

Novi Sad Archives
December 3, 2018

Good day everyone.

Last thursday I was in Novi Sad at the opening of our new American Corners – which these day is an expression of everyday cooperation between our countries in Novi Sad. Today we have an opportunity to place it all within the context of more than a 100 years of friendship and partnership. This book (Adventure in the Balkans 1915) was translated into Serbian for the first time and it describes the experience of an American in Serbia in extraordinary circumstances. However, the "adventures" of Dr. Dold were, in some sense, also a symbol for all of us as to how our relationships were, how they should be and how they could be in the future. I thank Nebojša Kuzmanović and his team from the Archives of Vojvodina for doing an incredible job on preserving the history of Serbia.

By taking care of all these books, documents and manuscripts, some of which are in extremely sensitive state, you protect the cultural heritage of this country, as well as protect the beautiful stories of Vojvodina and Serbia that would otherwise be forgotten or falsely remembered. I congratulate you on your dedication and devoted work with which you breathe life into history.

A few months ago, Nebojša asked me if I wanted to write a foreword for these great memoirs written by a certain American doctor, Douglas Meriwether Dold. I must confess that I, before I read this book, had some general knowledge about Mihajlo Pupin and his humanitarian organization, the Columbia Relief Expedition. I however knew very little about it.

Reading the memoirs of young Dr. Dold, while I won't spoil the book for you so you can enjoy it when you read it – I saw a very personal side to these activities of providing aid to the Serbian people.

I see Dr. Dold as part of one broader mosaic of Americans, from all spheres of life, that answered the call that "Serbia needs your help" from the poster of the famous war-time sculptor Malvina Hoffman.

Indeed a great number of Americans of Serbian descent signed up as volunteers in order to fight side by side with their cousins from that side of the ocean, all towards the far Salonica Front. Likewise, other Americans helped in all kinds of other ways.

An American woman Mabel Grujić, married to a Serbian diplomat Slavko Grujić, helped with gathering American financial aid for Serbia.

These brave Americans of Serbian descent or the American lady married to a Serbian diplomat were obviously connected to this country and had reasons for wanting to help out. However, the tale of Dr. Dold testifies about the numerous other Americans who went to Serbia's aid when it was needed, even though they didn't have any noticeable connections with this country.

Those were people such as Dr. Rosalie Morton, that brought supplies to the Salonica Front and worked there in the field hospitals. People like Dr. Richard Strong as well who, in April 1915, lead a mixed medical commission organized by the Rockefeller Foundation and the American Red Cross, with the goal of subduing the typhoid epidemic.

Even former president Teddy Roosevelt gave up some of his money, that he received as part of his Nobel Peace Prize, towards helping the Serbian people.

Many people were inspired by the stories of bravery and self sacrifice that they read about in the newspaper as well as from reports from the war-torn region. Many more, however, were inspired by one man, Mihajlo Pupin, who at that time was a Honorary Consul of Serbia and who founded his humanitarian organization at the Columbia University (the so called Columbia Relief Expedition).

Douglas Meriwether Dold just graduated at the College for doctors and surgeons at the Columbia University when he, together with his younger brother Elliott (back then still a student of medicine), joined a team of around fifty Americans on a dangerous journey to the Balkans in order to help wounded soldiers and civilians in need.

Dold's idealism and compassion were a reflection of emotions that Serbia received from ordinary people from around the United States of America, who was, back in 1915, still neutral.

By reading the *Adventure in the Balkans* we realize that Dr. Dold had to leave Serbia because of further worsening of his sight that was damaged in the war, which is yet another example of the mutual sacrifice that connects the history of our people and which connects both Americans and Serbs.

The US and Serbia stood side by side and overpowered the superior enemy during the First World War, and then again during the Second World War. Such examples of self sacrifice repeat themselves during most of our history together. We will never forget that during the Nazi occupation, Serbian peasants saved 500 American and other Allied pilots as well as crew members that were shot down over former Yugoslavia.

They risked their lives in order to protect those foreigners up until their evacuation during Operation Air Bridge aka Operation Halyard in 1944.

We stood shoulder to shoulder because we shared the same virtues and fought for the same principles. Unfortunately, during the 1990's, when Yugoslavia was falling apart, Slobodan Milošević lead this country into a conflict with the rest of Yugoslavia and the Western World, and that is the first time in history that we found ourselves in a different role – the role of an adversary. Those times are over now. Still the memory of that period remains as a clear reminder to us all that partnership must be constantly maintained.

We stood shoulder to shoulder in the past and likewise we must do so today as well in order to make the Balkans peaceful and stable. It's that that will enable Serbia and it's neighbors to have

progress and also give it's own citizens the ability to enjoy the blessings of a free and open society. The people of Serbia deserve it and it's what Douglas Meriwether Dold fought for.

I thank you and hope you enjoy reading this book.

Kyle Randolph Scott