitalized its efforts to promote international conciliation and participated to a new kind of international policy.² New actors

¹ CU RBML CEIP Records Volume 408. Annual report of the director, CEIP, March 16, 1921
The spelling of the names as they appeared in the archives has been kept in the footnotes references.

² Europe has not hanged so dramatically since Napoleon whose influence reached the Balkans. From 1815 to 1914 international policy followed rules and principles decided at the Vienna congress of 1815.

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emerged: the United States of America entered the international arena; in Southeastern Europe, new states appeared, amongst them, the kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes; finally, new players emerged as key element whose role and participation in international affairs was only going to grow during the 20th century: Non-profit organizations especially those with visions supported by strong financial capability such as the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (CEIP).

What could be the link between a powerful institution such as the CEIP, based far away, in the USA and Serbia as part of the new kingdom born out of the war? At the CEIP, a group of men were determined to succeed in the reconstruction of devastated areas. Largely drawn from the pre-war peace movement these lawyers, professors, and diplomats, believed although war would not be eliminated it could be codified through international law and arbitration. Disseminated throughout Europe and in the US, these men had gathered around the Carnegie Endowment in December 1910 in an informal and transnational network. American entrepreneurs and chief among them Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919), supported the peace movement by linking economic progress and prosperity as a crucial guaranty for peace. Originally from Scotland, the steel magnate Andrew Carnegie was one of the most successful businessmen of his time, but he was also a convinced philanthropist who devoted a great deal of his fortune to improve humankind condition. In 1912, the Carnegie Foundation established a European Center in Paris. Andrew Carnegie surrounded himself with academic, and political leaders: Fedor Martens (Russia), Samuel Dutton (USA), Henry Lammasch (Austria-Hungary) and Nicholas Butler, the president of Columbia University from 1901 to 1945. In 1910, he had convinced Carnegie to create the Foundation and became president of the Endowment in 1925. Also, Paul d'Estournelles de Constant, a French

diplomat, was the first president of the European Center and worked endlessly to promote the idea of arbitration.³ The Carnegie Foundation had three objectives: to promote international understanding and cooperation, to study the causes and impacts of wars (civilian populations issues), and finally to support the emerging concept of International Law.

What reasons may have lead the Carnegie Endowment to choose Belgrade in 1919 from all others cities that has experienced wartime devastation? The war conditions in Serbia were known in the US. Beside the massive level of destruction, the terrible living conditions of the population had been extensively reported in the US press, the *NY Times* of October 15, 1917 stated that *the ravages of the war there (in Serbia) are said to be worse than in Belgium and Rumania*.⁴ John Reed in *The War in Eastern Europe*, wrote a powerful description of the city when he entered Belgrade: *Everywhere were visible the effects of artillery fire...A shell smashed the roof of the military college...The University of Belgrade was only a mass of yawning ruins. The Austrians had made it their special target...*In fact the bombing of the university had started at the onset of the war in July 1914.⁵ The US Red Cross played a particular role in reporting on the war in Serbia. Its war council organized a major relief work, including public meetings and calls for funds throughout the US. In 1917, the Red Cross bulletin emphasized how the Serbian *civilian population had suffered as greatly*

³ Butler met d'Estournelles de Constant in 1902. They remained extremely close friend until the death of d'Estournelles de Constant in 1924.

⁴ New York Times, October 15, 1917.

⁵ Reed, John: *The war in Eastern Europe*, New York, 1916
Mitrovic, Andrej: *Serbia's Great War*, London: Hurst&Company, 2007

Stanoiewitch, George M.: *Le Bombardement de l'Universite de Belgrade*, Paris: Vermot, 1915

as *the army*⁶ referring here to the army retreat of the winter 1915-16. Second, the involvement of the Carnegie Endowment in the region was not new. In 1913, following the second Balkan War, the CEIP send an inquiry of eight members to investigate the causes of the wars and its impact on civilian populations. The decision was made by Butler and d'Estournelles de Constant. The result was the well-known report published in 1914, the first widely advertised document dealing almost exclusively with civilians in warfare. The same year, two reports of the Balkan Commission at the CEIP emphasized the importance to follow up the situation in the Balkans.⁷ Finally, in 1919, the concern for civilian population in warfare was taken one step beyond addressing this time their situation in postwar context targeting specifically the role of public opinion and education. According to Nicholas Butler, public opinion was appreciated as a potential force that needed to be informed and educated in order to ultimately contribute to prevent further conflicts.

The purpose of this paper is to describe the construction of the library from two angles: First, how the construction-work in itself was conducted and achieved by a small group of men coming from different countries and backgrounds (USA/Serbia). Second, to study the triangular relationship between three sharply contrasted actors: One private organization (CEIP) and two states (Kingdom/USA), one barely formed, barely internationally recognized and the other a relatively new comer on the international stage. The paper also emphasizes the role of Serbian officials who were in contact with the CEIP and were involved at different stages of the library-project.

⁶ The Work of the American Red Cross. Report by the War Council of appropriations and activities from outbreak of War to November 1, 1917. Washington 1917. Chapter 7, pp134-137.

⁷ CEIP Records, vol. 129 Commission des Balkans, June 17,1914 (in French)

1. The origins of the library project: A Carnegie choice, initiative and policy.

1.1 A triple operation: Louvain, Reims and Belgrade

The concept of reconstruction, providing help as well as to contribute to world peace was hardly a new theme. It belongs to the work already undertaken by philanthropists and it is link to the English and American missionary's involvement in the region since the end of the Crimean war and their presence in Albania, Bulgaria or Macedonia in 1870-1900.⁸ In 1918, the work of these philanthropists found a meaning full new with the implementation of the double concept of reconciliation and reconstruction. Here, one has to underline that the initiatives taken by the Carnegie Endowment were not a unique case as others as the Rockefeller and Hoover institutions were just as involved in the process.

In order to understand how the Belgrade library was born it is necessary to look at the unfolding of the major events of 1917 to 1919. The reconstruction of public spaces in devastated urban areas and specifically in Belgrade was part of a larger project involving the cities of Louvain in Belgium and Reims in France. On April 6, 1917, the US declared war on Germany. Barely two weeks later, on April 20, the CEIP board of trustees adopted a resolution for the appropriation of funds for reconstruction after the war.⁹ In 1918, a month after the armistice the board of trustees passed a new resolution on December 16, amending the one of April 1917, stating that the Executive Committee *...as an act of sympathy with the suffering, which has fallen upon innocent and helpless noncombatants in the existing war*¹⁰ decided for a separate fund to be attributed specifically to France, Belgium, Serbia and Russia. It also added that

⁸ Clayer, Nathalie: Aux origines du nationalisme albanais, Paris: Karthala, 2007, pp. 311-312.

⁹ CEIP Records, vol. 52, Report of the acting director, division for intercourse and education, March 16, 1919

¹⁰ *Ibid*

aid would be provided for some parts of the Ottoman Empire (Armenia and Syria). A correspondence started between the CEIP in the US and the various governments. The general answer was to wait until the war was over. On the Carnegie side, the committee wanted to study what would be re-constructed. Finally on January 18, 1919, the Paris Peace conference began. Two months later, a Carnegie report of March 16, stated that representatives of Belgium suggested that ...*the Executive Committee (CEIP) might wish to consider the reconstruction of the Library of the University of Louvain...*¹¹ The principle of rebuilding libraries in Europe was then adopted and later extended to Belgrade and Reims. Why libraries and no other large public buildings? Andrew Carnegie saw in education and literacy a bulwark against barbarism. He was also convinced that knowledge and reading were key elements to improve humankind condition. Carnegie devoted a great deal of his fortune to build up to 1,679 libraries in the USA and up to 2,500 in English speaking parts of the world. As the Belgium answer pointed out, the project of a library was justified *because of the association of Mr. Carnegie, of his own personal work and of his benefactions with libraries.*¹²

The three cities were chosen on their symbolic significance. The university library of Louvain was one of the oldest in Europe, founded in 1426 by the Duke of Burgundy. It was reduced to ashes in August 1914. 300, 000 volumes were burned and the city leveled to the ground as Reims. This second city was chosen for its historical meaning. Reims as stated in a report from March 1921...*Rheims, in whose 13th century cathedral, the Kings of France were formerly crowned, represents and symbolizes so much of the tradition and spirit of France.*¹³ Belgrade,

bearing a strategic significance, was the only capital city and the only city in Eastern Europe that the Carnegie Endowment selected for a reconstruction project. For the public opinion, the three countries were bound together by the war, and in the press, Serbia's plight matched that of Belgium.¹⁴ The *NY Times* of October 15, 1917 stated: *Next to Belgium and France, Serbia has been the chief center of American relief work.* And Milenko Vesnić wrote in 1917: *In Belgium and in Serbia as in France, non-fortified cities have been bombed and burned, churches have been profaned and burned, libraries burned and plundered. Do I have to remain you of Louvain and Reims and to add Belgrade as well?*¹⁵ The Carnegie reports used the same range of vocabulary to explain the choice of the three cities: the terrible suffering from German bombardments, the Teutonic invasions, the need for assistance to protect the civilized world, the soul of France or Serbia, the heroic defense against the iron rule, the atrocities, etc.

The building of these libraries has to be understood as a triple operation conducted over few years and achieved almost simultaneously. The definite decision for Louvain was reached in October 1919 at the time when the negotiations for Belgrade's library started and were achieved in February 1920.¹⁶ The final decision for Reims was official in November 1920.¹⁷ The beginning of the works were celebrated with an equally official ceremony of the corner stone, on June 23, 1921 in Belgrade, followed by July 20 in Reims and July 28 in Louvain. The libraries opened first in Belgrade in May 1926, one year later in Reims (June 1927) and followed by Louvain (July

¹¹ *Ibid.* In Dec 1918, Ladeuze (rector University Louvain) mentioned contact made by CEIP.

¹² *Ibid*

¹³ CEIP Records, vol.56, Annual report, division for intercourse and education, March 16, 1921

¹⁴ Mitrovic, Andrej: *Op. Cit.*, Introduction p. XIV

¹⁵ Vesnic, Milenko: *La Serbie a travers la Grand Guerre*, Paris: Bossard 1921, p156.

¹⁶ The decision for Louvain was reached on October 24, 1919

¹⁷ CEIP Records, vol. 53, November 8, 1920, Butler to d'Estournelles de Constant.

1928). The funds allocated were also similar, \$100, 000 for Belgrade, \$200, 000 for Reims and \$100, 000 for Louvain. A tribute to the Endowment was acknowledged with the same bust of Andrew Carnegie placed in the three buildings. There were also substantial differences. Belgrade and Reims were full Carnegie operations involving a local committee and representatives of the US governments. Louvain was placed under the supervision of the National Committee of the US for the restoration of the University of Louvain in which the Carnegie Endowment participated among other majors Americans institutions (universities of Harvard, Yale, Chicago, Herbert Hoover and J.P. Morgan foundations). Serbian and French architects were put on charge on the architectural plans where an American architect, Whitney Waren (1864-1943) drew the ones of Louvain. While Louvain and Belgrade were universities libraries, Reims was a city library.

To conclude the full picture of the reconstruction undertaken by the Carnegie Endowment, one should also underline three others operations. No construction occurred in Russia, one of the four countries chosen in 1917, but a refugee and child relief fund was put together. A smaller fund was also allocated to restore Westminster Abbey in London.¹⁸ Another fund was allocated to a small village, heavily destroyed, Fargniers, located 100km north of Paris. There the Endowment rebuilt several public buildings around a main square: A town building, schools, post and telegraphs, a public bath and a library.¹⁹ These three operations and more, constituted an ambitious project showing that the American approach toward Europe in 1919 has to be appreciated on a large scale.

The decision to build a complete new library in Belgrade was initially taken by the Carnegie

¹⁸ CEIP Records, vol. 53, December 15, 1920, Haskell to Finch

¹⁹ CEIP Time line, Jane Gorjevsky (RMBL CU). The buildings are still here today.

Endowment but it was also the result of a double initiative by two Serbians living at that time in the USA, Slavko Grujić (1871-1937) a diplomat and Mikhail Idvorski Pupin (1854-1935), the well-known professor of physics at Columbia University. Around October 1919, Mikail Idvorski Pupin suggested completing the Royal Academy of Arts and Sciences whose construction had started in 1914.²⁰ It was an independent initiative, which encountered if not the opposition at least the reluctance of Slavko Grujić, the Yugoslav ambassador a partisan of building a new university library. Both men knew members of the CEIP at the highest level. Pupin was a leader of the Serbian community, honorary consul of Serbia (1912) in New York, Professor at Columbia University whose president was Nicholas Butler. He also knew C. Severance, one of the trustees who himself was in contact with Slavko Grujić. The government in Belgrade was informed by Grujić of the intentions of the CEIP.

Pupin pointed out that the university and de facto the future library were state institutions and would remain as such. He perceived the Academy as semi-independent institution, one that had more in common with another private group such as the CEIP:²¹ *The Academy is not supported by the state directly...it is independent from the state...the academy is a recipient of private gifts which it receives in form of specific foundations.* Both options were discussed among Butler, Henry Haskell, assistant director, James Brown

²⁰ Pupin took a trip to Belgrade during the summer of 1919 and spoke to government officials. *I was informed that the governments intend to build the university from the ground including the library.*

CEIP Records, vol.52, November 5, 1919, Pupin to Butler

²¹ Created in 1886 under Milan Obrenovic, the Royal Academy was placed under the direct rule of the king who appointed the academicians. In 1892, it merged with the Serbian Learned Society. Private funds had played a key role in its development. Website: Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts.

CEIP Records, vol. 52, November 5, 1919, Pupin to Butler.

Scott, director of the division of international law and Severance who defended the library project. Grujić, argued that a university library would serve a more useful and *urgent* purpose than the Academy, books were in great need, making here the link with the post-war context.²² Butler underlined that Pupin's plan did not involve an integral reconstruction but only a participation in the erection of a building that could also be used for other educational purposes.²³ This last point seems to have been decisive as according to the rules set up by A. Carnegie, one of the purposes of the Endowment was to provide a free reading for the public.

The personality of Mrs. Grujić played also a role. Born in the US, she was extremely involved in charity work in Serbia and in the US. She knew Butler very well as well as other members of the Endowment such as Professor Dutton, who participated in the inquiry of 1913 and whom she met when he visited Belgrade.²⁴ Already during the war, she advocated for a new library. Finally on February 28-29, 1920, the Executive Committee of the CEIP decided to build a new library for the university.

The unfolding of the project did not encountered major obstacles. The CEIP was determined to achieve the building and the Yugoslav authorities needed to rebuild the capital and to organize a complete new state all together. In that sense the University Library bore a symbolic meaning. The complexity to implement the project came from three elements: The years 1918-1921 were

²² CEIP Records, vol. 52, November 10, 1919, Severance to Butler. *It seems quite clear that a decision in favor of Professor Pupin cannot properly be made.* He agreed with the words urgent written by Grouitch.

²³ RBML, Butler's Papers vol. 372, February 16, 1920, Butler to Severance.

²⁴ RBML, Butler Papers, vol. 169, March 2, 1920, Mabel Grouitch to Butler.

Mabel Grouitch also knew Pupin involved in relief work for Serbia.

a crucial time of building new institutions in Belgrade. During the set up of the Carnegie project, national elections took place and the constitution was adopted. Political life was turbulent with multiple political parties debating on the option of having centralists institutions or not, and the provisional government trying to improve the living conditions. International recognition of the new state was another issue. The US recognized the Kingdom in February 1919, followed by France and Great Britain in May but a border crisis erupted with Italy. At the same time, the Peace Conference was meeting in Paris. Because of the distance between Yugoslavia and the USA, a committee had to be set up in Belgrade to represent the interests of the Carnegie Endowment. Finally, the relationship between a private group that had launched the project and two governments were complex. To which extent did the Endowment represent the interests of the US government? As Mikail Pupin wrote: *Their ideas (from the Serbian officials) being that the Carnegie Endowment is an instrument of the United States government.*²⁵

1.2 The Carnegie Committee in Belgrade

On March 16, 1920, Nicholas Butler announced the creation of a committee to supervise the library project.²⁶ The building of the library was part of new university campus to be completed in the following six years. The plans called for several buildings organized in the shape of a triangle. The Carnegie library was to have *the place of honor in the center of this complex.*²⁷ Between March 16 and November 22, the composition of the Carnegie committee grew from 4 to 7 members. The long delay of nine months

²⁵ CEIP Records, vol. 52, November 5, 1919, Pupin to Butler.

²⁶ CEIP Records, vol. 53, March 16, 1920, Haskell to Scott Brown

²⁷ CEIP Records, vol. 56, September 28, 1921, Report Capser.

was due to the complexity of how to define the status, the responsibilities and the competences of the members in terms of the position and interests of the State Department. It included first the current US ambassador in Belgrade, Percival Dodge (1870-1936) as chairman, Svetozar Prebićević (1875-1936), Minister of Education, Slobodan Yovanović (1869-1958), Rector of the university, Cordenio Severance from the board of trustees (as temporary honorary member) and possibly an American living in Serbia, although this idea was abandoned.²⁸ Later, the architects became also committee members.

Cordenio Severance (1862-1925) played a decisive role in the composition of the committee. President of the American Bar Association, he was from Minnesota. He knew the Balkans and Serbia well: during the war he was chairman of the Red Cross and spent time both there and in Macedonia where he was in contact with Serbian officials.²⁹ Highly appreciated by Nicholas Butler, Severance traveled to Serbia during the spring of 1920, in order to discuss the formation of the committee with Serbian officials. In Washington, the head of the CEIP struggled to decide to whom to entrust the supervision of the project. While Severance discussed the matter in Belgrade, Nicholas Butler consulted another Serbian political personality, Milenko Vesnić, who at that time represented Serbia at the Paris Peace Conference and sat on the advisory council of

Europe at the CEIP. He was a close friend of James Scott-Brown, the director of the division of international law. Vesnic advised to entrust the University Council.³⁰ The architects were also considered to be in charge of the financial aspect. Severance explained the uncertainty of tenor of office of both the Serbian ministry of education and the rector.³¹ The later changed every year and the Yugoslav political life was instable. The government of Ljuba Davidović had fallen in February 1920, followed by the second Protić cabinet and debates raged between the Radicals and the Democrats parties.

According to the CEIP archives, the Endowment had simply decided the nominations of a diplomat from the State Department as well as the one of two Serbian officials. If on the Serbian side, no opposition or particularly comment was raised (at least from the Carnegie Report), the one of Percival Dodge initiated a range of issues and a conflict of interests. Percival Dodge was an experimented diplomat, who has been posted in Germany, Japan, and Latin-America. During the war, he was sent to France, in 1917 to Corfu and in July 1919 to Belgrade. Percival Dodge immediately declined his appointment as chairman of the committee underlining his complete lack of technical knowledge. More important, Dodge argued that this nomination would be in contradiction with his status as a diplomat. How could he defend the interests of an American institution, the Carnegie Endowment while at the same time represent his country, the USA, and carry on with the Yugoslav officials? Rightly he pointed out that he would

²⁸ CEIP Records, vol. 53, April 8, 1920, Haskell to Severance.

²⁹ Severance became a CEIP trustee in April 1918. Red Cross Bulletin, November 1917. Severance was working with Dr. Edward W. Ryan from the Red Cross, formerly head of the US Hospital in Belgrade.

The Work of the American Red Cross: report by the War Council of Appropriations and Activities from the outbreak of the war to November 1917, Washington DC, 1917 pp.134-137

The Work of the American Red Cross during the War: A statement of finances and accomplishments, January 1, 1917 to February 28, 1919, Wahsington DC, 1919

³⁰ CEIP Records, vol. 56, Annual Report, Division of Intercourse and Education, March 16, 1921

M.Vesnic (1862-1921): Diplomat and Professor of law. Several times member of the government, close to N. Pasic. He visited the USA during the war. CEIP Records, vol. 320 Capser to Butler, September 28, 1921

³¹ CEIP Records, vol. 320, June 22, 1920, Haskell to Dodge with reference to March 16, 1920.

have to negotiate with members of the committee nominated by the government (rector, Ministry of Education) to which he was accredited. Further, the responsibilities including full powers over the supervision of the building and of the use of the funds allocated.³² Ultimately, Dodge asked for the State Department to settle the matter. Dodge's refusal seems to have taken the CEIP by surprise. From the reports, it has been assumed that the approval of the State Department would be just a formality. *I cannot conceive of the State Department making any objection*, wrote Severance, *On the contrary, I should think they would all be very glad to have their Minister act for us*.³³ Upon his return to the US, Severance had several meetings with Butler, James Scott-Brown, Henry Haskell, a close adviser of Butler and Georges Finch, CEIP acting secretary. Slavko Grujić was also consulted several times. It was then decided to redefine the responsibilities of the chairman and to meet with the Secretary of State, Bainbrige Colby.³⁴ At that point, the CEIP was still convinced that the State Department would only instruct Dodge of his new function.³⁵ Grujić on his part met Norman Davis the Undersecretary of State and explained *that he would be highly desirable that the American minister should be ex-officio a member of the committee*.³⁶ Following the meeting with Colby it appeared that the nomination of Dodge as chairman would be interpreted as a full and direct expression and involvement of US foreign policy in Yugoslav internal affairs. A line had to be drawn and it was agreed that Dodge as well as Pribicević, who both were the

most high members of the committee would assume only the functions of honorary members without responsibility.³⁷

This episode has a double meaning. On one side it clearly underlined the position and even the power of the CEIP, which believed that it could nominate an official of the US government as the head of its sub-committee in Belgrade. However, the outcome showed the limit not to be crossed over. On the other side, the State Department's cautious approach showed that it was aware of the possible political meaning of the library project. As Severance stated in July 1920, *the building of this library is something that will tend very greatly to cement the friendly relations between this country (USA) and Serbia*.³⁸ If one cannot probably use the words political influence it can certainly use cultural influence. Even before the war, the CEIP assumed that it could influence the State Department. In 1914, Professor Dutton, describing the possible role of the CEIP Balkan commission, wrote: *Could the Carnegie Endowment persuade the State Department at Washington to take initiative, the end might be gained*. He was referring to a potential second Berlin Conference and the role of the CEIP Balkan Commission as intermediary between Balkan states and Great Powers.³⁹ On the CEIP side, the library project bear also an American cultural influence. Several reports mentioned the sending of collections of books on American history, literature, social and economic life and institutions as well as all Carnegie Endowments publications to the university library.⁴⁰

³² CEIP Records, vol. 320, June 7, 1920, Dodge to Haskell.

³³ CEIP Records, vol. 53, July 9, 1920, Severance to Butler

³⁴ Bainbrige Colby (1869-1950), was secretary of state in 1920-1921, at the end of the Wilson administration. He was very close to W. Wilson.

³⁵ CEIP Records, vol. 53, July 19, 1920, Haskell to Finch

³⁶ CEIP Records, vol. 53, August 2, 1920, Grouitch to Haskell

³⁷ CEIP Records, vol. 320, August 10, 1920, Haskell to Dodge

³⁸ CEIP Records, vol. 53, July 9, 1920, Severance to Butler

³⁹ CEIP Records, vol. 121, June 17-18, 1914, Commission des Balkans (In French).

⁴⁰ CEIP records, vol. 320, May 7, 1920, Butler to Vesnitch. Le Centre Europeen de la Dotation Carnegie 1911-1921, p.31, more than 140 titles. CEIP Records, vol. 56, March 2, 1921, Haskell to Finch

How was the financial operation carried on? The CEIP had difficulties to decide who would be in charge of the funds in Belgrade within regards of the Yugoslav authorities. Following a system-formula already in place as Andrew Carnegie started to finance and built libraries in 1886, the funds allocated were not released in full to the beneficiary but disbursed gradually as the project went on. The sum of \$100,000 was settled at the end of February 1920 and few weeks later was converted and invested in Dinars for 3,174,603.20.⁴¹ The money was kept under the form of a deposit in Belgrade but to the order of the Guaranty Trust Company (GTC), a financial institution based in New York.⁴² The CEIP had determined that the future chairman of the Belgrade committee would be responsible for the disbursement and all payments during the construction, but due to the issues raised by Percival Dodge to form the committee, Butler advised Severance and the French-Serbian Bank to keep the funds in the name of the GTC. Later the committee would request the Endowment to instruct the GTC to release specified sum one at a time. Obviously, there was a concern about the sending and the spending of the funds.⁴³ In the Carnegie archives, two wiring operations are mentioned. The first one in March 1921 for a sum of 30,000 Dinars and the second one in July 1921 for 250,000 Dinars to pay the contractors.⁴⁴ By September 1921, once the building work was underway, the CEIP decided to transfer the balance

⁴¹ CEIP Records, vol. 56, April 7, 1920, Trabold to Scott-Brown

⁴² The Guaranty Trust was founded in 1864. In 1920, it leased offices to the Carnegie Endowment. The GTC was also on charge of the financial operations for Louvain and Reims Libraries.

⁴³ CEIP Records, vol. 53, April 8, 1920, Haskell to Finch, and April 8, 1920, Haskell to Severance.

⁴⁴ CEIP Records, vol. 320, Minutes of Meeting of February 28, 1921, vol.56, March 9, 1921 Haskell to Finch, vol. 320, Minutes of Meeting of July 2, 1921, vol. 63, July 30, 1921 Bank Franco-Serb (in French).

of the funds to the government but once again had some difficulties to decide to whom they should be send: There was some hesitation between the University Council, the rector himself or the Ministry of Education.⁴⁵ As previously, the money was sent by the GTC through the Bank French-Serbian to the university authorities.

As Percival Dodge could not be the head of the committee, and as the CEIP needed a representative on the ground, Severance advised to hire Leo Capser, a former lieutenant in the US Navy. By December 1920, the committee was constituted as follow: Svetozar Pribicević (1875-1936), Minister of Education, Percival Dodge (1870-1936), American ambassador in Belgrade as honorary members. Slobodan Yovanović (1869-1958), Rector of the University, Leo Capser (1893-1975) and the architects, Nikola Nestorović (1868-1957), Professor Dragutin Djordjević (1866-1933) and Andra Stevanović (1859-1929) as executive members.

2. The construction work and the role of Leo Capser.

Leo Capser was recommended by Cordenio Severance whom he had met in 1917 when Severance was traveling to Serbia as chairman of the US Red Cross Commission.⁴⁶ He had studied engineering at the school of mines and later business administration at the University of Minnesota. In 1916, he was posted in Saloniki as assistant manager of the local office of the Standard Oil Company of New York. Later, he joined the American Navy as a lieutenant and served in France. Toward the end of the war, he was assigned to the American Relief Administration (Hoover Foundation) in Southern Serbia. Severance underlined Capser's knowledge of Serbia as

⁴⁵ CEIP Records, vol. 56, September 30, 1921, Haskell to Finch.

⁴⁶ Capser, 28 years old, was born in 1893, Minnesota. His grandfather had emigrated from Bavaria in 1846 to the US.

by reason of his residence in Saloniki at the time the Serbian government was located there and through his subsequent service in relief administration, Mr. Casper has a very wide and intimate acquaintance with Serbian officials.⁴⁷ Further he added: *He is willing to go by reason of his interest in the Serbian people.* Severance praised how Casper was willing to take full responsibility for carrying the work and how he seemed to be a very determined, engaging young man. The contrast with Dodge's somewhat more hesitant personality is evident. Casper showed a personality and strong character that probably pleased the equally strong personality of Butler. By agreeing to take full responsibility but also asking for full authority, Casper demonstrated he was up to the task. Severance's candidacy was approved by Butler who trusted him based on his past experiences and travels in Serbia as well as his friendly contacts with officials in Belgrade.⁴⁸

On December 11, 1920, Casper signed a contract with the CEIP, which specified that he was hired to represent the Endowment in Belgrade for an estimated period of six months. In a personal letter, Butler explained to Casper what would be his role and the task: As representative of the CEIP, Casper had to make certain that the library may be constructed and equipped within the amounts of funds allowed. He would be in charge to oversee the contracts for the construction, the starting of the building and responsible for the disbursements. Finally, he has to draw a document outlining the plan, equipment, approved costs, definitive dates and have it signed by the Serbian authorities as so far there was no official document from the Yugoslavs authorities. These large responsibilities might also explain why the State Department refused the in-

volvement of his ambassador. The CEIP used his friendly relationships with Serbian officials to prepare Casper's trip. The later met with Slavko Grujić who gave him letters of recommendation for the ministries of foreign affairs, education and for the rector of the University. Milenko Vesnić was also informed about Casper's mission and was asked to relay the information to Belgrade.⁴⁹ On February 3, Leo Casper left New York, sailing on the *Aquitania* to France and from there to Belgrade.

Upon his arrival in Belgrade, Casper settled at the Grand Hotel. In long and detailed report, Casper described his first impressions. He noticed that the population's number was growing rapidly in the capital and was facing difficulties in three areas: the prices of the everyday life were extremely high, accommodations and lodging were scarce and there was a general congestion throughout the city. In addition, he was very aware of the complexity of the political situation and that the library project was not a priority matter for the government much more engaged with the setting of new institutions, an opinion openly shared by Percival Dodge.⁵⁰ With a sense of humor he added: *The government officials were so occupied with this task that it was almost impossible to discuss any project and as a consequence a sort of "reconstructive and economic coma" seemed to exist.*⁵¹ As he wrote, there was also certain skepticism on their part regarding the fulfillment of the Carnegie's plan. In other words, Casper was aware that the work would be accomplished by himself and by the University officials who as he noticed were ready and even eager to start working. The uni-

⁴⁷ CEIP Records, vol. 53, November 17, 1920, Severance to Butler.

⁴⁸ CEIP Records, vol. 53, November 22, 1920, Butler to Scott-Brown. RMBL, Butler's papers vol.372, December 24, 1920, Butler to Severance.

⁴⁹ CEIP Records, vol. 56, January 27, 1921, J. Brown-Scott to Vesnić, vol. 320, February 26, 1921, Grouitch to Haskell.

⁵⁰ CEIP Records, vol. 320, October 7, 1920, Dodge to Haskell.

⁵¹ CEIP Records, vol. 56, Casper Report, September 28, 1921.

versity was badly in need of additional space and new equipment. In a very practical way, Casper pointed out that the students needed books as their number was growing steadily from 1500 prior 1914 to over 6000. He saw the project of a the new campus as a way to provide education for a larger number *as practically all the technical and professional men were formally educated outside their own country through a lack of proper educational facilities*.⁵²

The first meeting of the Committee took place on February 28, 1921, at the Ministry of Public Instruction eight days after Casper's arrival. Who were the members of the committee? Svetozar Pribicević (1875-1936), the Minister of Education was one of the main political figures during the beginning of Yugoslavia. Leader of the Democrat Party, he was Minister of Interior of the first coalition government after December 1918.⁵³ Percival Dodge (1870-1936) was the American ambassador. After the first meeting, Dodge and Pribicević's participation remained limited and they were not even often present at the meetings. The main role was assumed by the executive members. Slobodan Yovanović (1869-1958), Rector of the University in Belgrade was also a public figure as professor of law and historian. Severance spoke highly about him as *a very high-grade man* and Casper described him as *exceptionally able, energetic and capable member of the committee* and often praised his full cooperation.⁵⁴ The architects were Nikola Nestorović (1868-1957), professor at Belgrade University, Professor Dragutin Djordjević (1866-1933) and

Andra Stevanović (1859-1929). Djordjević and Nestorović figured in the Carnegie archives at the early stage of the project as they had submitted a first set of drawings via Grujić during the winter of 1920 when the project was under negotiations.⁵⁵ Having studied in France and in Germany, they participated in the modernization of Belgrade between 1890-1900. They had worked together on several projects, the Fund Management building, today the National Museum, (Nestorović-Stevanović), the Serbian Academy of Sciences plans prior WWI (Djordjević-Stevanović), the "house with green tiles" (Nestorović-Stevanović) and the plans of Oplenac Church at Topola (Nestorović-Stevanović).

Leo Casper occupied the central position in this web of diverse people. One can only imagined the complexity of the task for someone coming from such a different environment as the USA. However, at no point in his reports, Casper complained about the difficulties encountered. According to the Carnegie archives, he kept a very thorough and detailed correspondence with the CEIP showing a strong sense of duty, a professional consciousness of what was at stake with this ambitious project. From the ton of the reports he was concerned, as it was part of Butler's instructions, to inform properly and regularly the CEIP. A general cordiale and friendly ambiance was immediately established between the committee members and Casper was at ease with everyone. All decisions were to be taken unanimously.⁵⁶ Casper had no intention to impose his exclusive point of view. Further, all payments and disbursements would bear the two signatures of Casper and Yovanović, showing that the project was perceived as a full cooperation between CEIP and Belgrade University. In

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ S. Pribicevitch (1875-1936). He represented the Serbs from Croatia and participated to the National Council (Zagreb 1918). Minister of Interior of the first government, several times minister until 1925.

⁵⁴ RMBL, Butler's papers vol. 372, September 16, 1920, Severance to Butler. CEIP Records, vol.320, March 25, 1921, Report Casper.

⁵⁵ CEIP Records, vol. 53, July 21, 1920, Haskell to Finch, vol. 320, February 5, 8, 1921, Dodge to Haskell.

⁵⁶ CEIP Records, vol. 320, Casper Report, Minutes of meeting, February 28, 1921.

the same spirit, Casper wrote the minutes of the meetings in English and Yovanović would translate them into Serbian.

Several weeks later, in March, a preliminary report made by the architects led to a crisis and resulted in a change of policy. It appeared that the funds provided by the Carnegie Endowment would not be sufficient to cover both the cost and the equipment of the building. The statement was based on the high prices of the materials and labor conditions in the post war context.⁵⁷ During the discussions, the rector Yovanović suggested that the university take financial responsibility for the equipment and that the funds from the CEIP be used only for the construction itself.⁵⁸ The other option was to build and equip a much smaller library but it did not fit with the larger plan of building a complete new university campus, viewed as part of the setting of national institutions. Yovanović emphasized how important it was to link the library project with the needs of its students in the near and far future. It was a long-term plan and vision. The CEIP approved quickly what was clearly a change of policy as well as Pribicević. In an unexpected way, the “spirit” of the project was viewed from then on, much more as a partnership operation between, if not two states, two organizations and educational institutions, one providing the building and the other its equipment. As Casper reported, in a separate letter to the CEIP, the fact that the Serbs were equally involved with the CEIP in the project *created a spirit of confidence and cooperation that has been constructive*. And he also added a strong personal point: *This may sound peculiar but nationally and individually the perspective of the true Serbian, from a psychological standpoint, lacks flexibility due to the lack of*

*confidence in strangers, caused by constant oppression, and the pride and honor of a people who have existed solely because of that indomitable spirit.*⁵⁹ In his letters addressed directly to the CEIP (starting with *Gentlemen*, and different from the officials minutes meetings) Casper, expressed more personal views and opinions. He insisted on the remarkable cooperation showed by the officials and the architects and repeatedly used the word friendship. He spoke Serbian and most likely well enough to have efficient and direct relationship with the people he was working with: *I can report the most energetic cooperation on the part of the Serbians...more than I had even hoped for*. And in May: *I am still glad to state that the officials with whom I have been working have given the most satisfactory cooperation and appear exceptionally competent and have shown an initiative that make me optimistic...* He seemed to enjoy very much his life in Belgrade. Two months after his arrival, he described a noticeable change in the physical appearance of the city, as work of reconstruction seemed to finally take off in every part as large quantities of brick and woods are finally arrived.

By the middle of April the drawings and working plans were completed and the excavation work was scheduled to start in May-June. The location chosen was known as the grounds of Trkalishta, or the Racing Square, donated by the municipality of Belgrade. It was the site of several athletic clubs. The library was to face along King Alexander Sreet with the main University building on one side and the Technical Faculty on the other. According to the blueprints, the overall front façade was 55.5 meters/182 feet long by 31 meters/102 feet large and 18 meters/60 feet height. The style was largely neo-classic, although, in the reports it is called ‘Plastic-Renaissance’ and supposed to match the others build-

⁵⁷ CEIP Records, vol. 320, Casper Report, Minutes of meeting, March 11, 1921.

⁵⁸ CEIP Records, vol. 320, Yovanovitch to the CEIP Committee, March 17, 1921.

⁵⁹ CEIP Records, vol. 320, Casper to the CEIP Committee, April 15, 1921.

ings of the university campus. As Capser wrote in an almost poetic way: *The beauty of the front façade will come from its comparative simplicity and color scheme, which will be of several gray tones or color shades of plaster with a base and pillars of Arangelovatz granite.*⁶⁰ And he added: this granite is *one of the most beautiful in Europe.* The “Carnegie Library Model” was used to elaborate the architectural plans. Even if the Carnegie libraries were constructed in very different styles, the overall architecture was always simple and formal, with a prominent doorway, a monumental staircase as well as an outside lamp-post or lantern as a symbol of enlightenment.⁶¹ Commenting on the drawings, Capser noticed the modernity regarding the interior planning that included central water, light and heating plant, a ventilation system to take care of the effects of heat and moisture on the books. To protect the acoustic a special kind of linoleum was ordered.⁶² The ground floor included a large main reading hall and several smaller study rooms for students and professors. The books in storage rooms were to be located mainly on the first floor, where a large conference room (72sq meters) was also planned for future events.

Following the approval of the plans, the next step was to estimate the cost of the work in order to find a suitable contracting firm. Capser, although the details in the archives are scarce, took several trips to the interior of Serbia to evaluate the prices of material, their possible locations and transportations options.⁶³ He was hoping to

⁶⁰ CEIP Records, vol. 56, Final Capser Report, September 28, 1921.

⁶¹ G. Bobinsky: *Carnegie Libraries*, Chicago, 1969. J. Bertram, Carnegie’s secretary, wrote “Notes on Library Building” as a guide in 1911 it included the main requirements. Six editions were published.

⁶² CEIP Records, vol. 320, Capser to the CEIP Committee, April 30, May 16, 1921.

⁶³ CEIP Records, vol. 320, Capser to CEIP Committee, May 16, 1921.

request governmental transportation aid, but this was not possible. Capser does not give a specific reason, one can only think of his earlier remark according to which the library was not an urgent matter for the government officials. The architects and the rector contacted seven firms. Four submitted a bid and numbers. Only, Fenix and Obnova firms guaranteed that the work would be completed by January 1922. In the end, Obnova offered the lowest estimate and won the contract. Following the agreement of March 1921, the indoor equipment, the water system, the heat, the ventilation and the electricity was left to the Serbian responsibility. However, the CEIP decided to take care of temporary equipment involving canalization works, pipes, light system that had to be done at the time of the groundwork. Following consultation with the architects, Stevanović and Nestorović, the committee decided to extend the date by six months, up to July 1922 given that better quality material would be secured. More important, it was not advisable to complete the work by November-December as under winter weather conditions, the walls would not have time to dry.⁶⁴ The Carnegie Endowment agreed easily for a later completion of the work as Capser also argued that January was in the middle of the academic year and it would be difficult to transfer and install the books. He added that the process would highly disruptive for the students, an argument that found a great echo among the CEIP members in the US whose priority was the educational aspect of the library project.

On June 23, 1921, the Corner Stone Ceremony took place to celebrate the official beginning of the building work although it had already started few weeks before. According to Capser, the date for the corner stone ceremony had been hastily decided by Crown Prince Alexander due to sudden political tensions and there was not

⁶⁴ CEIP Records, vol. 320, Capser Reports, Minutes of meetings May 21 and 24, 1921.

enough time to reach Nicholas Butler who was traveling on his way to Reims and Louvain's corner stone ceremonies, planned for July 19-20 and 28-29. The tense political atmosphere played a major role as, just five days after the ceremony, on June 28, the Constitution of Vidvodan was proclaimed. The following day, on June 29, the communists attempted to kill Prince Alexander.⁶⁵ However, despite these tensions, a lavish and magnificent ceremony open to the public and to the press was organized. As Casper reported: The ceremony took place at the construction site. A grand stand was erected for Serbian officials and the large American delegation from the embassy and the consulate. It opened with the blessing of the Patriarch. Then, Prince Alexander laid the corner stone that contained the documents with a beautiful silver trowel and hammer. Serbian and American officials gave several speeches emphasizing the link between library and the new university.

The rector praised the Carnegie Endowment as *one of the greatest and most humanitarian power of our age...we are fortunate that our university in this way is connected to a so highly cultural country*.⁶⁶ He also praised Casper personally for his work and his open sympathy for Serbia. Leo Casper spoke in both English and Serbian, a gesture that Serbians officials highly appreciated. The Royal military band played Serbian and American anthems. Casper received the "Grand Cross of Saint Sava" from the hands of Prince Alexander. The ceremony was followed by an official lunch and later a dinner. *Moving pictures of the ceremony were taken by Mr. Drucker, representative of the Fox Film Company of New*

York and were forwarded through the Legation that night to Paris en route to the United States.⁶⁷ The event was reported in the press by at least three newspapers, *Pravda*, *Politika* and *Trivouna*. The ceremony was described weeks later on October 30, 1921, by the *New York Times* in a long article, entitled, *Carnegie Gift to Belgrade*. Describing the ceremony, the journalist wrote *the whole affair, which was planned entirely by the Serbians, and the crowds were handled in a manner that would have made the NY police forces envious. It was the heartfelt, dignified response of a proud people –the Serbians are very proud-to an American effort to help lessen the demoralizing devastation of the war*. If one compares the ceremony of the corner stone in Belgrade with the ones organized few weeks later in Reims and Louvain, one can notice the similarities, the various officials from the French and Belgium governments and of the universities, the King of Belgium and the numerous articles and photos published in the press. For the Carnegie Endowment, there was an obvious concern to present and connect the three libraries projects together.

From July to the end of September and the departure of Casper, the work progresses were satisfactory. By the end of August, the walls of the ground floor were starting to emerge from the grounds. The roof was expecting to be finished by the end of 1921. However, Casper mentioned on several occasion the influence of the political climate and social tensions. In early August, following the assassination of Drašković, Minister of Interior, the Communist Party was officially banned and driven underground. The police was watching closely the workers coming on the construction site and organized a strict surveillance of some of them. Casper even noticed that *the contractors have been badly handicapped by police activity and what he named the communist*

⁶⁵ One month later, on July 21, the communists assassinated the interior minister Miloras Draskovic. Consequently, the Communist party was banned and driven underground.

⁶⁶ CEIP Records, vol. 63, *Politika*, June 23, 1921. Speeches were made by the mayor of Belgrade, the Rector, the ministries of education and of interior, the US charge d'affairs, Casper and by a Serbian student.

⁶⁷ CEIP Records, vol. 56, Casper Report, June 24 and September 28, 1921.

and *bolchevistic* movement.⁶⁸ Later, he reported that the issue had been solved and the work was back to normal. During one of the last meetings held at the office of the rector of the university, the executive committee's members congratulated each other and everyone's cooperation, appreciation and assistance were praised. With a note of humor, Casper noticed that one of the architects Nikola Nestorović blushed when his work was the complimented.⁶⁹

3. Perception, Meanings and achievements.

How was the project advertised, perceived and reported before and after Casper's mission? The Carnegie archives contain a substantial and well-organized press file with clippings from about a dozen newspapers' articles in Serbian and in English published in Belgrade. There are also several articles published in the US, mainly the *New York Times*. One can reasonably assume that this file was put together and sent by Casper himself as in August 1925, the secretariat of Butler announced the sending of a package: the contracts, the photos, the architectural plans, the movie and newspaper's clipping to the Carnegie headquarters in Washington.⁷⁰ The file presents a choice of nine Serbian newspapers, some were well known: *Politika*, *Pokret*, *Pravda*, *Epoha*, *Balkan*, *Beogradski Dnevnik*, *Triviouna*, *Yugoslavenski Piemont*, *Trgovinski Glasnik*. Over the period of March to June 1921, more than two dozens articles, related to the Carnegie Endowment or the library project, were selected. During these four months, these articles represent around seven articles every month or one to two articles every week. Since this file include only a selection of newspapers, one can speak about a

topic often and widely advertised or published. In the archives, each article appears in Serbian followed by its translation, handwritten in English, to be read by the CEIP members, Haskell, Finch, Severance or Butler. Also, most of the translations end with a detailed note, stating whether or not the same topic had appeared the same day in other newspapers. In addition, Mabel Grujić sent personally several articles and their translation in English to Nicholas Butler.

The elaborated file demonstrated a sense of modernity and it is a direct reference to Butler's personal conviction regarding the importance of public opinion as an element that participated and should be involved in the development of the civil society. How were the newspapers selected by Casper? Probably according to their political tendencies and with the goal to reach a wider spectrum. Butler was convinced that the public opinion, an educated public opinion needed to be well informed as it was and had to be a crucial element in the ruling of public affairs. As mentioned earlier in the paper, Casper had noticed upon his arrival, that the project was perceived with doubt and skepticism. A turning point occurred in mid March 1921 when the library project became a joint operation between the CEIP and the Yugoslavs (the inside-outside division of the construction-work). Around the same time, Casper was invited to the press Congress held in Sarajevo by the president of the Newspapermen Union as the *representative of a mission of culture whose aims are greater civilization of the world*.⁷¹ Casper used this opportunity skillfully to explain and advertise the main concepts of the Carnegie Endowment in education policy and reconstruction. In contemporary words, he organized a press release and continued over the following months from Belgrade. In one of his

⁶⁸ CEIP Records, vol. 320, Casper Reports, July 30 and August 6, 1921.

⁶⁹ CEIP Records, vol. 320, Casper Reports, July 2, 1921.

⁷⁰ CEIP Records, vol. 63, Amy Jones to Finch, August 14, 1925.

⁷¹ CEIP Records, vol. 63, Casper to CEIP, Marsh 19, 1921. Casper accepted the invitation after consulting Percival Dodge.

personal letters to Haskell, he explained with humor that *the amount of Austrian beer was necessary to interest the press was appalling to one so young as myself coming from a land of Freedom and Prohibition* and concluded *but it costs a little more than water*.⁷² The letter was about his last personal financial statement. From then on, the press was clearly appreciated as a tool that should be used to advertise the library project. Journalists were invited on a regular base to visit the construction-site, the drawings rooms and thank to Casper's decision to deal with the press, *they have decided that the project has ceased to be a myth*.⁷³ The date of the Corner Stone Ceremony was released in the press and numerous journalists were invited to assist. Casper's policy raises some questions: Was there a need to create a climate of confidence and to win over the public opinion? If yes, was it connected to the general complex political situation (pre-Vidvotan Constitution). From the CEIP's point of view, was there a policy to use a modern means of publicity?

If one look closely at the topics of the articles, it appears that the vocabulary and the words used are similar, almost exactly the same, showing clearly that the press releases were orchestrated by Casper: The Carnegie Endowment is highly praised, acknowledged for his gift, Andrew Carnegie himself is largely mentioned along with his lifework achievement and described as a human believer, a positive real fighter, a giant (energetic, strong and beautiful). Some words appeared in a repeating way: Culture and progress, light and culture, humanitarian and concern/action, education and mission, American friendship. *Our people should understand and feel the education which Carnegie and his fruit full life is giving*

⁷² CEIP Records, Vol. 320, Casper to Haskell, Marsh 25, 1921.

⁷³ CEIP Records, vol. 56, Casper to CEIP Committee, April 15, 1921.

to all men of fight and progress. Pokret, March 12, 1921. Each step of the building process is reported with great similar details, including the topics discussed at the committee meetings such as the plans, equipment, issues related to the funding from the US, changes of dates etc. The press became an integral part of the project after March 1921, but it was already advertised on the US side in the *New York Times* of January 2, 1921, before Casper's departure and of October 30, 1921, upon his return.

The library can be perceived as a symbol of Andrew Carnegie life's and achievement even though he never saw himself the building or even the project as he died on August 11, 1919 at a time when only the principle of attributing funds for devastated areas has been adopted. During the two previous years, Carnegie had been suffering from attacks of pneumonia. According to biographical studies, he had been extremely shocked by the outbreak of the war and simply withdrew himself from public life.⁷⁴ The entire project was mostly due to the determination of Nicholas Butler, his close advisers, d'Estournelles de Constant in Paris and Cordenio Severance. One can say that Butler shared and followed Andrew Carnegie spirit and path undertaken decades ago with the building of hundred of public libraries in the US and beyond. D'Estournelles de Constant did not see the library finished either as he died in May 1924.

Two final episodes took place at the end of the construction work. First at request of the rector of the university, a bust of Andrew Carnegie was ordered and placed in the main entrance of the library. The sculptor, Sir William Goscombe John, living in London, who had already been commentated for a bronze sculpture agreed to have the model reproduced in the libraries under

⁷⁴ Heindrick, Burton: *The Life of Andrew Carnegie*, New York, 1962.

construction in Belgrade, Louvain and Reims.⁷⁵ Paul d'Estournelles de Constant, Nicolas Butler and Henry Haskell handled the matter. The property rights were transferred to the CEIP and a plaster replica was sent to Paris through the diplomatic valise. According to a report from February 1923, the reproduction work took place later in Paris and the bust was sent to Belgrade.⁷⁶ The bust implies a direct reference to the person it represent and offer a visual impact on the passerby. Second, an inscription was placed in the entrance hall. The matter raised some issues as the University authorities suggested to include some recognition to the Yugoslav Parliament for the funds it contributed for the indoor equipment of the building.⁷⁷ The proposal was simply rejected by the CEIP on the ground that the Yugoslavs authorities had decided to modify the original CEIP plans. Percival Dodge played the intermediary between the university officials and Haskell at the Carnegie Endowment. Ultimately, Dodge was instructed to transmit the original text. "*This building has been erected by the trustees of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace to mark their sympathy for the suffering of the people of Serbia in the Great War and as an evidence of their purpose to assist the Serbian people in their task of reconstruction. 1922*"⁷⁸

Can one attribute a political meaning to the library project? This point is more arguable, even a debatable question. However, I included it as Capser himself raised the issue in his last report linking closely the building of the library with

the one of the new Kingdom.⁷⁹ Capser made a strong political statement about the new constitution, *which at once gave confidence to the people and a noticeable change*, in the attitude of the officials and in the economic outlook. Further he saw this constitution as a unifying and crucial element for the new state. He emphasized the role of the parliament as representative of the will of the people and noticed the new resolution passed to secure external loan for the development of the country. He perceived the new set of institutions, including the future University and its library as a vital binding force for the new state. In an interesting way, he starts his last section of the report by describing the work progress (walls and foundation) and, without a transition he moved to the topics of the constitution and the parliament. It almost looks like that the construction work of the library and the one of the state institutions were merging completely. He ends his writing by strongly advising the CEIP to pursue in the future its aid in economic developments and give to Butler a long list of people in Serbia and in the US to be thanked for their cooperation, including at the State Department. Finally, he added a list of suggestions on how the help Yugoslavia ranging from call for funds to subsidies books written by members of the faculty or of the parliament. He also wished to call the attention of US medical institutions that could help the Medical Faculty in Belgrade. On several occasions, he presented the library not only as a gift from the Carnegie Endowment but as a way to bring the USA and the Kingdom closer together. While at the press congress in Sarajevo, he insisted that the building would cement *the bonds of friendship between our countries*.⁸⁰ This concept was also reiterated in the letter written by Nikola Pašić to thank Capser, emphasizing *the*

⁷⁵ CEIP Records, vol. 57, Haskell to Finch, October 11, 1921, Finch to Haskell, October 24, 1921, Haskell to Finch, May 5, 1922. The bust was also placed at Fagniers and Strasbourg University.

⁷⁶ CEIP Records, vol. 57, Finch to Estournelles de Constant, February 28, 1923.

⁷⁷ CEIP Records, vol. 320, Dodge to Haskell, December 22, 1922, Gavrilovic to Dodge, December 21, 1922, Haskell to Dodge, January 10, 1923.

⁷⁸ CEIP Records, vol. 320, Haskell to Dodge, September 29, 1922. In 1926, a another version was chosen.

⁷⁹ CEIP Records, vol. 56, Capser final report to CEIP, September 28, 1921.

⁸⁰ CEIP Records, vol. 56, Capser to CEIP, September 28, 1921.

*bonds of a true friendship between our peoples.*⁸¹ The original plans called for the work to be completed by 1922, but due to mainly financial issues the building was only achieved and inaugurated in May 1926. The Yugoslav Parliament voted to provide funds in order to complete the indoor equipment. By December 1922, the university of Belgrade had over 8,000 students registered and by 1926 it was able to hold more than 200, 000 books.

Conclusion.

The European dimension of the library project has to be underlined as the construction of the Belgrade library is linked to the ones in Belgium and in France. It was a triple operation and it should be understood and appreciated as such by the historians. The very active, personal and direct role of Leo Capser is also to be noticed. From his letters, reports and personal notes, it appears that his initiatives, his great understanding of the complex political situation were a decisive and essential contribution to the project. Leo Capser, may be an unknown figure in history, but one can here to draw a line with another figure, described in details by Ljubinka Trgovcević in her recent article on Mabel Grujić, described as *a little known-people on whom there are no*

*studies...but whose role was often influential and even essential.*⁸² Finally, was the Carnegie project an expression of a philanthropic work or did it also represented the new role of US foreign policy in Europe? Even if the library project was not a State Department initiative, American foreign policy was de facto involved and it shows, through Percival Dodge, how ambiguous the link was between a non-profit organization, the Carnegie Endowment and the US government. The Carnegie project went beyond a charity work as it reflected the interest of Washington at that time. However, the convergence of interest between Belgrade University and the CEIP was noticeable: the former needed a new building in order to implement a new education system and the latter had already accomplished a major work in education and knowledge through the building of numerous public libraries. Several years later, in 1933, Slavko Grujić wrote in one of his personal letter to Nicolas Butler: *I wonder if you know that the Carnegie Library Building of the Belgrade University, which is due to your donation from the CEIP and which for some years stood alone in an under developed area of the city is now flanked by other fine University buildings on a wide and well paved avenue which has become one of the city's thoroughfares.*⁸³

⁸¹ CEIP Records, vol. 320, N. Pashitch to Capser, July 30, 1921. Capser also received a personal letter from Pribichevitch.

⁸² Trgovcevic, Ljubinka: Mabel Grujic-An American in Serbia. Contributions on her Humanitarian Work during the WWI. In: 125 years of diplomatic relations between the USA and Serbia, Belgrade University, 2008.

⁸³ RBML, Butler's paper, vol. 169, Grouitch to Butler, December 1933.

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