

German and Serbian Newspapers on Renewalists

The Nazi Element of Kulturbund in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and in Banat

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Introduction

AFTER THE Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (Yugoslavia) was established, a large number of Germans, previously subjects of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire, lived and worked there. The life and position of the German minority in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (Yugoslavia) was of interest to the older generation of authors such as J. Mirnić and D. Biber, as well as to young authors and scholars such as Z. Janjetović, B. Bešlin, M. Antolović, F. Krčmar, B. Simić and others. King Aleksandar Karadjordjević, the ruler of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia,¹ and his regime seriously damaged the press since many newspapers ceased publication after the dictatorship was introduced on 6 January 1929 (Popov, 1983). The media which were still published were under constant police and regime surveillance. King Aleksandar wanted to impose an “integral Yugoslav spirit,” which became the state ideology, while forbidding all other forms of national affiliation, including flags and coats of arms. The surveillance of national minorities increased as well. Their rights were not fully respected, as it can be seen in the works of Zoran Janjetović:

Minimal minority rights in the new country were guaranteed by international laws and the Convention on minority rights which the kingdom signed on 5 December 1918, after a long refusal to accept it. However, it became clear very soon that that minimum was not present in many aspects, although in other aspects they had more rights than there were in the Convention. The German minority, alongside the Italian and Romanian minorities, had most use of it. (Janjetović 2016, 24)

Antolović also claims that that the Germans were well treated in the new state: “Soon after the unification, the government showed a benevolent attitude towards the Germans, especially those in Vojvodina, thus trying to oppose them to the irredentist aspirations of the Hungarian minority” (Antolović 2017, 198).

The king's decree of 3 October 1929 introduced a new state organization, dividing the Kingdom of Yugoslavia into nine provinces (*banovina*).² The territory of present-day Vojvodina³ and a part of Šumadija belonged to Dunavska banovina and its capital was Novi Sad (Vajagić 2016). Media censors had extensive authority and they could intervene if they suspected that a text contained hidden allusions or political elements. Military officers took important positions in the government; General Kalifatović, who suppressed every attempt at changing the official state policy, became the director of the Radio Beograd (Popov 1983, 282). Besides state censorship, self-censorship easily increased in such an atmosphere, and the editors of newspapers were most vulnerable to it. "The Yugoslav government was not shy to use other forms of influence on the media: donations, private conversations with the editors who were forced to change their editorial policy or instructions on how to report on certain topics" (Janjetović 2005, 267–268). From 6 January 1929 to the elections on 5 May 1935, most newspapers in Vojvodina supported the regime, while politically independent media had to be quiet or to be satisfied with some sarcastic comments which the censors did not notice (Bjelica 2008). It is worth mentioning that all magazines published by political parties were suspended, while new papers promoting integral Yugoslav affiliation came into existence. The media of the Yugoslav minorities had to be very careful of what they wrote about and they had to publish texts in which they expressed their loyalty to the king, the state and the idea of Yugoslavia. "The most problematic was the minority press, as well as the newspapers which came from their countries of origin, both legally and illegally. Minority press was mainly the concern of the censors with the state prosecutors in Novi Sad" (Janjetović 2009, 257).

Jugoslovenski Dnevnik on Minorities

ONE OF the greatest exponents of the new policy was the *Jugoslovenski dnevnik* (Yugoslav journal), whose director was Feodor Nikić. Its publication started in Subotica in 1929 and from the very beginning it criticized Hitler's imperialistic plan embodied in the motto "Drang nach Osten" (Popov 1983, 294). The paper's format was very modest and there were no photographs or other contemporary graphic solutions, and the journalists (mostly correspondents) were not very proficient. After the paper was transferred to Novi Sad,⁴ it had 12 pages, a lot of photographs, but some contributors, like Louis Barthou, appeared several times over a week. It was not very expensive and, alongside the usual layout of the front page, it started publishing editors' comments accompanying the agency news. A significant amount of space was given to the forthcoming Radio service act ("Kakva nam radio-služba treba," Sunday edition, 18 February 1934), and every issue featured the radio guide of the big regional and Central European stations: Belgrade, Zagreb, Vienna, Bucharest, Prague, Milan, Budapest and Warsaw. Nikić's journal followed the line of the integral Yugoslav spirit—there were texts written in Cyrillic and Latin alphabets on the same page, and he himself organized associations which promoted King Aleksandar's ideas in many towns in Vojvodina (Nadoveza 2011). *Jugoslovenski dnevnik* was against Hungarian revisionism

and there were texts which openly attacked national socialism and Hitler's regime in Germany. There were positive texts about the Kingdom of Romania, praising the Romanian king and his dynasty. Since Czechoslovakia, alongside Yugoslavia and Romania, was in the Little Entente, that country was highly respected in the Yugoslav newspapers and it was characterized as a very friendly country.

***Jugoslovenski Dnevnik* on Germans and Nazism**

JUGOSLOVENSKI DNEVNIK often commented on the German national group in Yugoslavia and Vojvodina, so they published articles about Kulturbund (Swabian-German Cultural Association), which had a positive influence on the relations between Serbs and Germans. A good example for cultivating good international relations was a text with the extended headline: "A lecture on Njegoš in the German language." "The lecturer spoke positively about Njegoš and when the passages from Njegoš's works were read in German . . . several times, the lecturer was interrupted by the applause from the audience, which acclaimed the exquisite articulation of the lecturer, as well as the content of certain passages from *Gorski vijenac*" (*Jugoslovenski dnevnik*, 24 February 1934, article "Predavanje g.dr Šmausa u Kulturbundu").

Nikić's journal gave real lectures on patriotism to Hungarians and Germans who were accused of spreading national intolerance and for behaving contrarily to the aspirations of the state's nation (*Jugoslovenski dnevnik*, 12 January 1934). On many occasions, *Jugoslovenski dnevnik* published critical articles about the cultural activities of minorities who, the journalists said, turned their theatrical performances and poetry readings into anti-state events and expressed disloyalty to the majority (*Jugoslovenski dnevnik*, 4 January 1934, article "Naše manjine i njihova kulturna aktivnost").

The journal informed about famous scientists, such as Professor Mijo Mirković, who gave an anti-Nazi lecture on "National Socialism in Germany" at the Open University in Subotica. According to the journal, Mirković said: "The situation today is that Hitler hasn't fulfilled any of his plans so far and he won't do it in the future. He is trying to pursue everything related to German imperialism, which provokes the hatred of the whole world. Hitler's words 'Drang nach Osten' cause peoples to come together, especially among the Slavs" (*Jugoslovenski dnevnik*, 26 January 1934, article "Nacionalni socijalizam u Nemačkoj").

Jugoslovenski dnevnik also accused the German minority media of being pro-Nazi. There was an article about a German paper published in Novi Sad called "Deutsches Volksblatt," stating: "An organ of the German minority or Hitler's official journal" (*Jugoslovenski dnevnik*, 10 March 1934, articles "Dajčes Folksblat" and "Anšlus"). There was a series of articles about Germany and its Nazi state system, and in one issue, next to the negative article about a quarrel in the German government, there was a picture of Adolf Hitler on the front page (*Jugoslovenski dnevnik*, 21 March 1934, article "U nemačkoj vladi može doći do ozbiljnih potresa" containing the subtitle "Posle sukoba između Gebelsa i fon Papena").

There were many other papers as well, and the most prominent were *Otadžbina* (Homeland) (Novi Sad, 1 December 1929–30 March 1930), *Jedinstvo* (Unity) (Sombor, 3 February 1931–30 May 1931), *Dunavska pošta* (Danube post) (Novi Sad, 13 October 1931), or *Podne* (Noon) (Veliki Bečkerek, 1 August 1933–25 November 1933).

The Renewalists' Nazi Faction and Their Media in Banat

THE RENEWALISTS, whose official name was Kameradschaft der Erneuerungsbewegung, were established by Jakob Avender in 1934. “It was influenced by a similar movement in Romania—Nationalsocialistische Erneuerungsbewegung der Deutschen in Rumänien” (Antolović 2017, 95). They had a distinctive national-socialist ideology and were the exponents of the Nazification of Kulturbund (Biber 1966, 46). “The first public appearance of the renewalists was on 3 December 1934 when they submitted their list of candidates for the Federal Board” (Mirnić 1974, 37). They attracted a significant number of young Germans who provoked the state to react: “The local Kulturbund organization youth in Kikinda used Nazi symbols and was therefore disbanded on 12 November 1935. Due to other similar causes, the authorities of Dunavska banovina banned the local Kulturbund organization in Novi Sad on 27 December 1935” (Antolović 2017, 101).

“The Nazis in the Third Reich had a well-developed propaganda media system which made an effort to transmit propaganda messages to the Germans who lived abroad. Nazi propaganda was well-organized and very sophisticated” (Barović 2015, 178). The most important German daily newspaper between the two wars in Yugoslavia was *Deutsches Volksblatt*, which had a high circulation and a very good and modern editorial policy. It was edited by a German minority organization in Yugoslavia called Kulturbund, therefore the pro-Nazi renewalists made *Pančevoer Post* their newspaper, changing its name to *Völkscruf* on 25 August 1934. That paper became the first national-socialist paper in Banat and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia which openly promoted Hitler’s ideology and came into fierce conflict with the leaders of Kulturbund, whom they called “deadbeat,” “parasites,” “pests,” etc. On the other hand, the renewalist press, led by *Völkscruf*, took up the worst of Nazi journalism, with an offensive language and insults (Janjetović 2009, 259).

The editors were prominent Nazi supporters from Banat such as Jakob Avender, Gustav Halvaks, Hans Turn, Jakob Redler, etc. (Bešlin 2001, 53). Jakob Lihtenberger, the previous leader of the Kulturbund youth was a correspondent of the paper, while the members of the “renewalist Kameradschaft,” Nazi groups in the villages of Banat, regularly sent articles, so the paper was seemingly very informative. The newspaper was printed in the Gothic script. On the front page, next to the nameplate, it said “Organ für völkische Erneuerung,” which was later replaced by the paper’s orientation “Kampfblatt für völkische Erneuerung.” The headlines often ended with exclamation marks in order to get attention. The paper was openly anti-Semitic, and the anti-Jewish orientation was used in arguments with the leaders of Kulturbund. “The authors were not professional journalists, but renewalist soldiers who openly advocated their beliefs” (Janjetović

2009, 249–250). Bešlin says that the topics of *Völkscruf* were miscellaneous, from agriculture to literature, approached from the point of view of national interests and racial hygiene (Bešlin 2001, 54).

On the front page, there was usually a discussion about some current affairs (e.g. “Bäuerliches Denken und Leben,” 25 August 1934) or a debate with a paper published by Kulturbund. *Völkscruf* published texts about the anniversaries of some towns or villages (“150 Jahre Torža”), educational issues (“Schulnachrichten”), and there were some advertisements on the back cover (*Völkscruf*, 25 August 1934).

Nazi Newspapers’ Attack on the Catholic Church in Banat

THE RENEWALIST newspapers accused *Deutsches Volksblatt* of collaborating with the Jewish shops and of recruiting German children for a private Jewish school (Bešlin 2001, 57). Like much of the national-socialist media, *Völkscruf* constantly attacked and insulted its opponents at the *Deutsches Volksblatt* (the first word of the nameplate was always written in quotation marks). As good Nazi journalists, they often attacked the Catholic Church, followed by the newspapers in the Serbian language. *Dan* published an article with the headline “The editors of *Völkscruf* from Pančevo have been accused of defaming Belgrade archbishop Dr. Rafael Rodić”:

Dr. Aleksandar Preler, the legal representative of Archbishop Rodić, and the members of the board of the Roman Catholic Church parish in Pančevo sued the editors of Völkscruf, Jakob Avender and Hans Turn. During yesterday’s and today’s hearings, the judicial council was presided by Pavle Dajić, the judge of the District Court. Dr. Jakob Avender declared that he did not feel guilty since he had not written the article (where the archbishop was attacked) and that the editorial was written by Hans Turn. This hearing attracted a lot of attention . . . The verdict was reached yesterday afternoon, Hans Turn was sentenced to a fine of 2,000 dinars because, as editor-in-chief, he had slandered Archbishop Rodić. Jakob Avender was sentenced to a fine of 1,500 dinars because he had received and proofread the article in which archbishop Rodić was attacked. (Dan, 15 November 1935)

The journalist of *Dan* concluded that the verdict had attracted a lot of attention (the big hall of the district court in Pančevo was full of people) and added that, apart from paying the fine, the editors of *Völkscruf* were obliged to publish the verdict of the district court in their next issue. However, that and similar judicial sanctions did not affect *Völkscruf*, which continued to attack its opponents. When the official newspaper of the Kulturbund published an add in which an English-German agency in London looked for a single young German female cook, *Völkscruf* accused the editor of *Deutsches Volksblatt* Franz Perc of human trafficking (Bešlin 2001, 58).

Although *Völkscruf* (as well as *Deutsches Volksblatt*) declared itself impartial about the internal political conflicts in Yugoslavia, it was not impartial because there were no professional journalists at the paper, but mostly young, ideologically biased contribu-

tors who were not very good at concealing their ideology. By adopting the national-socialist vocabulary, *Völkscruf* openly declared itself a the Nazi-oriented paper, and it used a lot of Nazi terms, including *drug* (kamerad). Racism was also present in its articles, but it was not only the Nazi-oriented papers who used it. For example, racism was present in *Jugoslovenska straža* (Yugoslav patrol), a newspaper from Banat (Pančevo) which wrote in the spirit of the 6 January dictatorship. They promoted the sublime terms which defined the “Yugoslav race”: family, nation, state, king and homeland (*Jugoslovenska straža*, 2 July 1932, article “Carstvo kriza”).

However, *Völkscruf* emphasized that, in the field of racial hygiene, the most important thing was to clear German surnames of Hungarian influences, as well as refrain from watching “decadent” Hungarian films which filled the cinemas in Banat and Yugoslavia. The authorities of Dunavska banovina often tried to halt Avender and *Völkscruf*, but they did not succeed due to bureaucratic obstacles⁵ and the higher authorities’ tolerance. Ban Rajić often required actions against the renewalists: “Since the headquarters of Avender’s group and their paper are situated in the territory of the town of Pančevo, it is my privilege to draw your attention to these facts. I would like to ask the town police in Pančevo and the public prosecutor in Pančevo to stop the activities of this group and the publication of that paper” (Arhiv. Vojvodine, Pov. Kab. Br. 78/1938, 14 May 1938, Rajić-Korošecu).

The struggle was intense and in order to control the German minority organization, the national-socialists started more publications. Being aware of the importance of media in Nazi propaganda, they launched *Volk und Bewegung* (monthly newspaper), *Deutsche Bauernzeitung* (weekly newspaper) and *Schaffende Jugend*. “The first youth magazine of the Kulturbund *Schaffende Jugend* was established in September 1938. The founders were the renewalists . . . It was said that the owner was Adam Maurus, a prominent renewalist” (Janjetović 2009, 250). There were also local magazines, such as *Die Heimat* published in Bačka Palanka and humor magazines such as *Die Wespe* (Novi Sad). The other renewalist magazines were published in Pančevo, where their propaganda headquarters was located. It is interesting to mention that German professional magazines, such as the magazine for peasants *Landwirt*, were under the influence of the renewalists, so they published a long speech of Walther Darré, Reich Minister for Food and Agriculture (Bešlin 2001, 160).

The Conflict between the Nazis and the Catholic Church—the Case of Adam Berenz

AFTER THE Second World War, there was a discussion about the anti-renewalist role of the Catholic press and the role of the priest Adam Berenz, who battled Nazism in Yugoslavia before the Second World War. The public in West Germany overstated his role, while the communist regime in Yugoslavia understated it. The fact is that on 22 June 1935, a weekly newspaper called *Die Donau* was founded in Apatin (which already had its local newspaper *Batsckaer Zeitung*). Its editor was Anton Lotherer

(Bešlin 2001, 151). Adam Berenz took over the magazine in January 1936. As a priest, he was expected to dedicate the paper to religious topics, and in the beginning, *Die Donau* was dedicated to them. However, Berenz turned it into a weapon to fight the Nazis-renewalists. The renewalists attacked the paper more than they attacked *Deutsches Volksblatt*, the paper of the Kulturbund. “Berenz started a crusade against the renewalists and their equating of Nazism with Germanism. He advocated a conservative Catholic stand, with a strong pro-Hungarian sentiment, which was clear during the Second World War. He was trying to convince his readers that the Nazis are godless and that being a good German does not mean being a national-socialist” (Janjetović 2009, 254). The conflict between the Catholic priests and Nazi renewalists stemmed from the animosity between the Third Reich leaders and the Catholic Church, that is, the Pope. In order to clarify the conflict and its consequences, we will use Serbian newspapers from that period which covered the conflict between Berlin and the Vatican.

After the conflict with the Reds, today Berlin is under the impact of its clash with the Vatican. Germany handed a note to the Vatican, which practically means it ended the relations with the Holy See. Nobody enters the quiet palace of the Apostolic Nuncio, Monsignor Orsenigo, the descendant of a Doge of Venice. Today, the building is quiet as a grave. However, the atmosphere is quite lively in the ministry of Mr. Goebbels. Although the German envoy has not been recalled from Rome, the situation is still very serious. These events will show the world that Berlin does not play with words and that there is a Germany of a new spirit and of new words, which does not waver. (Vreme, 2 June 1937, article “Situacija je još vrlo ozbiljna,” by Miloš Crnjanski, Berlin correspondent).

The conflict between the Pope and Hitler had significant consequences for the Germans in Vojvodina, and beside the division between Catholics and Protestants, the renewalists’ contempt for Christianity has to be taken into consideration. “Although the Germans from Vojvodina were conservative and religious people, the obituaries in *Volksruf* did not have Christian elements” (Bešlin 2001, 54). The renewalists had their expert in the media conflict with the Church, Jakob Kramer, who often debated with Berenz, and both sides aimed a lot of insults at their opponent.

Volksruf, like some national-socialist Reich newspapers, attacked Berenz for his physical appearance: “He is German by blood. Still, by his feelings, his education and upbringing, national and political attitude, his way of thinking, cultural affiliation and language, in a word, by his inner self, he is a Hungarian. And by the way he sees the world, he is a darker Roman” (Bešlin 2001, 154). The renewalist faction often attacked *Die Donau* arguing that, thanks to the priests, the Germans in Podunavlje were under a huge Hungarian influence, and they wrote the priests’ names in Hungarian. Besides Berenz, renewalists often attacked Bishop Lajčo Budanović and claimed that he had persuaded the Yugoslav authorities to arrest renewalists (*Volksruf*, 16 August 1940, article “Herr Budanović wir sind auf der Hut!” by Jakob Kramer).

The conflict between the Catholic Church and the renewalists lasted until 1941 and there were conflicts even after the Hungarians occupied Bačka (Mirnić 1974, 195).

The correspondents of the Yugoslav papers who were familiar with the situation in the Reich reported on that historical aspect of the conflict between church and state in Germany.

Those who like historical reminiscence point to similar conflicts in the past, the conflicts between Roman Popes and German emperors, the conflict between the Pope and Napoleon. Those who like to attack Mr. Hitler point out that Mr. Mussolini knew how to make peace with the Pope and use the Church for his goals. However, there is no similarity between this and the past conflicts of the German regime and the Pope, nor can we say that Mussolini and Hitler are in the same situation concerning the Catholic Church. (Vreme, 29 March 1937, article “Ko će pobediti? Pije XII ili nacionalsocijalizam?” by Miloš Crnjanski).

It is worth noting that Janjetović made the most objective assessment of the role and importance of Adam Berenz in the anti-Nazi media work: “Berenz’s *Die Donau* was rude enough to provoke the Reich authorities even during the war. That is why German authors after the Second World War proudly presented it as an example of how to fight Nazism. Without overestimating its importance, its editor, Adam Berenz, should be praised for courage in expressing his opinion and fighting for his ideals” (Janjetović 2009, 259).

Dan Newspaper Reports on Nazism

ALTHOUGH BERENZ criticized Kulturbund as well, the official paper of the German minority *Deutsches Volksblatt* did not respond and it did not want a conflict with the anti-Nazi Catholic priest, since they had a common enemy—the renewalists. The media in Serbian covered the conflict within the German national community, especially *Dan* from Novi Sad. The only daily political paper from Novi Sad *Jugoslovenski dnevnik* ceased to exist in March 1935 due to debts and it was replaced by *Dan*. Its first issue was published on 28 May 1935. Its creator Daka Popović wrote that he had started the newspaper because of the German community (Milić Šumarov 2017).

*In 1935, I decided to start a new paper in Novi Sad in order to unveil the political and social situation in Vojvodina and to draw attention to Kulturbund and the German paper published in Novi Sad called **Deutsches Volksblatt**. This newspaper is oriented towards the Yugoslav idea and it gradually spreads this ideology among radical Serbs in Vojvodina. It is open to all patriots, no matter which party they belong to. This paper carefully observed the Hitlerism which blossomed in Vojvodina, the Reichsdeutsche movements across Vojvodina, their speeches published in **Deutsches Volksblatt**, and those that were not published. I did not spare Maček’s supporters and their activities in Bačka, their destructive and chauvinist idea about a greater Croatia. I had to react to the writings of Korošec’s *Slovenec* and to the clericalism of the **Kapitol** from Zagreb. I had the impression then, and I haven’t changed my opinion to this day, that they were all against Yugoslavia... (Popović 1949, 48)*

Dan often reported on the Kulturbund activities and was among the first papers in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia to point to the evil of national-socialist ideology and propaganda, and editorials often dealt with it. *Dan* had a section called “Minority Life” and it usually wrote about the German minority, although there were a few articles about the Hungarian minority as well. When the conflicts within Kulturbund intensified, it wrote about those problems (*Dan*, 24 December 1935). The paper published some articles from the domestic newspapers in German as well as the reports about dictatorship in the Reich. In December 1935, as a part of “our article” it published a text “The Persecution of Poles in Germany” which, among other things, describes the suffering of this Slavic nation in the Reich and different psychological pressures meant to force them to leave Hitler’s state. “*Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny* reported about new persecutions of Poles in Germany, irrespective of their race and religion. Polish homes have often been searched and the Poles have had to go to the Gestapo offices for many different reasons. The aim of this action is to intimidate people and to make them leave Germany” (*Dan*, 13 December 1935).

Dan often warned the state officials about the serious pro-Nazi activities of some sections of Kulturbund:

A large number of Kulturbund members who belong to different fractions are dissatisfied with the work of their parliamentary representative Mr. Kraft and his closest associates. It is clear that the forthcoming Kulturbund reorganization will not calm them. All sensible Germans condemn the political conflict in Kulturbund which is under the influence of national-socialism of the Reich . . . The authorities will have to react as they did in Dravska banovina, since the representatives of Kulturbund have to be told that culture and politics cannot live under the same roof. (Dan, 7 November 1935)

The text further stated that Kulturbund had often been used for private purposes, that is, making Kraft and his associates rich, which bothered decent German peasants.

Sometimes *Dan* went too far in stigmatizing German pro-Nazi actions. In the article “Pan-Pankermanska provokacija u Novom Sadu” of 16 November 1935, the head of the local office of Kulturbund in Novi Sad, Filip Korel said:

It isn’t true that the secretary general of Kulturbund, Mr. Giljum, or someone else in that assembly [founding assembly, local group for Novi Sad] gave a pan-German speech or recommended to “our decent Germans” to be reserved towards Yugoslavia. On the contrary, the essence of all the speeches was to promote tolerance between the Slavic majority and the German minority in our common fatherland. Your paper twisted this fact to its antithesis. (Dan, 13 December 1935)

Another anti-renewalist paper was *Der Familienfreund*, a Catholic newspaper published first in Crvenka (starting with 1927) and later in Novi Vrbas, and it was against the renewalists, but it did not engage in a fierce polemic like Berenz’s paper (Bešlin 2001, 163). In the corpus of Catholic media which fought the renewalist national-socialism was the *Jugendruf*, published in Belgrade from 1934 to 1938, when it was transferred to

Odžaci. It was edited by the Catholic clergy and it was aimed at the Catholic youth. Since the Nazis in the renewalist movement called their paper *Zov naroda*, the Catholic youth called their paper *Zov omladine*.

The German Protestant Church and Nazism in Vojvodina

A SMALL NUMBER of Germans in Vojvodina were Protestants. Their papers had a certain role in the conflict between renewalists and Kulturbund, but unlike the Catholic Church, the Protestant Church supported national-socialism (Bešlin 2014, 690–691). There was a conflict between one part of the clergy and the Nazis in the Protestant Church in Germany, but Hitler's supporters prevailed and created a faction in the Protestant Church called "German Christians" which openly advocated racial hygiene, anti-Semitism and absolute submission to the leader and the party. The Serbian press had information about the conflict between Hitler and a part of the Protestant leaders who tried to prevent the Nazis from taking over the Protestant Church organizations.

The new elections in the Protestant parishes will no doubt bring the national-socialists to power. Hitler was not just gentle, but also very tactical in this conflict between state and church. No doubt this group of Protestant fanatics will be a minority and there will be a permanent peace between church and state after the elections. However, from a sentimental point of view, this conflict among the Protestants remains one of the most interesting chapters in recent history. The conflict which national-socialists have concerning the concordat is much more interesting and broader. (Vreme, 29 March 1937)

The Germans in Vojvodina had a well-organized Protestant Church. The head of their church was Dr. Filip Pop, who paid an official visit to Hitler in 1934 and also visited the Reich Bishop Ludwig Müller (*Kirche und Volk*, 15 March 1934, article "Amtlicher Besuch unseres Bischofs in Berlin"). The archive materials contain testimonials that Yugoslav organs received data about the activities of some Protestants from Vojvodina in the Gustav-Adolf Evangelical support society of Kaiserslautern.

Dr. Zimmerman, as well as other participants, are of good political and moral behavior; so there was no need to deprive them of their passports. The fact that a person spoke in the assembly, even in a secret meeting as the intelligence report says, doesn't mean that there was a criminal act. Other societies also have secret meetings without public attendance because of their affairs, and that could be the case of the Adolf Gustav Society where Dr. Zimmerman participated. The local authorities do not defend Dr. Zimmerman, therefore it is up to the intelligence services to provide the evidence on what Zimmerman said, and if he spoke against our country and our people, he will be charged. (Novi Sad archives, f. 174, pov. 1421/937, broj pov. 1365/37)

The leader of the group, Dr. Andrija Zimmerman, held a speech at a secret meeting of this Evangelical society which was suspicious to the Yugoslav police, and there was a case concerning those who had issued passports to this group of Evangelists in order for them to go to Germany (Novi Sad archives, f. 174, pov. 1421/937, KUDB II/2 broj 56869/C-93. This document was delivered as an attachment about the issuance of a group passport to travel to Germany).

The police later checked if the passports should or should not have been issued. The political eligibility of the Protestant believers would often be mentioned in the police correspondence, much more often as the Second World War approached. The national-socialist affiliation of the Protestant Church in Vojvodina and its support for the renewalists can be seen in its publications and newspapers (Bešlin 2001, 170). The most prominent Protestant newspaper was *Kirche und Volk* which was created in 1934, after the merger of *Griß Gott* and *Neues Leben*, and it contained a lot of articles which explained the compatibility of the German race and Christianity. They explained racial problems and emphasized the fact that the Christianity which the Germans had adopted was the form of religion which suited them best. "One thing should not be forgotten: From the complex Christian religion, the Germans took what best suited their race's innate point of view . . . Supreme and much closer racial characteristics and Christian faith fused in Luther. There are no important differences between German and Christian, it is a fusion of the basic principles" (Bešlin 2001, 171).

Conclusions

THE RELATIONSHIP with the press in German in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia varied from imposed censorship to close relation with the Reich during the government of Milan Stojadinović. "The peak of the cooperation was the agreement about the media between Germany and Yugoslavia, signed by Luković and Joseph Goebbels. The key point of the agreement was that both *German and Yugoslav press should avoid publishing news or articles that could deteriorate the good relations between the two states*" (Simić 2007, 199).

It can be concluded that the problem of Nazification of the Germans in Vojvodina has been approached and that Nazi propaganda in Yugoslavia, Vojvodina and Banat has been researched, but not as much as it should be (Barović and Pralica 2011, 454). The German press was polarized concerning the conflict between Kulturbund and renewalists, and the newspaper "war" included provincial newspapers which dealt with local scandals and gossip, and did not have any economic or political reason to support any of the parties in the conflict (Bešlin 2014, 695–696). After the war, there was a relatively well-coordinated avoidance of the issue of that conflict in Yugoslav historiography. The Germans who were contemporary to those events claimed that they were a hardworking minority which obeyed the authorities, and that most Volksdeutsche were loyal to their country.

Anyway, there was not a slightest trace of anti-Yugoslav mood in the German minority, not even in the 1930s, although many of their wishes were not fulfilled. *The London Times*, which cannot be seen as a pro-German newspaper, in the article of 29 May 1935 called “Germans on the Danube,” underlines the loyalty of the Germans: “More than anything, they demand to stay German, to educate their children in the German way, to be able to learn German at school. Their political hopes to not exceed their basic cultural privileges and rights, as guaranteed in the Act on minority rights protection. (Stefanović 2003, 61–62)

After the war, the historians who were ideologically impassioned did not write about this conflict because it was an ideological conflict, no matter how hard the leaders of Kulturbund, after the renewalists’ victory, tried to represent it as non-ideological. It cannot be said that there were no strong nationalist feelings in Kulturbund. Nevertheless, that organization was traditional and rightist rather than Nazi-oriented. In the end, it can be concluded that the renewalists had a major influence on the German minority in Banat and Yugoslavia and managed to direct it towards German national socialism. □

Notes

1. His wife Queen Marie was a Romanian princess, the daughter of the King Ferdinand I.
2. The City of Belgrade was a separate municipality.
3. Bačka, Srem and a part of Banat.
4. The first issue was published in 1934.
5. Since it was published in Pančevo, which was not a part of Dunavska banovina.

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Volksruf. German-language Nazi newspaper published in Pančevo.

Vreme. Daily Serbian-language newspaper published in Belgrade.

Abstract

German and Serbian Newspapers on Renewalists: The Nazi Element of Kulturbund in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and in Banat

This research analyzes texts from Serbian and German newspapers published in Yugoslavia and Banat during the 1930s and 1940s concerning renewalists, the Nazi element in the German minority. This paper examines the newspapers published in Serbian, as well as the papers published by the German minority organization Kulturbund. The writing of the pro-Nazi newspapers from Banat about the organization which imitated German Nazis and their propaganda methods has been analyzed separately. The religious component has also been analyzed, as well as the relation of the Catholic and Protestant German churches in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia with the renewalists, that is, Nazis. This paper states that the renewalists had a great influence on the German minority in Banat and Yugoslavia, directing it ideologically towards German national-socialism. It can be concluded that the media had a significant role in the Nazi propaganda, as well as in the attempts to suppress Nazism and show the deadly consequences of that totalitarian ideology.

Keywords

media, newspapers, Nazism, Yugoslavia, Banat, propaganda, Germans, Kulturbund, journalists, editors, history