

Vladimir Ćorović

The Relations between Serbia and Austria-Hungary in the 20th Century



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The Relations between Serbia and Austria-Hungary in the 20th Century

Publications of the Institute for Balkan Studies of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Art

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The Relations between Serbia and Austria-Hungary in the 20th Century

Translated by

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Author: Vladimir Ćorović (1885-1941) was professor of Serbian history at the University of Belgrade since 1919 and Rector of the Belgrade University in the years 1934/35 and 1935/36. Several of his books on the history of Serbian, Bosnian-Herzegovinian and Yugoslav history are considered to be definitive works on the subject.

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Vladimir Čorović

Publications of the Institute for Balkan Studies of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Art

Aims and Scope

The Institute for Balkan Studies (IBS) of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Art is a leading scholarly institution for multidisciplinary humanities studies of the Balkans and a host of European and international research projects. The origin of the Institute goes back to the *Institut des Études balkaniques* founded in Belgrade in 1934 as the only of its kind in the Balkans. Its work was banned by the occupation authorities in 1941. The institute was restarted only in 1969 under its present-day name and under the auspices of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts. It assembled a team of scholars to cover the Balkans from prehistory to the modern age and in a range of different fields of study such as archaeology, ethnography, anthropology, history, culture, art, literature, law. This multidisciplinary approach has remained its long-term orientation as the numerous publications of the IBS show. The series *Publications of the Institute for Balkan Studies of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Art* has been founded to present in English to an international readership: outstanding monographs, edited volumes and important key texts on the history and culture of the Balkans.

Preface

The publication in English of Vladimir Ćorović's study, *The Relations between Serbia and Austria-Hungary in the 20th Century*, is a culmination of the efforts that had started long before this book saw the light of the day. The origin of this study goes back to the late 1920s and the efforts made by some Yugoslav officials and intellectuals to provide a competent, scholarly work of international reputation on the question of the origins of the First World War. Vladimir Ćorović (1885-1941), a distinguished historian, one of the foremost representatives of Serbian and Yugoslav historiography in the first half of the twentieth century, wrote between 1930 and 1936 his voluminous study on the relations between Austria-Hungary and Serbia in the early twentieth century. As early as 1932, he met Professor Ralph Haswell Lutz, the chairman of the Board of Directors at the Hoover Institution and signed a contract with the Stanford University for an American edition of his book. The translation of Ćorović's study was undertaken by the well-known Yugoslav diplomat Stojan Gavrilović. However, the planned American edition ironically shared the destiny of the original edition in Serbian language. The publication of the study in 1936 was not realized, since the Yugoslav government complied with the request of the Minister of the Third Reich and forbade it. The rising Nazi Germany took a dim view of publishing a work that was likely to delve into the responsibility of not just Austria-Hungary, but also Wilhelmine Germany for the outbreak of the Great War. Ćorović tragically died when an aircraft in which he tried to escape from the invading Germans in April 1941 was shot down in Greece, whereas the manuscript of the English translation of his book remained incomplete and unpublished at the Archives of the Hoover Institution for decades to come. Even the Serbian text of his study was not published in Belgrade before 1992.

Dušan T. Bataković, the prematurely deceased Director of the Institute for Balkan Studies of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, considered Ćorović's study a seminal work on the Balkan origins of the Great War. When he visited the Hoover Institution Library & Archives Bataković found in the catalogue the record (ZZ028) of Gavrilović's partial translation of the study. It was on his initiative that the Institute for Balkan Studies SASA and the Archives of Yugoslavia decided to publish an English edition of the study. Miladin Milošević, the former director of the Archives of Yugoslavia, asked the Hoover Institution Library and Archives for the permission to use the partial translation of the manuscript done by Gavrilović as a starting point for the publication of the whole work in English – and that request was met with approval and granted. The publication of Ćorović's study thus became a

joint editorial undertaking of the Institute for Balkan Studies SASA and the Archives of Yugoslavia. The arduous task of completing the existing translation and editing the entire text was undertaken by Dragan Bakić, a research fellow at the Institute for Balkan Studies SASA.

This editorial work proved to be long-lasting and demanding, but the publishers are delighted to present finally Ćorović's study to the English speaking public. It is one of the most important works on the historical development in the Balkans in the early twentieth century that eventually led to the outbreak of the first world conflict in history. Impartial and objective analysis of the primary documents yields a clear presentation of the proverbially complicated Balkans in the years that preceded the outbreak of the Great War.

Vojislav G. Pavlović,
Director of the Institute for Balkan Studies of the
Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts

Introduction

In the discussion as to the direct responsibility for the beginning of the World War, the relations between Serbia and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy present one of the most important questions. The war broke out as a result of the conflict between these two states, namely as a result of the Austrian decision to hold Serbia and her government responsible both for the attempt made at Sarajevo on the Austrian heir-apparent, Franz Ferdinand, and for the entire national movement, which had of late become very strong among the Yugoslav subjects of Austria. It is therefore necessary, in order to establish the truth and obtain as trustworthy and complete a picture as possible of the actual state of affairs, to examine these relations thoroughly and with scholarly responsibility and to study all the phases through which they passed. For this purpose, it will be necessary to enlarge somewhat the scope of our enquiry. We shall be obliged, by sheer force of facts, to speak not only of the relations towards the Danubian Monarchy of Serbia herself, but also of those of the whole Serbian people, of which the greater part lived within the boundaries of Austria-Hungary. In making a survey of these relations, we shall not go back into the distant past, or the book would become too unwieldy, but, after the short explanation which is necessary for the better understanding of the whole question, we shall give an outline of the state of affairs from the beginning of the twentieth century.

Austria had not succeeded in settling the Serbian question at a time when it was not in the least a complicated one. In the course of the eighteenth century, she had waged three major wars against the Turks (1716-1718, 1737-1739, 1788-1791), of which the principal operations were carried out in Serbia. In all three wars, the Serbs had joined the Austrians in large numbers and had fought side by side with them against the "heathen Agareni". The Serbs looked upon Austria as a powerful Christian neighbouring state capable of setting them free from the Turkish domination, and all of them, both those living within Austrian frontiers and those under the Turks, hailed Austria as a liberator. At the end of the eighteenth century, during the settlement of the last of these wars, the Serbs would have freely agreed to become the subjects of the Austrian Emperor. In a memorandum drawn up by the Serbs from western Serbia on 22 January 1790, it was clearly stated that they were looking forward to liberating themselves from the Turks and to "winning the good graces and protection of His Most Enlightened Majesty, the Emperor, under whose sceptre we desire to live as faithful subjects for all time."¹ But engaged in other matters which at

¹ D. Pantelić, *Beogradski pašaluk posle Svištovskog mira 1791-1794*, Beograd 1927, p. 183.

the time were more important for her, Austria was unable to establish her rule in the territory south of the Sava and Danube, and the Serbs were left to themselves to get on with the Turks as best they could.

When in the beginning of the nineteenth century, in 1804, the Serbian uprising against the Turks took place under the leadership of Karadjordje Petrović, the Serbs again thought first of their Austrian neighbours and hoped for help from them. On 16 April 1804, Major Mitesser, the Austrian Commander in Zemun, received the following message from the Serbian headquarters: "As you order us, so shall we act."² Similar messages and appeals were repeated later in times of difficulty. The Serbs were unaware to what extent Austria was hampered in her Balkan policy by the development in Western Europe of conditions unfavourable to her. All they saw was that she could not or would not actively help them and they therefore looked for support in another direction. Austria herself did not at first realize the importance of the Serbian movement and paid proper attention to it only when the Serbs had entered into relations with Russia and when, after certain successes, the idea of establishing a state of their own had begun to take firm hold upon them. When, after great sacrifices, and with the diplomatic aid of Russia, this Serbian state was actually founded, any Austrian action along the lines of the former Serbian proposals would have come too late and would not have met with any but an unfriendly response. Austria had let slip forever the opportune moment for settling the Serbian question by liberating the Serbs from the Turks and making them her own subjects with their consent and even with their gratitude.

Once the creation of the Serbian state had become an accomplished fact, Austria was never able to establish with it relations of complete confidence. The reason for this lay primarily in the fact that no such confidence really existed. Two main points of departure in the Austrian policy towards Serbia led to a permanent attitude of suspicion. The first was jealousy of Russian influence in Serbia. Austrian diplomacy knew well that the Serbs were linked with Russia not only by identity of race and religion, but also by centuries-long connections which were fostered even by the poorest monks living in distant mountain monasteries in Turkey. Austria therefore believed that helping the Serbs and Serbia meant, in fact, indirectly strengthening the "Pan-Slavic" or Russian influence in the Balkans. Since the attitudes of Russia and Austria towards Balkan politics throughout the nineteenth century were contradictory in spite of all the apparent temporary agreements, neither of these two Powers could be satisfied with a policy of impartiality towards them on the part of the Balkan states. They were always working for an open declaration as to which

² *Bosanska vila*, XXV, 1910, p. 361.

of them this or that Balkan state was inclined at a given moment. A declaration favouring either of them was looked at askance by the other. Meanwhile, the Balkan states, small, divided, and with unconcealed aspirations as regards the future, exploited this rivalry between the Great Powers and, in accordance with both the general political situation and with their own interests, frequently changed their political orientation. They were concerned with what they could gain in given circumstances by relying on one or the other of the two Great Powers. The Serbian racial and religious connections with Russia therefore never completely excluded, even in theory, and still less in practice, the possibility of closer relations with Austria-Hungary. Russia's Balkan policy had aims of its own which were not always identical with those of Serbia (the best proof is the Treaty of San Stefano) and discontent with official circles in St. Petersburg was sometimes voiced in a very pronounced manner by Serbian public opinion. The extent to which Serbia would be politically Russophile was determined by the extent to which Austria was Serbophile; that is to say, by the extent to which the latter Power took into account national aspirations of the Serbs. But in this respect Austria was far from generous for she feared that aiding Serbian national interests would result in the creation of an attitude and aspirations which might be turned against herself. The second point of departure in her policy towards Serbia was dictated by this very fear of the Serbian national ideal. Austria had witnessed in the course of the nineteenth century the unification of the Germans and the Italians largely at her expense, and now she endeavoured to prevent the same occurrence in the south in the case of the Serbs, i.e. the Yugoslavs. She therefore made it an article of her political faith not to allow the small independent Serbia to rise and grow strong lest she should one day assume the part of a Piedmont and draw into her free state her kinsmen from the Monarchy. In all its relations with the Serbs and Serbia from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy constantly bore in mind these political principles and, led by them, could not remain a disinterested observer of the development of Serbian affairs.

Austro-Hungarian diplomacy often asserted that the Danubian Monarchy was not inimical to Serbia and that it had given ample proof of this in the course of the nineteenth century. The aggrandizement of Serbia at the Congress of Berlin on a larger scale, as it turned out, than that envisaged by the Treaty of San Stefano, the proclamation of the Kingdom of Serbia, Austria's action on behalf of Serbia after the defeat at Slivnica in 1885 were cited as obvious recent instances in support of that assertion. Austria-Hungary had indeed rendered certain services to Serbia at that time; for that reason, a section of the Serbian intelligentsia advocated a policy of close dependence on Austria in the hope

that she might find it to her interest to continue helping Serbia, if only to a very modest extent. But the services rendered to Serbia by Austria must be seen in their true proportions. Although such aid came to Serbia at a very opportune moment, Austria-Hungary did not provide it for the sake of the Serbs, but for its own sake, in order to counteract the Russian influence which spread through Bulgaria over most of the Balkans. Secondly, although Austria-Hungary helped the Serbs in this respect, such aid was disproportionate to the loss it inflicted on them by occupying Bosnia and Herzegovina, which were considered indisputably Serbian provinces and because of which Serbia and Montenegro had entered into war with Turkey. Thirdly, the aid Austria-Hungary provided to Serbia after the Congress of Berlin became unpopular, because it chiefly benefited King Milan, a ruler of unfortunate propensities, who struggled against the majority of his people for many years and, relying on the protection of the neighbouring Monarchy, abused his power. Moreover, the price of this aid was the Secret Convention concluded between Serbia and Austria-Hungary in 1881, which politically tied Serbia's hands and almost reduced her to a semi-vassal status.

We shall not enter here into the question as to whether the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy could have found other and better solutions for the Yugoslav problem than those which it adopted, but we shall, again with a view to the better understanding of the problem as it stood at the beginning of the twentieth century, point out the negative aspects of its action from the Yugoslav point of view. The national movements of the nineteenth century had aroused in all, even the smallest peoples, the desire to assert their national individuality. Tied to this was, naturally, the tendency on the part of small and separated national elements to join together in order to present their claims more successfully. Austria found the solution of her constitutional problem by dividing into two parts in 1867: Austria in which the Germans were predominant and Hungary in which the Magyars emerged as masters. This partition was particularly unsatisfactory for the Yugoslavs. A part of them were left in Austria (the Slovenes and Serbo-Croats in Styria, Carinthia, Carniola, Istria and Dalmatia); others came directly under Hungary (the Serbo-Croats in Bačka, Baranja and the Banat and the Serbo-Croats and Slovenes in Medjumurje); the third part found themselves in Croatia and Slavonia with a certain degree of administrative autonomy. When in 1878 Austria-Hungary occupied Bosnia and Herzegovina, these two provinces were established as a *corpus separatum*. Thus the Yugoslavs in Austria-Hungary were divided into four different sections. Oppressed in Austria by the Germans and in Hungary by the Magyars, they could nowhere find their full expression and although they were numerous as a whole, counting seven million souls, they were everywhere in the minority as a result of

this division and were ignored as such. The natural outcome of such a state of affairs was that the Yugoslavs strove to unite so as to be able, once united, to offer a stronger resistance to the German and Magyar elements and obtain their often flouted national rights. Until its demise in 1918, Austria-Hungary did not find any definite solution to the Yugoslav problem, although it was broached openly and with little hesitation, and although it was a vital question in view of the importance which it attached both publicly and confidentially to its relations with Serbia. If a preventive war against Serbia were intended to shield the Austro-Hungarian Yugoslav provinces from the danger to which, according to the assertions of official circles in Vienna, they were directly exposed through propaganda emanating from Belgrade, how was it not possible, at that time or even earlier, to find a less violent means of suppressing this propaganda by satisfying the claims of the Austro-Hungarian Yugoslav subjects or, at least, by showing some desire to meet them? In Vienna and Pest, however, it seemed easier to treat the Yugoslav question and its broaching as subversive in character, and, not without offence to their Yugoslav subjects, to proclaim that every movement in this direction was fostered from abroad. The German and Magyar elements in the Monarchy wanted to hold all the power in their own hands and were unwilling to make concessions, even in minor matters. And this was bound to lead to a reaction.

Bosnia and Herzegovina, two of the purest Yugoslav provinces with 96% of the Serbo-Croats, "the Tuscany of the Serbian race",³ as V. Mantegazza dubbed it, were considered almost as a colonial territory. The national language, which was Serbo-Croatian, was not allowed to be called by that name, and it was given the local name of Bosnian. The Middle Ages were evoked in all national questions in order to revive local and provincial separatism. This was done for obvious reasons, in order to break off and render impossible any relations between Bosnia and Herzegovina, on the one hand, and Serbia and Montenegro on the other. When this failed with the people of the same origin, the same language and the same spirit, and with hundreds of traditional and inherited connections, police force was resorted to; but instead of inspiring fear, it only served to irritate further. History seems never to have been a teacher in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

The relations between the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, on the one hand, and Serbia and the whole Yugoslav people on the other, may be briefly summarized as follows: fearful for its future, Austria-Hungary was not at all willing to allow the development of a free Serbian state which might exercise an influence over Austrian subjects; however, it never took any step to satisfy those

3 V. Mantegazza, *Macedonia*, Milano 1903, p. 80.

subjects or definitely to settle the Yugoslav question on its own. In this way, Austria-Hungary obviously provoked enmity against itself both outside and within its frontiers. On the other hand, Serbia wished to live and to develop; the whole Yugoslav people had the same desire. With every decade of the nineteenth century, the Serbian, the Yugoslav and the Slav question in general was growing more complex in the Danubian Monarchy. While, the Viennese authorities sought and found certain compromise solutions for the Polish, and, to some extent, the Czech question, the Yugoslav question was mostly dealt with by force. A conflict was inevitable after all that had happened. How it came about, why it could not be avoided, and why it took this particular course, will be seen from the facts set forth in this book, which has been written indeed by a Yugoslav and a former subject of the Danubian Monarchy, but also by a historian whose guiding principle is to tell nothing but the truth.

PART I

*From the Reforms in Turkey to the Annexation
of Bosnia and Herzegovina
(1902-1909)*

The Reform Question in Turkey

After its diplomatic and military defeat in Germany and Italy, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy transferred the center of gravity of its policy to the Balkans. This was the territory in which Austria hoped to make good her losses in the West. In entrusting it with the mandate to occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina, together with the Sanjak of Novi Pazar, the Congress of Berlin had made ample compensation. Just before it encroached on the Balkans as a Great Power, the Danubian Monarchy clearly indicated what were its tendencies in the future in the negotiations with Russia. On the occasion of the conclusion of a convention supplementary to the Russo-Austrian Treaty of Pest of 15 January 1877, Count Andrassy let Russia know that he considered the whole territory down to the Timok-Vardar-Salonica [Thessaloniki] line as his country's sphere of interest. Professor A. Fournier from Vienna states that an agreement to this effect was in fact concluded, although it was not confirmed in writing.¹

After the easily achieved successes at the Congress of Berlin, the old rivalry with Russia began again to make itself felt in Vienna with ever more clearly defined objectives: it was no longer to be a case of dividing the spheres of influence in the Balkan Peninsula between these two powers; Russian influence there was going to be suppressed as far as possible. Hence the efforts which Viennese diplomacy made not only in Serbia, but also in Romania and Bulgaria to create in these countries a favourable situation and to bring into power complacent men. That Serbia was the special object of this policy is self-evident in view of the above mentioned aims of Viennese diplomacy as regards the limits of the Austrian sphere of interest and also in view of Serbia's geographical position in general and her importance for any action in the Balkans which the Vienna government might intend to take at some future time. The Russophile orientation of any Serbian government was therefore looked upon in Vienna with much more reprobation than, for instance, such an attitude on the part of Bulgaria and was considered almost as an unfriendly act – this was made very clear in all political and economic questions.

Another problem which had not existed for Austria-Hungary earlier, even in the first half of the nineteenth century, was Italian interest in the Balkans and

1 A. Fournier, *Wie Wir zu Bosnien kamen*, Vienna 1909, pp. 43-44. There is no further information on this point in E. Wertheimer, *Graf Julius Andrassy*, II, Stuttgart 1913, pp. 376-414.

influence in Albania. From the Peace of Karlovac onwards, Austria-Hungary had secured influence with the Roman Catholics of northern Albania and took a dim view of a rival there, all the more so as Italy, a maritime power stronger than the Danubian Monarchy, would be a menace to the freedom of the Adriatic, if it were to become dominant on both its shores. Viennese diplomacy was sufficiently outspoken in its relations with Italy as regards this question, from time to time permitting Austrian military circles to bring their military supremacy to the notice of the Italian public. In order to suppress Italian influence in Albania, deeply rooted on account of proximity and ancient connections, and to create a favourable disposition to its interests, Austria-Hungary found it most convenient to support the Albanians and to further their national and economic expansion. In doing so, Austria-Hungary hoped to attain two ends: to extend and strengthen its own influence instead of the Italian, and to suppress the Serbian element at whose expense the Albanians chiefly improved their position. Such an attitude on the part of Austria, however, made Italy modify considerably its policy; from 1902 onwards, it made rapprochement with France and then Russia, and sought for friends and support among the Balkan peoples, particularly the Serbs, who were geographically nearest. For those reasons, the Serbs became a political factor which on account of their position in the direction of the aspirations of two Great Powers, as well as because of their racial and religious ties with Russia, were bound to play a more active part, even if they did not perhaps wish it, but that could hardly be the case with a people with highly developed oral tradition of the greatness and importance of their ancient state and with so keen a national consciousness.

As soon as the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy set foot in the Balkans, the position of Serbia became very difficult and much more complex than before in relation to it. Serbia had laid claim to Bosnia from the very first years of her liberation; all the national movements in that province, as well as in Herzegovina, throughout the nineteenth century had had for their object the union of the two provinces with Serbia and Montenegro; because of these two provinces Serbia and Montenegro had entered into an unequal struggle with the Turkish Empire in 1876. In the discussions at the Congress of Berlin as to the fate of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the nationality principle was not taken into consideration. The two provinces were given to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, which had secured them beforehand by means of diplomatic negotiations. Such settlement came as a blow to our whole people. On hearing of the possibility of such a solution, the well-known Bishop Strossmayer wrote bitterly to his friend Franjo Rački: "How is it possible for us to be liberated by those who would drown us in a drop of water, who never cease striving to hamper us, to

put upon us an everlasting curse of bloodlessness!"² If that was the opinion of a high Roman Catholic Church dignitary, a former Court Chamberlain and an Austro-Hungarian citizen, there is no need to enlarge on how other Yugoslavs, who were directly affected, viewed it. With the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy had, counting the Serbs already within its borders, a more numerous Serb population than that of Serbia and Montenegro put together. The settlement of the Serbian question might therefore have passed entirely into the hands of Viennese circles. If this settlement had then been undertaken with a certain amount of respect for the principle of nationality and with safeguards for the national existence of Serbs, the existence of the small independent Serbia might one day have been put into question. Why should Serbia continue to exist as a separate unit outside a satisfied community to which she was ethnically akin and to which a Great Power had guaranteed prosperity and protection? But if a settlement were effected by the oppression of the Serbian element and the endangering of its future, the small Serbian state might one day, although fully aware of the disproportion between its strength and that of the great Danubian Monarchy, be forced into raising its voice on behalf of its compatriots. In any case, therefore, the future did not promise Serbia much security.

The difficulty of the situation in which Serbia found herself after the Austrian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina was increased by other misfortunes. It was the general conviction that Bosnia and Herzegovina were not the last provinces that Austria-Hungary would add to its territorial possessions. Their occupation was held to be only the beginning of further expansion in the Balkans. The Congress of Berlin entitled Austria-Hungary to occupy the territory "to beyond Mitrovica". The territory in which Austria-Hungary intended to extend its influence and, if need be, its possession was once again Serbian. Novi Pazar, i.e. the ancient Raška, and Kosovo were two centers of the old Serbian medieval state and the classic lands of Serbia's past. And there too the Serbian element was now in danger of absorption by the Danubian Empire. Serbia was encircled by Austria-Hungary to the north and west and, as it appeared, or at least as it was firmly believed in Serbian quarters, the same fate was to befall her in the south as well. Without an outlet to the sea, ringed on three sides by a mighty Power, standing exposed on the old historic strategic highway which linked up Central Europe with Constantinople and Asia, Serbia felt that she was imperiled and was convinced that there was an intention at work to deprive her of the possibility of free development in the future.

2 F. Šišić, ed., *Korespondencija Rački-Strossmayer*, II, Zagreb 1929, p. 155.

Austria-Hungary was fully aware of the fact that by entering into Bosnia and Herzegovina and by penetrating into the Balkans, it had delivered a blow to the Serbian national cause. For that reason, in order to make itself completely secure, it demanded from the Serbian government to renounce any kind of national activity in the western parts of the Serbian ethnic territory. In the Secret Convention which King Milan, personally and without any previous understanding with his government, concluded in 1881 with the Danubian Monarchy, Serbia undertook by Article II “not to permit any political, religious or other intrigue which might be directed from her territory against the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, including Bosnia, Herzegovina and the Sanjak of Novi Pazar.” Serbia’s behaviour was carefully watched. Any act which savoured of a more independent policy met with mistrust and provoked warnings and threats. The most favourable situation for Austria-Hungary would no doubt have been that provided for by Article IV of the same Secret Convention, by which Serbia was under the following obligation: “Without previous agreement with Austria-Hungary, Serbia will negotiate or conclude no political treaty with any other Power.”³ In other words, Austria-Hungary could only be satisfied with a Serbia deprived by this obligation of her political freedom and reduced to a subordinate position. “We shall simply strangle Serbia”, said the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister, Count Goluchowski, on 6 January 1901 to the German Ambassador, Prince Eulenburg, “if something serious takes place in the Balkans and Serbia ventures to adopt a line of policy different from what we desire.”⁴ Serbia could, according to the Viennese conception, exist only as a kind of politically semi-vassal state in relation to Austria-Hungary, restricted in size and in her ambitions. In any other Serbia, less tied or really free, Austria-Hungary suspected an enemy. When in 1902, in the matter of the enthroning of Firmilijan, the Serbian Bishop elected to the metropolitan see of Skoplje, Serbian diplomacy, aided by Russia, achieved a definite success, it was immediately thought necessary in diplomatic circles in Vienna, although the matter was obviously in no way contrary to any of its interests, to declare to their friends that Serbia “still lies within the range of Austrian guns.”⁵

For the same reasons, special care was taken in Vienna, from the time of Andrassy, when such a policy was openly advocated, that no closer union should be effected between Serbia and Montenegro. It was not desired that

3 Cf. as regards the course of these negotiations Dr. G. Jakšić, “Istorija Tajne konvencije”, *Arhiv za pravne i društvene nauke*, IX, 1924, 3 ff.

4 *Die Grosse Politik des Europäischen Kabinetts 1871-1914* [hereafter *Die Grosse Politik*], XVII, 1, p. 116.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 140.

Serbia and Serbdom be strengthened in this way, nor that, by consolidating Serbian forces, obstacles be put in the way of Austro-Hungarian penetration in the east. In May 1900, when there was no actual need for it, Count Goluchowski declared to Count Bülow, then Secretary of State in the German Foreign Office: "Austria-Hungary will never allow a union between Serbia and Montenegro."⁶ "The only positive instructions" that Goluchowski gave to his newly appointed Minister in Belgrade, Konstantin Dumba, at the beginning of 1903, according to Dumba's statement, were couched in the following terms: "We can in no case permit a union of the Kingdom of Serbia with the Principality of Montenegro; we would prevent it even at the cost of war."⁷

It was nevertheless felt in Vienna that it was impossible to subdue all the national tendencies of a young and aspiring people, and not even opportune. If the Serbs were to find that on every side and at every step they met with the opposition of Austria-Hungary, it might happen that, far from being forced into capitulating, as was hoped in certain quarters in Vienna, they would turn to the opposite camp and become implacable enemies. Russia was always ready to understand Serbia's discontent with the policy of Vienna; it was to her interest even to keep it alive. Realizing this, Benjamin Kállay, the joint Finance Minister and Minister for Bosnia and Herzegovina, who had been an Austro-Hungarian diplomatic agent in Belgrade for many years and, until his death in 1903, the principal expert in Vienna on Balkan policy proposed that Serbia's prospects for the future should not be blocked on all sides. And as a matter of fact, in the above mentioned Secret Convention of 1881, in the drafting of which Kállay played by far the most important part, Austria-Hungary made in Article VIII the following undertaking: "If through a concatenation of events, whose development cannot be foreseen today, Serbia should be in a position to expand in the direction of her southern frontiers (with the exception of the Sanjak of Novi Pazar), Austria-Hungary will not oppose this, and will intervene with the other Powers to induce them to adopt an attitude favourable to Serbia."⁸ This clause was retained when the Convention was prolonged in 1889, but it was made more precise; instead of "her southern frontiers", it stated explicitly "in the direction of the Vardar valley" and added that the expansion would extend "as far as circumstances permit".⁹ Although this undertaking was more academic than anything else, it nevertheless showed that Austria-Hungary,

6 Ibid., p. 99.

7 C. Dumba, *Dreibund und Entente-politik in der Alten und Neuen Welt*, Amalthea Verlag 1931, p. 159.

8 *Arhiv za pravne i društvene nauke*, IX, p. 274; A. F. Pribram, *Die Politischen Geheimverträge Oesterreich-Ungarns 1879-1974*, Vienna 1920, p. 20.

9 Pribram, *Die Politischen Geheimverträge Oesterreich-Ungarns*, pp. 58-59.

whatever its reasons for doing so at that time, to a certain extent, at any rate theoretically, took into account the Serbian desire to extend the territory inhabited by Serbs free from foreign domination. In addition, in concluding the Secret Convention King Milan was given by this provision a kind of guarantee that the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy would not proceed to the settlement of the Balkan questions without Serbia or even against her.

However, conditions in the Balkan Peninsula at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century developed rather differently and more rapidly than anticipated. The Greco-Turkish war of 1897 aroused all the Balkan states to greater activity and stirred up the Moslem population against the Christians in Turkey. The Albanians in particular became an element of disorder. A fair number of them took part in the war as volunteers and, returning home supplied with modern arms, started molesting their Christian neighbours, especially the Serbs. In a note submitted to the Sublime Porte on 26 May 1898, the Serbian government mentioned "more than four hundred cases of crimes" committed against Serbs in 1897.¹⁰ The Albanians had often even earlier committed outrages against almost unarmed Christians (their attack on the Roman Catholics in Scutari (Shkodra) in March 1897 is, for instance, the well-known case); After the wars of 1876-1878 and the expulsion of the Turkish element and the Albanians from the regions of Kuršumlja and Prokuplje, Turkey had been systematically preparing the Albanians as a sort of military frontier against Serbia. At the Court of Sultan Abdul Hamid II the Albanians were considered very loyal and reliable men; the Sultan's guard was mostly made up from among their numbers. As the Albanians were, owing to this, a privileged element in the Sultan's entourage and as their friendship was a bone of contention between Austria-Hungary and Italy, both of which Powers had in many ways supported them, it is no wonder that, being truculent by nature, they developed a high degree of self-confidence and unrestraint in respect of their Serbian neighbours. As early as 1898, the Serbian government lodged concrete accusations about the Albanian atrocities and demanded a mixed Serbo-Turkish Commission for the purpose of establishing facts. "The disorders which are causing so much anxiety to the Serbian Government", stated the official Serbian communication, "still continue in the Villayet of Kosovo, threatening the Serbian population with extermination. The Imperial authorities remain indifferent. All they are concerned about is to find a round-about means to hide their impotence as regards the anarchical autonomy to which the Albanians have become accustomed, thanks to the lack of any strong

10 *Prepiska o arbanaskim nasiljima u Staroj Srbiji, 1898-1899*, Beograd: Ministarstvo inostranih dela, 1899, p. 16.

authoritative control or any serious judicature.”¹¹ The Sublime Porte pretended to agree to the proposed Commission being set up, but its emissaries made investigations without the Serbs and thus prevented the establishment of the truth and the possibility of improving the atrocious situation. At that point, Serbia wished to submit the matter, before it took on greater proportions, to the Great Powers or, failing that, to make a military demonstration on the border, but Austro-Hungarian diplomacy discouraged both steps by assuring the Serbs that they would meet with the opposition of Russia, which would not allow them to achieve any success because of the presence of King Milan in Serbia.¹² In fact, Serbian activity and perhaps success in the territory of Old Serbia, and consequently against the Albanians, was contrary to Austria’s own interests. Meanwhile having incurred no serious consequences for their atrocities, the Albanians became more daring, and even crossed the Serbian border in early June 1899 and attacked the Serbian border guards and villages. The same thing was repeated in the following year, 1900.

In the course of 1901, the situation grew worse for the Serbs in two ways: the activity of the Albanians increased and Viennese diplomacy, which until then had tried hesitatingly, but nevertheless, to smooth down disagreements in certain matters, acting on representations made by the Serbs, now tended to side with the Albanians against the Serbs. The reason for this change was an open secret: King Alexander Obrenović provoked the anger of Emperor Franz Joseph and his government by breaking his promise to marry Princess Alexandra of Schaumburg Lippe, a match for which they exerted their influence at his request. Alexander’s unfortunate marriage to Draga Mašin in spite of the energetic opposition of his father, ex-King Milan, was the cause of a definite estrangement between the father and the son. King Milan, Austria’s most trusted friend in Serbia, left the country for good and took refuge in Vienna, where he died on 11 February (29 January) 1901. In order to present his unpopular marriage in a more favourable light to his people, King Alexander wanted to win the confidence of the Russophile majority amongst his subjects by a change of policy, and to this end he made rapprochement with Russia. The Russian Emperor’s acceptance to be the best man was a visible sign of the change. Henceforward Serbia had Austria-Hungary as an enemy not only as regards the Albanian question but also as regards the contemplated Serbian expansion to the Vardar valley and any other matter. The conflicts of interests between the two countries, previously concealed or glossed over by certain compromises, now clearly emerged and grew more acute each year until they

11 Ibid., p. 68.

12 Slobodan Jovanović, *Vlada Aleksandra Obrenovića*, II, Beograd 1931, p. 76.

threatened with a bloody showdown. "The most recent events could convince the people in Belgrade", warned the *Neue Freie Presse* on 11 February 1903, "that the development of European situation has proved the orientation taken by King Alexander to be a fatal mistake."

In order to help their unarmed compatriots against the Albanians, who did not stop at threats, the Serbs of the Kingdom supplied them clandestinely with a certain quantity of arms. Informed of this, The Turkish authorities adopted severe measures in search of those arms. In the summer of 1901, in Kolašin, this resulted in the outrages committed against the Serbs by the Albanians and their leader, Isa Boletini, to whom the search for arms served as a pretext for extortions. Through the intervention of the Russian government with the Sublime Porte the Serbian population was then, although for a very short time, spared further atrocities, which threatened to turn into a movement for the extermination of the Serbs in the western part of the Villayet of Kosovo, but the question of the Albano-Serbian relations was not thereby settled. On the contrary, it only became more complex. In certain places and in regard to certain matters the Serbs were under the impression that the Albanians were not acting entirely on their own initiative, but that the pressure they were exerting and the ill-will they showed towards the Serbs were systematically supported by persons known or suspected to be in touch with the Austrian authorities. Such suspicions were not held by the Serbs alone. Certain Turks, among them the mutasarrif Asaf Pasha of Priština, also pointed them out. When on one occasion, the Russian Ambassador in Constantinople, Zinoviev, drew the attention of the Sultan himself to the fact that the Albanian atrocities were carried out according to a definite plan and that the Orthodox Christians chiefly suffered, and very rarely the Roman Catholics, the Sultan, "did not deny that a foreign Power too, through its secret agents, had its finger in the matter!"¹³ The French Vice-Consul in Skoplje, Choublier, spoke of Austrian intrigues as beyond all doubt in a dispatch to his government on 18 September 1902.¹⁴ In order to be able to follow the entire course of events and to exercise, to certain extent, her own influence upon them, Russia opened a Consulate in Mitrovica and appointed as Consul Grigorie S. Shtcherbin on 7 May (24 April) 1902, who had previously served in Scutari and had experience with the Albanians. This appointment caused much excitement among the Albanians and it is known

13 Beograd, Arhiv Ministarstava inostranih dela [The Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs], Report from Constantinople, 2 June 1901, conf. no. 600.

14 *Documents diplomatiques français. 1871-1914, 2e série, 1901-1911, Ministère des affaires étrangères. Commission de publication des documents relatifs aux origines de la guerre de 1914*, Tome II, Paris 1931, p. 480.

that it was not agreeable to the Vienna government either. The Albanians sent out messages and threats in all directions to the effect that they would not endure an "infidel" consul, and a Russian at that, in their midst. They did not want to have their actions controlled, or the Christians to be so obviously protected. What the situation was in those parts can best be judged from the fact that the Turkish War Minister, Riza Pasha, requested the Russian Ambassador in Constantinople "not to insist that M. Shtcherbin should go to Mitrovica at once, but that he should wait there for a week or two, during which time he himself would pacify the Mitrovica Albanians so that the Consul might be able to proceed to his destination in peace!"¹⁵ When even the Russian Consul was not sure of passing through unmolested by the Albanians, it is not difficult to imagine the state of affairs which prevailed as regards the helpless Serbian peasant and town-dweller.

The Serbian government, of course, endeavoured to help. Its first thought was to find collaborators to this end, as it was clear that Serbia alone had neither sufficient strength nor authority to force Turkey to adopt the stricter measures which Serbia held indispensable, if the situation was to be improved. The Sultan preferred the Albanians to the Serbs and would use force against them only if he were driven to do so. Apart from Russia, Serbian diplomacy thought also at this time of Bulgaria. Bulgaria was discontented with the situation of the Christians in the neighbouring Macedonian and Thracian districts and showed a readiness to aid any action, the object of which was to arouse the interest of the European public and European diplomacy in this matter. It would have been quite natural for Serbia and Bulgaria to join forces with a view to effecting a change in the conditions prevailing in Turkey. But in spite of all Belgrade's urging, it was not possible to come to a sincere understanding in this direction. Serbia was of the opinion that the first thing to do was to make the Balkan territory secure from foreign military intervention and that to bring in foreign powers other than Russia for the settlement of outstanding questions might prove very dangerous. More particularly, she looked askance at Austria-Hungary, which was too close a neighbour and the activity of which in the Sanjak and Kosovo regions seemed to her suspicious. As can be seen from the circular of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs dated 9 April (27 March) 1902, Serbian diplomacy endeavoured to convince the Bulgarians that "Macedonia's bell, too, would be sounded the moment Austria had established herself on the plain of Kosovo". Bulgaria, however, wanted to raise the Macedonian question

15 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from Constantinople, 25 September 1902.

without any regard to such a possibility. She did this mainly in the conviction that the settlement of the Macedonian question might turn to her favour through that province's autonomy which, just like the autonomy of Rumelia in 1885, might be transformed one day with an adroit maneuver into a Bulgarian occupation. There was also certain jealousy of Serbia, whom she wanted to push out of Macedonia at any cost. It was for that reason that the Bulgarian attitude in Macedonia in 1902 and 1903 took on an offensive form, whilst the Serbian attitude, both on account of Austria-Hungary and of the uncertainty of the situation in the interior of the country, was chiefly defensive in character. The Austrian Military Attachè in Belgrade, Josif Pomiankowski, reported to his government in a dispatch dated 27 March 1902 that Serbia, suspicious of Bulgaria's attitude "at the present moment sincerely desires the maintenance of the *status quo*". The Austrian Legation learnt from King Alexander himself as early as February of the same year that he, too, was personally emphatically opposed to any movement in Macedonia and would "not even move a finger" to aid it. The above mentioned circular of the Belgrade Foreign Ministry clearly shows the point of view of the Serbian authorities at that time: "Two conditions are necessary for the triumph of the Slav cause in Macedonia: the first is an understanding between the two Slav states (Serbia and Bulgaria), for their rivalry, which is paralyzing their strength, weakens at the same time the power of resistance of the Slav population in Macedonia, exposed as it is to various dangers from various quarters; the second condition is to secure the position of Serbs in Old Serbia from national disaster, as it must not be overlooked that Macedonia would be lost the moment Austria had established herself in Kosovo. As the situation in Macedonia, in those areas where the Slav population is not in contact with the Albanians, is relatively tenable as compared with the situation in Old Serbia, it is for Serbia and Bulgaria, taking into account the two above mentioned conditions, to do all in their power to prevent the disturbance of peace in Macedonia, but at the same time to make an effort to bring about by diplomatic means the renunciation by Turkey, in its own interest and in that of the other Balkan peoples, of the policy of conniving at the activities of the Albanians, and the establishment, of its own accord and not as a result of foreign intervention, of a state of order in these provinces based on respect for the law whose just administration will be secured by such reforms as may be found by mutual agreement to be indispensable." The Serbian point of view, as may be seen, was not in the least unfriendly to the Turks, nor was it likely that, on account of the Serbian proposals and the Serbian attitude generally, there would be any disturbances in the Balkans or any change of the existing situation. According to a somewhat obscure telegram of 13 March (28 February) 1902 from the Serbian Minister at Cetinje, Colonel Miloš Vasić, Prince Nicholas

of Montenegro was also in favour of preventing an uprising in Macedonia; just like the Serbian government, he, too, was afraid of offensive measures and of the complications which might follow as a result of them.

The Albanians were, for quite comprehensible reasons, opposed to any measures which might interfere with their so far privileged position. In Metohija and Kosovo they were the masters. As all proposals aiming at the restriction of their freedom to do whatever they pleased came from the Serbian side and the territory which they dominated had been Serbian in the old times and was full of monuments of Serbia's ancient power and culture, they looked upon the Serbs as their principal foes and kept them down wherever they could. They interpreted and defended their resistance by referring to the danger to which they were exposed as a result of the Serbian desire to return one day to the ancient home of the Serbian people. Austro-Hungarian interests were in this part of the world identical with those of the Albanians. Ever since the Congress of Berlin the Danubian Monarchy had emphasized its standpoint that the Sanjak must remain a great canal separating Serbia from Montenegro. The road to Mitrovica must not be barred by a Serbian state. It was for that reason that Viennese diplomacy, in order not to weaken or discourage the Albanian element, made it impossible for the Serbs to realize their wishes and demands for the adoption of energetic reforms in those parts.

In the course of 1901-1902, rumours became frequent in the Vienna press first of a Serbo-Bulgarian alliance against Turkey, then of a military convention between Russia and Serbia, and lastly of Serbo-Montenegrin preparations for an uprising in Old Serbia and for the occupation of that territory. Such rumours naturally provoked the suspicion of the Turks, both at the Sublime Porte and in the provinces – although it may be seen from the above mentioned circular dispatch that there were no aggressive intentions at all on the part of Serbia – and they also intensified the ancient Albanian hatred of the Serbs. Rumours reached the Sultan himself that Priština was the place where the Serbo-Bulgarian negotiations were carried out. Priština was mentioned in such rumours obviously with a view to inflaming the hatred of the Albanians, for that place and its neighbourhood were one of the centers of their belligerent activities. It was later affirmed, in early 1902, on the basis of some unreliable assertions, that a letter from a member of the Serbian Municipal Board in Novi Pazar to the prefect of the district of Raška had been intercepted and that it contained an enquiry as to when the Serbian army would move to liberate the Serbs in those parts. The whole thing was so naive that, even if it had been true, it was impossible to build much upon it, but that and similar reports, based on false statements, exaggerations and suspicions did what they were intended to do and caused the Serbian population much trouble and persecution.

In August 1902, the Serbian government, in view of the movement which, at the instigation of Bulgaria, had nevertheless broken out in Macedonia and spread to some extent to the neighbouring districts, decided to demand of the Turkish government more active protection for their kinsmen in Old Serbia. The Serbs feared, and not without reason, lest this movement should serve foreign interests and be in certain areas entirely to their own detriment. They feared more especially for the Serbs living in the mixed Serbo-Albanian areas, for they suffered even when there was no disturbance, and the uprising would give the Albanians a welcome new pretext for further oppression and violence, and thus only bring about further difficulties and casualties to the Serbs. This fear proved to be fully justified. The Albanian atrocities in the spring of 1902 assumed dangerous proportions. The Turkish authorities were inactive either from force of habit or out of fear of more serious consequences and of their own responsibility in case of an Albanian revolt or extensive bloodshed, or else they were themselves in cahoots with the Albanians. It did actually happen that thefts and atrocities were committed not only by the Albanians but also by the very Turkish soldiery who, having been left often for months without pay, left their garrisons and took what they pleased from the population.

On 27 (14) August 1902, the Serbian government authorized their representative in Constantinople to intervene at the Sublime Porte and demand: 1) the proper and undiscriminating application of the law and the establishment of order and 2) the abandonment of the policy of connivance at the behaviour of the Albanians as a natural corollary. In order to realize such demands, the following measures were proposed: 1) the disarmament of the Albanians or, should that prove impossible, permission to the Serbs to carry arms for self-defense; 2) the reinforcement of the Turkish garrisons in all the more important Christian-Albanian centers; 3) the appointment of conscientious officials and the recall of those whose conduct was unsatisfactory; 4) the introduction of administrative and judicial reforms giving the Christians a greater share in the administration and in the judicature; 5) the agrarian reform. These Serbian demands were taken up by Russian diplomacy, too, as reasonable and justifiable. Turkey's *status quo* was not in the least affected by them; it was only to be changed into the *status quo amélioré par les réformes*.¹⁶ The representatives of other powers, too, were of the opinion that it was really necessary, in the interests of peace, to extend these reforms to the provinces in which Albanians were living and to disarm them. In a memorandum of 17 February 1903 concerning

16 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Instructions, P. N. no. 3051. Cf. S. Simić, *Mačedonsko pitanje*, Beograd 1908, pp. 50-54; also on the basis of Simić's study, Dr. H. Marcuse, *Serbien und die Revolutionsbewegung in Makedonien*, Berlin 1908, pp. 48-51.

the proposed reforms, Austria-Hungary also recognized, together with Russia, that the Albanian atrocities and their remaining unpunished were among the chief causes of the existing unrest and insecurity, and that the Ottoman government should urgently proceed with measures to force the Albanians to respect the law. Even confidential Austro-Hungarian consular reports admit the Albanian misdeeds and the necessity for putting an end to them.

When Austria-Hungary, in agreement with Russia, made a public statement to this effect (regardless of whether it was done out of conviction or, as it seems more likely, at the wish of Russia), it was natural to expect that it would agree, together with Russia, to certain more energetic measures against the Albanians for the purpose of carrying out reforms and establishing a more tolerable situation. This was all the more to be expected as, in connection with the Bulgarian *comitadji* action in Macedonia and because of the outrages committed by the undisciplined Turkish soldiery and the incompetency of the administrative authorities, the question of reforms in Turkey was already on the agenda. But the Austro-Hungarian attitude towards the reforms in Albania and in the provinces with more important Albanian settlements was from the beginning rather equivocal and eventually decidedly adverse. The Austro-Hungarian Ambassador in Constantinople, Baron Calice, long refused to attach his signature on the programme of reforms put forward by his Russian colleague on account of one of its provisions, which drew attention of the Sublime Porte to the difficulties of Christians in Old Serbia and demanded energetic measures against the Albanians. "For the Austrian Ambassador", the Russian Ambassador Zinoviev said, "the Albanian atrocities do not exist, for they are not committed against the Catholics, – who, like the Albanians, go about armed and enjoy all privileges, – but against the Orthodox Serbs, who are treated like serfs that have no rights."¹⁷ On 21 December 1902, Zinoviev complained to Ernest Constans, the French Ambassador in Constantinople, that the Austro-Hungarian Embassy, whose attitude was favourable in regard to Macedonian affairs, was hostile to anything that was intended to change the existing situation in Old Serbia, because they were unwilling to irritate the Albanians. They were not displeased, he said, to see the gradual disappearance of the Serbian population (*et c'est sans déplaisir qu'elle en voit disparaître peu à peu la population orthodoxe serbe*).¹⁸ Some of the Austro-Hungarian consuls were even working more or less openly among the people against the reforms. In August 1902, Mérey, the head of a department in the Viennese Ministry for

17 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from Constantinople, 21 January 1903, P. no. 64.

18 *Documents diplomatiques français*. 2e série, II, p. 672.

Foreign Affairs, confidentially told the German Charge d'Affaires that he was not at all a partisan of the reforms and that to him it seemed doubtful "whether it would not be best, in the interests of the policy of *status quo*, that the Porte should retain its old system." He even said that he was using his influence to steady the Foreign Minister, Count Goluchowski, who was more sensitive to the news of unrest and misdeeds in the Balkans.¹⁹ We have seen what the chief reason for this attitude was. But apart from that, there were other reasons. The Consul in Scutari, Theodor Ippen, feared, for instance, lest the introduction of reforms might weaken and push into the background the Catholic element from northern Albania, and that the local Moslems would, with the advent of the rearmend Turkish authorities, get the upper hand. In his dispatch of 26 September 1903 to the Vienna government, he said therefore that it was better that "the present anarchy", with the old privileges protecting the Catholic Albanians, should remain. Furthermore, according to his dispatch of 24 August 1903, he personally advised the Catholic priests of Nikaj to join the Moslem resistance to reforms which would chiefly result in new taxes. Ippen must have acted on some instructions, for otherwise it is difficult to suppose that he would have been opposed to the reforms, as he was aware of a dim view that the Albanians themselves took of their compatriots in the mixed areas for which the reforms were demanded, having himself written that "Prizren, Djakovica and Peć are in culture and civilization the most backward of all the Albanian districts".²⁰ To the Serbs it was obvious that the resistance to the reforms came chiefly from the northern Albanians from Metohija, Kosovo and the Sanjak, where the Austro-Hungarian influence was predominant, whereas "nothing is ever heard of similar movements among the Albanians to the south of Tirana"²¹ where this influence did not exist or at least was not so great.

According to the 16 (3) February 1904 report by Vasilije Popović, the abbot of the Monastery of the Holy Trinity near Plevlje, the Austrian officials were carrying out propaganda even among the Serbs, particularly around Bobovac near Ćetotina on the Bosnian border, to put up resistance to the new Turkish taxes levied on horses and cattle. The excited peasants spoke openly: "If Montenegro and Serbia cannot help us, Austria will." The Austrian agents on the border told

19 *Die Grosse Politik*, XVIII, p. 165.

20 *Illyrisch-albanische Forschungen*, I, 1916, p. 384.

21 P. O. (Svetislav Simić), *Stara Srbija i Arbanasi*, Beograd 1904, p. 74. "It is obvious", Lj. Jovanović said, "that there exists a great difference between the attitude of the Albanians in Old Serbia – in the classical Serbian territory – and in Albania – their cradle. The Albanians are at home a quiet, sober, industrious people; in the Serbian territory they are savage oppressors." See Lj. Jovanović, *Srpski narod i otomanska ustavnost*, Beograd 1908, p. 8.

the Serbs that they should rebel and even take up arms, and that the Monarchy would certainly protect them. Under Austrian administration, it was rumoured, "they would have to pay no taxes for seven years, and only those born under Austrian administration would have to serve in the army." Austrian officers in Prijepolje also made similar promises to the excited population in those parts. The Serbs were advised to seek Austrian protection and offer to become Austrian subjects on their own volition, which should instantly improve their situation.

As a result of these and similar suggestions, the Albanian outrages and their open rebellion against the authorities and against the introduction of reforms were so provocative that it became imperative to take some steps in the matter. This was all the more necessary as many Turkish functionaries were not themselves willing to take any action against their co-religionists for their misdoings and many Christian complaints were, in the cynical words of the *kaymakam* in Vučitrn "eaten up by the mice".²² In the face of open atrocities and cruelty even the Austro-Hungarian representatives could not and would not in certain cases remain completely passive, but their diplomacy was entirely against involving any other party into the Albanian question; Austria wanted to operate alone in northern Albania, since she was forced to reckon with Italian rivalry in central and southern parts of the country. Whereas Italy exercised its influence in Albania from the sea side, Austria-Hungary exercised it on the land, chiefly through the Sanjak and Kosovo. It was therefore in regard to the territory which was inhabited by both Serbs and Albanians that the Austrians were most sensitive and least willing to allow foreign involvement as far as it depended on them. They regarded this territory as falling within their exclusive sphere of influence. The Secretary of State in the German Foreign Ministry, Baron Richthofen, informed the German Emperor on 9 April 1903 that the Italian Ambassador in Vienna, Count Nigra, had proposed to Count Goluchowski that they study the necessity for reform in Albania and that "this awkward move met in Vienna with a reception hardly likely to encourage future activity in this direction".²³ From a statement made by the Russian Ambassador in Vienna, Count Kapnist, we learn that the Vienna government was also opposed to the opening of the Russian Consulate in Mitrovica on the grounds of inadequate security for its staff.²⁴ In November 1903, the French and British Consuls and the Austrian Vice-Consul in Skoplje left for Mitrovica,

22 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from Priština, 16 April 1903.

23 *Die Grosse Politik*, XVIII, pp. 251-2.

24 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from Vienna, 26 February 1903, conf. no. 61.

Peć, Djakovo and Prizren to study conditions there at close quarters. The Austro-Hungarian and his dragoman left his colleagues immediately after the visit to Mitrovica, apparently displeased because they did not accept only one-sided information.

In late March 1903, the Albanian atrocities ran wild. On 29 March, the Albanians disarmed the Christian zaptiehs in Vučitrn, refusing to allow Christians to carry arms or exercise any authority whatever. On that occasion they broke into the Serbian church where a funeral service was being held, dispersed the assembly, searched even the coffin where the dead body lay, and plundered both the church and the church house. Next day, they set off for Mitrovica, but the Turkish authorities, in the presence of the Russian Consul, M. Shtcherbin, prevented them from entering the town by the use of guns and troops. On the following day, an Albanian soldier in the Turkish army fatally wounded Shtcherbin, who died of the wound on 10 April. On 18 April, two non-Moslem judges, an Armenian and a Jew, brought in as part of the reforms, were killed. Even when with all that had happened it was no longer possible to avoid energetic action against the Albanians, when such action was recommended in writing to the Sultan by German Emperor himself, at that time the Sultan's chief friend, the Viennese circles still showed much consideration for the Albanians and required the same consideration from others. "Russian policy insists", wrote the German Foreign Office to Baron Wangenheim in Constantinople on 5 May 1903, "that the Albanian resistance be broken down by force, whilst Austria would rather see a peaceful settlement of the present Albanian crisis";²⁵ obviously not in the interests of the oppressed for whose sake the reforms were demanded. Zinoviev noted certain coolness on the part of Austria-Hungary in connection with this action – he actually used the word *refroidissement* – and spoke about it to the German Charge d'Affaires on 4 May. The Russian Ambassador in Vienna, Count Kapnist, informed the German Ambassador, Count Wedel, according to a dispatch dated 18 May of that year, that he did not share the opinion of the Russian press that Austria-Hungary was inciting the Albanians to resist the reforms, but it struck him "that opinion here (i.e. in Vienna) is in general kindly disposed towards the Albanians and appears to be unwilling to see them seriously weakened".²⁶ The Vienna press was openly of the opinion that it was impossible to break the resistance "of the wild and courageous sons of the Albanian Alps" and that it was therefore more profitable for the cause in question to deal with them diplomatically.²⁷ The

²⁵ *Die Grosse Politik*, XVIII, p. 278.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 286.

²⁷ *Neue Freie Presse*, 2 April, 1903.

campaign for their disarmament “would mean”, according to the press assurances, “the same thing as a war for the subjugation of the Albanians”.²⁸ The *Presse* correspondent even had a disagreement in Mitrovica with the Russian Consul Mashkov because of his statement that the late Shcherbina had gone further in defence of Mitrovica than it was his business to do, that is to say that he was himself to be blamed for his own death. In his report to the Delegations on 16 December 1903, Count Goluchowski did not reproach, or made any mention of, the Albanians or of the difficulties which they put in the way of the reforms, although he made assessments of the attitude taken by the Turks, the Serbs and the Bulgarians towards the reforms.²⁹

This mildness and consideration for the Albanians would have been easy to understand and would have aroused no suspicion only if the entire Balkan policy of the Danubian Monarchy had been conducted in the same spirit of reasonable consideration and compliancy. But, on the contrary, Austria's attitude towards others, even towards the Ottoman Empire, was sometimes such as to surprise even diplomats from allied countries. As early as 25 June 1901, Count Marschall complained from Constantinople to Count Bülow: “The air of superiority which Austrian diplomacy usually assumes in dealing with Turkey gives offence here. Whilst the other Great Powers have gradually got used to recognizing Turkey, at least outwardly, as their equal, Vienna persists in its custom of treating her *de haut en bas*”.³⁰ “The fundamental evil in the Austro-Hungarian Eastern policy”, Marshall repeated on 5 November 1901, “is that, convinced that this is due to the dignity and position of the Monarchy as a Great Power, it generally cannot use in its relations with Turkey any other tone than that of the stronger towards the weaker, of a highly civilized Great Power towards a half barbarian state accustomed to despotism. The Turks are sensitive enough to feel deeply the offensiveness of such a system.”³¹ Later, during the reform campaign, the Austrians “*used un langage mordant*” in Constantinople, according to statements made in diplomatic circles.³² In a detailed dispatch to Count Bülow, Marshall wrote on 20 April 1904: “The attitude of the Austro-Hungarian representatives towards the Turks was intransigent from beginning to end. Count Giesl consistently spoke in the sharpest

28 Ibid., 10 April 1903.

29 Zinoviev, the Russian Envoy in Constantinople, attributed the Austro-Hungarian shrinking from stern measures against the Albanians to the fear “lest they should, abandoned or offended by Austria, turn to Italy.” Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from Constantinople, 14 August 1905, conf. no. 1420.

30 *Die Grosse Politik*, XVIII, p. 146.

31 Ibid., XVIII, p. 153.

32 Ibid., XXII, p. 137.

tone. And the keenest demands on the Porte were made by Count Calice." The German Military Attaché, Major Alten, told his Minister explicitly: "I am not a politician and have never had anything to do with political questions, but I must say that I seriously doubt whether Austria-Hungary really desires peace and order in the Balkan Peninsula. For Count Giesl has always, of all the representatives, spoken most harshly to the Turks and, whenever there has been an opportunity for an arrangement with them, has done all in his power to hinder it."³³

The attitude of superiority and harshness that Austria-Hungary adopted towards Turkey, it also exhibited, to a great extent, in its relations with Serbia. Prince Eulenburg informed the German government on 6 January 1901 that Goluchowski had spoken with contempt of Serbia; but although he called her *une quantité négligeable*, he nevertheless found it necessary to threaten her, which gave Eulenburg reason to write in his report "that it would be very advisable to avoid letting guns speak in the Balkans."³⁴ On 9 August 1904, the German Charge d'Affaires in Vienna, Count Wedel, made very similar remarks to his government: "Austria has, generally speaking, a tendency to adopt an Olympian attitude towards both her great and small neighbours, a tendency which especially finds expression in her dealings with the Balkan states. Friends are not made in this way, and it is no wonder that Austria, with the exception of Romania, seems no longer to have any friends on the lower Danube. An opportunity is hardly ever lost for creating unpleasantness for the Serbs and for showing them that they will have nothing to do with them." The Austrian attitude during the reform campaign was "such as might well alarm the other Powers, and give reason to fear that Austria have selfish intentions and is preparing a policy of action." He did not believe this; there is certain desire for adventure in military circles, but the responsible people are willing to maintain peace. "But they think here – and Count Goluchowski is especially of this opinion – that intimidating is the only sure method in the Balkans."³⁵ The Serbian Minister in Berlin, Mihailo Milićević, was told in the German Foreign Ministry in connection with commercial negotiations between Serbia and Germany, and in general, that the German government "does not wish to make the mistakes, which Austria-Hungary has always made in its relations

33 Ibid., p. 145.

34 *Die Grosse Politik*, XVIII, p. 116.

35 Ibid., pp. 173-4.

with the Balkan states, not taking into account their susceptibilities, and thus never been able to win the friendship of the Balkan peoples".³⁶

When contrary to this attitude, which had become customary on the part of Vienna, Austria showed so much consideration for the Albanians, that was bound to awaken certain suspicions, on the one hand, and the feeling of certain uneasiness, on the other. In the course of 1901-2, on two or three occasions, when there was talk of Serbia, Goluchowski mentioned guns as his best arguments. Why this difference in treatment, it might properly have been asked? And why did the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy hesitate in this case and demand palliative measures, when at the very same time and surprisingly it was anxious for Turkey to undertake decisive measures? The answer is clear: the Albanians were necessary to Austria-Hungary for its own political ends and it thus protected them, even when they were responsible for considerable disturbances, showing that the reforms were for it only a means and not an end in itself.

When from 28 April 1903 onwards, Bulgarian outrages with bombs and dynamite took place in Salonica, resulting in the loss of lives and damage to a branch of the Ottoman Bank, Austria-Hungary hastened to send its warships to Salonica without previous agreement even with Germany or Russia, as it was bound to do in accordance with the existing treaties. This left a very painful impression in St. Petersburg. It was clear that, in doing so, Austria-Hungary wanted to stress its separate interests in the Balkans, this time in Salonica. On the other hand, the show of warships in Turkish waters that belonged to a Great Power encouraged the *comitadji*, whose object was to provoke foreign intervention, and adversely affected the nascent work of introducing the reforms. Count Goluchowski had thought and once said to the French Ambassador in Vienna that the departure of Count Lamsdorf for Sofia in late 1902 might have been the encouragement to the Bulgarians.³⁷ Was not the same true now, and even more so, about this demonstration of the fleet? And why were the most drastic measures immediately applied to Salonica, whereas consideration and mild measures were advocated in case of Albanians at whose hands consuls lost their lives? The St. Petersburg government saw in this action the duplicity of Vienna's policy and did not hide its displeasure. Austria's desire to assume the attitude of the first protecting power in Salonica can best be seen from Goluchowski's discontent on account of the presence of an Italian warship that arrived in the port after the Austrian ones. On 4 May, he angrily told Count

36 Milićević Pašiću, Berlin, 10. 4. 1905, Pov. Br. 133, in: Lj. Aleksić-Pejković, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije 1903-1914*, knj. I, sv. 3/1, Beograd 2014, 551-552.

37 *Documents diplomatiques français*, 23 série, II, p. 679.

Wedel that a vessel had been sent to Salonica by Italy “who must meddle in everything”.³⁸ The Italian Military Attaché in St. Petersburg, Count Ladersky, did not hesitate to point out that the dispatch of their vessel was a protest against Italy’s exclusion from questions relating to Balkan affairs.³⁹

Doubts in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy’s disinterest aroused by this naval expedition to Salonica and the restraint from sterner measures against the Albanians were further intensified by the efforts to construct a railway from the Bosnian border to Kosovska Mitrovica. The idea of such a line had been seriously put forward in 1900, and had then immediately created a feeling of uneasiness in Serbia and a desire that, in view of the political and economic importance of a railway line across Kosovo and the Sanjak, another line be built running from Serbia through Turkish territory down to the sea; such a line had already been the subject of negotiations between Serbia and Romania. In each case, the railway line was to strengthen political influences in the provinces through which it passed and to affirm political pretensions. There was no doubt about this. Austro-Hungarian diplomacy reopened this question at the beginning of December 1902. Although Germany, in accordance with the suggestion made by its Ambassador in Constantinople, Count Marschall, advised Vienna to give up this plan, which was likely to cause further unrest in the Balkans, Austro-Hungarian diplomacy attempted to realize it nevertheless. Both Emperor Franz Joseph and Count Goluchowski brought this question before the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Count Lamsdorf, when he came to Vienna at the end of that year. According to the report of Count Goluchowski, Count Lamsdorf “did not fail to make favourable comments on this matter”.⁴⁰ However, we learn from a dispatch of the Serbian Minister in Constantinople, Sava Grujić, dated 25 (12) February 1903, that, according to a communication made by Zinoviev, Count Goluchowski “spoke of the Austrian intentions to extend the Bosnian railway line down to Mitrovica and so secure for it an outlet to Salonica. The Austrian [Foreign] Minister wished to know the attitude of the Russian Government towards this. Count Lamsdorf replied that he would report on it to the Emperor and that only afterwards would he be in a position to give him a definite answer”. Zinoviev himself added that “the Emperor will not give his consent and will certainly advise the *status quo* in this case”.⁴¹ In St. Petersburg, the Austrian proposition met with a very

38 *Die Grosse Politik*, XVIII, p. 280.

39 *Ibid.*, p. 283.

40 *Ibid.*, p. 213.

41 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from Constantinople, conf. no. 151. The German Envoy in Constantinople, Count Marschall was also informed that the Austrian

cold reception, since certain people, for example War Minister Kuropatkin, saw behind it German influence at work and the desire to obtain connection between Hamburg and Berlin and Baghdad through Old Serbia. The question was therefore taken off the table.

Feeling that Austria prevented dealing with the Albanian violence and having received from different quarters, particularly from his Minister in London, Čedomilj Mijatović, alarming reports about the secret Russo-Austrian treaty that envisaged the occupation of Old Serbia and Macedonia – and being moreover offended with the Russian Court's hesitation to receive him together with his Queen, whose past was dubious – King Alexander Obrenović attempted from 1902 onwards to re-establish more cordial relations with Austria-Hungary. As early as 28 January, the King's Private Secretary, Dr. Miloš Petronijević, brought a message from his sovereign to the Vienna government to the effect that it was his wish to establish more cordial relations between Vienna and Belgrade. To show his goodwill, the King promised that he would settle the question of his heir only in agreement with the neighbouring Monarchy by adopting one of the descendants of the female line of the Obrenovići, who lived in Austria-Hungary and were its subjects. In his conversations with the Austrian Minister and through his agents, the King emphasized his willingness to settle the matters that had hitherto estranged them. After the rapid and successive falls of the Mihailo Vujić and P. Velimirović governments in October–November 1902, which depended on Radical majority, King Alexander called General Dimitrije Cincar-Marković to form a Cabinet, informing the Austro-Hungarian Minister through Petronijević that the new government would change political course and should be considered Austrophile. He hoped that Vienna would help him as a friend in those matters in which it had created difficulties for him while he had been orientated towards Russia. The King was desirous that Austria-Hungary should revert to the promises made in the Secret Convention and that, in case of Bulgarian action in Macedonia and the eventual territorial changes, it would secure for Serbia expansion along her southern borders. If it refused to do this, he expected it to prevent any disturbance of the existing territorial possessions of the Turkish Empire in Europe, especially on the Bulgarian side. Embroiled in serious difficulties in the Far East, Russia did all in her power to induce both Serbia and Bulgaria to remain quiet – Count Lamsdorf himself visited Serbia and Bulgaria in December 1902 with this in view – but the Serbian government, well informed of Bulgarian preparations for large-scale action in 1903 could not be soothed by Russian

proposition “*fand vorläufig bei Graf Lamsdorff keine positive Zusage*”. See *Die Grosse Politik*. XVIII 1, p. 224. Cf. *Krasnii arhiv*, II, 1922, p. 16.

assurances. They feared that the Macedonian question and the question of Turkey's possessions in Europe might flare up because of the insurrection and warlike attitude of Bulgaria, in spite of Russian advice and be settled unsatisfactorily for Serbia. For that reason, the King declared in a speech delivered at Niš on 11 January 1903 that no one should get any stretch of territory in the Balkans without Serbia receiving her share. The King was very uncertain about Austria-Hungary's attitude. From 1897 onwards, Austria-Hungary had had the agreement with Russia about maintaining the existing situation in Turkey, but Serbia feared, because of the Sanjak railway and the Austrian activity among the Albanians, that Austria might be secretly preparing some plan for further penetration. It would be dangerous to go against the Danubian Monarchy, so Serbia envisaged the possibility of action in the south with its aid. The King therefore spared no effort in the first half of 1903 to come to an agreement with Austria-Hungary by all means. He sent his emissaries with very extensive offers to Emperor Franz Joseph in Pest and Vienna. Petronijević was entrusted with a personal letter from the King to the Emperor, and Vukašin Petrović, to whom instructions were sent through the Minister of Education, Andra Djordjević, carried a letter to the Austrian Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The King promised that he would return to the purely Austrophile policy of his father; his secretary sent messages to the Austro-Hungarian Minister in Belgrade to the effect that he was systematically introducing staunch supporters of King Milan and his policy in his new government; he was willing to cede the Serbian railways to the Austrians; he even offered a military and customs union and proposed to "bring Serbia into the same position towards the Habsburg Monarchy as was that of Bavaria and Saxony towards the German Empire." In return, he required Austrian support to enable Serbia to acquire Old Serbia and the northern part of Macedonia in case of the partition of the Turkish Empire. Russia knew nothing of these offers, as the King made them in the strictest secrecy, but she still considered Alexander Obrenović not sufficiently reliable. On his return from Serbia, Count Lamsdorf said to General Kuropatkin that it would not be wise to make any military convention with Serbia, because she might betray it to Austria.⁴² Indeed, King Alexander granted an audience to the Austrian Minister Count Heidler a day after Count Lamsdorf's departure, telling him of his conversation with the Russian and assuring him that he remained firm in his new attitude towards Vienna. But this time Austria-Hungary was not just reserved to the King and Serbia, but rather ignored them. The Austro-Hungarian Minister Dumba, acting on Goluchowski's instructions, refused to enter into any negotiations with Serbia despite the attractive offers. Austria-Hungary, he

42 *Krasnii arhiv*, II, 1922, p. 16.

said, wanted to maintain the integrity of Turkish possessions and to create a tolerable situation for the Christians in the Macedonian villayets, and not to divide them. It even had a written agreement with Russia to preserve the existing state of affairs in the Balkans.⁴³ According to Count Lamsdorf, on the occasion of his visit to Vienna in late 1902, his hosts were more frank and told him point blank, obviously with a view to forwarding the information to Serbia, that Austria-Hungary would occupy Serbia, if she interfered with the Macedonian disturbances. In a conversation with Stojan Novaković, the Serbian Minister in St. Petersburg, on 24 February 1904, Lamsdorf warned him and the Serbian government of this, probably not for the first time. Vienna seems not to have provided explanations for such plans – at least General Kuropatkin, to whom Lamsdorf relayed his conversations, made no mention of them⁴⁴ – but they are quite comprehensible. Serbia's entry into Macedonia would block Austria's road and thwart her plans there, and she was determined to prevent this by the most effective means. The document of the Geographical Bureau attached to the Austrian General Staff, Res. No. 555, of 23 October 1902, which required of Josif Pomiankowski, the Military Attaché in Belgrade, to send as soon as possible and not later than 15 November some photographs of the surroundings of Belgrade and Ostružnica and to examine the Ostružnica-Žarkovo-Belgrade road must have had something to do with these Austrian threats. The information was required in order to help complete the work which would "give information of a military value to a commander who intends to cross the Sava near Belgrade."

The negative attitude of Viennese diplomacy towards King Alexander would be fairly comprehensible in view of his unstable policy; a Great Power could hardly allow small Balkan rulers to play with its friendship like sulky lovers. It would also be understandable that, with a view to maintaining the *status quo* as long as possible, Austria refused the offers and pleas of any Balkan state for support to acquire a part of Turkey's European possessions. The acceptance of such offers might have easily incited the Balkan peoples to become aggressive to Turkey and cause further difficulties in the ever-dangerous Eastern Question. However, Vienna excluded in principle only collaboration with Serbia and any prospect of strengthening that country. On 11 June (29 May) 1903, King Alexander Obrenović's reign ended and Peter Karadjordjević took the Serbian throne. He was immediately recognized by the Austro-Hungarian sovereign and greeted by the Austro-Hungarian government, acting in concert with

43 S. Jovanović, *Vlada Aleksandra Obrenovića*, II, pp. 325-6; Dumba, *Dreibund und Entente-politik in der Alten und Neuen Welt*, pp. 168-9.

44 *Krasnii arhiv*, II, p. 15.

Russia, as a member of the dynasty “which raised the greatest expectations” to bring “security, peace and stability” to Serbia.⁴⁵ King Peter came to Serbia in late June; he and his government were extremely busy settling internal affairs, which were greatly disturbed, and they were very careful not to add external complications to the difficulties of their position. They were particularly correct towards Austria-Hungary. But nevertheless, at the meeting between the German and Austro-Hungarian Emperors in Vienna, on 18-19 September 1903, just before the Mürtzsteg Treaty between Russia and Austria-Hungary, Count Goluchowski showed such hostile intentions in respect to Serbia and the Serbs in general in an account he gave of his work and further outlook in the Balkans, that this could only be explained by a deep-rooted conviction of the danger they posed and the preparedness of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy to be their enemy in any question of their national prosperity and development, regardless of who reigned in Serbia. On that occasion, Goluchowski said that he “would never allow the creation of a Greater Serbia or of a Greater Montenegro; there could also be no question of Constantinople passing to Russia. The moment Russia was in Constantinople, or a great state was created between the Adriatic and the Danube, it would no longer be possible to govern Austria. The centrifugal Slav elements would tear her to pieces. Rather than allow either of these eventualities, Austria would resort to the sword.” As regards the settlement of the Balkan question, Count Goluchowski’s conception was, if it proved impossible to maintain any longer the existing situation: Turkey must gradually, “as slowly as possible”, be replaced by new autonomous states “and these should be: a Greece as large as possible, a greater Romania, a greater Bulgaria, a weak Serbia, a little Montenegro, and lastly a free Albania.” Most importantly, this was not merely the personal opinion of Count Goluchowski, then Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister; as Bülow explicitly said, Emperor Franz Joseph’s view was “similar to that of his Minister, just more reserved.” In the same strain, the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador in Berlin, Count Szögyény, declared on 3 March 1904 to Prince Lichnowsky that in Vienna “Bulgaria’s aggrandizement would be tolerated, although not aided, but never that of Serbia”.⁴⁶

Austria-Hungary thus showed a different attitude and more goodwill towards all other Balkan states and nations than towards the Serbs and Serbia. It was only Serbia and Montenegro that were an immediate danger to it in the Balkans, or presented, as Bismarck had said in 1879, “a stumbling block

45 Dumba, *Dreibund und Entente-politik in der Alten und Neuen Welt*, p. 190.

46 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXII, p. 190; cf. Bülow, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, I, pp. 626-7.

in Austria's way".⁴⁷ The Austrian messages to Belgrade to the effect that the partition of Turkey was not contemplated were a sheer excuse; it is clear from Goluchowski's plans that Austria took it into account as part of her political combinations. It could be hardly supposed that the responsible circles in Vienna could have believed that their anti-Serbian diplomacy would not be noted, however correct it might appear outwardly. And although Austria might have expected that any unfriendly act towards Serbia would have had a bad effect on her Serb, or rather Yugoslav, subjects, Viennese diplomacy was nevertheless willing to favour the Greeks, the Albanians and the Bulgarians rather than the Serbs. Austria did not intend to conduct her Balkan policy in agreement with the Serbs, but rather against them. She even neglected her earlier promise to aid Serbian expansion in the direction of the Vardar valley. Her plan was to block all Serbia's outlets and prospects. The Serbs were supposed to watch from their narrow cage the progress and strengthening of all the other Balkan peoples, while their actions alone were to be hamstrung by Viennese diplomacy. Austria-Hungary had never before adopted such an exclusively negative attitude towards Serbia, either before or after the Congress of Berlin. It is difficult to say why such a harsh and uncompromising attitude was adopted. This question cannot be answered even today, unless it is subsumed in the general principle of Austrian policy not to allow any further strengthening of Serbia. The advent of the Karadjordjević dynasty was certainly not the reason, since it was impossible to see what their attitude in foreign affairs would be during the two and a half months between the return of the Karadjordjevićs to Serbia and the said meeting; King Peter did nothing that might have given rise to such Austria's attitude. On the contrary, during the first months and even early years of his reign, he showed the sincerest desire to live on the best terms with the neighbouring Monarchy; the reports of the Austro-Hungarian Minister in Belgrade, Count Dumba, speak of this with conviction.

The Serbs felt this change for the worse in Austria's attitude and knowing there was no concrete reason for it interpreted it as resulting from the fact that they were an obstacle to Austria-Hungary's further penetration into the Balkans. In Serbia, the opinion was prevalent that Austria-Hungary embarked on an activist policy in 1903 in connection with the disturbances in Turkey. This conviction was based on several facts. Having proclaimed themselves the two "most interested Powers" in the Balkans, Russia and Austria-Hungary took it upon themselves to draw up a programme for and exercise control over the introduction of reforms in Macedonia and Old Serbia. During the meeting between Nicholas II and Franz Joseph and their Foreign Ministers in Mürtzsteg

47 Rusko-germanskije otnoshenija, *Krasnii arhiv*, 1922, Moscow 1922, p. 70.

on 2 October 1903, an extensive programme of reform was drawn up. This programme was communicated to the Sublime Porte on 22 October and was later agreed to by other Great Powers. This plan did not seek the collaboration of the Balkan states, despite the fact that it involved their kinsmen and dealt with questions of vital interest to them. The justification for this was the alleged consideration for Turkey. Russia and Austria-Hungary acted initially with considerable solidarity, although their motives for this collaboration were quite opposite and their agreement was not the result of any community of interests. Because of the complications in the East with Japan, Russia wanted to secure herself against Austria and endeavoured to maintain the *status quo* in the Balkan Peninsula, where the principal danger of clash of their interests lay. Aware of Russia's preoccupations in the East, Austria-Hungary agreed to collaboration, which formally, in view of the maintenance of the *status quo*, tied its hands, but which nevertheless did not prevent it from carrying on a systematic agitation to its benefit. When in early 1904 Russia was forced into war with Japan, it was feared in Serbia that Austria-Hungary would avail itself of this opportunity and take some concrete action in the direction of Salonica. If Austria-Hungary had immediately sent its fleet to Salonica in the case of the Ottoman Bank in Salonica, could it not have found an excuse for sending its troops in Old Serbia in order "to protect its interests" in connection with some likely disturbance, whether real or contrived? The construction of the railway line from Sarajevo to the Bosnian frontier, which, according to the plan drawn up in 1902, would be extended to Mitrovica, had already started in 1903. This line was considered preliminary to a proper military action. In this connection, attention was also drawn to Germany's railway scheme, especially as it obtained prolongation of the concession for the line to Bagdad on 5 March 1902. Austria-Hungary was proclaimed as Germany's forerunner in its economic and political penetration to the East, which was envisaged on a large scale and in systematic stages. Similar doubts were, as a matter of fact, entertained by other Powers. "In all Italian political circles alike", M. Milovanović wrote from Rome on 27 (14) May 1903, "it is today believed that Austria-Hungary seeks something in the Balkans, and that, with this in view, it uses its influence to create complications, to stir up strife, to render impossible the maintenance of the present state of affairs, and to gain an opportunity for armed intervention and for further extension of its rule to the Balkan Peninsula".⁴⁸ "I have identical reports from Salonica and Skoplje about the insurrection of the Albanians", said the Bulgarian Minister Racho Petrov to Jovan M. Jovanović in Sofia on 22 February 1904. "It is serious, and it was Austria-Hungary that staged

48 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from Rome, 14 May 1903, conf. no. 46.

it. The principal danger comes from Austria. I am in possession of a communication from our diplomatic agent in Rome according to which it is clear that there is conviction in Italy that Austria has ulterior motives in the Balkans".⁴⁹ Russia could not indeed create any difficulties for the Vienna government; the war in the East assumed increasing proportions and went badly for Russia. There was a danger that Austria-Hungary would be left alone in the Balkans and exploit to its own advantage such a favourable diplomatic position. That Austria attempted to do so will be seen from what follows; that she failed in her attempt was, to a large extent, due to the intervention of the Western Powers.

Even earlier, in the course of 1902 and 1903, voices were raised in Europe against the exclusive role of Russia and Austria-Hungary in the reform action in Turkey; France and Britain also drafted certain proposals for the reforms. Britain, in particular, demanded more energetic measures with which it intended to take part itself in the work of ameliorating the conditions prevailing in Turkey. It was the British programme of reform that gave the impetus for abandoning the too slow and hesitating pace at which the Russo-Austrian action had been carried out and for the adoption of the new and more decisive programme in Mürtzsteg. With a view to the British attitude, the Mürtzsteg programme provided for a reformed gendarmerie with officers drawn from all the Great Powers instead of the previous gendarmerie recruited from officers who were citizens of the small neutral states. The work of those officers was not to be performed jointly by means of some sort of a mixed commission, but it was rather agreed, according to the later arrangement, that each Power be made responsible for certain area of the Kosovo, Bitolj and Salonica vilayets, and that its officers exercise independent control. This decision soon revealed some selfish tendencies on the part of the Danubian Monarchy, but on the other hand it largely contributed to making the reform issue in Turkey a European matter and not just an exclusive domain of Russia and Austria-Hungary. These two countries each appointed, with a view to retaining the principal roles in the reform campaign, not only gendarmerie officers, but also a civil representative to be in attendance on Hilmi Pasha, the Comptroller-General in the reform districts; their special position in the Balkans was thereby amply stressed. They also wished to give it special emphasis by demanding from Turkey the right, to be confirmed in writing, that such representatives be entirely free themselves or through the agency of their secretaries and dragomans to carry out investigations in the Turkish territory and to communicate with Turkish subjects. They later demanded to exercise some kind of control over the activities

49 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from Sofia, 9 February 1904, conf. no. 50.

of a reformed gendarmerie and caused a conflict with the head of the gendarmerie, di Giorgis, and the Italian government, which argued for the independence in the work of that gendarmerie rather than their subordination to Austro-Russian functionaries. It is not difficult to guess why St. Petersburg and Vienna, especially the latter, made their demands and why Italy opposed them. Italy believed it had been left in the lurch by the Mürtzsteg Treaty. The treaty was signed behind her back, although such a procedure was contrary to the spirit of the Triple Alliance, of which Article 7 expressly provided for collaboration in the Balkans between the Rome and Vienna governments. "A second Mürtzsteg", Tittoni declared later in Berlin, "would mean the end of the Triple Alliance".⁵⁰ As early as December 1902, on the eve of the meeting between Lamsdorf and Goluchowski, the Italian Ambassador in Vienna protested against the discussion of the Macedonian question without the participation of his country.⁵¹ "I am more than ever convinced that Italy is dissatisfied with it (the Mürtzsteg Treaty)", wrote Milovanović from Rome on 8 November (26 October) 1903, "and that after this last concerted Russo-Austrian step it looks upon Balkan affairs with redoubled mistrust and concern".⁵² In its note of 3 March 1905, Italy clearly expressed its dissatisfaction and protested to the St. Petersburg and Vienna governments for proclaiming themselves "interested Powers" in the Balkans, as if other Powers were not interested too.⁵³ The British government supported Italy with its note in the same sense handed to the Vienna Cabinet on 30 March 1905.

There are some facts that show that Austria-Hungary pursued her own particular goals in the Balkans in the course of the reform action, despite all Austrian denials. The Italian General di Giorgis became head of the entire reformed gendarmerie. When in this capacity he proposed at the beginning of 1904 that a battalion of gendarmerie be organized in Priština, the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador in Constantinople did all in his power to prevent this from being done. "If a battalion officered by Christians were stationed in the districts peopled by Albanians, it would again provoke great unrest among the Albanians", said Baron Calice as the theoretical explanation of his intervention against this, but at the same time he communicated confidentially to the German

50 H. Hauser, *Histoire diplomatique de l'Europe*, II, Paris 1929, p. 115.

51 *Documents diplomatiques français*, II, p. 676.

52 Milovanović Ministarstvu inostranih dela, Rim, 8. 11. 1903, Pov. Br. 98, in: A. Radenić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije 1903-1914*, knj. I, sv. 1, Beograd 1991, pp. 658-665.

53 *Documenti diplomatici presentati al Parlamento italiano dal ministro degli affari esteri (di San Giuliano): Macedonia: seduta del 30 gennaio 1906*, Roma: Tip. della Camera dei Deputati, 1906, pp. 282, 284.

Ambassador the real reason for such a step. He feared that an Italian might obtain the position of a gendarmerie commander there.⁵⁴ It is obvious when the loyalty of the gendarmerie officers of another Power was mistrusted even before they started work, that this was, to a large extent, due to the fact that the mistrustful Power's own officers were entrusted, apart from the work connected with the reforms, with duties of some other nature. In the second place, the fact that Austria prevented the organization of the gendarmerie in Priština, with an Italian officer perhaps at its head, speaks clearly in favour of the previous assertion that Austria-Hungary did not tolerate the control and activity of another Power in this part of the world. This may have been for two reasons: 1) because it had plans of its own there and was not anxious for witnesses, or 2) because, although it had no plans for conquest, it did not allow anybody else to entertain them, so that no one could create difficulties for it either then or later, whether from a political or economic point of view. According to the assurances from Viennese circles, it would appear that their behaviour was dictated by the latter consideration. But in fact, the former was the prevailing motive. Zinoviev said in the strictest confidence to the secretary of the Serbian Legation, Dr. M. Pećanac on 4 February 1904 that the Austrian Military Attaché, Baron Giesl, in his draft proposals for the reorganization of the gendarmerie, envisaged a zone including Peć, Prizren, Priština and Novi Pazar, in which Russian officers would exercise control. In fact, a new Sanjak was to be organized in Old Serbia, which would include Prizren and extend beyond Peć, including even Plevlje and Novi Pazar. Some time later, the Austrian Ambassador, Baron Calice, declared "most emphatically", "that there can be no question of this, or that the gendarmerie commanders in these districts, in which according to the spirit of the Treaty of Berlin Austro-Hungarian influence must be decisive, should be Austrian officers".⁵⁵ And in fact this territory was immediately demanded for them. Count Goluchowski indeed pointed out on several occasions that the Vienna Cabinet had no thought of conquest. Emperor Franz Joseph himself declared in his speech from the throne on the occasion of the opening of the Delegations, on 16 December 1903, that the reform action had been begun "without any selfish motives". But this was hardly believed abroad; it was held, and with good reason, as the following facts show, that these words were intended to mask the real thought, although they came from such a high and authoritative place. In the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1875-76, Vienna had also made declarations and created the impression of having no ulterior

54 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXII, p. 162.

55 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from Constantinople, 22 February 1904, conf. no. 40.

motives, while in fact it had acted quite differently and worked for a decision to its own benefit. The opponents pointed out a single fact: that Austria-Hungary jealously kept the Kosovo Vilayet out of any foreign collaboration, that it made reform there dependent upon its political interests, and did not undertake it primarily for the purpose of alleviating the hardships of the Christian population. Even today, when things can be contemplated in their historical perspective, it is difficult to attribute the Austro-Hungarian stance to other reasons than selfishness. How else can we explain the above mentioned Ippen's action against the reforms in the districts of northern Albania at the moment when the Monarchy was preparing the reform plans for other vilayets and threatening everyone who opposed the execution of such plans?

Austro-Hungarian interestedness in the question of the reform campaign fully emerged in early 1904 when the Great Powers were assigned particular areas in the vilayets in which their officers were to exercise control over the reforms. Austria-Hungary then demanded for itself the area of Skoplje. As we have seen, Viennese diplomacy resolutely refused the initially proposed arrangement, whereby the reform of the gendarmerie in the western part of the Kosovo Vilayet was to be entrusted to Russian officers as well as Austrian ones. Russian diplomacy drew Austria's attention to the fact that the entry of Austrian officers into the said Vilayet would raise doubts as to the sincerity of her reform motives, while it might cause "tremendous excitement" in Serbia and Montenegro. The Russian Minister in Belgrade, Muraviev, said to the Austrian Charge d'Affaires, Baron Flotow, on 17 February 1904 that he saw this demand as the first consequence of the Russian reverses in the war against Japan and a desire on the part of Austria-Hungary to steal a march on Russia. The effects of this demand would be deleterious for Serbia "and its consequences could not yet be foreseen." According to Zinoviev's account, Baron Calice withdrew the first demand under the impression of Russian warnings and arguments and agreed with him "that in these areas reliable Turkish officers should be commanders", that is to say, neither Russian nor Austrian ones. Count Lamsdorf also declared to Novaković in St. Petersburg on 24 February that "out of consideration for our susceptibilities, Russia has found a means of setting aside the Austro-Hungarian demands" and that it had been "found most suitable to send Turkish gendarmerie officers to the areas of the Kosovo Vilayet".⁵⁶ However, on 12 February 1904, the Russian Military Attaché in Constantinople, General Kalnin, being as a soldier much more straightforward in his expressions, informed the Serbian Military Attaché, Lt.-Col. Lešjanin,

56 Novaković Ministarstvu inostranih dela, Petrograd, 25. 2. 1904, Pov. Br. 38, in: Radenić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. I, sv. 1, pp. 992-993.

that the whole agreement was ultimately intended to ensure that in the newly-proposed Sanjak of Prizren, including Peć, Novi Pazar and Plevlje, "the reforms should not be introduced, but that it should remain under the exclusive rule of Turkey".⁵⁷ In fact, Austria alone profited from the whole matter; she frustrated the collaboration of Russian or any other foreign officers and excluded from the reform scheme the entire western part of the Kosovo Vilayet. Moreover, this exclusion was also a desire of Viennese diplomacy, since the excluded part remained primarily in its own direct sphere of interest, although Russian diplomacy could believe and claim that this resulted from its arguments in its real or feigned naivety.

Another scheme that emanated from Serbian circles envisaged that the gendarmerie in the Kosovo Vilayet be entrusted to Italian or French officers. It was at once said in St. Petersburg that Vienna would not be willing even to speak of Italian officers, as it was known how jealously it watched over Italian relations with the Balkans, and especially with the neighbouring Albania. And they were right. The Vienna government never thought of agreeing to this and, moreover, long resisted the proposals to allot the Bitolj area to Italy, being obviously afraid of Italian influence on the Albanian element there, as well as in southern and central Albania. The Vienna government agreed at last to this proposal after protracted and strained negotiations which took place over seven weeks, but only because of rather strong pressure from other Powers, including its German ally, and after both France and Britain, to whom the Bitolj area had first been given, had renounced it in favour of Italy.⁵⁸ Even then, Vienna's agreement was only obtained on the condition that General di Giorgis should not make his headquarters in Bitolj. "If in apportioning these districts", Tittoni wrote on 14 February to the Italian missions abroad, "the criteria based not so much on self-interest and eventual influence had prevailed, it would not have been difficult for us to accept the Serres area. But as other criterion had prevailed, we believe that the Bitolj area is absolutely the only one that can suit us and satisfy public opinion in Italy".⁵⁹ Austria-Hungary's rivalry with Italy might have been justified by defensive needs on the grounds that the establishment of Italian influence in Albania would have weakened its position in the Adriatic – but in order to avoid any disagreements and to dispel any suspicions, Austria must not have set a bad example and demanded the Skoplje-Kosovo area, which in

57 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from Constantinople, 30 January, P.P.No.56.

58 *I Documenti diplomatici: Macedonia*, p. 148. *Die Grosse Politik*, XXII, pp. 126, 128. Cf. J. V. Povolni, *Le problème macédonien et sa solution*, Paris 1903, pp. 43-4; *British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1889-1914* [hereafter *British Documents*], V, p. 71.

59 *I Documenti diplomatici*, pp. 151-2, 173 ff.

turn provoked Italy to demand Bitolj for the same selfish reasons. Italy acted more wisely and more loyally when it requested that the Powers divide the gendarmerie zones in such way that no political tendency emerge in any area and when it proposed the Drama and the Serres districts to be given to itself and Austria-Hungary respectively.⁶⁰ Austria-Hungary – that was the general conviction – would not have stubbornly demanded the Kosovo region, excluding from it even a neutral France, or would not have raised doubts and protests, to which it had been frankly warned, had it not been for some particular and very important considerations of its own. Thus from the outset, the reform question in Turkey was compromised and served as a background against which the susceptibilities and intertwined interests of the Great Powers were played out, among which Austria-Hungary took the lead.

Suspensions as to Austria-Hungary's plans in the Balkans were particularly intensified when, besides retaining the Skoplje area for its officers, it also spared no effort to exclude from the reform scheme not only the purely Albanian regions, but also all the regions with a mixed Serbo-Albanian population. That meant all the western parts of the Kosovo Vilayet in which the Serbs had suffered most and cried out for protection and reform. These were at the same time those regions where the best historical traditions of the Serbs survived, that is to say, the three Sanjaks of Peć, Priština and Prizren. On the grounds of the provisions of the Congress of Berlin, Austria-Hungary already considered Novi Pazar "up to beyond Mitrovica" its domain in which it was entitled to act in agreement only with the Turkish authorities and without the interference of any other Powers. In this way, the diplomacy of the Dual Monarchy secured for itself the lion's share in the reform campaign; the entire territory from Novi Pazar and the Albanian border to Kriva Palanka and Kratovo remained in its sphere of interest, touching on the administrative boundary of the Skoplje area which was also allotted to it. The entire northern part of Turkey's European territory stretching along the southern Serbian frontier, right to Bulgaria, came under control of its officials. There were Austrian military garrisons in the Sanjak and Austrian gendarmerie officers, and with them Austrian influence, in the remaining districts of Kačanik, Skoplje, Kumanovo, Kratovo, and Kriva Palanka. The Austro-Hungarian Emperor had already built a Roman Catholic church in Skoplje which had solemnly been opened on his birthday, 18 August 1902, with a view to preparing the ground and showing to the whole world Austria's direct interest in this entire province.

For the Serbs, the Austrian desire for aggrandizement in the direction of Kosovo became a mortal danger. By the terms of the Mürtzsteg Treaty, Russia

60 *I Documenti diplomatici*, p. 179.

and Austria-Hungary demanded in Article 3, in the interests of peace, that the Turkish government make certain changes as regards the boundaries of their administrative units "with a view to the fairer grouping of various nationalities." By excluding the western part of the Kosovo Vilayet, i.e. the greater part of Old Serbia from the reforms, the Serbs were exposed to the danger of their nationality being neglected for the sake of the Albanians; and by the allotment of the eastern part of the Kosovo Vilayet to the Austro-Hungarian gendarmerie they were exposed to the danger that such a change of boundaries might be effected, and influence within such boundaries exerted, on behalf of the Danubian Monarchy or of that state in the Balkans which was politically most to its liking. As early as 23 (10) May 1903, the Serbian side expressed its fear of strangulation on the southern border in a note submitted to the British government. "Supposing that, say from the east, the borders of one neighbouring state were extended to the Vardar in keeping with the desire for conquest of the Bulgarian chauvinists, which has been sustained and stimulated ever since the time of the Treaty of San Stefano, and that from the north the boundaries of another neighbour's dominion were moved down to Mitrovica or Skoplje, Serbia would be strangled in such a double embrace and would of course, in self-defense, have to resist it most resolutely." The Serbs could, to certain extent, understand the previous attitude of Austro-Hungarian diplomacy in refusing to aid them in the matter of their eventual expansion to southern Serbia; but they could not understand why the only regions left out of the reform scheme should be just those where their people lived and, as was generally admitted, suffered at the hands of the Albanians. If Austria-Hungary had reasons for not helping official Serbia and Serbian diplomacy, why should the innocent Serbian population of Old Serbia perish and receive markedly different treatment from that accorded to other Slavs and Christians in Macedonia? The conviction therefore gained ground in Serbian public opinion that the Danubian Monarchy obviously preferred the Albanians to Serbs and that it did so with the intention to find support among the Albanians for its expansion and a tool against the Serbs. The extermination of Serbs in the Kosovo Vilayet, which was incontestable and which there was no desire to prevent by the introduction of reforms, was considered a part of Austria-Hungary's plan. Vienna was fully aware of this state of feeling.⁶¹ Dumba himself considered, and wrote to Vienna on 10 May 1904, that the exclusion of Serbs from the reforms was "a complaint that was not quite unfounded", but the leading Austro-Hungarian circles did not care much to dissipate Serbian mistrust by deeds and not words.

61 Dumba, *Dreibund und Entente-politik in der Alten und Neuen Welt*, pp. 169, 197.

Austria claimed that this exclusion was only temporary and justified it on the grounds that the introduction of reforms would excite the Albanians and lead to further revolts in their parts. Such a reason is very problematic and speaks volumes in itself. All autocrats and criminals throughout the world oppose reforms which limit their power. In lands where order prevails and where people know how to behave themselves, nobody would think of demanding the introduction of reforms though the agency of a foreign gendarmerie. No one who conscientiously wished to describe the state of affairs in Turkey could assert that the situation in Old Serbia was more favourable than that in Macedonia and that the necessity for reform was less urgent there. The Sultan himself opposed the introduction of reforms, but the Great Powers quite rightly overcame his opposition. The opposition of the Albanians, too, might have been overcome, and would soon have died down, had they seen that the reforms were indeed carried out seriously and impartially, and that they constituted the programme of a system to be introduced and not just a means of functionaries who introduced them. As for the opportuneness of a moment to introduce reforms, Austrian view was not justified in that matter either. It was wiser to carry our reforms there at the same time they were carried out elsewhere. People would realize that the matter was not directed against them and would not have the impression they were the exception to the rule. A piecemeal introduction of reforms only served to prolong the internal crisis in Turkey and feed various centrifugal aspirations, on the one hand, and tax its strength on the other. Surgical operations are best performed by removing in a single stroke all that is sick or poisonous in the organism.

Frightened by the Austro-Hungarian attitude, the Sublime Porte proposed to the Great Powers that the reforms include the Albanian areas as well. It expressed the desire put forward by Serbia in 1902, when she had demanded reforms at least in those regions with a mixed Serbo-Albanian population. Count Goluchowski considered, however, according to a declaration made to the Serbian Minister in Vienna on 2 March (8 February) 1904, that by putting forward such a proposal Turkey attempted to compromise the whole reform campaign. In fact, Turkey put forward these proposals with the sole intention of bringing the Albanian provinces, by the extension of the reforms to them, under the eye of the other Great Powers, so that the entire reform campaign, being now inevitable, not be exclusively in Russian and Austro-Hungarian hands, and in the case of the northern districts in those of the latter Power only. The sly Abdul Hamid doubtless counted on the obvious rivalry of the Great Powers and hoped to delay the settlement of the reform question or to diminish its importance. Besides Turkey, Britain and Italy, too, worked energetically for the extension and "Europeanisation" of the reform scheme, the

former country because of its diplomatic prestige and mistrust of Germany's Eastern policy, and the latter out of fear lest Austria-Hungary should obtain too strong a position in the Balkans generally, and in Albania in particular. General di Giorgis indeed declared that the Austro-Hungarian gendarmerie officers, "were investigating the ground and verifying their maps, and that the gendarmerie duty was a secondary concern for them,"⁶² which could only strengthen the suspicions of his government.

Russia at that time maintained solidarity with Austria-Hungary. Her diplomatic representatives in the Balkans received instructions to act in agreement with their Austrian colleagues in all matters and to undertake nothing without their participation. The Russian Acting Consul in Skoplje, Razumovsky, said to the Serbian Consul Ristić in September 1904, that all the Russian Consuls had "the most categorical orders never to go into the interior of the Vilayet without inviting the Austrian Consul to accompany us ... We have explicit instructions never to refuse to collaborate with Mr. Parry in any matter."⁶³ The Consul in Mitrovica, Orlov, was reprimanded in writing, and this was reported to all the Russian Consulates, because he went to the monastery of Devič without the Austrian Consul Zambaur. This was the spirit that inspired all their policy, including that concerning the extent of the reforms. On 29 February 1904, the Russian and Austro-Hungarian Ambassadors handed a note to the Sublime Porte in which they declared that the reforms would not "at present" be introduced in the western districts of the Kosovo and Bitolj Vilayets, i.e. in the Sanjak of Korica (excepting the Kaza of Kostur), in the western part of the Ohrid Kaza, in the Sanjaks of Debar and Prizren and the southwestern part of the Sanjaks of Peć. This decision was also taken note of at the conference of the representatives of the Great Powers, with the Italian representative alone declaring that such procedure should be improved as soon as possible. The Porte replied on 17 March that it still wished to see the reforms carried through in both the vilayets in question without exception.⁶⁴

Like the Russians, in order to pacify the excited Serbs, and himself feeling the political inopportuneness and the injustice of this measure, Count Goluchowski said on 2 March to the Serbian Minister in Vienna, Vujić, that the reforms would not include only "Albania proper", that is to say "to the south-west of Peć and Scutari", but they "must be carried out also in the Peć,

62 W. Giesl, *Zwei Jahrzehnte in Nahen Orient*, Berlin 1927, p. 184.

63 Ristić Ministarstvu inostranih dela, Skoplje, 29. 12. 1904, Pov. Br. 1451, in: A. Radenić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije 1903-1914*, knj. I, sv. 2, Beograd 1998, pp. 986-999.

64 Simić Ministarstvu inostranih dela, Carigrad, 22. 3. 1904, Pov. Br. 166, in: *Ibid.*, pp. 176-177.

Prizren, and Priština regions". This was to be taken as a consolation for the future, although very vague as regards both the time and the extent; in reality, at that time and throughout the reform campaign these areas remained excluded. Vujić then informed the Belgrade government that Goluchowski told him on 23 March that the reforms would "immediately" be extended to Peć and Priština "and stop only south-west of Peć", but this promise was never fulfilled, either immediately or later, though it was made in so explicit a form and was not definitely excluded even by the submitted note.

In addition, the entire Sanjak of Novi Pazar with western Kosovo, to which Austria-Hungary laid claim on the basis of the decisions of the Congress of Berlin, was completely excluded from the reforms. Referring to this, Count Goluchowski declared succinctly to Vujić on 23 March that the Sanjak did not come into consideration in the matter of reforms, as "the Austro-Turkish garrisons successfully maintain peace and order" there. Count Kapnist informed Vujić that a decision with regard to this exclusion had already been made in Mürtzsteg ("as Turkey and Austria-Hungary have jointly to provide for the maintenance of order in it in keeping with the Treaty of Berlin") and he even read out to him the text of this treaty;⁶⁵ this seems to have been one of the Austro-Hungarian preliminary conditions for the agreement. Count Lamsdorf himself said to Novaković, in an attempt to placate him, that the reforms would nevertheless later include the whole of the Kosovo Vilayet, but he also added that there had been "an exchange of opinion [between Russia and Austria-Hungary] as to who should be responsible for the suppression of disorder in the particular districts, if the Powers were forced to interfere"; on that occasion, Novaković formed the impression "that Count Lamsdorf did not deny Austria-Hungary's exclusive right to enter the Sanjak of Novi Pazar and establish order there in that case".⁶⁶ Austria-Hungary openly laid claims on that province and showed it was prepared to resort to very harsh measures, if its rights were contested. Count Goluchowski made emphatic declarations to

65 Vujić Ministarstvu inostranih dela, Beč, 3. 3. 1904, Pov. Br. 38, in: Ibid., pp. 94-97; Vujić Ministarstvu inostranih dela, Beč, 24. 3. 1904, Pov. Br. 54, in: Ibid., pp. 184-186; Vujić Pašiću, Beč, 25. 3. 1904, Pov. Br. 55, in: Ibid., pp. 191-192; Pašić Jovanoviću, Beograd, 24. 3. 1905, lično, strogo poverljivo, in: Ibid., pp. 182-184. Novaković Ministarstvu inostranih dela, Petrograd, 19. 3. 1904, Pov. Br. 57, in: Ibid., pp. 169-171. Lamsdorf categorically denied this to Novaković (Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from St. Petersburg, 6 March 1904, conf. no. 57). Marquis de Reverseaux, the French Ambassador in Vienna, said to Vujic that his government knew that the Mürtzsteg Treaty "did in fact provide for the exclusion of the Sanjak of Novi Pazar and of the purely Albanian areas from the interference of any administration – apart from the Turko-Austrian one."

66 Novaković Ministarstvu inostranih dela, Petrograd, 19. 3. 1904, Pov. Br. 57, in: Radenić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. I, sv. 2, pp. 169-171.

the effect that the Danubian Monarchy had special interests in that province. It interpreted the extension of the border "to beyond Mitrovica" from a political point of view, as extending right down to Kačanik and including the whole of Metohija. In that area, Austria wished to be left to work together with the Turks. As Turkey was too weak to stand its ground against the Danubian Monarchy, and as Russia was engaged in the war with Japan, there was an obvious danger of Austria-Hungary's acquiring an undisputed influence in the Kosovo Vilayet. In the joint Russo-Austrian note submitted to the Porte on 29 February, both Powers declared that if it proved necessary on account of the failure to carry out their duties or of incompetence on the part of Turkish officers, effective command over the gendarmerie would be entrusted to foreign officers. As a standard by which the behaviour of the Turkish officers could be judged was a matter open to different interpretations, this decision was widely regarded as a convenient means to prepare the ground for a premeditated intervention, all the more so as the Vienna government, returned an answer to Rome in early March 1904 to the effect that they intended to do nothing on their own in the Balkan Peninsula, but made an express reservation in respect of their rights granted by the Congress of Berlin.

The reference Austria-Hungary made to its rights, which did not exclude the possibility of a military occupation, in the very midst of the reform campaign provoked of necessity some political excitement. In a conversation with Milovan Milovanović on 17 April 1904, Tittoni described it as "the dark spot on the Balkan horizon". In fact, it almost neutralized Austria-Hungary's undertaking never to act on its own initiative and presented a constant danger, although Lamsdorf affirmed that the Vienna government "had given him their word" not to make use of their right. But their word was hardly believed. Why should Vienna appeal to this right and make reservations as to its use, if it really never intended to make use of it at an opportune moment? This question was long considered in the diplomatic world to have been settled by the official statement made by the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador in Constantinople on 27 February 1879 to the effect that the maximal line of the Austro-Hungarian occupation would remain Priboj-Plevlje-Prijepolje. Austria-Hungary then informed the Porte that "it had no intention of extending this occupation down to Mitrovica or Novi Pazar".⁶⁷ In reasserting this out-dated right, Austria clearly acted with some purpose. This purpose and the whole Austro-Hungarian attitude provoked suspicion on all sides. It looked as if a situation were again arising similar to that on the eve of the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

67 Cf. as regards this question the article by M. B. in *Srpski književni glasnik*, XVII, 1906, pp. 533-7.

Then too, it started with the proposals for reforms in the insurgent Turkish provinces and it all ended with military occupation, regardless of the vital interests of Serbia and Montenegro.

The general suspicion of Austro-Hungarian expansionist intentions was greatly increased by the writings of a section of the Vienna press, especially the military journals. Danzer's *Armee-Zeitung*, No.15, of 9 April 1903, discussed the conditions for an Austro-Hungarian advance into the "fertile plains of the Vardar and the Drin",⁶⁸ when this took place, although "acting more out of necessity than own impulse." The relations between Danzer's paper and the responsible military circles in Vienna are well-known; Major A. Pichler was at the time its scientific editor. In No. 17, of 30 April, in a book review, there was a discussion as to the possible partition of European Turkey; the following was said of the Balkan nations and Austria-Hungary: "To leave the nations down there to themselves looks like a very questionable experiment, to say nothing of the Great Powers, which must, for higher cause, put forward certain claims in case of partition, in the face of which any fantastic policy based on sentiment lose every justification." In No. 19, of 7 May, it was clearly said that, should the proposed reforms prove a failure, a congress must be convened "which would, in accordance with the famous precedent, entrust to the nearest and therefore predestined Power, i.e. to Austria-Hungary, the mandate to carry out the pacification of Macedonia. But Macedonia is a geographical unit which cannot be complete without including also Albania." Counting on this as an almost established fact, a military expert, von Kergasin, proposed, and discussed the possibilities of, a military occupation which should be directed from the Sanjak, from Salonica and from the Albanian coast, the army being provisioned partly by means of the railway from Belgrade to Vranje "through friendly Serbia." In No. 27, of 2 July, it was again stated that Europe might "at any moment entrust to Austria a mandate similar to that [given] twenty-five years ago." Austria-Hungary "might at any moment be forced into taking upon itself such a mandate." In No. 32, of August 6th, a strategic expert developed the idea that the territory along the Lim river "might come into consideration only as a base for secondary operations"; Austria-Hungary must have the Kosovo plain as the principal base of operations, and therefore it was a primary and essential condition to obtain Mitrovica "before the outbreak of hostilities and to garrison and fortify it strongly." The principal road, however, led through the Morava Valley, i.e. through Serbia. This line of communication must be made secure by means of a military convention, control over the Belgrade-Niš railway, a system of grants for the building of roads and for the extension of

68 Ibid.

the line, together with the right to occupy Niš and the entire railway line "in case of the danger of complications, when Austria-Hungary find it necessary and before the outbreak of hostilities." Serbia should be, according to this conception, a mere vassal state at the unconditional disposal of the Danubian Monarchy, without any advantages for herself and to the obvious detriment of her own interests and those of the Balkans in general.

After the Mürtzsteg Treaty and after the British action in the matter of the reforms and the Italian warnings, the whole tone of this paper started to change and the desire for an activist policy became a little less keen. "Even the surgeon must wait for the abscess to ripen for the operation ... The waiting time will not, however, be wasted. Those who are responsible for the conduct of political affairs will have to devote all their attention to creating a clear situation for intervention in due course, while the military authorities of the directly interested states will have continually to keep an eye on the preparations for this intervention." (No. 44, 29 October). However, in No. 47, of 19 November, it was stated clearly again that Russia and Austria-Hungary had seriously engaged themselves in their reform programme and that if Turkey opposed it, things might take a new and more dangerous turn. "They must ensure the fulfillment of their will by force, no matter how little inclined either of them might be to resort to arms. But should the necessity arise, it would no longer be the question of a control over the administrative reforms in Macedonia, but of the final settlement of the Eastern Question." The situation became complicated and events might, after Mürtzsteg, develop as to "make their force stronger than the most pacific intentions of the governments concerned. The coming spring might bring about surprises; we should therefore be ready for any emergency." A leading article entitled "Austria-Hungary and the Balkans" appeared in the same paper, Danzer's *Armee-Zeitung*, No. 49, of 3 December 1903, and its outspokenness could not have been clearer. At that time, Major A. Pichler was no longer scientific editor of the paper, but the peace was published, as it was stated on the title page, "with the collaboration of a group of senior officers". The article read: "The Monarchy has natural interests in the southeastern direction, in the Balkans. There is to be found the only sphere of interest left to the House of Habsburg, which once had so mighty a voice in Germany and Italy." By occupying Bosnia and Herzegovina, Austria-Hungary had established a firm footing in the Balkan Peninsula, but this gain served only as a hinterland for Dalmatia. Bosnia and Herzegovina were of minor importance as a further stage in the penetration into the Balkans. The narrow Sanjak, which would have to serve this purpose, was very unsuited strategically. "The Monarchy's natural line of expansion into the Balkan Peninsula leads in quite a different direction, in the direction once pointed out to the Empire by the never-to-be-forgotten Prince

Eugene, that through Belgrade and up the Morava." The Powers had closed this road to Austria by aiding Serbia to obtain her independence. Austria-Hungary could not remain a quiet observer of events in the Balkans which were steadily growing in importance. "For its future development the Monarchy is directed to the Balkans; there it must attempt to gain the position of a first-rate Power, and for this purpose the possession of extensive territory is necessary. Such possessions, in spite of all political difficulties, are easier to come by when they can be taken from the Turks. When they belong to a Christian Balkan State, their acquisition is almost impossible." Austria-Hungary had several ways at its disposal whereby it might realize its aims. One was to place itself at the head of the Balkan Alliance to which Romania belonged and perhaps Greece. "Serbia must be won over to this at all costs. Without the close and indissoluble collaboration of that country a successful Austria-Hungary's Balkan policy is unthinkable." From a practical point of view, these are the same ideas as those expressed in the above mentioned article of 6 August. Austria-Hungary was this time to demand the clearly defined line running from the mouth of the Timok to the mouth of the Struma as its sphere of interest. The idea of securing some other route for penetration into Macedonia than that leading through the Sanjak, was repeated in No. 51, of 17 December. It seemed quite clear to the author of the article that it was impossible for "an army of four or five corps" to be directed through the Sanjak, and that for such an army another and more convenient route must be found. "Should Fate decree", wrote the more cautious *Neue Freie Presse*, addressing the Austro-Hungarian political parties on 14 February 1904, "that our Monarchy be involved in events (in the Balkans), it is certain that such events will take their course regardless of whether our political parties wish or do not wish to put off their quarrels."

The Austro-Hungarian attitude seemed suspicious and almost warlike even to the German statesmen who were familiar with the real state of affairs in Vienna; it was, therefore, only natural that it caused a genuine uneasiness not only in the Balkan states, but also in Italy and France. The reports of the French consuls in the Balkans drew attention of their government to the suspicious attitude of the Danubian Monarchy. Movements of troops and military preparations on a large scale in Bosnia and Herzegovina were widely noted, and it is probable that Rome and Paris were informed of them. Both these Powers thus asked Vienna to explain its attitude and dispel suspicion. In February 1904, the French Ambassador in Vienna communicated to the responsible authorities there the point of view of his government "which is absolutely opposed to any one-sided undertaking and seeking for any special benefits from the present Balkan crisis", and he received a categorical reply from Count Goluchowski to the effect "that the Austro-Hungarian Government would not on its own

initiative do or attempt anything whereby the existing situation in the Balkans would be changed." But this emphatic reply appeared insincere, because the French Ambassador was assured – or so at least he informed his Serbian colleague – that "there was to be no exclusion even of those provinces populated by Albanians" and that, as we have seen, soon proved to be untrue. To make sure, the French government, through its Ambassador in Vienna, informed the Foreign Minister that they had taken note of his statement.⁶⁹ These rumours of Austria's particular plans and military preparations induced Lord Lansdowne, the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, to ask the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador, Count Mensdorff, on 24 February 1904 how much truth there was in these rumours. Count Mensdorff's reply was very characteristic: to a question of such importance he did not give a reply which would at once have dissipated all doubts, but said "that he was unable to state whether there were any grounds for them or no".⁷⁰ Tittoni said to the Serbian Minister in Rome on 5 March (21 February) that the fears on account of Vienna's intentions were "unfortunately well grounded, for while making declarations and binding itself to do nothing on its own initiative in the Balkans, Austria-Hungary, in its own interests and for the attainment of its own ends, made a reservation in the case of the rights it had been granted by the Treaty of Berlin." "His Excellency", the Serbian Minister went on, "was considerably perturbed himself at such a reservation on the part of Austria-Hungary, for no doubt it was not unconnected with the disorder that had taken place for some time past in the Albanian regions."⁷¹ In late 1904, when situation was much clearer, especially since the categorical statement made by Count Goluchowski to Tittoni during their meeting in Abbazia in April 1904 to the effect that Austria-Hungary did not contemplate any further conquest, the French Consul in Skoplje, Choublier, said "that he would not be at all surprised if it were decided that Austria-Hungary should occupy the entire Kosovo Vilayet and that the other two [vilayets] should form an autonomous province ... According to him, we were very near to a definite settlement of the Macedonian question, but that settlement would by no means be a favourable one for the Balkan nations."⁷²

It is comprehensible that, after such momentous decisions and actions detrimental to the Serbian element in general and her own existence, Serbia could

69 Vujić Ministarstvu inostranih dela, Beč, 29. 2. 1904, Pov. Br. 26, in: Radenić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj I, sv. 2, pp. 84-86; Milovanović Ministarstvu inostranih dela, Rim, 4. 3. 1904, Pov. Br. 27 in: *Ibid.*, pp. 102-104.

70 *British Documents*, V, p. 70.

71 Milovanović Ministarstvu inostranih dela, Rim, 6. 3. 1904, Pov. Br. 31, in: Radenić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. I, sv. 2, pp. 106-108.

72 *Ibid.*

no longer remain passive. Stojan Novaković was right in saying to Lamsdorf that “the extension of Austrian influence in Turkey in any form whatever causes among us a panic fear.” Preoccupied with serious domestic troubles, Serbia had been the least responsible country for the opening of the Macedonian question and the liquidation of Turkey in general. Throughout 1903 Serbia had done nothing to cause the insurrection in Macedonia to assume dangerous proportions which, after the Bulgarian Ilindan uprising, had aroused the concern of all Europe and led to Hürtzsteg, nor had she in any way hindered the work of reform scheme. Her loyal attitude was admitted by all Cabinets, even by Vienna, which was extremely well informed, since the Austrian Consul in Skoplje, Parra, had been receiving through a secret channel the entire official correspondence of the local Serbian Consulate. Serbia had had an unfortunate experience in 1876 when she had supported the movement in Bosnia and Herzegovina and did not wish to make the same mistake again. She did not wish to provoke a movement and be involved in an adventure which might have turned out again, as in 1878 at the Congress of Berlin, to redound to the benefit of Austria-Hungary. Serbia only undertook with certain amount of energy the above mentioned interventions with the Sublime Porte and with the Great Powers, demanding the extension of reforms to the whole of Old Serbia.⁷³ In the 2 December (19 November) 1903 circular to its diplomatic representatives abroad, the Serbian Foreign Ministry laid particular stress on the following: “Serbia sets great store to peace in the Balkan Peninsula, for she is much in need of it today, but she sets much greater store to her own existence, which

73 The exclusion of the mixed districts from the reforms meant for Serbia not only a political setback, but also the most serious danger for the Serbian population in those parts. The reports of the Serbian Consuls in 1904 and 1905 concerning the atrocities committed by the Albanians, who considered the exclusion their success, and therefore raised their heads and believed they were the uncontrolled and unrestrained masters, provide the endless lists of the cases of seizure of cattle, stealing property, rape and murder. The report of the Consul in Priština, Dr. M. Spalajković dated 28 (15) November 1904 informs us that the Serbs especially suffered from the revenge of those Albanians who had been sentenced for atrocities committed in 1903 and pardoned afterwards; they killed people, blackmailed and drove them out of their homes; in this way, they not only reduced the number of Serbs, but simply made it impossible for them to live. The Albanian League was restored in Peć, which issued a proclamation that nobody should settle their affairs with the imperial authorities, but only with the League. Those who acted differently would have their homes burnt and would be killed. This League introduced into its national programme a special clause to the effect that the Serbian peasant leaseholders should be evicted from their land and Moslems and Albanian colonists settled in their place. In a short time, according to the detailed lists supplied by the Consul, 24 Serbian families were driven out in this fashion in the neighbourhood of Peć, including Živan Zorić-Šakabenta, a descendent of the Serbian Patriarch Arsenije IV.

would remain out of danger only if the position of Old Serbia and Macedonia were improved by means of far-reaching and effective reforms, which would make impossible either a one-sided settlement of the Macedonian question on the lines of the Bulgarian nationalist claims, or an extension of the occupation on the lines of the ambitions to which the Vienna-Pest press gives frequent expression in no equivocal fashion."

It is an established historical fact that at the beginning of the twentieth century Serbia was the state which caused least disturbance of the *status quo* in the Balkan Peninsula and least threatened its peace. There had been war between Turkey and Greece in 1897 and the question of Crete remained unsettled. After the publication of diplomatic correspondence and the confessions of Bulgarian organizations, it is no longer a secret today that the insurrection in Macedonia and the *comitadji* activities were the work of the Bulgarian organizations, with the Sofia government behind them, with a view to bringing the Macedonian question before Europe and provoking intervention for its solution. The two Serbian states, Serbia and Montenegro, were the only ones which for a long time had not been aggressive. This is a fact which should be taken into consideration while speaking about the dangers then threatening the peace of Europe. The situation created in the Balkan Peninsula as a result of the *comitadji* activities provided a pretext to the two Great Powers, which had long been interested in the Balkans, to take the settlement of Balkan questions into their own hands. It would be pointless to say that Russia and, more particularly, Austria-Hungary did so only for sentimental reasons; after all, the statements coming from their responsible circles did not even attempt to present their activities in that light alone. The German Ambassador in Rome, Count Monts, said quite openly to M. Milovanović in early July 1904 "that Austria-Hungary was called upon by reason of her geographical position and all other circumstances to wield the decisive influence in the Balkans, to group all the Balkan states around it and to bring them into its sphere of interest. This was the problem with which the very existence of Austria-Hungary was bound, as well as many interests of both Germany and other Powers."⁷⁴ After their moves, and especially after those of Austro-Hungarian diplomacy, Serbia had to protect herself somehow. Russia and Austria-Hungary did not apprise the Balkan states of their intentions with regard to reform scheme, and the latter, suspicious and insufficiently informed, imagined every possible contingency. Fear made them far too cautious and suspicious, and they sometimes perhaps saw danger even where it did not exist or at least not to the degree it

74 Milovanović Ministarstvu inostranih dela, Rim, 12. 7. 1904, Pov. Br. 101, in: Radenić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. I, sv. 2, pp. 504-508.

appeared to them. All the Balkan states were perturbed on account of the fact that Russia and Austria did not ask for their collaboration, and even avoided it in the most evident manner. Their attitude recalled to mind, to certain extent, the preliminary actions leading to the Anglo-French condominium in Egypt and was likened to it. Serbia felt that the Balkan question, on which her existence and her whole future depended, started to be settled not only without her, but even against her. And it was only then that, seeing danger at close quarters, she pulled herself together. A more lively political activity on the part of Serbia was generated by the situation created in Old Serbia and Macedonia, and especially the Balkan policy of the Danubian Monarchy.

Vienna gave assurances that the Austro-Hungarian policy was suspected without any real reason, that Belgrade, in particular, was spreading alarmist reports and that the declarations made on several occasions in the most authoritative quarters in the Monarchy were sufficiently clear to the European diplomatic world. Those assurances might perhaps have been accorded more credence had they not attempted to deny everything, and thus come into obvious contradiction with the facts. Even if it were perhaps possible to believe that Austria-Hungary was not actuated purely by thoughts of conquest, it could never indeed be said that its actions were unselfish, as its diplomatists asserted. From the eighteenth century onwards, the Vienna government had never been unselfish in its Balkan policy, and it openly admitted this whenever it was necessary to justify it. This is, after all, quite comprehensible and entirely in agreement with the spirit prevailing at that time in many European states, which desired to pursue a policy of expansion and to emphasize their position as Great Powers. Austria's proceedings in the reform action of 1902-1904 cannot be described – by anyone's estimate – otherwise than dictated primarily by her own selfish interests. With such interests in view, she at times adopted a harsh and exceedingly stiff attitude which, as in the case of the Kosovo Vilayet, excluded any possibility of compromise. Was her insistence on her special interests in the Turkish Empire in itself not suspicious? Did not such insistence mean at the same time a kind of mortgage in case of bankruptcy? As early as 1901 Baron von Marschall put it very well when he said that Austria-Hungary's Eastern policy suffered from the practice of "thinking aloud." That practice was clearly felt on this occasion. It was well-known to Vienna why its policy was suspect in Europe and in its own immediate neighbourhood, and if it had been so desired, such suspicion could have been dispelled with one stroke. The Western Great Powers, seeing an unpleasant conflict between the interests of Italy and those of Austria-Hungary, proposed that Britain and France take the Kosovo and Bitolj areas, while Austria and Italy received the Drama and

Seres regions. The Vienna government would not even enter into discussion on this matter; had they accepted this proposal, which was calculated to inspire confidence in the entire scheme, they would have dispelled all mistrust and silenced all critics. Instead of this, Vienna stood stubbornly by its original proposals, while Baron Giesl was so vociferous in Constantinople that he confused his German colleague. If Vienna's policy had no aggressive tendencies indeed, it had such appearance for a long time, which in politics means one and the same thing. However, even now, when the attitude of Viennese diplomacy at that time can be judged from a historical point of view, it is impossible to feel that their proceedings were such as to encourage belief in the truthfulness of their official assurances.

Even without reference to the above mentioned military articles, we know today that Vienna harboured a clearly expressed desire for a more active policy. The evidence could be found in the Article 7 of the renewed Triple Alliance Treaty of 28 June 1902, which envisaged the possibility of a disturbance of the *status quo* in the Balkans and the occasion for carrying out a "temporary or permanent occupation". This article was included in the Treaty at the request of Italy, which wanted to secure itself against a one-sided action on the part of the Danubian Monarchy. Its inclusion in the Treaty of Alliance means therefore that the possibility of an action aiming at occupation was clearly taken into account. If Austria-Hungary did not believe in it, why did it agree to including this article into the treaty and to undertaking responsibilities in such an eventuality? A still stronger proof of the existence of the above mentioned tendency is the Treaty of Neutrality between Russia and Austria-Hungary, concluded at the end of October 1904, in case either of the two powers became involved in a war with a third power. In a letter that Emperor Franz Joseph addressed to Wilhelm II on this occasion, Italy was openly mentioned as a possible enemy of his country.⁷⁵ This unfriendliness towards Italy on the part of Vienna at that exact time certainly arose from the difficulties which Viennese diplomacy encountered in its Balkan plans due to the attitude of the Rome Cabinet rather than because of the long-settled situation on the old borders. Italy's point of view was, according to what Tittoni stated to the Serbian Minister in Rome, Dr. M. Milovanović, as follows: "If it proved impossible to maintain the territorial *status quo* and to keep within the limits of the reform programme, Italy will always hold the view that territorial changes in the Balkans could only be effected with the approval of the Signatory Powers of the Treaty of Berlin, assembled at a congress or conference, and also that all the Balkan

75 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXII, pp. 3-4.

states should be invited to attend any such congress or conference".⁷⁶ Tittoni publicly made a similar declaration in the Italian parliament: "But if – and this is a hypothesis which we wish to see delayed as long as possible – the maintenance of the *status quo* is no longer possible, we shall continue to oppose any occupation, any partition between certain Powers, and shall work on the contrary for agreement between all the Powers on the basis of the principle of autonomy founded on the rights of nationalities".⁷⁷ This was also the point of view of British and French diplomacy, which were equally perturbed at Austria's behaviour. The French Ambassador in Rome, Camille Barrère, declared to Milovanović that France, Britain and Italy would "jointly stand for and defend the principle that no Great Power be allowed to demand for itself any advantages, especially any territorial expansion in the Balkan Peninsula, on any pretext or in any form whatsoever".⁷⁸ In Vienna, the mistrust on the part of the Western Powers was ascribed to the activities of Italian diplomacy and the idea therefore emerged to frighten and, if need be, bring Italy to heel by means of military measures. The Viennese military circles used to say that Austria's road to the Balkans led through Rome. The German Ambassador in Rome, Count Monts, told Milovanović in early July 1904 that Italy "was on the road which must lead to war" with Austria-Hungary and that its policy was "suicidal." "With Austro-Hungarian military circles, as indeed with the majority of the population in Austria-Hungary, no war would be as popular as a war with Italy."⁷⁹ Prince Bülow has stated in his memoirs that he was also prepared to suppress "eventual desires for war on the part of the fiery Magyars or restless general staff people" as regards Italy, Serbia and Rumania.⁸⁰

The reforms question in Turkey thus became a political question of the first importance due to the too manifest interests of certain of the Great Powers, especially Austria-Hungary. Instead of soothing feelings in the Balkans, this irritated them. The Danubian Monarchy's pointing out that it was, together with Russia, "the most interested Power" in that region, its insistence that its gendarmerie should be given the Skoplje area, its opposition to the Italian gendarmerie entering the Bitolj area and its later bargaining with Italy about the

76 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from Rome, 4 February 1904, conf. no. 193.

77 Milovanović Ministarstvu inostranih dela, Rim, 23. 5. 1904, Pov. Br. 73, in: Radenić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. I, sv. 2, pp. 355-359.

78 Milovanović Ministarstvu inostranih dela, Rim, 4. 3. 1904, Pov. Br. 27 in: Ibid., pp. 102-104. Barrère's declaration was made before 25 (12) February.

79 Milovanović Ministarstvu inostranih dela Kraljevine Srbije, Rim 12. 7. 1904, Pov. Br. br. 101, in: Ibid., pp. 504-508.

80 *Denkwürdigkeiten*, I, Berlin 1930, pp. 578, 608.

Albanian question; its appeal during the execution of reforms to its rights in the Sanjak granted by the Congress of Berlin – all this provided plenty of reasons to view its part in the reform action with mistrust. The increased military estimates and the visits of senior officers to Bosnia and Sanjak may have been no more than precautionary measures, but they gave rise to still greater uneasiness. Suspicions and fears of the Austro-Hungarian policy were not entertained by the Balkan states alone, but also, as we have seen, by the three great Western Powers, and it seemed occasionally as if Germany itself were not quite sure what was going on. The mediation of Germany, whose object it was to bring about an agreement in this matter between Austria-Hungary and Italy in order to prevent the weakening or breaking up of the Triple Alliance on account of their rivalry best showed the extent to which the whole action in Macedonia had assumed a special political significance. The Great Powers, particularly Austria-Hungary and Italy, and, to less extent, Russia started on this occasion to discuss and assess their political calculations before the whole world, and they insisted on their own interests to such extent that it threatened completely to overshadow the importance of the question which had originally given rise to the reform action. The Balkan nations came into consideration inasmuch as they entered into political calculations of one or the other group of Great Powers. It is therefore quite comprehensible that under the pressure of such important political events they, too, developed a much more intense political and diplomatic activity. "The entire strength of the nation must be employed and concentrated on the sole object of defending the survival and the independent political life of Serbia", M. Milovanović wrote on 7 March 1904 in a private letter to N. Pašić; "everything else, all internal party politics and financial stabilization and economic progress is now of secondary importance. If we remain alive and in good health, there will be time for everything later on when this storm has passed."

The activity of Serbian diplomacy in those days was directed to one single object: to stop the activist policy of the Vienna Government. Together with Montenegro, Serbian diplomacy aimed in the first place at frustrating any Austrian action in the direction of Kosovo. Unsuccessful attempts were made through the friendly Cabinets to ensure, if possible, that the Skoplje region not be allotted to the Austrian gendarmerie, but rather to that of some other Great Power. On 17 (4) February, Pašić instructed the Serbian Minister in Constantinople to draw Zinoviev's attention to the danger "to Serbian and Slav interests" arising from Austria's intentions and to oppose, together with the Ambassadors of France and Italy, any settlement along the lines "detrimental to the interests of all those who take a dim view of Austria-Hungary's penetration to Salonica." Russian diplomacy could not become involved in a conflict

with Austria-Hungary because of the conflict with Japan and was thus visibly embarrassed. Russia was clear as to what Vienna intended, but being unable to oppose it energetically she pretended to trust it and sought for all possible excuses to calm down the Serbs, lest they should do something which might provoke repressive measures on the part of Austria-Hungary. The Russians were not therefore outspoken with the Serbs about the real part played by Austria in the matter of gendarmerie and all decisions concerning the reforms; they informed them gradually. They claimed that the reforms would not be extended to the western part of the Kosovo Vilayet for the time being only, but that their introduction was otherwise agreed upon in principle, although Russia, in fact, had agreed with Austria-Hungary that the Sanjak of Novi Pazar stretching to beyond Mitrovica be excluded from the reform scheme. Lamsdorf even went as far as to reassure Novaković “that no part of the Kosovo Vilayet would be excluded from the reforms and that Austrian officers would not be permitted in the Kosovo Vilayet”.⁸¹ Seeing that the Serbs were frightened and irritated, Zinoviev even said on one occasion, in the hope that this would assuage them, to some extent, that he was himself – which was not true – working for the entry of Austrian gendarmerie into Old Serbia. Fearing at the same time that he might lose his influence with the Serbs, he recommended to the Serbian Minister, Dj. Simić, that Serbia should rely entirely on Russia and make no independent overtures to other Legations, threatening even that he would consider any contrary procedure the lack of confidence in and a move directed against Russia. Pašić made the following note below one of the dispatches from Constantinople that conveyed these recommendations: “We are not working against Russia’s aspirations, but we are trying to protect our own vital interests.” Consequently, he did not at first follow such advice, but continued with his efforts, appealing to Rome and Paris. When on 25 February Count Lamsdorf expressed his desire that Serbia should have full confidence in Russia’s protection and when he uttered the above-quoted words “that Austrian officers would not be permitted in the Kosovo Vilayet”, Pašić wrote on the back of the telegram from St. Petersburg the following words and forwarded them to the Legations in Rome, Constantinople and Sofia: “Content with this result, we shall for the time being abstain from further steps and await the unfolding of the reform campaign, in keeping with which we shall better know how to act.” But when it was soon became clear that the Russian assurances regarding the non-entry of Austrian officers into the eastern part of the Kosovo Vilayet had not been realized, Serbian confidence in Russian diplomacy considerably

81 Novaković Ministarstvu inostranih dela, Petrograd, 25. 2. 1904, Pov. Br. 38, in: Radenić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj I, sv. 1, pp. 992-993.

diminished, and the Serbs started to seek for support among the Powers whose hands seemed less tied and whose interests seemed the same, i.e. that Austria should not establish herself in Kosovo. Rome thenceforward increasingly became Serbia's chief advisor and supporter.

Prince Nicholas telegraphed to the King of Italy asking him to endeavour to prevent his ally from carrying out his intentions, and received a promise that he would do so. Tittoni reassured Milovanović that his government would certainly oppose the proposal, while the French Ambassador in Rome, Barrère, expressed himself in accord with this attitude. But fears were entertained in Rome, too, on account of Russia's yielding attitude; if Russia supported the Austro-Hungarian proposals, France would not be able to go against them, and the opposition of an isolated Italy would not have the desired effect. It was therefore necessary to create a block of states in the Balkans, which would be prepared to defend their own interests and form a serious bulwark against Austrian expansion. A Balkan alliance or a closer understanding was proposed as a vital necessity, upon which depended the future of the Balkan states. Even a solidary protest made by Serbia, Montenegro and Bulgaria to Great Powers against the proposed partition of the spheres of interest might have exercised a considerable influence upon public opinion and diplomatic situation. The Italian fears on account of Russia's attitude were justified. Russia did not offer any great opposition to the Austro-Hungarian proposal and thus paralyzed France to certain extent. Italy alone remained consistent and voted against the proposal.

Austria-Hungary's stubbornness in demanding that its officers should be allotted the Kosovo Vilayet raised doubts among the Great Powers and drew further attention to the reform question. The French, British and Italian intervention in Vienna and the enquiries as to Austria's intentions, and their insistence that there could be no pursuit of particular interests of any one Power in the reform action, demonstrated that the general uneasiness on account of Vienna's attitude was turning into real concern. Vienna felt this and began to be more specific in its declarations. It did not, it is true, yield an inch in its demand for the introduction of Austro-Hungarian gendarmerie officers into the Kosovo Vilayet; it also maintained its reservation regarding its rights acquired at the Congress of Berlin, but it made reassuring statements to the effect that it would not disturb the existing state of affairs in the Balkans and that it did not think of further conquests. An immediate danger was thus averted or at least postponed for some time to come. On 24 February, Barrère communicated to the Serbian Minister in Rome, along with the above mentioned words about the attitude of France, Italy and Britain, the following comforting news: "that he has received from Paris a confirmation of his conviction

that Russia has no agreement with Austria-Hungary which would leave a free hand to the latter Power's designs for conquest, and that the standpoint of Russian policy, Russian aspirations and Russian plans as regards the Balkans were in complete harmony with the policy pursued in the Balkans by France, Britain and Italy". Tittoni also informed the Serbian Minister in Rome on 27 February "that Italy had, on the one hand, received from St. Petersburg, as well as from Paris and London, declarations to the effect that the Balkan *status quo* will in no event be disturbed either to the detriment of Italian interests or to the detriment of the interests of the Balkan states and nations, while on the other hand, Austria-Hungary has also given the most categorical assurances that she neither thought of territorial expansion or occupation, nor of pursuing any special benefits in Old Serbia and Albania." These declarations, like the Russian one, were calculated to assuage the Serbs and to show them that their attitude was appreciated. But this was done only partially and conditionally. Austria-Hungary nevertheless achieved what it had at first set out to do; it did not perhaps achieve all that it had hoped for, or might have been led to expect in view of the Russian difficulties, but this was undoubtedly a political success. In the Kosovo Vilayet, it became the principal factor; the entry of its officers as gendarmerie into the eastern part of it and the maintenance of garrisons in the Sanjak meant – it may be said without exaggeration – that the ground was prepared for an eventual occupation. For the Serbs, in addition to the assurances they received that there would be no further conquest, the most important diplomatic result from the whole business was that Vienna was given to understand that others beside Russia were interested in the Balkan question and might, in cooperation with the Balkan nations and in association with other Powers, make difficulties for it, i.e. that its Balkan policy could no longer be conducted uncontrolled by, or regardless of, the rest of Europe. The Vienna Cabinet, as will be seen later, did not fully realize this; however, it was a great relief and something of a guarantee for the Serbs then.

Apart from this, the Serbian government brought its influence to bear on the Serb population in Turkey to remain quiet and not take action either on their own initiative or in cooperation with the Bulgarian bands, lest they should give the neighbouring Monarchy an excuse for military intervention; the Serbs in the Kosovo Vilayet were particularly influenced in this sense. Any movement on their part might be misinterpreted in Vienna or provide a welcome pretext for more active measures on the part of the Monarchy. This abstention from action was not without difficulties. Bulgarian aggressiveness and exclusiveness in Macedonia incited both the Serbian and Greek population in those districts to resistance; to counter the Bulgarian *comitadji* organisations, Serbian and Greek bands were also organized in Serbia and Greece. Any

hindrance to this movement, which turned into an internecine strife between Christians, was proclaimed unpatriotic and indifferent to the fate of the fellow-nationals. Nevertheless, the Serbian government set out in early 1904 to prevent the movement. "The work had to be concealed from the Foreign Ministry", a journalist who recorded the development of the *chetnik* movement (Serbian irregular detachments) wrote, "because it was in favour of a cautious school and religious propaganda instead of an armed action".⁸²

Serbian political activities were, as can be seen, of a purely defensive character and dictated solely by the fear of the future. Austria's entry into the territory stretching from Novi Pazar to Kriva Palanka not only encircled the entire southern border of Serbia, but also separated her from Old Serbia and Macedonia, and blocked her way. Even the Austro-Hungarian Minister in Belgrade, Dumba, has stated in his memoirs that from the end of 1903 onward Serbia showed "much greater interest in the maintenance of the *status quo* in Turkey and particularly in Old Serbia".⁸³ He ascribed this to the official recognition of the Serbian nationality in Turkey and thought that this gain satisfied, to certain extent, the Serbian claims; in fact, the Serbs favoured the maintenance of the *status quo* out of fear that Austria-Hungary might largely benefit from the change and that a newly-created situation might be much worse for them than the existing one. Milovan Milovanović explained to Count Monts the main direction of Serbian policy: "Based on what Vienna has done and of its attitude towards Balkan affairs, we Serbs have been forced to reach the conclusion that we can expect no benefit for ourselves, no satisfaction of even our most legitimate national interests from Austro-Hungarian friendship or sense of justice, but rather that, on the contrary, the only prospects of our achieving anything depend on the condition that Austria-Hungary and its influence be suppressed from the Balkans".⁸⁴

In order to prevent further Austro-Hungarian expansion to the Balkans and, generally, to avoid mediation of the Great Powers, almost all Balkan statesmen upheld the principle that the Balkans should be left to the Balkan peoples. This principle was not new and had always been evoked when there had been a danger of foreign intervention. But to successfully defend this principle before Europe, the Balkan peoples had to come to a mutual agreement and not to provide justification by their actions to those Powers which tended to exert their influence upon the development of the Balkan situation and the fate of

82 S. Krakov, *Plamen četnišva*, Beograd 1930, p. 82.

83 Ibid., p. 197.

84 Milovanović Ministarstvu inostranih dela, Rim, 12. 7. 1904, Pov. Br. 101, in: Radenić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. I, sv. 2, pp. 504-508.

the Balkan peoples. "Facing the same dangers", the circular note of the Serbian Foreign Ministry dated 2 December (19 November) 1903 read, "Serbia, together with Montenegro, and Bulgaria must start to rid themselves of historical atavism, which causes and nourishes a permanent rivalry between them, and to think of finding in mutual understanding a means whereby they could best safeguard, without injury to their particular interests, their common interests in the Balkan Peninsula. Rivalry paralyses their strength, which would hardly suffice in aggregate to serve as a bulwark against foreign demands and as a guarantee for the improvement of the really miserable situation of their kinsmen in Turkey." How was such an understanding to be reached? The point of view of the Serbian government formulated in the said circular note to diplomatic missions abroad, was as follows: "In view of the highly likely, grave dangers, the Slav states in the Balkans should only renounce their claims to territorial expansion to the contested areas, especially as their rivalry helps perpetuate and aggravate a state of affairs that is already quite intolerable and consequently full of danger for the Slav population there. In order to improve this situation, at least to make it tolerable, it is necessary in the first place to endeavour to secure, in accordance with Article 23 of the Treaty of Berlin, the introduction of as wide and as thorough reforms as possible to put an end to the current anarchy, to establish a legal order on the basis of respect for law for all the Sultan's subjects alike and guarantee the favourable conditions for cultural development and respect for national individuality to all nationalities."

The dangers arising out of the attitude of the Vienna Cabinet first induced to closer understanding the two Serbian states. In September 1903, during their meeting in Constantinople, the Serbian Minister at the Porte, Sava Grujić, and the Montenegrin Foreign Minister, Gavro Vuković, found that the situation in the Balkans was "catastrophic for our people in Turkey, as well as for the two Serbian states." When Grujić became head of the Serbian government and the events in the Balkans increasingly complicated and threatening, Gavro Vuković appealed to the Serbian government on 30 (17) December 1903, at the request of Prince Nicholas, inviting Serbia to make a closer agreement with Montenegro for cooperation in the Balkans. "Although she is an apparent temporary ally of Russia, Austria makes military preparations methodically and rapidly of late with an eye to our East. In our neighbourhood, in Boka Kotorska and Herzegovina, various fortifications are being constructed. Strategic roads are being built in spite of the winter season. The fortifications are supplied with war material and provisions. Military effectives are systematically increasing in numbers. What takes place in our neighbourhood also takes place in yours, as you must surely be informed." "In the name of the survival of the two

Serbian states, I invite you, General, to urge the Royal [Serbian] Government to enter into agreement with the Government of the Principality to discuss the details of their joint position, with a view to the perilous circumstances which we face. Let us come to an agreement as to our common action, because war seems inevitable. Let us prepare for all the sacrifices which the whole Serb people require of us. If we fail to arrange for that, think what a terrible responsibility we are assuming for the future of the Serb people, for they indeed are exposed to greater danger on all sides than any other Balkan people! Do not hesitate, for we have still time to arrange everything so as to avoid being taken by surprise." Such was the wording of this, not very literary exposition of the said appeal, which also included a reference to the conditions in Turkey and to the activity of Bulgaria, which headed for war with her selfish attitude. The Belgrade government naturally accepted the suggestion and opened negotiations. On 10 February (28 January) 1904, the Cetinje government received the Belgrade proposals for a preliminary agreement consisting of the following three points:

1) His Majesty the King of Serbia and His Royal Highness the Prince of Montenegro and the Highlands undertake to work in agreement and cooperation for the defense of the Serb people and the furtherance of its interests.

2) They loyally accept as the basis of their activities the reform programme of the Great Powers and they will assist the realization of this programme, insofar as their means allowed, abstaining from anything which might hinder it for whatever reason

3) In case of the failure of the peaceful reform action for whatever reason, the Serb rulers reserve the right to modify their attitude in accordance with the nature of the danger which may threaten Serb interests, concerning which a more detailed agreement will follow."

Austria's entry into the Skoplje area and the exclusion of the Kosovo region, as the Serbian Foreign Minister Pašić put it in the circular of 17 (4) February of that year, "would deliver a death blow not only to our own national and state interests, but also to the general interests of the peoples in the Balkan Peninsula." The French Vice-Consul at Skoplje, Choublier, affirmed his conviction that "the presence of Austro-Hungarian officers and noncommissioned officers would mean an occupation of these parts carried out in a peaceful manner." The Vali's Deputy in Skoplje, Sali Pasha, said "that the time has come when all the Balkan peoples would perhaps have to join forces against the Austro-Hungarian invasion." The French Vice-Consul even advised that Serbia, Bulgaria and Turkey, in view of the imminent danger, enter into a temporary

agreement for defense against any foreign penetration into the Balkans in any form. The Great Powers would then be notified of the said agreement to make them realize the danger of new conflicts from this quarter.⁸⁵

On 20 (7) February 1904, Gavro Vuković wrote from Cetinje to Prince Nicholas, who was in Flume at the time: "The Sultan informs us that there is every probability that Austria will continue to penetrate further into the Sanjak and he hopes to receive your support."

It was for this reason, in the general state of excitement, that a special provision was included into the draft treaty between Serbia and Montenegro on which the two governments quickly agreed. It read: "The two allied states undertake jointly to oppose with all the means and force at their disposal any inimical action or isolated occupation, from whatever side it may come." The chief tendency of the said agreement was clearly against the Austro-Hungarian designs, but it was conditional and had a purely defensive character.

Having been informed of these negotiations, the Russian government lodged a protest at Cetinje, according to Gavro Vuković,⁸⁶ and demanded their immediate suspension, clearly fearing more serious complications should Austria learn of them. Vuković claimed that he had rejected the Russian demand – there is no evidence whatever to show whether it was also made in Belgrade – but the negotiations proceeded much more slowly afterwards.

In addition to Montenegro, Serbia entered into closer negotiations for an alliance with Bulgaria. After some indecision and unsuccessful attempts to exploit the Turkish crisis to her own exclusive benefit, Sofia realized that the extension of foreign political influence in connection with the reform action in the vilayets of Macedonia and Old Serbia complicated the Balkan question and turned it in such a direction that its solution might ultimately be utterly unfavourable to the aspirations and interests of the Balkan states. The imperialistic demands of the Danubian Monarchy could easily be satisfied at the expense of the Balkan nations and states. The initiative for the conclusion of a political agreement between Serbia and Bulgaria came at the beginning of 1904 from Sofia, although suggestions for a closer understanding had previously been made on both sides. The principal representatives of the Bulgarian revolutionary organizations, General Tsonchev and Boris Sarafov, came personally to Belgrade in early December 1903 to negotiate. From the beginning of 1903 onwards, Italy had strongly recommended a closer association of Serbia,

85 Ristić Ministarstvu inostranih dela, Skoplje, 29. 2. 1904, Pov. Br. 152, in: Radenić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. I, sv. 2, pp. 86-89.

86 *Odlomak iz diplomatskih odnosa s Rusijom: tri naša sukoba s ruskom diplomacijom: memoari vojvode Gavra Vukovića*, Kotor 1928, pp. 20-1.

Bulgaria and Montenegro as an indispensable condition to defend before Europe "the Balkans for the Balkan peoples" principle and to form a strong, if not yet dangerous, bulwark against those Powers which might have their own plans of conquest in the Balkan Peninsula. Tittoni spoke about this on several occasions with Milovanović and suggested through him that "it is desired and expected in Italy that the Balkan states, primarily Serbia and Bulgaria, come to an agreement and join forces." Himself convinced of the necessity for such an agreement Milovanović wrote to Belgrade on 10 February (28 January) that in his opinion "the first and most indispensable necessity is to make every attempt to reach an agreement between Serbia, Montenegro and Bulgaria, not for the purpose of solving the Macedonian question, but exclusively on the practical grounds of defending the common and general interests of the Balkan states against foreigners".⁸⁷ The immediate reasons why the Bulgarians urged this question were their fear of a possible military conflict with the Turks, the uncertainty of general situation arising out of the Russo-Japanese war and the anxieties on account of Austrian plans in the Balkans. The Serbian representatives in Sofia, both diplomatic and military, were struck to find many Bulgarian officials in the first months of 1904 to start to speak, as if by agreement, about the necessity for an understanding between Serbia and Bulgaria and about the common danger from Austria-Hungary. "Our common disaster comes from Austria", Dr. Danev said to the Serbian Minister in Sofia. "She has put pressure on both you and us; we should fear her, and not Turkey." Others, too, talked in the same strain, including even the hitherto very reserved War Minister, General Savov.⁸⁸ The German Minister in Sofia also informed his government of the Bulgarian fears of Austria-Hungary. According to the report of the Serbian Minister in Sofia, Jovan M. Jovanović, sent on 13 February (31 January) 1904, the newly appointed Bulgarian Charge d'Affaires in Belgrade, Colonel Hristofor Hesapchiev, declared in the Legation that he was setting out for his new post with a special mission. "We have just started to realize", he said

87 Milovanović Ministarstvu inostranih dela, Rim, 10. 2. 1904, Pov. Br. 11, in: Radenić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. I, sv. 1, pp. 924-926. Milovanović emphasized that Tittoni told him "that the interests of the Balkan states and the Balkan peoples could be safeguarded against any injury in any contingency, only if the Balkan states and the Balkan peoples themselves knew how to defend their common interests together and wisely, how to harmonize their separate interests and to wait for an opportune moment for the solution of the Balkan question. Mincovic [Minchov] (the Bulgarian representative in Rome) told me this morning that, after the talk he had had with me, Tittoni also informed him of this Italian point of view."

88 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from Sofia, 1 March 1904, conf. no. 70.

on that occasion, “that in case of a disturbance in Macedonia, it may suffer the fate of Bosnia.”⁸⁹

Apart from Hesapchiev, Bulgaria also sent in February her Chargé d’Affaires in Cetinje, Dimitrije Rizov, to Belgrade for the purpose of negotiating a political treaty and possibly an alliance. Pašić, then Foreign Minister, explained the views of the Serbian government as regards the situation in the Balkans to the Serbian Minister in St. Petersburg in his instructions of 14 (1) March: “According to our assessment of the present position of the European Powers and of their intentions as regards the Balkans, the best policy for us and, generally, for the whole Slavdom would be that of sparing no effort to maintain peace and prepare a defense in case some European Power should attempt to take advantage of Russia’s difficult position in the Far East. In order to make agreement in this sense between all the Balkan peoples, especially the Serbian and Bulgarian, it is necessary that Russian diplomacy assist such a policy with all its power, and not to avoid any discussion of it, or leave it as a matter of domestic affairs of the Balkan peoples. The greatest danger at present that threatens the independence of the Balkan peoples might come about on account of Austria-Hungary’s attempt to make use of the ‘long-dead right’ derived from the Treaty of Berlin that relates to the Sanjak of Novi Pazar. If Austria-Hungary chose to instigate disturbance, which would provide a cause for it to enter into the Sanjak of Novi Pazar to beyond Mitrovica, then all our hopes of an independent existence would disappear and Austria would dominate the entire Balkans. To repress these obnoxious demands of Austria-Hungary, it would be necessary first that Russia not give way to Austria-Hungary in Balkan affairs, and, second, that she exchanges thoughts in this matter with France, Italy and perhaps Britain, for we believe, in accordance with our information, that she would find powerful support from those Powers, which cannot agree to Austria-Hungary’s seizing special benefits in the Balkans. If Austria-Hungary were convinced that its right to the Sanjak is outdated, just like other unfulfilled provisions of the Berlin Treaty, it would then remain peaceful and any danger of war in the Balkans would blow over.”

89 It should be noted in connection with his personality that Hesapchiev, formerly the Bulgarian Military Attaché in Belgrade, had handed to the Austro-Hungarian Military Attaché there in October 1901, the information on the Serbian fortifications on the Bulgarian frontier, and, in January 1902, a report on the Serbian heavy artillery. He claimed that King Peter had first suggested him the thought of the necessity of a Serbo-Bulgarian alliance during an audience on 18 (31) January 1904. See A.Toshev, *Balkanskiti vojni*, I, Sofia 1929, p. 152. This does not appear to be correct, judging by the whole material at our disposal and by the above-quoted statement that Hesapchiev made to the Serbian Minister in Sofia two weeks after that audience.

The Serbo-Bulgarian negotiations which took place in Belgrade between February and April resulted in the agreement on the following points: to mutually open their borders to all their products; to endeavour to have the same tariff policies towards other states; and to strive in this way to bring about their customs union. There were, in addition to these points, some decisions concerning an agreement of an economic-administrative nature (the question of tariffs, post and telegraph charges, passports, etc.). In the secret part of the treaty, signed on 12 April (30 March) 1904 in Belgrade, the first three clauses were of greater and principled significance. They read:⁹⁰

“1) Convinced of the advantageousness of the published programme of reforms in the vilayets of Salonica, Bitolj and Kosovo (Macedonia and Old Serbia), which was drafted in Mürtzsteg, the two contracting states undertake to work jointly and with all the peaceful means at their disposal for the carrying out of the said reforms in the afore-mentioned three vilayets, and they also desire that similar reforms be introduced in the Vilayet of Adrianople, so that the lives, property and free development of their compatriots there be secure on the basis of national equality in all matters.

2) Firmly determined to engage all their loyal efforts and all their goodwill in the maintenance of peace in the Balkan Peninsula, the two contracting states undertake to defend themselves jointly and with all the force and means at their disposal against any attempt, from whatever quarter, directed either against their present territorial integrity and the independence of their countries, or against the security and permanence of their reigning dynasties.

3) Likewise, the two contracting states undertake to oppose jointly and with all the force and means at their disposal any hostile action in, or isolated occupation of, the four above mentioned vilayets, on the part of any state whatever.

The fourth clause of the treaty provided for the conclusion of a military convention wherein all the contingencies referred to in clauses 2 and 3 were to be set forth.

The Austro-Hungarian Minister in Belgrade, who had carefully followed these negotiations, informed his government on 13 May that he “had the impression that the rapprochement between the two neighbouring nations was due to their common fear of our eventual penetration into Macedonia.”

Also feeling threatened by Austria-Hungary, Turkey made two offers of an alliance to Serbia and Montenegro in the course of 1904. The Sultan himself took the initiative, as we have seen from the above mentioned February telegram addressed to the Prince of Montenegro. He made the first offer

90 The entire text of the treaty was published in Toshev, *Balkanskiti vojni*, I, pp. 153-8.

at a time when he was not quite clear as to what exactly Austria-Hungary wanted in his country, but it is interesting to note that he renewed the offer in December 1904, when the ground had been cleared, to some extent. He spoke again to the Montenegrin Minister Matanović about “the necessity for an agreement between Turkey, Serbia and Montenegro for the purpose of defending against the common enemy”.⁹¹ In April 1904, rumours circulated in diplomatic circles in Constantinople that a military convention, also of a purely defensive character, was to be concluded between Turkey and Bulgaria, “in case of an Austro-Hungarian or any other penetration into Turkish territory”.⁹² The Serbian Minister in Sofia, Jovan M. Jovanović, sent on 13 May 1904 the information that there was no reliable news regarding the convention, but that it was not impossible. “If we are (to judge) by what the government people say and what has recently been published here in the government press, it would be directed in the first place against Austria. In the conversations I have had with the Foreign Minister, he keeps assuring me that Austria is increasingly showing herself to be an enemy of reforms in Macedonia, a supporter of the elements of disorder in that province, and an enemy to the Slavs and their aspirations in the Balkans. He told me that he had had reports from his agent in Skoplje that Austria was particularly active in the Sanjak of Skoplje ... The British Minister here, in a conversation about the reforms, expressed doubts as to the possibility of carrying out the present reform scheme in Macedonia, while he said to M. Racho Petrov confidentially that he was convinced that Austria neither desired nor intended the reforms in Macedonia. I may add that fear of Austria is not concealed here”.⁹³ Austria-Hungary’s attitude in the matter of reforms did not, as may be seen, alarmed just the Serbs, but all the other Balkan states too, with the partial exception of Greece.

Austria-Hungary, which carefully followed the relations between the Balkan states and paid attention no doubt to the writings in the Belgrade and Sofia press, where the struggle between the Serbs and the Bulgarians was described as profitable only to the *tertius gaudens*,⁹⁴ realized that the rapprochement between Serbia, Bulgaria and Montenegro might run against its interests and, naturally, used all its skill to frustrate it. Valuable information on this matter is contained in the statement made by Count Bülow on 26 October 1904 to the German Minister in Belgrade, Baron Heyking, regarding Austria’s attitude

91 Simić Ministarstvu inostranih dela, Carigrad, 8. 1. 1905, Pov. Br. 670, in: Radenić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. I, sv. 2, pp. 1036-1038.

92 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 12 April 1904, PP. No. 221.

93 Jovanović Ministarstvu inostranih dela, Sofija, 13. 5. 1904, Pov. Br. 162, in: Radenić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. I, sv. 2, pp. 320-321.

94 Cf. especially the newspaper *Blgarija*, no. 3, 1904.

towards Balkan questions. Bülow told Heyking that he had personally endeavoured by all means to convince the Italian government, which was worried and skeptical in this matter, that Austria-Hungary had no desire for conquest. As the Italian Charge d'Affaires in Belgrade had said to Heyking that "Austria works systematically with a view to aggravating the situation in the Balkan Peninsula and is the intellectual instigator of the attacks of the Bulgarian irregulars on the Serbian population", Bülow thought it necessary to inform the German Minister as follows: such an opinion "could only be contemplated on the assumption that Austria-Hungary really seeks to extend its borders in the direction of Salonica. But there is no evidence of this, and it would be difficult to explain such a proceeding on the part of the Habsburg Monarchy, which is already burdened with so many disparate elements. However, it could be indeed in the interests of self-preservation for Austrian policy to endeavour to prevent the union of all the Yugoslav elements, perhaps in the form of some Balkan alliance. For the blade of such an alliance would be pointed at the Austrian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina".⁹⁵ We have just seen the terms of this alliance, in which there is no mention of Bosnia and Herzegovina, or any province of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy; the alliance concerned only the defense of the Balkan territory from further conquest. But Bülow's second remark should be noted, probably made on the basis of an Austrian explanation to the effect that it was to the interest of the Danubian Monarchy to prevent rapprochement between Serbia and Bulgaria, and the fact that he did not deny the allegation that Austria-Hungary was the intellectual instigator of the attacks of the Bulgarian irregulars. It was to the interest of the Monarchy, therefore, that an atmosphere of mistrust and irritation between Belgrade and Sofia be created through the strife of the Serbo-Bulgarian irregulars and that such strife renders it impossible, as it did to a large extent, to establish more cordial relations between the Balkan states. This is obviously the only logical conclusion to be drawn from this important document penned by Count Bülow. With this in view, the Austrian reform action appears in a strange light; while Austrian gendarmerie was supposed to allay the passions in the Balkans, Austrian diplomacy, in fact, incited them through its agents. The Serbian Government had direct proof of this. As early as 1902, in connection with the appointment of Firmilijan as Metropolitan Bishop of Skoplje, which the Bulgarians most energetically opposed despite the well-developed movement for a Serbo-Bulgarian understanding, the Austro-Hungarian Consul in Skoplje, Parra, found it politically prudent to give the Serbian Consul, Kurtović, confidential information about the representations which the Bulgarians had

95 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXII, pp. 195-6.

been making to him against Firmilijan.⁹⁶ Boris Sarafov and P. N. Daskalov, the editor of the *Večernja Pošta*, informed the Serbs of two conversations they had had with Müller, the Austrian civil representative at the seat of Hilmi Pasha. He kindly assured the Bulgarians that the Danubian Monarchy had nothing against the autonomy of Macedonia, not even against a Greater Bulgaria, but that it was decidedly opposed to the partition of Macedonia and to any aggrandizement of Serbia.⁹⁷ These words were not merely an expression of his own opinion; as we now know from Count Goluchowski's plans of September 1903, this was the political programme of the Ballplatz. The Serbian Consul in Skoplje, M. Ristić, communicated to his government declarations made by the leader of the Bulgarian *comitadji*, Damyan Gruev, who had been captured by a Serbian band and then set free, to the effect that the Austro-Hungarian Consul in Bitolj, Kral, "had advised the Bulgarophiles to suppress the Serbian penetration into the Kičevo district." From the report of the Austro-Hungarian Vice-Consul in Bitolj, Prochaska, made on 29 September 1904, we learn that the Bulgarian representative Toshev had kept him well informed of the work of the Serbs and the movements of their irregulars. On the basis of documents and information from reliable sources, Ristić proved the existence of relations between Consul Parra – who had informed Serbia of the Bulgarian agitation against Firmilijan – and the Bulgarian terrorists and their irregulars.⁹⁸ Ristić also reported on 18 January 1905 that the Austro-Hungarian reform officers maintained almost publically their relations with the Bulgarian organization. They gave the explanation to the effect that the Bulgarian organization was the only organized force in those parts and had to be reckoned with. "Our commissar in Ristovac, R. Mrvić, sent me a parcel containing Bulgarian revolutionary literature, which had been addressed to the local Austrian Consulate, at Ristovac, so that the *kavas* could take it to Skoplje and which was no doubt intended for the local Bulgarophiles." The Russian Consul at Skoplje, Belyaev, authorised Ristić to communicate his statement to the Serbian government: "It is indisputable that both the Austro-Hungarian Consul and the Austro-Hungarian officers here are against you"; "it is also indisputable that the Austrian Consul has never took the initiative in any matter that would be in your favour. Mr. Parra's initiative has always concerned the Bulgarians alone".⁹⁹ On 12 October 1905, the Serbian Foreign Minister, Jovan Žujović, warned the Austrian Minister, Baron

96 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from Skoplje, 9 August 1902, no. 1331.

97 Jovanović Ministarstvu inostranih dela, Sofija, 21. 6. 1904, Pov. Br. 247 in: Radenić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. I, sv. 2, pp. 454-455.

98 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from Skoplje, 2 December 1904. These documents are no longer to be found in the archives of the Foreign Ministry.

99 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from Skoplje, 23 March 1905.

Czikann, of the activities of two Austrian reform officers, one at Kratovo and the other at Kočane, who “expressed themselves unfavourably about Serbia and the Serbs in their intercourse with the local population, saying that the Serbs were a degenerate people, and glorifying the Bulgarians, saying that Austria-Hungary would occupy Macedonia and that it would march its army across Serbia for that purpose.” Even the Bulgarian Foreign Minister, Racho Petrov, told the Serbian Minister in Sofia on 28 (15) January 1905 “that the Austrians have pointed out to them on many occasions that they have nothing against Bulgarian expansion in Macedonia and that they are always willing to help them there.” More importantly, Petrov himself did not deny “that the Austrians know all that is going on in the (Macedonian Internal) Organization and that they could even, through their agents, influence its activities to some extent. He advanced the examples: the well-known revolutionary Shumanov who, he was convinced, was an Austrian agent; the delivery of Austrian passports to Macedonian revolutionaries; the cases of Macedonian revolutionaries surrendering to the Austrian Consul at Bitolj, Kral, who thereupon presented them to the Turkish authorities and vouched for them”.¹⁰⁰ Sveta Simić, the Serbian Minister in Sofia, stated in his second report that “D. Gruev himself assured him that the Macedonian chetniks started, after the 1903 uprising in which the Serbs had adopted towards them an attitude of sympathetic reserve, to force Serbian villages by means of terror and murders to go over to the Exarchate on the advice of Kral”.¹⁰¹ In the summer of 1905, Danilo Rizov of Bitolj admitted the existence of permanent liaisons between certain Bulgarians and the Austrian Consulate, and “that the late Müller was very well informed about all the activities of the Internal Organization by Euripid Rabev, his dragoman, who still serves as a channel for the correspondence between the local revolutionaries and those in the interior of the country”.¹⁰² Simić’s third report contains the following significant details concerning the Austro-Hungarian attitude: 1) “that the Austro-Hungarian Consulates in Bitolj and Skoplje, especially the latter, have served as a shelter for the Macedonian revolutionaries, some of whom (Dj. Tashkov, Sv. Shumanov) went from there with Austrian passports through Serbia to Sofia” and 2) “that Austro-Hungarian officers in the Skoplje area have protected, according to the accounts of many well-known revolutionaries, the detachments of the I. R. Organization, informing their

100 Simić Pašiću, Sofija, 29. 1. 1905, Pov. Br. 33, in: Aleksić-Pejković, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. I, sv. 3/1, pp. 193-195.

101 Simić Pašiću, Sofija, 15. 6. 1906, Pov. Br. 173, in: Lj. Aleksić and Ž. Anić, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije 1903-1914*, knj. II, sv. 1/2, Beograd 2006, pp. 1097-1101.

102 Simić Antoniću, Sofija, 25. 8. 1905, Pov. Br. 329, in: Lj. Aleksić-Pejković, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije 1903-1914*, knj. I, sv. 4/1, Beograd 2014, pp. 207-211.

leaders of the movements of the Turkish troops, whereas the same officers have been very active in pursuing the Serbian detachments, on the other hand". A circular of the Foreign Ministry, dated 29 (16) June 1908, revealed information to the effect that Urban, the Austro-Hungarian reform officer in Palanka, "have been stopping peasants in the streets and forbidding them to send their children to the Serbian school. He has denied all validity to the certificates issued by the Serbian mayor before the authorities, stating that there were no Serbs in those parts and that the Serbian municipality was no better than the Gypsy municipality, that it did not exist for him, although the Serbian mayor was recognized by the the authorities and has been there for many years".¹⁰³ The Austro-Hungarian officer in Štip, Milan Turić, worked just as openly against the Serbs. According to a circular of the Ministry dated 31 (18) March 1908, he protested to the Turkish authorities about the Serbian movement in Štip. "In his home, the Bulgarians held their meetings and under his instructions various deputations were sent to the authorities." "This reform officer has almost openly been in cahoots with the Bulgarian Committee ever since he had come to Štip. It is an established fact that on several occasions, when he went with soldiers to villages where Bulgarian irregulars were hidden, he left his troops half an hour's distance from the village and entered it alone, thus allowing the Bulgarian irregulars to leave on the other side".¹⁰⁴

Such a hostile attitude on the part of Austria-Hungary in all questions of decisive importance for the Serbian interests in Old Serbia and Macedonia provided the well-grounded reasons why relations between Vienna and Belgrade were aggravated at the beginning of the twentieth century. The effects of the afore-mentioned plan drawn up by Count Goluchowski in September 1903 were felt. As regards the Albanian question, Austria-Hungary supported the cause of the Albanians and succeeded in the end to exclude them from the reforms and to reserve for them, and perhaps indirectly for itself, the ancient Serbian territory with the most sacred Serbian monuments (the Patriarchate of Peć, Kosovo, the monasteries of Dečane, Gračanica, Banjska, etc.). It laid its hand on the whole of the Kosovo Vilayet and proclaimed it a sphere of its interests, and the Kosovo vilayet was not only the strategic key to the road to Salonica, but also the most natural center from which, as history proved often enough, the fate of the whole Morava valley could be controlled. In the matter of Serbia's eventual expansion down the Vardar valley, Austria-Hungary

103 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, PP. No. 3170.

104 Pašić Poslanstvu Kraljevine Srbije u Francuskoj i Belgiji, 31. 3. 1908, Pov. Br. 568, in: M. Vojvodić and Lj. Aleksić-Pejković, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije 1903-1914*, knj. III, sv. 1/2, Beograd 2010, p. 796.

also changed its attitude and forgot its previous promises; it not just ceased to think of helping us there, but even worked against us. Belgrade might perhaps have understood Vienna's passivity, i.e. that it intended to do nothing for Serbia when it was not certain of her policy, because every country acted according to its own interests. But Belgrade could not but be embittered when it was felt that Austria-Hungary's actions were directed especially against the Serbs and when it was seen that these actions might call into question the whole future of Serbia on that side. Finally, such a policy was unacceptable also to the Yugoslav subjects of the Danubian Monarchy. The Serbs, who were of their own blood, were closer to them than the Albanians, Greeks and Bulgarians; when they saw the tendency of Viennese diplomatic circles to espouse the cause of all the rest at the expense of their compatriots, they were quite naturally filled with the ever-growing feelings of solidarity and of revolt because no notice was taken of them and their feelings. Instead of keeping Serbia busy in the south, Austria-Hungary was increasingly pushing the Serbian question to the fore in its full proportions and entire extent. Anxious not to allow Serbia to grow stronger, Austria-Hungary in fact aroused all her national energies and contributed most to making the Serbian question an acute and, gradually, dangerous problem.

In order correctly to understand the hostile disposition towards Austria-Hungary which from that time gained ground in Serbia another important fact should be taken into consideration, i.e. that Serbia made several attempts to approach the Danubian Monarchy. The Austro-Hungarian Minister in Belgrade, Dumba, said that the Serbian Foreign Minister, Nicholas Pašić, offered him three times to come to an agreement in the course of the spring and summer of 1904. He said that the future of his country lay to the south, that Serbia had nothing to hope for in the west, that the Great Powers had decided the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in favour of Austria and that any further decisions depended on them. If Austria-Hungary agreed to extend the reform action to the regions of Peć, Prizren and Priština and undertook to protect the Serbs against the Albanians, if it promised to help Serbia in the distant future on the occasion of the partition of Macedonia to obtain the areas in which there was an undisputed Serbian majority, Pašić promised on behalf of Serbia not only the most loyal cooperation with Austria Hungary in the matter of reforms, but also that he would work for the strengthening of an Austrophile policy in Serbia. But Vienna did not wish to enter into discussion of these questions any more than on the previous occasion, a year earlier, when similar offers had been made by King Alexander. It refused on the grounds that it did not want to appear disloyal to Russia. According to his own account, Dumba disagreed on this score with his government's point of view;

he thought it possible to promise the Serbs, in the distant future, the application of “the Balkans for the Balkan peoples” principle and to demand in return immediate economic concessions, such as a commercial treaty favourable to Austria-Hungary, the floating of a loan and the purchase of goods in their country. His proposals along these lines met with no response in Vienna.¹⁰⁵

It may be interpreted that Austria-Hungary did not want to accept the Serbian offers lest it should encourage Serbia to proceed to more aggressive activities and provoke the Bulgarians and Greeks into becoming still more active in Macedonia on account of Serbia's action, thus raising, contrary to the wishes of the Great Powers, and in spite of the Austro-Russian agreement, the whole thorny question of European Turkey. It may further be said that Austria-Hungary feared complications with Italy because of the Serbian conflict with the Albanians. But if such were the reasons why Austria-Hungary did not agree to cooperate with the Serbs, why did it then hasten to secure for itself the whole of the Kosovo Vilayet in the very face of the Serbs? And why did Austria-Hungary work so obviously in Macedonia in favour of Bulgaria and against the Serbs? It was in such acts on the part of Austria-Hungary that the Serbs saw danger for themselves and believed that its policy was a perfidious one. Austria-Hungary, it was thought in Belgrade, refused to cooperate with Serbia because it intended to take those provinces for itself, or to let Serbia's opponents take them, and not out of consideration of the danger of Balkan complications.

There was certain element of double-dealing in Pašić's policy in the first half of 1904, to which attention has been drawn.¹⁰⁶ While forming alliances against a possible Austro-Hungarian penetration into the Balkans, counting in this on the Bulgarians, he addressed Vienna at the same time to ask for its political cooperation, which, in case of Austria-Hungary's consent, might have been turned against the Bulgarians in Macedonia. But even in this, Pašić was mainly led by motives which were primarily dictated by fear of Austria-Hungary. He offered an agreement to Vienna: 1) because he feared that Austria-Hungary, unchecked by Russia, would be able to enter the Balkans and that Serbia alone would not be able to oppose it. To a Serbia which remained obstinately hostile, Austria-Hungary would have no consideration whatever; but for a Serbia which agreed to an understanding similar to that of the Secret Convention it would perhaps show some consideration where its own direct interests were not involved. 2) Pašić also offered that agreement largely because he wanted to find out Vienna's real intentions. If Austria-Hungary were indeed willing

105 Dumba, *Dreibund und Entente-politik in der Alten und Neuen Welt*, pp. 206-7.

106 Slobodan Jovanović, *Politika*, no. 8144, 1931.

to penetrate towards Skoplje, it might perhaps hint at that in its replies to, or demands on, Serbia, and Belgrade would then know where it stood and accordingly be able to come to a decision. That such an agreement could only be accepted in Serbia as an act arising from a dire necessity and in the last resort can best be seen from the fact that Pašić and the Serbian government did all they could to prevent the Austrian penetration. The agreement with Bulgaria was necessary to Pašić for the following reasons: 1) to separate Bulgaria from Austria-Hungary, since he much feared their rapprochement at Serbia's expense; and 2) because Serbia would, together with Bulgaria in a loyal cooperation against foreign penetration, present an important military front, which Vienna could not ignore. Pašić feared, and with good reason, Austro-Bulgarian cooperation in the eastern part of the Kosovo Vilayet and Macedonia, and when he offered an agreement to Austria, by the terms of which she would help Serbia there, he did so mainly to oblige her to work there with the Serbs and not against them.

A draft letter in Pašić's handwriting addressed to the Serbian Minister in St. Petersburg on 14 (1) 1904 has been preserved. We do not know whether that letter was actually dispatched and, if so, in what form, the draft being full of deletions, additions and alterations. Be that as it may, it is interesting as it shows clearly the disposition and the train of thought of Nicholas Pašić, one of the most important figures in Serbian foreign policy. In this letter, he first relayed the news which he had received from the neighbourhood regarding the military preparations of Austria-Hungary; he spoke about the inspection and review of border garrisons by the Chief of the General Staff, Field-Marshal Beck, and about his stay in Zemun; he then mentioned the rumours that four Austrian army corps were to cross into Turkey through Serbia, along the Timok valley. All this, it was alleged, was done in agreement with Russia, "and Serbia would be obliged, voluntarily or by force, to permit the passage of Austro-Hungarian troops across her territory to Turkey, and in case of an agreement she would be given a part of Old Serbia." "Such news," he wrote, "we receive daily, and our people are greatly perturbed by it. It is still impossible to ascertain how much truth the rumours contain, but they undoubtedly contain elements which we know to be true. We fear that in spite of our best will to maintain peace in the Balkans, such a situation may be created that it will require forcible measures either to coerce Turkey into carrying out the proposed reforms or to put an end to the disorders and establish order in the vilayets in question. In that case, we might be faced with questions connected with the rumours which are being persistently circulated from Austrian military circles." In order to know where they stood, it was necessary for the Serbs to find out definitely from St. Petersburg the following things: 1) If contrary to the will of Russia,

Austria-Hungary sent its army against the Turks either through the Sanjak and beyond, or though Serbia, could Serbia in that case “count on Russia’s armed cooperation in defense of the Balkan peoples?”; 2) If Russia, engaged in the war with Japan, were unable to prevent Austria-Hungary’s armed action, or if she were forced to agree to it on some other grounds, would she have any objection to the Serbs’s coming to an agreement with Austria-Hungary and to their obtaining by this agreement, if possible, some compensation, e.g. Old Serbia? 3) What would be Russia’s attitude towards a Balkan agreement whose object it would be to prevent an occupation “even if undertaken by an authorized Power?” 4) What would be Russia’s attitude if Serbia, Montenegro and Greece, together with Turkey, defended from occupation the provinces with regard to which reforms had been proposed, in case such occupation was attempted by Bulgaria, or if they in general opposed Bulgaria, if she violated the peace of the Balkans? “We know that it will be very difficult for you to induce Count Lamsdorf to give you information on these (questions), but a favourable opportunity may present itself for the Count to express his opinion and perhaps give advice on this matter. They have complete confidence in Austria-Hungary, and it may therefore be inconvenient for them to talk about what will happen when their confidence has been proven ill-founded. If you cannot get replies to all the questions in a single interview, at least you will be able to obtain general advice and instructions in connection with the points raised.” “With Bulgaria”, Pašić went on, “we could come to an agreement as to our joint defense and action, if she consented to Old Serbia, the Kosovo Vilayet, being organized separately and to its being recognized as a purely Serbian province, in which there can be no question of any common interests with Bulgaria ... On the other hand, as regards Macedonia itself (which we take as meaning the Salonika and Bitolj Vilayets), we can agree to its becoming an autonomous province on the understanding that the Bulgarian and Serbian elements shall have equal rights in all matters. Should Russia favour such an agreement, we could count upon success in this.”

As may be seen from this extremely interesting document, which is purely and simply the *credo* of the Serbian policy at the time, Pašić brooded about all possible combinations for the solution of the Balkan question. Serbia would have liked best that the established order in the Balkans not be disturbed, but that the reforms had been carried out and that free and at least tolerable life had been assured to the Christian element. She was afraid of any major disorder or disturbance of the existing state of affairs, because she believed that the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy would largely benefit from it. The principal aim of Serbian policy was to prevent this, and most of political combinations were made with this in view. If this failed, i.e. if Austria-Hungary with

its policy seemed likely to be victorious, or if the other Balkan peoples were not solidary, but rather concerned with their particular interests – then, as a last resort, cooperation with Austria-Hungary would be taken into consideration, although naturally not at the price of complete self-renunciation, which would have meant the death of Serbia's prospects as a state. It was only natural that these calculations were made with a view to Serbia's participation in, and gain from, the possible liquidation of the Turkish Empire; that was the inheritance on which all the Balkan states and nations counted, as after all, it had once been their and had been forcibly taken from them at their moment of weakness.

All the Serbian governments, under all circumstances, had the same point of view as regards further Austrian penetration. Replying to a note of the Great Powers addressed to the Balkan states, Jovan Žujović, Professor of geology and once Foreign Minister in the Cabinet of Independent Radicals, declared in a conversation with the members of diplomatic corps, "that Serbia would have to change her attitude of peaceful reserve, if the *status quo* were altered in any way." The German Minister then told him his personal and friendly opinion that such a statement made publicly in the name of Serbia should be expressed in a milder form "so that it not cast suspicion upon, or irritate, Austria-Hungary." "We do not intend to cast suspicion upon anybody", Žujović replied, "but if, unfortunately, Austria-Hungary obtained a mandate for the pacification of Old Serbia and Macedonia, that would not be a mandate for pacification, but rather a signal for a general revolution in those provinces. Whatever the attitude of the Kingdom of Serbia might be, it is very probable that in such case all the Balkan peoples, the Serbs and Turks and Albanians and Greeks and Bulgarians would rise up against this new occupation; and even if the occupying Power won, the Eastern question would smoulder for a while, and soon emerged again with equal vigour, although in another form. The Balkan states alone are capable of carrying out pacification." And somewhat naively, more as a professor than a diplomat, he seized this opportunity to develop a plan, by no means realistic, according to which "the Kosovo Vilayet would soon be peaceful, if it were handed over to the administration of Serbia alone or of Serbia and Montenegro".¹⁰⁷

This energetic pronouncement on the part of the Serbian Foreign Minister came at the moment when the foreign Powers had undertaken a great naval demonstration in order to force Turkey to extend the reforms to financial matters, and when Russia and Austria-Hungary had sent identical notes to the

107 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, A circular dispatch to Legations, 22 November 1905, conf. no. 2100.

Balkan states, blaming their rivalry and *comitadji* strife for hampering the success of the reforms and intimating that, unless their warnings were heeded, they would be compelled to oppose any attempts which might lead to a disturbance of the political *status quo* in the Balkans. The Serbs, like the other Balkan peoples, feared that other and harsher measures might follow, in case of the failure of naval demonstration, which might lead to a change in the existing situation. This warning, which seemed like a threat, appeared to have been the first signal pointing in that direction. Therefore, Žujović said without hesitation to the Russian and Austrian Ministers on 29 (16) November: "In case of eventual changes in the present relations between the states and nationalities, the Serbian people will be entitled to demand from its government to protest vehemently against such changes and also to attempt to restore the balance of privileges and power which has already been on several occasions modified to the detriment of the Serbian people".¹⁰⁸ The Serbian government believed that the movement of the people in the Sanjak of Novi Pazar against the Turkish taxes, which broke out again in September–October of that year, had something to do with Austria's doubtful intentions. Tittoni also told Milovanović that, "according to his information, there was a very strong faction in Vienna in favour of seeking an excuse to intervene in the Balkans, and that, although he did not believe this faction would prevail, it was nevertheless necessary to be prepared for all contingencies".¹⁰⁹ In Paris, the Prime Minister, Rouvier, told M. Vesnić that "he had the impression that one of the Powers would not be unwilling to interfere more openly and more actively with the affairs of European Turkey, but that this ought certainly to be prevented".¹¹⁰ To appreciate that all these rumours and suspicions did not emanate only from hostile quarters and to comprehend what was said and written that summer in Vienna about further development in the Balkan situation, it is important to note the article published in Danzer's *Armee Zeitung* No. 23, 8 July 1905. It read: "If Serbia does not come down on our side honestly and without hesitation when our country is concerned with an undertaking in the Balkans, we shall have to consider her our enemy and raise our already drawn sword against her. That would mean a normal war against Serbia, which would leave the Macedonian question for the time being without an answer; only after Serbia has been crushed and thus deprived of any right to self-determination, one

108 Žujović Poslanstvu Kraljevine Srbije u Grčkoj, 29. 11. 1905, Pov. Br. 2062, in: Lj. Aleksić-Pejković, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije 1903-1914*, knj. I, sv. 4/2, Beograd 2014, pp. 563-566.

109 Milovanović Žujoviću, Rim, 1. 12. 1905, Pov. Br. 238, in: *Ibid.*, pp. 579-581.

110 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from Paris, undated, received in Belgrade on 5 December, conf. no. 371.

could think of further offensive against Macedonia. This is perhaps a classic example of how diplomacy must keep in close and constant touch with military measures, and, moreover, place itself entirely at the service of military demands from the moment when it is decided that arms are to be allowed to speak." The war, which was sincerely desired, would not be an expression of "the thoughtless inclinations of military vanity or of frivolous imperialism", but would, on the contrary, bring a new purpose and a new duty to the Danubian Monarchy, as well as a new distribution of forces in the Balkans. An independent, united Albania would be created and a Greater Bulgaria, which would obtain the "lion's share" of Macedonia, while Serbia would enter, together with Montenegro and Old Serbia, into an Austrian Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav state, consisting of Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Old Serbia and Serbia, would be "a step forward in the world's historical development, which cannot be arrested and which tends towards the unification of peoples speaking the same language".

We shall find the same plan again with Conrad Hötendorf, the Chief of the Austro-Hungarian General Staff. It was, therefore, not merely the opinion of a military newspaper, but that of a far more influential circle of people. In short, it consisted of this: the shortest road to Salonica lay through Serbia; in order to secure it, Serbia must throw in her lot with Austria, either voluntarily or by force. She would be given no opportunity to cooperate or to secure her fellow-nationals in the parts of her territory which the Emperor's army would have to cross. The Viennese military men divided the Balkans as they saw fit, and they would make their demands. The Serbs could choose: either to accept their dictates or take Austria's blow. These Viennese circles did not want a free Serbia; in the best case, they would agree to add her to their possessions without dismemberment; afterwards, if she resisted, they would deny even that and would think of dismembering and bleeding her. In this newspaper article, the Yugoslav programme of the military circles was put forward perhaps as a distant plan, to which they frequently referred in their calculations, or perhaps only as a bait for the Yugoslavs. The fact that such a plan could have appeared at all in the otherwise cautious military press of the Monarchy is of great importance and very characteristic both of the circumstances in the Balkans and of Serbo-Austrian relations; the competent quarters in Vienna knew well what a poisonous effect upon mutual relations and what mistrust the discussion of such questions in such a manner and with such an outlook might cause. For all assurances to the effect that the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy had no aggressive designs seemed, after such articles and messages, a mere trick of Viennese diplomacy to tranquilize their opponents. It was difficult to convince people that such articles were not the real expression of Austria's disposition and

intentions, and the assurances of diplomats the usual stock-in-trade of their profession, to hide their thought behind words. For that reason, Austria's entire Balkan policy as regards the proposed reforms was looked upon in Belgrade with much mistrust; when Austria-Hungary did not make any move, it was thought that she could not rather than that she did not want to do so. Its policy towards the Serbs was undoubtedly hostile and was largely responsible for the fact that political mistrust between Vienna and Belgrade increasingly started to turn into a full-blown political antagonism.

The Tariff War

The hostile attitude of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy towards any closer relations between the Balkan peoples, especially between Serbia and Bulgaria, could be expected, on the basis of what we have seen, and that for simple reasons: 1) because it feared that the Balkan understanding or alliance might in time turn against itself, especially an alliance of the Slav states in the Balkans; and 2) because an understanding between the Balkan peoples would, in principle, exclude all possibility of the intervention of foreign states in the Balkan territory and of their taking advantage of Balkan quarrels and rivalries. As early as May 1904, when the political understanding was followed by more active relations between the Serbs and Bulgarians, and a meeting took place between King Peter and Prince Ferdinand in Niš (14 May), Baron Dumba found that certain questions in connection with the Serbo-Bulgarian understanding could not be settled without a conflict with his Monarchy. In his report of 13 May, he mentioned customs union as such a question without giving any explanation why that union was bound to lead to a conflict. He probably said this because he knew the general standpoint of his chiefs in Vienna, and the events that soon followed showed he was not mistaken. The hostile attitude of Austria-Hungary emerged immediately and without any hesitation as soon as the existence of a Serbo-Bulgarian customs union concluded on 22 June 1905 and come into force on 1 May 1906 had become known in Vienna.

In November 1905, the negotiations for a new commercial treaty between Serbia and Austria-Hungary were started in Vienna. During these negotiations, the Bulgarian government, announced in the *Sobranje*, from somewhat questionable motives, that a customs union existed between Serbia and themselves, although it was a secret arrangement and only accepted on the Serbian side with the reservation that the union should not come into force until it was seen whether there was need to make certain modifications in its text because of other treaties to be concluded with other states. As soon as the news of the existence of this union broke out, the Austro-Hungarian delegates suspended further negotiations with the Serbian delegates and, acting upon orders from their government, demanded on 28 (15) December that the whole text of the treaty be communicated to them.¹¹¹ The Serbian Minister in Vienna,

111 In reviewing these events at the meeting of the National Assembly on 2 February (20 January) 1906, LXXXII Ordinary Session, Ljuba Stojanović quoted the dates on which

Dr. M. Vujić, then presented to the Foreign Ministry in Vienna on 3 January (21 December) the text of the Serbo-Bulgarian Treaty with the official statement, “that this treaty will not be submitted to the National Assembly until after the settlement of the question of our commercial treaty with Austria-Hungary and it will even be open to adaptation, if necessary, in accordance with our possible new treaty relations with Austria-Hungary.”

But this was not considered satisfactory in Vienna. On 5 January (23 December), Goluchowski declared to Vujić and other Serbian delegates, Dr. M. Milovanović and Dr. M. Popović, that Austria-Hungary “would not be able to recognize” the Serbo-Bulgarian customs union “and that on that account it would be unable to continue the commercial negotiations with Serbia.” On this occasion, Goluchowski pretended to talk in friendly fashion to the Serbian delegates, saying he thought that “in this matter the Bulgarians had been exploiting us all the time for their own ends, in attempting, as a vassal state, to enter into a treaty involving privileges contrary to the Treaty of Berlin and endeavouring to export their products through Serbia and Austria-Hungary, to which latter Power would never and could never consent in such a manner.” The Serbian delegates repeated their statement to the Minister: “that the treaty was signed conditionally on our side just because we wished to see what our new treaty relations with Austria-Hungary would be, so that we might thereupon, in accordance with them, determine our position in regard to the conditionally signed treaty with Bulgaria.” Count Goluchowski made no answer to so clear and honest a statement, and bluntly asked with a thinly veiled intention “whether Serbia was prepared, with a view to continuing negotiations with Austria-Hungary, to give up” [*abandonner*; the expression constantly used in the German was *fallen lassen*] in advance the treaty with Bulgaria. The Serbian delegates naturally replied at once, “that we should hardly be justified in sacrificing one treaty (even though it was of much less interest to us) for the sake of another, which we were not yet certain to conclude. It was sufficient that the Royal Government, through the reservations made on the occasion of the signing of the same treaty with Bulgaria, kept a free hand in order to be able to modify that treaty or reject it altogether, if that should prove necessary as a consequence of the negotiations with Austria-Hungary.” Goluchowski then objected, more specifically, that the union had been kept secret and added, quite illogically, that Serbia had intended to put pressure upon Austria-Hungary with that secret treaty. However, Serbia had kept the treaty secret until she had completed her negotiations with the Danubian Monarchy merely in order not

the reports of the Serbian Minister in Vienna were written, and not those on which the statements were actually made.

to have to introduce later corrections and additions in an already published treaty, arising out of the decisions involved in the new Serbo-Austrian commercial treaty.

"This customs union", the *Neue Freie Presse* published on 3 January 1906, "is a challenge to Austria-Hungary, or at any rate is designed as such, for Serbia's trade gravitates towards Austria-Hungary ... The customs union is an economic farce, and no one will have any doubt as to its unimportance. But the conclusion of such an agreement is a symptom of the endless agitation and ambition prevailing amongst the Balkan states, of the continual scheming and intriguing, which neither Austria-Hungary nor even Russia will be able to pass over in silence for long." The issue of 4 January threatened that the Danubian Monarchy would "most energetically" strike a blow (*den Gegenstoss*) at "the pretended customs union between Serbia and Bulgaria", not by breaking off diplomatic relations, "but on an entirely different ground, where it would have its effect." Economic pressure was threatened. "Anyone acquainted with the Serbian export lists can be in no doubt as to the effect the so-called customs union will have." The editorial article in the issue of 5 January opened with the statement: "King Peter of Serbia has forgotten Slivnica. Otherwise, it would be difficult to understand his close friendship with the old Bulgarian foe and the conclusion under his scepter of a custom union between Serbia and Bulgaria, just like between Bavaria and Prussia once." It continued in the same threatening and angry tone: "The Obrenovićs saw that Serbia must look to Austria's goodwill, if she did not want to be crushed, like a grain of wheat between two millstones, between that Power and Russia, whose influence weighed heavily upon her, and the proximity of Austria, whose gunboats on the Danube were within sight of Belgrade, was a permanent warning to them that Serbia needed the neighbourly friendship of Austria." "Here is a great, perhaps a fateful political question; it may involve the raising of the entire Balkan problem, and it would be more than shameful European anomaly, if a rash Balkan intrigue were to endanger the peace and tranquility of the whole Europe with a fantasy about a customs union, which is meaningless in itself, and which has not arisen out of any obvious economic necessity ... This Serbo-Bulgarian customs union and the entire game which is being played under cover of it cannot be concluded without provoking the reprisals of Austria-Hungary and that might involve the most serious consequences for Serbia."¹¹²

112 The well-known historian H. Friedjung, who was ill-disposed and biased towards the opponents of Austria-Hungary, asserts in his work *Das Zeitalter des Imperialismus*, Berlin 1910, I, p. 351, that the Serbo-Bulgarian customs union would have "excluded Austria-Hungary

This hostile tone on the part of one of the principal newspapers in Vienna and the Danubian Monarchy, which usually wrote very tactfully and the relations of which with the Ballplatz were no secret, expressed clearly enough the unjustified nervousness which suddenly seized Vienna and made it, at first, lose its sense of proportion. Was the Serbo-Bulgarian customs union really so dangerous as to threaten the tranquility and peace of the whole of Europe? The whole of Europe! What did it contain that was capable of setting Europe on fire? Absolutely nothing but the simple fact that an understanding was possible between Serbia and Bulgaria not only without Vienna's participation, but even contrary to its tendencies, as has been seen in the reform campaign, to sow seeds of discord between the two Slav countries in the Balkans, as indeed was done in the above mentioned newspaper articles. The Serbo-Bulgarian customs union was a possible forerunner of a real political alliance¹¹³ and of a new grouping of forces in the Balkans, which would have led to the exclusion of foreign, i.e. Austro-Hungarian, interference in that territory. Vienna considered this was directed against her and she therefore started so bitter a struggle against the customs union. It was not a question of peace and tranquility of Europe, but of Austria's questionable intentions in the Balkans, and her wish to subject all relations on that territory to her interests. "Whatever may in the long run be the outcome of these negotiations", the *Times* correspondent wrote from Vienna, "it is clearly understood here that the conclusion of the treaty is of great political importance, and that it does not mean an increase of Austro-Hungarian influence in the Balkans."¹¹⁴

Many ambassadors of the Great Powers in Vienna, the German, Russian, French and Italian, were surprised on this occasion at such a display "of irritation of the Ballplatz which was of course, not merely of economic but also of political nature". Although it had much greater right to complain of the conclusion of this treaty without its agreement, on account of its sovereignty over Bulgaria, Turkey nevertheless adopted a much cooler and wiser attitude and succeeded, without any difficulty, to bring about some changes in those clauses of the treaty which it considered unfavourable to its interests. But the Vienna government persisted in its attitude. The impression which Count Goluchowski left on the French Ambassador, after a prolonged conversation on this subject, was that he "still maintained his opinion that the Serbo-Bulgarian treaty would

commercially and politically from the Balkans" and that that country therefore "forced its rupture". See also *ibid.*, II, p. 190.

113 Our representatives did not conceal this quite comprehensible view. Cf. Dr. M. Ninčić, "The Customs Union between Serbia and Bulgaria", in *Delo*, XXXI, 1904, pp. 314-340.

114 *The Times*, 6 January 1906.

have to be sacrificed in advance, if the continuation of commercial negotiations between us and Austria-Hungary were desired".¹¹⁵ Breaking off further negotiations for the conclusion of a commercial treaty with Bulgaria as well, Goluchowski announced to the Bulgarian Minister Sarafov on 11 January 1906 that he would demand from Serbia as a condition for further negotiations with her "the willingness to drop the (Serbo-Bulgarian) Treaty." Sarafov told him on that occasion "that Bulgaria for her part is not dropping the treaty".¹¹⁶ On 12 January (30 December), the Austrian representative in Belgrade informed the Foreign Minister "that he demanded from Serbia a written declaration to the effect that Serbia would bind herself not to bring the treaty before the *Skupština*, but to drop it, after which the [Austro-Serbian] negotiations would at once be resumed." The Serbian Government could not agree to such a demand, even apart from its obvious political tendency. They could not annoy Bulgaria by dropping their treaty without any explanation as to the nature and extent of the differences between the terms of the Serbo-Bulgarian treaty and the interests of Serbo-Austrian commercial relations. The Austro-Hungarian attitude, which was stiff and politically thinly veiled, had provoked nothing but mistrust. If Serbia withdrew from the customs union with Bulgaria without any reason, it would lead to mutual recriminations and the natural alienation between the two countries. For its part, while demanding this considerable sacrifice, Austria-Hungary gave no guarantee whatever that the commercial treaty with itself would offer something better. It simply assumed the attitude of the stronger party that demanded and threatened. For this reason, the reply of the Serbian government on 13 January (31 December) was to the effect that they could not give the written declaration required, but they repeated "that they would change anything in the Serbo-Bulgarian treaty that might hinder the conclusion of a commercial treaty between Serbia and Austria-Hungary, or that might be detrimental to their mutual interests, and they regretted if, in spite of the declarations of both the Serbian delegates and the Serbian Government, the suspended commercial negotiations were not soon resumed." Austria-Hungary found, despite such a conciliatory reply, and informed the Serbian Government on 18 January that it could not renew the previously commenced commercial negotiations "until it was stated in writing that the government would not bring the Serbo-Bulgarian treaty before the parliament during the negotiations between Serbia and Austria-Hungary; and that, if an agreement with Austria-Hungary were reached, all the changes

115 Vujić Antoniću, Beč, 9. 1. 1906, Pov. Br. 476, in: Aleksić-Pejković, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. I, sv. 4/2, pp. 725-726.

116 Vujić Ministarstvu inostranih dela, Beč, 12. 1. 1906, Pov. Br. 2315, in: Ibid. pp. 735-736.

demand by Austria-Hungary would be made". It was not possible to give a positive answer to this very unusual demand, which was also accompanied by the threat of "consequences", if it were not accepted. How could anyone think of giving consent in advance to the adoption of changes, the nature of which was unknown? The demand was far too peremptory and did not in the least take into account either the rights or the susceptibilities of Serbia. Nevertheless, Serbia was willing to negotiate, giving way as far as she could, and she declared that she agreed "not to bring the commercial treaty between Serbia and Bulgaria before the parliament for ratification as long as the negotiations with Austria-Hungary were underway, and to make in it all the changes which might be required in view of the nature of the treaty to be concluded between Serbia and Austria-Hungary." She proposed, as a way out, that negotiations for the revision of the Serbo-Bulgarian treaty take place at the same time as the commercial negotiations so that it might be seen whether any of its provisions were detrimental to Austria's interests.

In fact, Vienna demanded that the customs union be abandoned or discredited; when this failed, it announced on 22 (9) January 1906 the definite rupture of the negotiations and, in order to bring the strongest possible pressure to bear upon Serbia, prohibited the export and transit of Serbian cattle, meat and poultry on 23 (10) January on the grounds that there had been a case of swine fever in one of the transports. The prohibition of the transit of meat through Austro-Hungarian territory was contrary to the existing commercial treaty between Serbia and Austria-Hungary, but the powerful Monarchy ignored that to impose its will.¹¹⁷ Dušan Lončarević, then correspondent of the *Politička korespondencija* recounted that the Counselor of the Austrian Legation in Belgrade, von Löwenthal, told him on 22 January that his government hoped to make a very strong impression. "So far the closing of the border has never failed in its effect upon the Serbian government ... The peasant is internationalist; his only concern is to sell his produce. When the Serbian peasant finds that he cannot sell his cattle at all, Serbia will be brought to her knees in less than a month!"¹¹⁸ Such was the opinion expressed by the Austro-Hungarian

117 Vujić Antoniću, Beč, 4. 1. 1906, Pov. Br. 472, in: Aleksić-Pejković, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. I, sv. 4/2, p. 708; Vujić Antoniću, 6. 1. 1906, Pov. Br. 475, in: Ibid., pp. 723-724; Vujić Antoniću, Beč, 9. 1. 1906, Pov. Br. 476 in: Ibid., pp. 725-726.

118 *Yugoslaviens Entstehung*. Amalthea Verlag, 1929, p. 110. The communications made clandestinely by Vukašin Petrović, formerly King Milan's Minister and an Austrian secret agent, imbued with the hatred for the regime which had overthrown him, were taken far too seriously in the official circles in the Monarchy. He especially recommended the closing of the borders, hoping for an opportunity to take part in a new government formed by Vladan Djordjević, as a saviour from the bad situation.

diplomatic representatives in Belgrade and in their reports to the Foreign Ministry, amplifying its hostile decision as regards Serbia.

The attitude of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy naturally produced a very painful impression in Serbia. "It seems to me that Austria-Hungary has forgotten that the Kingdom of Serbia is an independent state", Nicholas Pašić, then leader of the opposition, said in the course of discussion of this question in the National Assembly, "and that such a demand could not be presented to her, if there were any thought of sparing her feelings. It may be that the Austro-Hungarian Government wanted to show Europe by imposing this demand that Serbia is commercially bound to them and so economically dependent upon them as to be obliged to fulfill any demand which they may make. But they are mistaken in this. The Serbian Government did their duty towards their country when they refused such a demand." The other leader of the opposition, the head of the once Austrophile Progressive Party, Stojan Novaković, declared that "the Austrian policy has been wrong in seeking to protect its interest in this country by such narrow-minded and impetuous means. Its interests would have been better served by some measure of tolerance and goodwill." The third leader of the opposition, Dr. Vojislav Veljković, pointed out, with good reason, that the Austrian demand presented to Serbia was "to say the least an extraordinary, and I would be free to qualify it as a cavalier, occurrence in diplomatic relations. In international law, all states, no matter what their size or the number of their population, are equal and have equal rights. Such a dictatorial tone in international relations is therefore completely out of place. A state which wishes to preserve its dignity cannot adopt such a tone, and our Government was quite right to reply in the negative to such a note." The prohibition of the export and transit of cattle was undoubtedly adopted as a means of exercising political pressure, the "contagion" among the cattle "appeared suddenly, as if by magic, just at the moment when the commercial negotiations were broken off. This obviously shows that the two things were connected and that the prohibition was not based on any Austria-Hungary's right under the terms of the commercial treaty and the veterinary convention, but purely and simply on the right of the stronger towards the weaker." The National Assembly decided unanimously, after a thorough discussion, "that the Royal Government have acted correctly in refusing to accept the demand of the Austro-Hungarian government made in the course of the negotiations for a commercial treaty, and approved its action."

Supported by all political parties, the Serbian government accepted the struggle which was thus thrust upon it. For its part, it prohibited the importation and transit of sugar and alcohol produced in Austria-Hungary. If Serbian cattle were subject to the sudden political disease, Austrian sugar might with equal

suddenness be infected with dangerous germs. Thus, on 25 (12) January 1906, the first phase of the tariff war between the Danubian Monarchy and the small Kingdom of Serbia, which had hitherto been economically much dependent on it, begun. In this connection, the No. 3 of Danzer's *Armee Zeitung* published on 18 January 1906 the article on "The Military Situation on the Serbian Border" in case "our Monarchy was at war with Serbia."

Count Goluchowski's unbending and ill-disposed attitude in this question surprised all diplomatic circles. As early as 17 January, the Russian Minister in Belgrade said to his Austrian colleague that the demands of his country were "somewhat too harsh" and that it should be more conciliatory. The Italian Minister, Marquis Guiccioli, repeated almost the same to him on 26 January. The Serbian Minister in Vienna reported on 30 (17) January that "the representatives of France, Italy and Britain openly showed their sympathy for Serbia (the Russian and German representatives were more reserved), and not just passively, but actively, too, by making their comments to Count Goluchowski himself." The Serbian Minister in Berlin reported on 28 (15) January that Germany also "found it advisable on certain occasions to draw the attention of the Vienna government to the inconvenience and inadvisability of such out-of-date behaviour towards the Balkan states." On 31 (18) January, the Assistant Secretary of State, Mühlberg, told the Serbian Minister in Berlin "that Austria-Hungary's behaviour to Serbia in this matter was far too harsh, just like its political attitude towards the Balkan states had often been. He further told me that he had expressed this opinion ever since our conflict with Austria-Hungary had begun in his conversations with the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador, Count Szögyény." "In the behaviour of the Austro-Hungarian government at the time of the exchange of notes and declarations just before the rupture", another report from the same Minister stated, "there is again evidence of its system, or rather of Count Goluchowski's system, of dealing with the Balkan states, i.e. the arrogant, tactless, rude and domineering behaviour towards the weaker neighbours, which so far has made it impossible for these countries, which rightly have certain susceptibilities, to have any sympathy for Austria-Hungary, but, on the contrary, always nourished and increased the antipathies for that country. This is the system of the old Austria, as I have been told by a representative of one of the Great Powers which is on friendly terms with Austria-Hungary".¹¹⁹ The Germans had an opportunity at this time to observe Austria-Hungary's behaviour in a case which concerned them. The

119 Milićević Antoniću, Berlin, 1. 2. 1906, Pov. Br. 47, in: Lj. Aleksić-Pejković and Ž. Anić, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije 1903-1914*, knj. II, sv. 1/1, Beograd 2006, pp. 280-281.

fact that Serbia had entered into commercial negotiations with Germany after the invitation of the German government, but prior to the negotiations with Austria-Hungary, and had concluded them on 26 November 1904 led to rather sharp reproaches on the part of the Viennese diplomacy in Belgrade (as early as 26 September, Baron Dumba reminded the Serbian Finance Minister in threatening tones that Serbian exports to Germany passed through Austria-Hungary, and that the latter would be able to stop them, if no agreement were reached with Austria about a commercial treaty); it even led to a rather significant diplomatic episode with the German Legation, which reached Emperor Franz Joseph himself.¹²⁰ In this connection, even the Kaiser said on 22 January 1905 to Baron Richthofen that he was pleased “that the Serbs have remained firm and refused to be frightened”.¹²¹ Even in Austria, protests were raised against the behaviour of the Ballplatz. In Viennese parliamentary circles, particularly among the Czechs and Yugoslavs, Count Goluchowski’s action was condemned and the government was called upon to give an explanation of the whole matter.

All this, according to the statements made by the members of the Vienna government to the Serbian Minister, as well as the sympathetic attitude of the Hungarian opposition towards the Serbs in this question, did have some influence on the Austrian Foreign Ministry “in the sense of a more moderate and conciliatory attitude”.¹²² Count Goluchowski felt the need to explain his behaviour and to give way. He had previously reproached Serbia, because the treaty had been kept secret, regarding it as directed against Austria. When the treaty was shown to him and he saw for himself that it did not contain any clause to justify such a suspicion, he was then, according to the report of the Serbian Minister in Vienna on 30 January, “surprised that we have allowed ourselves to be deceived by Bulgarian machinations.” On that occasion, he informed the Serbian Minister that the Bulgarian government had declared, through Racho Petrov, that they did not set much store by this treaty of a customs union with Serbia, and that he (R. Petrov) had only complied with the insistent demands of Messrs. N. Pašić and S. Simić.” From the same motives Goluchowski had also said to Vujić a little earlier “that it was only after she became convinced that she could not obtain what Austria-Hungary was willing to grant us in the matter of veterinary regulations that Bulgaria published her customs union

120 Dumba, *Dreibund und Entente-politik in der Alten und Neuen Welt*, pp. 213-5.

121 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from Berlin, 9 January 1905, conf. no. 19.

122 Vujić Antoniū, Beč, 22. 2. 1906, Pov. Br. 54, in: Aleksić-Pejković and Anić, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. II, sv. 1/1, pp. 425-426.

agreement, without asking us or coming to an understanding with us".¹²³ Similar statements were also made afterwards by Count Khevenhüller, the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador in Paris, in the *Temps* on 31 January to the effect that the Serbs, deceived by Bulgarian suggestions, "were more susceptible to sentimental feelings than to counsels of reason". It is not difficult to guess what the intentions of Austro-Hungarian Ministers in making such statements were, although they may have been genuine and a matter of their true conviction. Having failed in his plan to bring about the rupture of the Serbo-Bulgarian customs union, Goluchowski hoped to realize it by sowing discord.

However, as early as 7 February (25 January), he made it clear to the Serbian Minister, undoubtedly under the influence of the current unfavourable opinion of his unbending and arrogant attitude, that Austria-Hungary would be willing to renew the interrupted negotiations, but that it would not be the first to make a move. A still clearer hint was given to the Serbian Minister by Emperor Franz Joseph himself at a diplomatic luncheon the next day. According to the Minister's account of 9 February (27 January), the Emperor told him "that it was to the interest of both countries that they come to an agreement as soon as possible" and that "the first move should undoubtedly be made by Belgrade."

What was more natural after this than to believe that things would improve considerably? Taking into account the prestige of Austria-Hungary as a Great Power, Serbia at once consented to take the initiative for the renewal of negotiations. The basis of the agreement was as follows: that Austria-Hungary should definitely state which provisions of the Serbo-Bulgarian Treaty could not be reconciled with the new Austro-Serbian agreement, and that Serbia should agree to make the necessary changes. The Serbian government made a statement on 13 February (31 January) to the effect that they agreed in principle to this basis and asked the Austro-Hungarian government to communicate their proposed changes "so that the Royal Government might take these into consideration and come to a decision in the matter." Apart from some demands of theoretic and formal nature, the proposed changes contained the following: that the two contracting states, Serbia and Bulgaria, should be "free to levy customs duties on Austro-Hungarian products," and that "on the basis of the most favoured nation clause, Austria-Hungary should reserve for itself the right to demand for its products all the privileges which might eventually be accorded in Serbo-Bulgarian commercial intercourse to some monopolized goods and in the imposition of taxes." But the principal demand, in comparison with which, according to Count Goluchowski's statement to the Serbian Minister on 14 (1) February, "all the other changes would be of subsidiary and more formal

123 Vujić Antoniću, Beč, 1. 2. 1906, Pov. Br. 29, in: *Ibid.*, pp. 274-276.

significance", was that Serbia should give up the name of the Serbo-Bulgarian "customs union". If the union itself could not be dissolved, as was originally demanded, let its name be dropped, let the established understanding be disputed somehow. In support of this, he advanced the following arguments: this was not, in fact, a customs union, "for it would be bound, if it really existed, to exclude other contracting states from the facilities mutually agreed upon under the terms of the treaty, and therefore necessarily to exclude also the recognition of Austria-Hungary's right to the most favoured nation clause."¹²⁴ In their note of 6 February, the Austrian government, not recognizing the Serbo-Bulgarian treaty as a customs union, demanded that "in accordance with the international convention concerning the most favoured nation clause, all the special privileges contained in this treaty should be granted also to Austria-Hungary on the basis of its commercial treaty with Serbia." This was now a concrete demand which could be discussed, and the Serbian government took cognizance of these conditions, not because it was convinced that they were justified, but because it was the weaker party and wanted to avoid a conflict, finding at the same time that these conditions were not of such a kind as to injure Serbia's status as a sovereign state.

During the preliminary negotiations, Serbia approached the Bulgarian government and informed it of the Austro-Hungarian demands, asking loyally for its consent to the eventual changes. To this, the Bulgarian government replied that "it was aware of Serbia's difficulties and the great responsibility of the Serbian government and it therefore did not wish to limit in the least its freedom of action in its attempt to remove the difficulties which arose as a result of the Austrian demands", but that it "could not introduce the changes without legislative approval", the treaty having already been ratified. Serbia then replied to Vienna on 23 (10) February that it agreed in principle to the changes which were to be made in favour of Austria-Hungary "in the spirit of the principle of the most favoured nation clause", adding that it considered "that on account of the special nature of Austria-Hungary's economic position, Serbia could not adopt the same attitude towards Austria-Hungary as she could towards Bulgaria and that she could not offer it the special privileges which Serbia and Bulgaria accorded to each other in the treaty of union." Serbia did not any longer make an issue of the demand to change the name of a customs union. After these declarations, which were taken as a starting point, negotiations were resumed in Vienna. In this way, the Serbo-Bulgarian agreement was breached and the impression was created among the people that the

124 Vujić Antoniću, Beč, 15. 2. 1906, Pov. Br. 51, in: Aleksić-Pejković and Anić, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. II, sv. 1/1, pp. 396-398.

understanding arrived at between Serbia and Bulgaria was a major obstacle to their economic development. Besides, with its whole behaviour, Vienna made it perfectly clear that no Balkan question, not even that of purely economic character, could be discussed without its approval and without taking its attitude into account.

Just as this question was somehow disposed of, a new and still more acute one appeared. From 1904 onwards, Serbia had conducted negotiations to obtain a considerable loan for armaments and the construction of railways. Austro-Hungarian diplomacy had insisted that Serbia should place certain part of her orders for military supplies with Austrian firms, especially that part of artillery at least should be ordered at the *Škoda* works. In instructions that the General Staff sent to their Military Attaché in Belgrade on 27 December 1904, it was clearly stated “that it should be above all endeavoured to succeed in the matter of guns” and “that the armaments of Serbia is a matter in which no other state must compete with us (in der uns kein anderer Staat Concurrenz machen dürfe)”. This question was a delicate one; it was a question of armaments and of complete confidence in those armaments. As early as May 1903, when King Alexander had ordered the first battery of guns from *Škoda*, the Austrians pointed out that this order was “more political than military in character.” The Serbian government, however, now wanted to have a free hand in this matter and only to act in accordance with their military and financial interests. As the Vienna government conducted its Balkan policy without any regard for Serbia and refused Pašić’s offer of a political treaty, it was clear that Serbia could not expect from this same government any consideration, but rather hesitation and mistrust, all the more so as the Austrian attitude in the matter of the Kosovo Vilayet was still, even after the 1904 crisis, a source of much concern both to Serbian and other statesmen, especially after Russia’s major defeats in Manchuria.¹²⁵

125 Milovanović Ministarstvu inostranih dela, Rim, 11. 1. 1905, Pov. Br. 199, in: Radenić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. I, sv. 2, pp. 1043-1046; Vujić Pašiću, Beč, 3. 2. 1905, Pov. Br. 23, in: Aleksić-Pejković, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. I, sv. 3/1, pp. 221-222. Milovanović’s important report read: “The conversations which I have recently had, on the one hand, with G. Fusinato, and, on the other hand, with the French, German and Russian Ambassadors have left me under the impression that nobody is certain, nobody even dares to assert, that there is much likelihood that the Balkan crisis can, in the course of the coming year, be maintained in its present stage. There are no prospects any longer of success in the business of reforms, nor does anybody risk showing

himself so naive as to still put any faith in them. The Russo-Austrian reform programme is already played out and its utter failure has not greatly surprised anybody who has seriously studied Balkan affairs, and least of all perhaps the Russian and Austro-Hungarian diplomatists, who certainly all acted in this matter in accordance with the plans and purposes of their own, and were far from hoping for success of the reforms. From Russia, under the circumstances in which she now finds herself, all that could be expected was to gain time. From Austria-Hungary, however, there was reason to expect other results and benefits than stating the obvious fact that every attempt at reform in Turkey is in vain, particularly when, parallel with this experiment, yet another experiment has been going on, which has just as convincingly proved both that in Macedonia the conditions for autonomy do not exist and that the Balkan peoples and the Balkan states cannot come to an agreement on the Macedonian question on the basis which would satisfy the vital and legitimate interests of them all.

What Austria-Hungary will attempt, whether it will indeed undertake anything, and what she is thinking of undertaking in the Balkans, are now questions of the first importance, and the starting point, in fact, for all other schemes in connection with the Macedonian and general Balkan problems. The Russo-Austrian agreement until recently tied Austria-Hungary's hands in this respect, for judging by all that it has so far been possible to learn and see of such agreements its object was primarily the maintenance of the *status quo* in the Balkans. When Russia entered into war in the Far East, Italy, relying on the friendly support of France and Britain, took it upon itself to fill Russia's place in guaranteeing the maintenance of the Balkan *status quo*, insofar as a need was felt in this respect as a result of Russia's engagements elsewhere. But this guarantee has begun gradually to lose weight, inasmuch as on the one hand, Russia becomes more and more involved in the difficulties of the war in the Far East, while on the other hand the conviction is gaining ground that the Serbo-Bulgarian agreement has not sufficiently wide and sure foundations to secure a community of interests and of action between the Serbs and the Bulgarians in further development of the Macedonian crisis. I have been able to note that on the Italian side, though they have always upheld the necessity for the maintenance of the *status quo* and, in case this became impossible, the exclusion of any occupation of Balkan territory by one of the Great Powers, the eventual extension of the Austro-Hungarian occupation to beyond Mitrovica within the limits set down for it in the Treaty of Berlin, is now envisaged with much more equanimity than formerly. Prince Urusov, though he still believes that the Balkan *status quo* will be maintained in its entirety, and that Austria will make no attempt to move the boundary of her occupation further south, bases his belief not so much on Austro-Hungarian consideration for, and obligations towards, Russia, as on internal conditions in the Habsburg Monarchy, which exclude the possibility of more vigorous action abroad. I thereupon observed to the Russian Ambassador that history provides several examples of particular states deciding on important actions abroad for the very reason that their internal situation was complicated and unfavourable.

As Messrs Tittoni and Fusinato still, as on previous occasions, show the greatest interest in Balkan affairs and are firm in their opinion that Italian interests demand that an end be put to all further occupation of Balkan territory either by Austria-Hungary or by any other Great Power, it seems to me that they are increasingly afraid lest relations in the Balkan Peninsula on the one hand, and between the Great Powers on the other, should take such a course and lead to such a situation that it would no longer be possible to offer any successful resistance to the extension of the Austro-Hungarian occupation to beyond

Protesting to Pašić on 10 April 1905 about the Serbian *chetnik* bands in Macedonia, in accordance with the orders received from Vienna, Baron Dumba spoke of the possibility that the Bulgarians might in revenge provoke the Albanians to massacre the Serbs in Kosovo. In that case, Austria-Hungary would “be forced *à contre coeur* to enter there with troops.” Dumba has said indeed that he only intended to threaten the Serbs in order to dissuade them from helping the activities of *chetniks*, but the threat came from an authoritative source; it confirmed former Serbian suspicions and gave rise to new ones. It was therefore quite comprehensible that some of the Serbian statesmen were little, if at all, interested in the Austrian war industry in dealing with the question of armaments. Pašić’s government never contemplated ordering guns from the *Škoda* works in Austria, and only thought of the German and French

Mitrovica. Austria-Hungary can find a justification for such a step in its Berlin mandate, and to all remarks to the effect that now to invoke that mandate after thirty years would look like aggressiveness, it can answer that such a long silence is the best proof of its goodwill not to use it at all, and that its resorting to it now, provoked by the anarchy in Macedonia and Old Serbia, shows that its action is as much humanitarian as defensive. Fusinato, who is personally on the friendliest and most confidential terms with me, told me openly that Italy could hardly contest such arguments, if one bears in mind, on the one hand, that its signature is appended to the Berlin Treaty, and if, on the other hand, the conviction is confirmed that the anarchy in those parts of the Turkish Empire, where the special interests of Austria-Hungary are involved, is really gaining more and more ground, and if, furthermore, it becomes clearer every day not only that the mutual relations between the Christian Balkan states and peoples leave no room for the hope that they will by their own joint action be capable of putting an end to this state of things, but on the contrary show that they themselves, by their quarrels with one another, are making the Balkan crisis increasingly complicated, dangerous and disgusting. Aside from this, both Tittoni and Fusinato let me understand that they are governed by the fear that Italy would run far too great a risk, if it were, under present conditions, to engage itself to defend to the bitter end the Balkan *status quo* or the principle of the Balkans for the Balkan peoples, since the position and the behaviour of Russia gives her cause to doubt whether it could count in this matter on the active co-operation of any of the Great Powers, and since the relations between the Balkan peoples and the aspirations manifested in the various Balkan states do not encourage the belief that Austria-Hungary’s action would meet in the Balkan Peninsula itself with any serious resistance, which only the united forces of the Balkan states, Serbia and Bulgaria in the first place, are capable of offering. On several occasions already, as at the present one, both Tittoni and Fusinato, like other friends of ours, have expressed the belief that the fate of the Balkan peoples now lies mainly in their own hands, and that the Balkan states themselves, by loyal co-operation, founded upon the conviction that their interests are identical and that the future of every one of them is directly and inevitably dependent upon the future of the rest, could give a strong guarantee of which nothing else can take the place, that the Balkan question would be settled in the spirit of the principle of the Balkans for the Balkan peoples. Everyone familiar with conditions in the Balkan states shares the belief that the best starting point for such co-operation lies in a Serbo-Bulgarian understanding.”

firms, the *Krupp* and *Schneider*. Besides political matters of principle, they had other reasons for this. The latter firms had good reputation of long standing, much better than that of *Škoda*, whose artillery had been much criticized by experts and whose first delivery to Serbia in 1903 had not turned out satisfactorily. The Bulgarian army, of which Serbia thought as a possible ally in 1904, had recently ordered *Schneider* guns, and that too had to be borne in mind. But at the Austrian diplomatic insistence, which made it a serious question, and after some hesitation, the Serbian government at last agreed to consider other firms, amongst which was *Škoda*, on the understanding that the guns would be tested and the order given to that firm whose guns proved most satisfactory. In making this decision against their better judgment, as they believed it could only create difficulties and complicate matters, Pašić's Radical government formed the Commission of Military Experts, the duty of which was to test in Serbia the guns of all the firms concerned.

In order to bring more direct pressure to bear upon Serbia and coerce her into submission, Vienna made the question of the commercial treaty dependent on that of these orders from late 1904 onwards and started what almost amounted to blackmail. Commercial negotiations were not to be initiated until Serbia had accepted Vienna's point of view in this matter.

Pašić's government particularly disliked the idea of ordering guns from Austria, because the latter had too much insisted, to the exclusion of all other orders, on that matter; and also because her Foreign Minister, diplomatic envoys and Military Attaché all demanded it, and because they made not just the commercial treaty, but also other and still more important questions dependent on this question. On 25 October 1904, when the negotiations for a loan started, the Serbian Finance Minister, Dr. L. Paču, was approached, through the mediation of Baron Dumba, by the representative of the Vienna Banks Association (Wiener Bankverein), von Adler, with the following proposals: 1) his Association would be prepared to give a loan of 30,000,000 dinars to Serbia on the security of the Serbian railways, but on condition that all military supplies should be obtained from Austria; and 2) that the Serbian state railways should be sold to a limited liability company with a capital of 20,000,000 dinars, in which his Association would be strongly represented. The staff of the Serbian railway services would largely continue in their posts, with the exception of senior officials, who would be brought from the Monarchy "for the purpose of supervision." Of course, the Serbs did not want to enter into negotiations on that basis; moreover, it turned them against the offer as a whole. It was evident that it was linked with the designs of the Viennese military circles which, as we have seen, had let it be known publicly that they desired to obtain control over the Serbian railways. Doubts were also raised by the fact that von Adler

appeared in the Serbian Ministry with a letter of introduction from Baron Dumba, who, together with the entire staff of his Legation, seemed to be as much something of an agent for *Škoda* as a representative of the Monarchy. In that capacity he asked, offered and acted as a go-between, while in his official capacity he sometimes assumed an attitude which, if not directly, was indirectly minatory. Shortly after the Banks's proposal was made, in an audience with the King on 14 December, he said emphatically while recommending *Škoda's* tender that the attitude of the Serbian government in the questions of the artillery order and of the loan was "a touchstone and a kind of barometer" for its attitude towards Austria-Hungary, in accordance with which the Monarchy would adjust its attitude in all questions concerning Serbia. The threat had been openly made on 11 December to the War Minister, R. Putnik, by the Military Attaché, J. Pomiankowski, who reported to have spoken "very strongly".

In the course of 1905, the guns question passed through various stages. The French financiers, who had made former loans to Serbia and were ready to do so again, would not agree to a long term loan because of the uncertainty prevailing on the money market as a result of the long duration of the Russo-Japanese war and did not therefore allow even a sufficient time for the testing of the guns. They had asked, just like the Austrians, for Serbia's order for guns, leaving to other states, whose banks would participate in the loan, the orders for rifles, ammunition and railway materiel. Through no fault of the Serbian government, and purely for technical reasons depending on the firms themselves, the guns designed for testing purposes did not arrive in Serbia until April 1905. And up to that month Austria-Hungary had not given permission for the transport of the foreign munitions samples through its territory to Serbia, a demonstration which even its own Minister called a bureaucratic vexation. The testing of the guns, the drafting of reports, corrections and modifications, would therefore certainly last until late in the spring, if not later. Meanwhile, the government urgently desired to conclude a loan as soon as possible, particularly prior to the large Russian loan which would exhaust the French money market, so they accepted the French offer and concluded a contract for a loan of 110 million francs on 8 May 1905. On behalf of his government, Baron Dumba had already protested in Belgrade on 4 April, because the idea of testing the guns had been dropped, and he presented an emphatic demand that Austrian industries, in the way of compensation for the guns, should be given 40% of the Serbian orders to be paid for out of the new loan. Pašić had refused this in principle, contesting the right of the neighbouring Monarchy to compensation for something that had not yet been granted, and had therefore not been lost, and on practical grounds, quoting the

arrangement already made with the syndicated Banks, whereby 30% was reserved for Austro-Hungarian and German industries and the remaining 40% for French industries, as the French Minister in Belgrade had duly informed Baron Dumba on 1 March 1905. The high rate of interest for the new loan, and to a large extent this conflict with Austria, which, in keeping with her usual tactics, did not stop short of threats, aroused dissatisfaction in certain section of the Serbian political establishment, and as the government had run into difficulties both with the Court and with the parliament, they handed in their resignation on 27 May. The new Cabinet of the younger Radicals or Independent Radicals, with Ljubomir Stojanović at its head, soon entered into negotiations to float a new but smaller loan in another quarter. This was concluded after lengthy negotiations, nominally in Brussels with an international syndicate, but *de facto* in Belgrade, on 4 November 1905, with a representative of the Austrian Union Bank and the financial group with which it was connected. This loan amounted to 70 million francs and was, on paper, more favourable (it was issued at 84,5% as against 83,5% in the case of the French loan), but it contained certain questionable reservations involving the right of option and was without a guarantee that Serbian securities would be quoted on the Stock Exchanges of the Monarchy, as the Belgrade government had long demanded. Both reservations were made as a means of exerting pressure on Serbian contracts. The Austrian government demanded through their Minister in Belgrade, in a note of 2 November, that the Serbian government give a written undertaking, in connection with this loan agreement, that they would place their orders with Austrian firms, but their note arrived when the negotiations had been completed. Moreover, Dumba's successor, Baron Czikann, averred with good reason that the Serbian government would hardly be able to agree to this demand. Nevertheless, Vienna could be satisfied with the contract. And indeed, both in the Legation in Belgrade and in the Ministry in Vienna the conclusion of this loan was looked upon as their victory; it was only for the sake of public opinion that instructions were issued on 10 November from the Press Bureau of the Foreign Ministry to the government press to say nothing about the loan or at least not to make too much of that success. There was every likelihood that the new Serbian Cabinet would consider Austria's desires as far as possible. The government had given definite indications of that. They had rejected the French loan and reopened the gun question. In order to fulfill the wishes of the neighbouring Monarchy, they had earlier formed the new Committee of Military Experts for testing purposes, and on 21 September 1905 sent them abroad with instructions to examine and test the guns in the factories concerned. At the same time, the government press attempted to influence the public so as to shift the gun question from political to purely commercial

grounds, and thereby sacrificed much of its prestige and popularity.¹²⁶ But instead of supporting this government, which was so favourably disposed towards it and which had a strong opposition to face, instead of dispelling many doubts as to its own attitude towards Serbia, Austria-Hungary only created the greatest difficulties by breaking off further negotiations for a commercial arrangement on 28 December 1905 on account of the customs union between Serbia and Bulgaria. With this uncompromising act and all that followed it, Austria-Hungary cut short all work for the establishment of more friendly relations between itself and Serbia, where just at that time many influential elements were in favour of a more conciliatory policy. King Peter himself was sincerely in favour of a friendly accommodation. A number of the best known Serbian statesmen advised, not publicly, but in their private conversations and correspondence, that Serbia should make a sincere attempt to approach Austria-Hungary. "It seems to me", Dr. Milovan Milovanović wrote officially to Pašić from Rome on 3 February (21 January) 1905, "that not only could Austro-Hungarian interests in the Balkan Peninsula be brought into line with those of the Balkan peoples, especially with our own Serbian interests, but that by creating a spirit of harmony which would make the Balkan peoples, and first and foremost us Serbs, her helpers instead of her unyielding opponents, Austria-Hungary might secure for itself, if not solely and exclusively, at least in the quickest, surest and cheapest way, all that is really necessary to its interests. It is perhaps partly our fault, but it is certainly chiefly Austria's, that our mutual relations have not taken so far this life-saving turn, which would be equally propitious for the Serbs, for the other Balkan peoples, and for Austria-Hungary." As early as mid-October 1905, in a conversation with the Italian Ambassador in Vienna, the Duke of Avarna, who begun to believe that the new Serbian Independent Radical government had "plunged into Austrian waters", Milovanović said openly that Serbia would endeavour to dispel Austria-Hungary's mistrust of her inasmuch as she became convinced that Austria-Hungary was not thinking, or at any rate not immediately, of embarking upon any new conquests or occupation of territory in the Balkan Peninsula".¹²⁷ Milovanović, undoubtedly one of the most competent Serbian politicians, at the same time pointed out that the Serbian policy towards Austria-Hungary was entirely devoid of any aggressive tendency and purely

126 The attitude of *Štampa*, issued by Svetolik M. Jakšić, was not dependent on its relations with the government, but rather on its connection with the management of the *Škoda* works.

127 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from Venice, 3 October 1905, conf. no. 182.

defensive in character, and remarked how easy an agreement with Vienna would be if only Vienna cared to make it on the basis which the Serbs clearly outlined. What a disillusionment the author of such counsels and messages must have suffered at the end of that same year in Vienna, where he went as delegate to conduct commercial negotiations, in hope no doubt that he would be able personally to do something towards the realization of his ideas! The same case was with the Serbian Minister in Vienna, Vujić, who wrote to his chief in Belgrade on 1 June (19 May) 1905 that he had for his part honestly urged "Austria-Hungary to give up in relation to us King Milan's old policy of personal support (the so-called 'policy of support on two eyes'), and to substitute for it a more open policy based on an understanding with the competent constitutional elements in Serbia which might, by really uniting Austria-Hungary's and Serbia's political and economic interests in the Balkans, serve as the foundation for a new state policy of greater mutual confidence and the promotion of their joint state interests".¹²⁸ However, after so sharp a conflict in the matter of the customs union, the Serbian politicians among the Old and Independent Radicals who entertained such ideas had to back down. As a result, from the practical point of view, the Serbian government speedily lost interest in the matter of the Austrian loan against which there was a very strong feeling in the Independent Radicals's Club, and it was soon afterwards, on 30 January 1906, completely abandoned. In further negotiations between Serbia and Austria-Hungary concerning the artillery order, there was no longer any real difference between the attitudes of the Old and Independent Radicals;¹²⁹ both parties were from that time on greatly embittered and fully determined not to give way in this question.¹³⁰ In their attitude to Austria-Hungary, they were thenceforward at one.

During later negotiations, the Serbian government maintained on the whole one fundamental point of view: that the question of the commercial treaty, which was to be of twelve years duration, was completely independent of the question of military or other supplies to be ordered during the next year or two.

128 Vujić Žujoviću, Beč, 1. 6. 1905, Pov. Br. 182, in: Lj. Aleksić-Pejković, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije 1903-1914*, knj. I, sv. 3/2, Beograd 2014, pp. 816-819.

129 Only Sava Grujić, the second Prime Minister in the Independent Radical government, entertained the idea that some concessions should be made to Austria-Hungary and that the order for the mountain artillery should be given to *Škoda*, but he did not have sufficient support from his party.

130 Dr. Roderich Gooss is quite wrong in stating that the Independents fell because they wanted to order the guns from *Krupp* and *Škoda*, and that their fall was brought about by Russia. See *Die Vorgeschichte des Weltkrieges*, X, (Das Werk des Untersuchungsausschusses), Berlin 1930, p. 67.

Whereas the former question was a matter of principle, affecting large commercial and political organization, conditioned by the economic needs of the two countries, the second was a concrete question of a purely technical nature, which arose from the need of the moment. Austro-Hungarian diplomacy seemed not to be fully conscious of the extent to which its attitude rendered impossible the fulfillment of its own demands and wishes, as on 5 April 1906 they again demanded "that the principle be guaranteed that in the ordering of government supplies Austro-Hungarian goods would not be excluded, if equal in price and quality. This applied particularly to the question of the supply of guns, now under consideration, and that of salt, in both of which cases no objection could be raised to Austro-Hungarian goods as regards either price or quality." On hearing privately that out of the ten votes in the guns committee five had been cast in favour of the *Škoda* gun, Goluchowski explicitly said to the Serbian Minister in Vienna on 4 April "that he could not allow that it (the *Škoda* gun) be passed over just because it was an Austrian product, and that German or even French guns be preferred for purely political and financial reasons." He himself, he continued, "could no longer sit with his hands folded and allow us to demand and obtain from Austria-Hungary special concessions which it makes to nobody else, while in return for this we completely ignore Austro-Hungarian industries." "He spoke rather bitterly," Vujić's account reads, and as he spoke in irritation, he was somewhat careless of the facts.¹³¹ Neither had the Serbs demanded of Austria-Hungary something which was not allowed to anyone else (and which, obviously, it would not have allowed them either), nor were Austro-Hungarian industries completely ignored in Serbia. On the contrary, Austria was given to expect and even definitely promised all the contracts for the railways and for some other supplies. Although the Serbian government immediately issued a denial of the private report about the distribution of the votes in the guns committee, Goluchowski nevertheless asserted that the Serbian commission had deliberately rejected the *Škoda* gun and stuck to his opinion that the Serbs ought certainly to order it. On the same day that Goluchowski spoke in Vienna to the Serbian Minister about the order for the guns, Commander Pomiankowski called on the Premier, Sava Grujić, and told him, according to his own account, "that the disregard for *Škoda* would not only have an unfavourable influence upon the commercial treaty, but that the attitude of the Monarchy might also be changed as regards various other questions to Serbia's detriment", and he also added that the order of

131 Vujić Antoniću, Beč, 5. 4. 1906, Pov. Br. 138, in: Aleksić-Pejković and Anić, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. II, sv. 1/1, pp. 687-691; Vujić Antoniću, Beč, 12. 4. 1906, Pov. Br. 152, in: *Ibid.*, pp. 729-731.

other material in Austria, as the Serbian government had suggested, "was not of the same importance as guns." During an audience with King Peter on 8 April, on the eve of the day when the tenders of the gun firms were to be opened, the Austro-Hungarian Minister, von Czikann, explained along the lines of his Foreign Minister's statement the point of view of his government with regard to the order of guns from *Škoda* and demanded that their factory be taken into consideration, and that the King, contrary to constitutional procedure, use his personal influence with his government in this sense.

In April 1906, another change of government took place in Serbia. Because of the difficulties which had arisen in connection with the settlement of the 1903 conspirators question, the Independent Radical Cabinet resigned on 17 April and the homogeneous Radical Cabinet was formed a week later with Pašić as Prime Minister, whose attitude towards the artillery orders had long been known and had in no way changed essentially.

Seeing the hesitation of the Serbian government, after all that had happened, to bind themselves in the matter of military supplies, Austrian diplomacy attempted, for the sake of public opinion, to defend their point of view on the grounds of principle and to have it accepted after all. At a diplomatic reception on 25 April 1906, Goluchowski informed the Serbian Minister "that Austria-Hungary absolutely demanded that its industry should no longer be disregarded in Serbia, but that it should be accorded in principle the right of priority, all other things being equal". "We of course are not in a position to demand", he then went on with something of a change of front, "that any particular order should be placed in Austria-Hungary, but we shall certainly determine the extent of the concessions under the new commercial treaty by the extent to which the public contracts now under discussion are given to Austria-Hungary." In accordance with this statement, which seemed to indicate a certain modification of the initial point of view, the Serbian government found it necessary to give way to some extent and replied on 21 (8) May that it would meet the Austro-Hungarian wishes and allot to Austrian firms contracts amounting to over 26,000,000 dinars, "i.e., over 50% of the new orders which Serbia is about to make", but that it could not meet them in respect of the artillery contracts. Count Goluchowski, however, was not satisfied with this answer. When the discussion shifted from matters of principle to concrete questions, it at once became apparent what Vienna really wanted. The Count said clearly "that he attached much importance to at least part of the artillery orders." Moreover, he authorized Baron von Czikann after 25 April to inform Pašić "that the guns question is for us, now just as before, a condition for the conclusion of a commercial treaty." The War Ministry also informed their Military Attaché in Belgrade of this. Goluchowski now defended and explained

Austria's demand as follows: 1) on account of a previous promise made by Pašić; 2) on the grounds that the Gun Commission estimated *Škoda* gun as inferior to *Krupp*'s, but superior to *Schneider*'s; and (3) because the remaining contracts would go to Austria-Hungary simply for the reason of low price. To these remarks, Serbia replied as follows: 1) In the matter of guns, she had appointed a technical committee of experts whose opinion she now held authoritative; 2) Austria-Hungary had demanded that its industry should be taken into consideration and this was now being done, as Serbia intended to allot to Austrian firms 50% of the contracts. The cheapness of Austro-Hungarian goods weighed less with Serbia than her desire to show her willingness to make concessions. Serbia had to take into consideration the French and German artillery firms, as the new loan was to be floated in those countries. 3) As for Pašić's promise, if indeed it had ever been made, it could be said that it was binding on Pašić alone and not on the Technical Military Commission, the competence of which in this matter was paramount. The Commission's decision was that the best offer for field artillery were those of *Krupp* (6 votes out of 10) and *Schneider* (4), and for mountain artillery those of *Schneider* (7 votes) and *Krupp* (3).¹³² The *Škoda* guns were not once assessed as the best or at least equal with others in any of the Commission's reports, of which the Austrian Legation was fully informed. Moreover, the Austrian official circles knew that the testing of the *Škoda* guns had taken place on 7 October 1901 at Steinfeld and had not gone well. They also knew that the former Austro-Hungarian War Minister, Baron von Krieghammer, had declared on 9 May 1902 before the Budget Committee of the Austrian Delegations that *Škoda*'s steel was not of the best quality and not suitable for gun barrels; it was obvious that Serbia had reason to be cautious. In spite of this, the Austro-Hungarian government was persistent, and on 16 May 1906 the Serbian Minister in Vienna was officially informed that the Monarchy had not withdrawn its demands as regards the guns and that "there could be no plenary meeting (for the negotiation of a commercial treaty) nor would there be any prolongation of the provisional (commercial) arrangements" until these demands had been satisfied, that is to say until Pašić's promise had been fulfilled. However, Pašić denied in his telegram of 17 May that he had ever made such a promise. He had just told the Austrian Minister in Belgrade, Baron von Czikann, that the government would find it agreeable, if the technical report were favourable to the *Škoda* guns, as it would facilitate commercial relations and the government would, of

¹³² The *Krupp* guns could not be considered when the time for ordering had come, as the *Krupp* declared that it would not divide the order with *Schneider*, but would either accept the entire order or divide it with *Škoda*.

course, accept it. "I could not have promised that we would buy *Škoda* guns, for the whole conversation was about the necessity to wait for the findings of the Commission and the report of the War Minister." In all probability, that was a true statement of the case. Pašić's indefiniteness and cautiousness in making declarations were widely known. Baron Dumba, who had negotiated the matter before Czikann, reported in his dispatch of 13 June 1905 that Pašić would give no binding promise (kein bindendes Versprechen) in writing on behalf of the government. Commander Pomiankowski, too, reported on 18 June 1906 that Pašić had made far too "indefinite promises" (ganz wage unverbindliche Zusagen) and had even been negative about the guns question. It would certainly have been better had he been more definite in his declarations and had he defended more openly his real position, as he did with those matters which he desired to succeed, but the main thing is, and this is also clear from the above-quoted Austrian sources, that he had not bound himself.

It was noticeable that Austro-Hungarian diplomacy, although consistent in its principal demand, often changed its tactics and methods in the artillery question. While Austria had earlier obstinately insisted that the guns should be tested, and that an expert opinion should be given, she suddenly changed her point of view when that opinion turned out to be unfavourable to her interests. According to his own account, Baron von Czikann informed Pašić on 22 May that "for Austria the opinion of the Artillery Commission could not be final." That such a point of view could not be accepted by the Serbian government is obvious. For them, the opinion of their technical commission, which had been entrusted with the task, was and must have been final. Logically, Austria-Hungary should have accepted it too. Having demanded the tests and agreed to their being carried out by Serbian experts, it was quite clear, since an Austrian factory was the object of the tests, that Austria should have been ready to accept the opinion of the experts and recognize it. Had it turned out to be positive, she would have no doubt appealed to it! We have seen that Goluchowski immediately raised his voice when he heard that there were five votes in favour of the *Škoda* gun. What would he have done had this really been the case, or had the majority of the Commission been in favour of it?! Such inconsistencies in the attitude of the Vienna government and its representatives only weakened the already weak position, which they had adopted in defense of *Škoda*, and were, to a large extent, responsible for the whole affair turning into something much worse than a specific political question.

On 28 May, the Hungarian Minister of National Economy, F. Kossuth, told the Serbian Minister in Vienna that Serbia would be well advised to give way in the artillery question, "since Goluchowski does not, and could not, give way, as that would mean a capitulation for him." He repeated similar advice to the Serbian

Consul in Budapest, T. Petković. As Serbia was also not willing, and indeed no longer able, to give in, since she considered that the Austro-Hungarian attitude was nothing less than a direct pressure exerted without much consideration and perhaps not without ulterior motives, and as Austria-Hungary, according to Baron von Czikann's declaration to Pašić on 26 June, considered it, after all that had happened, a matter of honour to "espouse with all its might the cause of its artillery manufacturer and to secure for it the satisfaction it deserves", it was no longer possible to reach an agreement. On 7 July (24 June), the Danubian Monarchy denounced the provisional commercial arrangement with Serbia and started a real tariff war. It acted on the recommendation made on 27 June by its Minister in Belgrade, who, together with the German Minister, Prince Ratibor, believed that the Serbian government would thus be frightened and forced into submission. At the session of the National Assembly, held on 31 (17) July 1906, Pašić made clear what he thought of the negotiations: "In all other questions we can come to an agreement provided there is goodwill on both sides, but in this question, where our honour is at stake, where our right to self-determination is restricted, we cannot agree. We have declared that we reserve for ourselves the full freedom to order our guns and munitions wherever we may find that our national interests require us to order them".¹³³

The Serbian government's point of view was clearly set forth in a note addressed to the Austro-Hungarian government on 30 (17) September. It stated that the Serbian government "with regard to its official supplies was not free to make concessions to any state, which might be interpreted as the right of priority, incompatible both with the conception of the right of states to self-determination and with the principle of free competition, and which as such could not be found in any commercial treaty hitherto concluded between independent states, as it was in the obvious opposition to the recognized and established principle of the most favoured nation." In Pašić's draft of this note, there is a passage which reads as follows: "Apart from what we have done so far in defense of the self-determination and the right to buy where we please, the demand which has been made must be judged from another standpoint: the demands made to us have not been made to any other state which has concluded a commercial treaty with Austria-Hungary, and this alone would be sufficient to make the Serbian government decide not to go further in this respect in their commercial treaties than other independent states have done." The Austrian reply to this came, it was thought in Serbian circles, at the instigation of the Foreign Ministry, in the pages of the Viennese newspaper *Neues*

133 *Rad Narodne skupštine: stenografske beleške, 1906/1907-1914*, Beograd: Državna štamparija Kraljevine Srbije, 1906, p. 268.

Wiener Tagblatt, no. 274. It was there clearly stated that throughout this affair the Danubian Monarchy had "acted with the greatest cold-bloodedness and had not shown the slightest inclination to exploit the regulations of economic relations with Serbia as a trial of strength. But if Belgrade now desires to provoke such a trial of strength, we have no reason to regret the long-suffering attitude which we have so far maintained, for it has made us secure against all reproaches to the effect that we have abused our power." The threat was, as may be seen, undisguised, but Belgrade did not flinch at it. On 7 November 1906, the Serbian government ordered sixty quick-firing field and twenty-five mountain batteries from *Schneider's* works in France, and on 12 November concluded a new loan. Serbia had given in on many points: the customs union with Bulgaria had become a dead letter; to meet Austria's wishes, Serbia had not raised the tariffs on imports from Austria; she had promised to order from Austro-Hungarian firms goods to the value of 26,000,000 dinars. To make further concessions would have meant, according to the general conviction, losing all sense of dignity of the state and the people. Lastly, it should be borne in mind that Serbia made all the above concessions even though the commercial treaty offered to her by Austria-Hungary was much less favourable than the previous one and contained many restrictions (e.g. high tariff rates on cereals; no renewal of the veterinary convention; decrease of the live-stock quota; increase in the import duty on fresh meat). Moreover, there was the conviction that if Serbia had ordered the guns from Austria after all, she would have made herself far too dependent upon the goodwill of the neighbouring Monarchy, in case she suddenly needed the artillery, and that this might have caused major military difficulties, especially in view of the very uncertain situation in Turkey, where it was uncertain what might happen next day. Dušan A. Lončarević has given an accurate statement of the Serbian opinion in this matter: "A forced order to *Škoda* would not just look like a tribute which Serbia was bound to pay to the Austro-Hungarian industry, but it would also involve a still greater danger, namely that Serbia, while arming her fighting forces, would leave herself at the mercy of the very Power which alone could seriously threaten her independence".¹³⁴ Moreover, Austria-Hungary would be placed in a position to obtain accurate and detailed information about the Serbian armaments, and that could not be to Belgrade's liking, given Austria-Hungary's attitude towards Serbia.

The Serbian economy was seriously affected by the tariff war, especially stock-farming, but the people stood by their government's action, as they felt that higher national interests were at stake. The tariff war caused the Serbian

¹³⁴ D. A. Lončarević, *Jugoslaviens Entstehung*, Wien 1929. pp. 85-6.

government many economic difficulties, but hardly any political trouble in the country. It is, to some extent, comprehensible that the Serbian business world, which had formerly suffered politically, and now also felt the economic pressure of the neighbouring Monarchy, should have begun to evince not merely the old mistrust, but also the obvious signs of hatred for it. Heinrich Kanner was quite right when, speaking about Count Goluchowski's policy, he asserted that he had "done great service" to the rise of Serbophobia in Austria-Hungary¹³⁵ and also of Austrophobia in Serbia. "He aroused again the conflict of interests between Serbia and Austria-Hungary from which the Serbophobia could emerge." In the Committee of the Hungarian Delegations for Foreign Affairs, the deputy Ludwig Holo declared on 10 December that "the behaviour of the former Foreign Minister has estranged Serbia from us", thereby correctly estimating the effects of the policy which for some years past had been adopted towards Serbia. The Austro-Hungarian Ambassador in Berlin, Count Szógyény condemned before Vujić in January 1907 Goluchowski's Balkan policy "which combined with our inconsistency and obstinacy led to the customs war 'detrimental to both sides'."¹³⁶ Count Ottokar Czernin, the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister during the reign of the Emperor Karl, said much later, on 27 July 1913, in a speech in the Austrian House of Lords, the following: "We did not find the strength to crush Serbia and Montenegro or the greatness to enlist them as our friends. We did not prevent their military development, but, economically and commercially, by a policy of pin-pricks, we drove them to desperation. We closed our borders to them and we achieved thereby that they grew strong, hated us, and were not afraid of us." Almost every student of Serbo-Austrian relations sees this today. The Hungarian historian, an opponent of the Serbs, Joseph Bajza, wrote not long ago, that "one cannot get away from the impression that the greed of the large Austrian industries forced Austria-Hungary to play an antipathetic part which was bound to end in a miserable failure".¹³⁷

The whole conflict, which was so unnecessarily allowed to reach such a pitch, appears even more preposterous, from the purely Austro-Hungarian point of view, in the light of what was behind it, as recently revealed by the Austro-Hungarian Minister in Belgrade, Dumba, who had long conducted the negotiations about these matters. Dumba himself admits that the first battery of *Škoda* field guns, which had been delivered to Serbia during the time of King Alexander, had turned out rather badly; they "really needed repairing",

135 H. Kanner, *Kaiserliche Katastrophen-Politik*, Wien 1922, p. 27.

136 Vujić Pašiću, Berlin, 24. 1. 1907, Pov. Br. 9, in: Lj. Aleksić-Pejković and Ž. Anić, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije 1903-1914*, knj. II, sv. 3/1, Beograd 2003, pp. 252-254.

137 *Revue de Hongrie*, 44-45, 1931. p. 12.

as he puts it. The works were afterwards reorganized and improved, but the lack of confidence in them still carried on in Serbia. Dumba received an "urgent order to do all he could to secure for that firm an order of 50 to 60 batteries which was under consideration." The firm, he said, had long been in difficulties; it owed over four million crowns to the Austrian *Creditanstalt* and had received notice from it of the cessation of further credit. The contracts which it obtained from the Austro-Hungarian War Ministry "were far too small to keep the works going. They had to secure at all costs a larger contract abroad to prevent closing down. At the Court Ball in Vienna, Emperor Franz Joseph, the Archdukes, and Count Goluchowski spoke with much concern about this danger, and expected me to see this contract through".¹³⁸ In order to keep the *Škoda* works going, it was thought necessary to coerce Serbia into ordering guns from them and not to shrink from the harshest of measures. Instead of winning Serbia over by kindness and some concessions, the method of threats was at once resorted to in order to terrify and coerce her. Now we can understand why Austria would not be satisfied with other Serbian contracts, although they amounted to 26,000,000 dinars. They wanted to save the *Škoda* works and aimed exclusively at that. The rest of the contracts and, generally, all talk of other industries were only a pretext to conceal their real intentions. The statement made publicly by Baron Czikann that Austria-Hungary would "stand by its demands just as obstinately even if, for instance, the products of a soap factory are in question",¹³⁹ was therefore both untrue and full of hypocrisy. For the sake of the *Škoda* works, a tariff war was to be engaged upon! The Serbian Minister in Vienna already reported that rumours had reached him to the effect that pressure was being brought to bear upon Serbia, because the capital of some of the Archdukes was invested in the *Škoda* works; we now see, although it is not possible to verify positively the Minister's suspicions, that moral pressure was indeed being brought to bear from that quarter both upon the Vienna government and the Minister in Belgrade – and also upon Serbia. What political consequences this might have, and how such an attitude would be interpreted in Belgrade, where there was not much confidence in Vienna, were obviously matters not taken into account.

In the note of 26 July 1906, the British government informed Belgrade that they considered that the Austro-Hungarian "terms seemed to represent an innovation in the usual stipulations in commercial understandings between independent nations, which was not consonant with the principle of equal

138 Dumba, *Dreibund und Entente-politik in der Alten und Neuen Welt*, pp. 218-9.

139 Lončarević, *Kaiserliche Katastrophen-Politik*, pp. 149-50.

terms and conditions for the commerce of all nations".¹⁴⁰ This point of view was also communicated simultaneously by Sir Edward Grey to the Austrian Ambassador in London. The representatives of Italy, Britain and France spoke with much sympathy to the Serbian Minister in Sofia, Sveta Simić. "This struggle is imposed upon Serbia, who has done all that could be done, without injury to her dignity, to avoid it. A crisis is inevitable, but the moment is decisive, and Serbia should meet it boldly and act wisely for the sake of her future. The crisis will mark an epoch in Serbo-Austrian relations, and Serbia will come out of it regenerated. Even crises have their better sides, for they arouse and strengthen the dormant vitality of the nation, and Serbia should not forget that in this struggle she will have on her side the sympathies of all the nations who value the independence of the Balkans".¹⁴¹ The Romanian Minister, Take Ionescu, said to the Serbian Minister in London, Dr. M. Milićević: "If only you are at all in a position to withstand a tariff war, you should fight it out, for it will be advantageous for your country in spite of the temporary losses which are inevitable".¹⁴² In Belgrade, the British and Italian Ministers said that Austria's demands had gone much too far and the Austrian Minister informed his government of this on 12 October 1906. Turkey, which had helped Serbian exportation via Salonika, was given to understand by the Austrians that "they looked upon this as an abandoning, to some extent, of its neutrality", but the Sublime Porte answered them that it had no interest in putting obstacles in Serbia's way.¹⁴³

The Vienna government fully realized that its attitude could not meet with approval and wanted therefore to conceal its real reasons. When the Serbian government prepared its Blue Book about the whole question, Vienna grew perturbed and the Serbian Minister was told "that the publication of confidential things in the dispute, which was still unsettled, could only aggravate mutual relations." As a concrete instance, the Austrians considered that their note of 5 April setting forth, in no equivocal terms, the guns question, was a "matter of a confidential nature".¹⁴⁴

140 Milićević Pašiću, London, 27. 7. 1906, Pov. Br. 242, in: Lj. Aleksić-Pejković and Ž. Anić, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije 1903-1914*, knj. II, sv. 2/1, Beograd 2006, pp. 176-177.

141 Simić Pašiću, Sofija, 16. 7. 1906, Pov. Br. 207, in: Ibid., pp. 120-123.

142 Milićević Pašiću, London, 30. 7. 1906, Pov. Br. 246, in: Ibid., pp. 189-192.

143 Balugdžić Pašiću, Carigrad, 29. 12. 1906, lično, Pov. Br. 2665, in: Aleksić-Pejković, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. II, sv. 2/2, pp. 867-870.

144 Vujić Pašiću, Beč, 27. 7. 1906, Pov. Br. 346, in: Aleksić-Pejković and Anić, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. II, sv. 2/1, pp. 174-176; Vujić Pašiću, Beč, 30. 7. 1906, Pov. Br. 353, in: Ibid., pp. 188-189.

Austro-Hungarian diplomacy behaved towards Serbia on this occasion with such complete lack of consideration chiefly for two reasons, which are interrelated: Austria wanted to crush any attempt at an independent policy in Serbia and any resistance to her political ambitions, and in order to achieve this, she resorted to economic pressure. Serbia had indeed hitherto found in Austria-Hungary the principal markets for her exports, and had exported little, if any, of her cattle and raw materials elsewhere. Austria-Hungary was not only the chief customer, but also the main intermediary for Serbian exports. Between 1894 and 1905, Austria-Hungary had imported from Serbia food worth 305,971,000 dinars for its own consumption and 323,834,000 dinars as an intermediary.¹⁴⁵ The closing of the Austro-Hungarian border therefore meant an effective blow to all Serbian exporters and to Serbia herself. Austro-Hungarian diplomacy was fully aware of this. Austria's economic policy towards Serbia had for years been designed to reduce the latter to the position of what she called an "economic dependency".¹⁴⁶ In the report Baron Dumba sent from Belgrade on 10 July 1903, he said with much conviction that the thought of the possibility of Serbia's economic emancipation from Austria-Hungary was simply a "fixed idea". "For Serbia", the Austrian report from Belgrade sent on 17 September 1905 read, "the exportation of cattle is the vital question of supreme importance, and the Monarchy is her only possible export market." Conscious of its hold on the destiny of Serbian trade, Austria-Hungary resorted on several occasions, for political purposes, to closing the Serbian border or threatening that it would do so, and had always succeeded to achieve the desired effect by means of this pressure. The firm conviction therefore prevailed in Vienna that Serbia could not hold out in an economic struggle with the neighbouring Monarchy, and that she would shortly have to beg for the renewal of negotiations, to accept with humility all that she had previously refused, and to realize her powerlessness to offer any kind of resistance. The Austrian Ambassador in Rome, Count Lützow, affirmed that "Serbia was absolutely in no position to endure a tariff war with Austria-Hungary, but would be forced to capitulate and accept the conditions which would be dictated to her".¹⁴⁷ The Counselor of the British Embassy in Vienna, Sir B. Boothby, was quite right when he wrote in a dispatch to his government on 15 November 1906

145 K. Stojanović, *Govori i rasprave političko-ekonomske*, II, Beograd 1911, p. 50.

146 Cf. Stojanović, *Govori i rasprave političko-ekonomske*, I, Beograd 1910, p. 124.

147 Milovanović Pašiću, Rim, 24. 7. 1906, Pov. Br. 78, in: Aleksić-Pejković and Anić, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. II, sv. 2/1, pp. 165-169.

that Austria-Hungary had grown used to viewing Serbia not just as a *quantité négligeable* but also as a *quantité néprisable*.¹⁴⁸

On this occasion, however, something unexpected happened. With two excellent Ministers for Economic Affairs, Milorad Drašković and Kosta Stojanović, Serbia strained all her forces and used all the means at her disposal to divert her exports into other channels and find other markets. Contrary to all expectations, the outcome was satisfactory. By 1907, Serbian exports already exceeded those from 1902 by a surplus of 9,373,548 dinars, “which was the best year for exports during the treaty period.” Between 1906 and 1909, “the average exports, with no treaty, exceeded the average exports for the duration of the treaty by a surplus of 29 million dinars”.¹⁴⁹ This undoubtedly had the effect of stimulating national self-consciousness and developing the will to work and the desire for self-assertion. Instead of making her economically weaker, the tariff war strengthened Serbia: it opened up for her new paths, provided her with new resources and new prospects. Economic dependence on Austria-Hungary involved political dependence; economic emancipation was naturally followed by political emancipation. Vienna’s political schemes based on the possibilities of economic pressure proved to have fallen short off the mark, and Austria no doubt learned a lesson from this experience. Serbia was now viewed with more seriousness. It was felt that she had certain innate strength which should not be underestimated and which should therefore be suppressed before it became dangerous. The first “trial of strength”, to which Vienna attached so much importance, the expression being used by Count Goluchowski in a conversation with the Serbian Minister, was favourable to Serbia and signified the first step towards the perilous reckoning which was to come.

148 *British Documents*, V, p. 160.

149 Stojanović, *Govori i rasprave političko-ekonomske*, II, pp. 132, 154.

The Adriatic Railway

Count Goluchowski's successor, formerly Ambassador in St. Petersburg, Baron von Aehrenthal, who took up office on 21 October 1906, was of the opinion, just like some other Austro-Hungarian diplomats, that his predecessor's proceedings had lacked the sense of moderation. A foreign diplomat said to Vujić that Aehrenthal had even called Goluchowski's policy "petty",¹⁵⁰ while J. M. Baernreither has stated that the new Foreign Minister admitted at the Cabinet meeting held on 27 October 1907 that the Austrian policy "of making Serbia politically and economically dependent and considering her as a *quantité négligeable* had come to grief".¹⁵¹ Aehrenthal's instructions sent on 6 July 1907 to the Austrian Minister in Belgrade revealed his opinion that the weapon of economic pressure and of closing the borders of Serbia had "suddenly lost some of its sharpness" and that it was not advisable to link so emphatically the negotiations for a commercial treaty with other demands not directly connected with it. He therefore abandoned further discussions and recriminations as to the settlement of the artillery question;¹⁵² he also appears to have communicated his opinion to the Austro-Hungarian representatives

150 Vujić Pašiću, Beč, 3. 11. 1906, Pov. Br. 460, in: Aleksić-Pejković and Anić, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. II, sv. 2/2, pp. 544-545.

151 J. M. Baernreither, *Fragmente eines politischen Tagebuches*, Berlin 1928, p. 74.

152 Certain people from Vienna and from Škoda attempted through the agency of France, and particularly Premier Clemenceau, to influence Serbia to agree to handing over to Škoda certain part of the order placed with the *Schneider*. On 16 January 1907, the Foreign Minister, M. Pichon, offered his services to the Serbian government to "assist in reaching an understanding with Austria-Hungary" on that basis. But in view of the importance which this question had acquired, and as the Serbian parliament had already decided that the order be entrusted to the French factories, this was now difficult to carry out. The Austrian government, i.e. the Foreign Ministry and its representatives in Paris, did not itself put forward this request; the initiative came from other quarters, chiefly financial ones. The *Neue Freie Presse* correspondent Fischauer told the Serbian Minister, Vesnić, that the placing of order with Škoda was a very delicate business, as Emperor Franz Joseph had given his promise to the proprietors of the Škoda works that Serbia would order some artillery from them – and the endeavours were still made to fulfill his promise. See Vesnić Pašiću, Pariz, 13. 1. 1907, Pov. Br. 296, in: Aleksić-Pejković and Anić, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. II, sv. 2/2, pp. 934-937; Vesnić Pašiću, Pariz, 16. 1. 1907, Pov. Br. 4, in: Aleksić-Pejković and Anić, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. II, sv. 3/1, pp. 170-171; Vesnić Pašiću, Pariz, 19. 1. 1907, Pov. Br. 6, in: *Ibid.*, pp. 188-190.

abroad. This may account for the fact, to some extent at least, that even the diplomats of the Danubian Monarchy condemned Goluchowski's foreign policy towards Serbia in the autumn of 1906, as Marquis Pallavicini did, for example, in Constantinople in his conversation with Ferid Pasha.¹⁵³ But Aehrenthal was unable completely to remove the impression, as well as the political and economic consequences resulting from the policy of his predecessor – and he was not, in fact, in a hurry to do so. In order to show their goodwill towards the Monarchy, the Serbian government renewed on 8 February 1907 their former offer to secure for Austro-Hungarian industries, if quality and price were the same as elsewhere, orders amounting to 26,000,000 dinars and kept their promise by giving a contract for rifles to an Austrian firm and another for the construction of wagons for the Serbian railways to Hungarian one, although the offer had originally been made under different conditions, before the tariff war, and could not be binding on Serbia under the changed circumstances. The concession made in this matter was only a sign of goodwill and of the necessity to come to an agreement. Serbia had clearly demonstrated that she was prepared and able to defend her national dignity and her freedom of decision, but she wanted at the same time, by taking the artillery question off the agenda, to prove that she did not want a conflict with her powerful neighbour and was willing, taking the initiative in the matter of a new agreement, to do all she could to restore normal relations. The Austrian side showed no such interest in the renewal of relations. Throughout 1907, until nearly the end of the year, the conclusion of a commercial treaty with Serbia was either rendered impossible by Austria's refusal dictated by the attitude of both the Austrian and Hungarian Agrarians, or postponed on various, more or less justifiable, pretexts and the treaty was not concluded before 13 February 1908.

Count Goluchowski was reproached in the Viennese military circles for not being sufficiently active in his Balkan policy. "In his policy towards Serbia", Vujić wrote, "he is mostly criticized because all the aggressiveness of his policy was focused on the *Škoda* guns, behind which there was, as everyone realizes, no deeper and more far-reaching policy (as it was at first supposed). That after Goluchowski's fall, some new and more favourable policy towards Serbia would enter Ballplatz is not to be expected, and therefore we must be very much on our guard".¹⁵⁴ In his report of 17 (4) November 1906, Vujić offered an

153 Simić Pašiću, Carigrad, 3. 12. 1906, Pov. Br. 602, in: Lj. Aleksić-Pejković and Ž. Anić, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije 1903-1914*, knj. II, sv. 2/2, Beograd 2006, pp. 681-683.

154 Vujić Pašiću, Beč, 15. 10. 1906, Pov. Br. 438, in: Ibid., pp. 448-449. Cf. O. Hoijer, *Le Conte d'Aehrenthal et la Politique de la violence*, Paris 1922, p. 21.

early opinion of Aehrenthal, which he had heard and which was soon to prove almost completely correct: "Many of those who have known Aehrenthal better are afraid of his policy, which is certainly milder and more cautious, but, for that very reason, deeper and more active. The Court and military party, which for their part let Goluchowski fall because his Balkan policy was not more active and crafty, place more hopes in Baron von Aehrenthal in this respect." Milenko Vesnić had reported earlier from Paris that a diplomat had informed him that Aehrenthal was a "very clever, but also a very cunning man, and that his assurances could not always be considered reliable".¹⁵⁵

The evidence was soon forthcoming. Directly out of the tariff war, another question emerged, which in its origins was rather of an economic nature, but which soon took on political character and clearly indicated there were two quite divergent tendencies for the future. The tariff war had forced Serbia to look for new markets and new outlets. The waterway down the Danube and by the Black Sea was a roundabout one; and the way to Salonica was not reliable, on the one hand, because of Turkey's attitude, which was not always certain, and on the other hand, because the Oriental Railways were largely controlled by Austro-Hungarian and German capital. Serbia needed an outlet to sea, taking the shortest route and, in this connection, the Adriatic railway. Serbia had long realized this and a plan for the construction of such a railway had been broached in the late nineteenth century. Since Serbia did not have sufficient means to carry it out and wanted the matter to assume greater economic importance and arise a wider interest, she approached Rumania as early as 1898 with the proposal that the Serbian and Romanian railways be connected by a bridge across the Danube and that the two countries work together to realize this plan. An agreement was reached and some works were even begun to construct the railway bridge between Kladovo and Drobeta-Turnu Severin, where the connection would be made. King Milan was then in Serbia as a Supreme Commander of the Army, and there was a thoroughly Austrophile Cabinet with Dr. Vladan Djordjević as Prime Minister, while Rumania was Austria's ally. It was clear that Serbia's motives in this matter were economic rather than political. But in Vienna, the whole plan was received very coldly, as it was thought that the Adriatic railway would make Serbian trade independent of the Austro-Hungarian markets and, consequently, of Austro-Hungarian influence as well. For that reason, Emperor Franz Joseph himself advanced as early as 1901 the project for an Austrian railway down to Mitrovica, of which the negotiations were conducted later, in the winter of 1902, with the Russians, but

155 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from Paris, 26 September 1906, conf. no. 320.

without success. The Serbian plan did not meet with any great enthusiasm in Romania either, where it was appreciated that the Adriatic railway would certainly be of more benefit to Serbia than to Rumania, the foreign trade of which was less constrained and had a direct access to the Black Sea. Even the Serbian government was not consistent in its proceedings in this matter. Contrary to Romania's view, it wanted the narrow-gauge great transbalkanic railway rather than the standard-gauge one on account of lower costs, and it made a decision to that effect after the conclusion of the agreement. The negotiations were broken off in 1899 over this question and were not resumed before 1907. Not even Russia gave the Serbian plan the reception which Belgrade hoped for, although she contributed 1,000,000 francs for studying the scheme in 1900. Count Lamsdorf foresaw many political difficulties with Turkey and Austria, which would be hard to overcome, and the Finance Minister, Witte, found in 1901 that the proposed railway did not promise much even from the material point of view. From 1900 onwards, Italy alone had shown an interest in the plan and recommended it to Serbia and Montenegro, but Rome would not do much either. It only in 1902 that it looked as if the plan might be realized, as the Sultan, fearing the Austro-Hungarian law on the construction of a railway line from Sarajevo to the Turkish frontier and the plan for a railway connection between Sarajevo and Mitrovica, started to encourage negotiations with a view to getting a French company to undertake the construction of a railway from Kosovo to the sea, which he had hitherto opposed, preferring the Salonica-Bitolj-Adriatic line. But this scheme was dropped when the Austrian plan was withdrawn because of the Russian opposition and Serbia's and Montenegro's protest to Nicholas II.

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the Serbs had raised this question on several occasions, making various schemes and seeking to form an international syndicate (without Austrian or German capital) to finance it, and, after 1906, it became almost the most pressing issue for them, because the tariff war faced Serbia with major difficulties.

Before the tariff war the question of the Adriatic railway had been discussed in Serbian circles from a theoretical point of view. Very little, if anything, had been done to realize it before 1905/6. The line from the Danube to the Turkish frontier had not been built, although there was some talk of linking up this Serbian line with the Turkish one through Kosovo and Albania; the exact financial estimates were not prepared, nor was capital found for investment in the scheme. The Romanian Foreign Minister declared to the Serbian Minister on 15 December 1906 that his government was not prepared to negotiate about the Adriatic railway "until we have built the railway linking up the Danube with

Niš, i.e. with the Turkish border”.¹⁵⁶ After the tariff war, the question became much more serious. The Serbian government opened negotiations on several sides. Their idea was to build a railway from Mrdare on the Serbian border, through Priština and Prizren, down to San Giovanni di Medua.

From the autumn of 1906 onwards, the rumours about the railway became more concrete. In Austria-Hungary, the *Pester Lloyd* was the first newspaper to draw attention to it in its issue of 17 November of that year. The arrival in Belgrade of the Turkish Ambassador in Paris, Munir Bey, was, without any reason, connected with these schemes; according to a report dated 20 December 1906, it was rumoured in the Austrian that definite “plans” for the railway were in existence and had been seen in Paris. The capital for the construction would be furnished by a French-Italian syndicate. On the strength of this news, partly correct, Austro-Hungarian resistance was at once at work, supported by Germany. “Austria-Hungary would be most strongly opposed to the Ulcinj-Niš railway line”, Baron Marschall wrote, “for it would mean the end of the political and economic preponderance of the Dual Monarchy, not always used adroitly, over Serbia. Apart from this, the scheme in question would be looked upon in Vienna as an Italian-Serbian-Montenegrin intrigue calculated to weaken Austria-Hungary’s political position not just in Serbia, but also in Albania and Macedonia”.¹⁵⁷ However, Serbia gained in principle the support of the Western Powers, Italy and France, who watched her endeavours with understanding. The Italian government even took it upon itself to defend the Serbian point of view in this matter in London and to ask for British cooperation at the Sublime Porte with a view to obtaining the concession. San Giuliano, the Italian Ambassador, spoke with Sir Edward Grey, and informed Milovanović in early March 1907 “that Lord Grey has shown himself very well disposed towards this and told him that he would immediately give the necessary instructions to the British Ambassador in Constantinople to act together with the Italian Ambassador in raising the question at the Porte as soon as it should be presented in such a concrete form as to offer prospects of its successful settlement.” Grey’s reserved, though friendly, answer was due to his accurate prediction that there would be opposition on the part of Turkey and those Powers, whose interests were not served by the Adriatic railway. He recommended, therefore, that “before the question of the concession for the said railway was raised in Constantinople, the ground should be prepared and all

156 Ristić Pašiću, Bukurešt, 16. 12. 1906, Pov. Br. 167, in: Aleksić-Pejković and Anić, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. II, sv. 2/2, pp. 780-781.

157 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXV, p. 285.

the conditions for its success assured, for otherwise the prestige of the states which unsuccessfully exerted their influence would be harmed, and at the same time the cause itself would be badly served as, after such a failure, it might be difficult to reopen the question for some time.”¹⁵⁸ Grey’s reply to the Serbian Minister in London, on 8 April 1907, was much to the same effect. This reply also considerably influenced the Italian government, which had followed with great sympathy Serbia’s efforts, but which, as Austria’s ally, could not appear as one of the principal supporters of the Serbian cause. The Italian Ambassador in Constantinople, Marquis Imperiali, advised the Serbian Chargé d’Affairs, Živojin Balugdžić, that Serbia should urge Russia to step in and should “break down the scruples” which constrained Russia in respect to Austria-Hungary.¹⁵⁹ In Rome, Tittoni gave the same advice to the Serbian Minister, suggesting that matters should be hastened in Belgrade while there was a prospect of the Turks’s being compliant. When difficulties arose, Rome became visibly reserved. The Italian Government sent instructions to its Minister in Bucharest on 8 July to support the Serbian overtures to the Romanian government concerning the Danubian connection, “but only if he was convinced that his intercession would be successful; otherwise, he should do nothing”.¹⁶⁰

Russian diplomacy, however, conscious of the difficulties which would ensue in Vienna, adopted a fairly reserved attitude in the matter, just like in 1901. On 21 April, Zinoviev said explicitly to the Serbian Minister in Constantinople, Dr. Jaša Nenadović, that he considered this plan unrealizable, because of the attitude of both Turkey and Austria-Hungary.¹⁶¹ On 24 April, the Foreign Minister, Izvolsky, asked the Serbian representative whether the Serbian government had also applied to Austria-Hungary for support in Constantinople with a view to obtaining the concession, and on 27 June he told the Serbian Minister, Dimitrije Popović, that the whole question of the Serbian railway was “in a very vague phase” and as long as that was the case, Russian diplomacy could not exert its influence.¹⁶²

158 Milovanović Pašiću, Rim, 14. 3. 1907, Pov. Br. 65, in: Aleksić-Pejković and Anić, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. II, sv. 3/1, pp. 528-532.

159 Balugdžić Pašiću, Carigrad, 28. 2. 1907, Pov. Br. 127, in: Lj. Aleksić-Pejković and Ž. Anić, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije 1903-1914*, knj. II, sv. 3/1, Beograd 2003, pp. 426-429; Milovanović Pašiću, Rim, 14. 3. 1907, Pov. Br. 65, in: *Ibid.*, 528-532.

160 Ristić Pašiću, Bukurešt, 8. 7. 1907, Pov. Br. 213, in: Lj. Aleksić-Pejković ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. II, sv. 3/2, Beograd 2003, pp. 1254-1255.

161 Nenadović Pašiću, Carigrad, 22. 4. 1907, Pov. Br. 353, in: *Ibid.*, pp. 797-800.

162 Popović Pašiću, Petrograd, 27. 6. 1907, Pov. Br. 198, in: *Ibid.*, pp. 1165.

Turkey was opposed to the Serbian plan, which was officially brought to her knowledge at the beginning of 1907. The Grand Vizier declared to the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador that the Porte "could never and nowhere lend its aid to the realization of a scheme so dangerous for itself." Fethi Pasha said on 13 March to the Austrian Minister in Belgrade that the Porte was "completely opposed" to this plan. The Sultan himself gave a very reserved reply to the Serbian Minister when he explained to him Serbia's wishes in this matter on 20 April. He said that "his Ministers would report to him on this".¹⁶³ With this in view, Pašić ordered Nenadović in Constantinople on 25 (12) April "not to urge" the railway question "but to keep it on the agenda." Having been informed of Bulgarian counter activities regarding the line from Kumanovo to Ćustendil, he sent orders on 29 (16) April that "the question of the Danube-Adriatic railway should now no longer be touched upon, nor should any other questions except that of the appointment of a Serb as Metropolitan in the Veles-Debar diocese", although he had earlier even prepared the complete draft of a treaty of alliance between Serbia and Turkey to win the confidence of the Turks.

In the early months of 1907, there was some concern at the Porte and in Yıldız Palace about the intensive political activities of the Bulgarians. The visits paid by the new Bulgarian Foreign Minister, Dr. D. Stanchov, to Vienna, Berlin and St. Petersburg, Stanchov's relations with Baron von Aehrenthal and the obvious Austrian support to Bulgaria, the attempts at the closer cooperation between Romania and Bulgaria, which was especially recommended by the Ballplatz, were all occurrences that perturbed the Sultan and his government. In order not to be left isolated, Turkey immediately offered the Serbs certain concessions and showed itself favourably disposed towards Serbia's wishes. In late February 1907, on his way to Paris, Münir Pasha stopped in Belgrade to deliver a private letter from the Sultan to King Peter. In conversations with Serbian diplomats, Münir Pasha let it be understood that the Sultan wished to enter into the intimate and friendly relations with the Serbs, clearly with the intention of preventing an understanding between the Serbs and Bulgarians, or frightening the latter to some extent. The Serbian government did not agree, however, to bind themselves to declare war on Bulgaria in the event of a Bulgaro-Turkish war, although they wished to secure themselves against a possible Bulgarian aggressive policy. They were fully aware that their alliance with Turkey would not meet with the approval of Europe, if it were directed against a Christian Balkan state. But Nicholas Pašić, then Premier and Foreign Minister, found it opportune at least to take advantage of Turkey's present attitude to obtain the

163 Nenadović Pašiću, Carigrad, 20. 4. 1907, *Pov. Br.* 346, in: *Ibid.*, pp. 784-786.

greatest possible concessions for Serbia. According to a draft in his own handwriting dated 23 (10) March 1907, a treaty of alliance between Serbia and Turkey would contain the following provisions: in Article 1, the undertaking that “the two allied states should pursue a policy of peace and the maintenance of the territorial *status quo* in the Balkans”; Articles 3 and 4 provided for an undertaking on the part of Turkey to initiate hostilities against Bulgaria, should the latter state attack Serbia, or send an army against Old Serbia and Macedonia; if Bulgaria moved in the direction of Thrace (Article 5), Serbia would mobilize, but remain neutral.¹⁶⁴ In Article 6, Serbia undertook “to oppose Austria Hungary’s army, if it attempted to attack Turkey through Serbia, and if it were not acting with the mandate of all the Great Powers. Turkey would also accept the same obligation (Article 7). Article 8 contained the following important provisions: “The Kingdom of Serbia and the Ottoman Empire undertake to work in cooperation when the question of Bosnia and Herzegovina comes up, in order to effect the evacuation of the Austro-Hungarian army and to ensure the organization in those provinces of an autonomous administration under the sovereignty of His Majesty the Turkish Emperor or perhaps, if the European situation permit, to demand the right for the population of those provinces to decide their own future for themselves. In the last resort, any other solution would be preferable to annexation by the occupying Power.” Other important provisions included the demands contained in Articles 11 and 12, which Pašić intended to advance in order to make Serbia’s alliance with Turkey popular in Serbia itself and among the Serbs in general. These were: 1) that the Serbian nationality in Turkey be recognized and that recognition carried out on the footing of equality with the Greeks; 2) the granting of a concession for the Adriatic Railway; 3) the restoration of the Patriarchate of Peć; and 4) that the railway lines linking Sarajevo with Mitrovica and Ćustendil with Skoplje not be permitted without an agreement with Serbia.

The Turks saw Serbia’s hesitation to attack Bulgaria in the event of a Bulgaro-Turkish war, and the list of Serbian demands seemed to them too long and out of all proportion to the services which the Serbs should render in return. And they let this be known. After an audience with the Sultan on 20 April, Jaša Nenadović had the impression that the Turks would not go beyond promises and that “all their cordiality to Serbia was only intended to scare Bulgaria”.¹⁶⁵

164 The public knew these provisions of the proposed treaty as early as the summer of 1907. Cf. *Srpska Riječ*, no. 167, 1 (14) August.

165 Nenadović Pašiću, Carigrad, 20. 4. 1907, Pov. Br. 346, in: Aleksić-Pejković and Anić, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. II, sv. 3/2, pp. 784-786.

In view of the fact that Serbia really needed a railway connection with the sea, and that it was difficult for the Monarchy to deny that need, Baron von Aehrenthal returned to Vienna's former idea of offering Serbia a link with the sea through Bosnia, instead of the Adriatic Railway across Kosovo. Serbia would be advised to link up her own railway with the Bosnian line on the Drina and thus to obtain an outlet to the sea somewhere in Dalmatia, at Metković or Gruž, or at Split upon the completion of the Bugojno – Aržano railway. In this way, making a show of willingness to meet Serbia half-way, Austria-Hungary in fact intended to achieve three objectives: 1) to frustrate the possible construction of the railway line across Kosovo; 2) to keep under its control the possibility of a Serbian outlet to the sea, and in this connection to retain all its political and economic influence in that country; 3) to divert to its ports all the exports from the central Balkans. Nevertheless, Aehrenthal seems to have hoped, apparently sincerely, for an improvement in Serbo-Austrian relations as a result of the linking up of the Serbian-Bosnian railways. On 6 July 1907, in his instructions to Count Forgách, the new Austro-Hungarian Minister in Belgrade, who was a young man of thirty-six, full of ambition but without diplomatic experience, he said that such a conciliatory attitude on their part might in time lead to "a sober assessment of the relations with the neighbouring Monarchy". The behaviour of the new Minister in Belgrade should, therefore, accord with "the behaviour of a representative of a Great Power that stands before a small state which is in great difficulties." He should accordingly "treat people and affairs in Serbia, basically, with goodwill." Austria-Hungary's intentions, of which Goluchowski had spoken to the Serbian Minister in Vienna in April 1906 and which Aehrenthal communicated on 6 July to his Minister in Belgrade, instructing him to bring them to the attention of the Serbian government, were not difficult to see through as far as the first two points were concerned, and it is therefore rather comprehensible that they met with no response in Serbian circles. As for Aehrenthal's intention of showing Serbia more goodwill than his uncompromising predecessor, it should be noted that that goodwill did not extend beyond mere words. Austria-Hungary did not change its attitude in none of the questions to which Serbia attached particular importance, not even in the matter of the exportation of Serbian live-stock during the new negotiations for the conclusion of a commercial treaty, nor in the authorization to transit meat for the duration of the provisional commercial agreement. As far as we have been able to ascertain, Aehrenthal personally was at first willing to give way in these questions, but he found himself faced with the strong opposition on the part of the Austrian and Hungarian Agrarians. The Serbian Minister in Vienna, Djordje Simić, sincerely believed in the goodwill of the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister; his belief was confirmed by the

assurances of the Italian Ambassador,¹⁶⁶ but things nevertheless remained at a standstill. It was known in Belgrade that the Vienna government was faced with many difficulties (the compromise between Austria and Hungary, the Agrarian opposition, etc.), but it was nevertheless believed that these difficulties could be removed or overcome, if an understanding were sincerely and urgently desired. Real confidence thus could not yet be established. Serbia viewed the suggested connection of the Serbian railways with those in Bosnia as a bait rather than conciliatoriness.

The question soon became still more complicated. The Bulgarian government with Dr. Stanchov, formerly Minister in St. Petersburg and a friend of Aehrenthal as well as a supporter of the policy of reliance on Vienna and Berlin, as Foreign Minister after 6 November now found that the Adriatic Railway was an obstacle to its designs in Macedonia and Old Serbia, and thus asked Vienna to help frustrate, both in its own and Bulgaria's interest, Serbia's plan and to aid Bulgaria to obtain a concession for the Čustendil-Kumanovo-Skopje railway, i.e. for a transbalkan railway through Bulgaria. Bulgaria had been negotiating with Turkey about this from 1904 onwards. According to the information of the Italian government, the Bulgarians asked that Austria influence Rumania "not to grant the Serbs a bridge on the Gruja-Prahovo line, but to grant one to the Bulgarians on the Kalafat-Vidin line." The Bulgarians themselves worked along these lines in Bucharest, but without much success. The Serbian Minister, M. Ristić, was told in the Romanian Foreign Ministry in November 1907 that "there is no question of a bridge across the Danube or a railway connection" with the Bulgarians.¹⁶⁷ In Vienna, however, the Bulgarian proposals were well received, all the more so as, according to the information of the Italian government, "Bulgaria has stated she is prepared, in order to acquire this, to give to Austria-Hungary all the necessary guarantees both for its economic and political interests".¹⁶⁸ Such an attitude on the part of Bulgaria was difficult to understand. It was only natural that she should also require a railway line, which would be in accordance with her political and economic interests; but it was certainly unnatural, and against her own interests, to make difficulties to the realization of the Serbian railway scheme, which would have diverted Serbian

166 Simić Pašiću, Beč, 25. 9. 1907, Pov. Br. 310, in: Lj. Aleksić-Pejković and Ž. Anić, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije 1903-1914*, knj. II, sv. 4/1, Beograd 2008, pp. 476-477.

167 Ristić Pašiću, Bukurešt, 6. 11. 1907, Pov. Br. 283, in: Lj. Aleksić-Pejković and Ž. Anić, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije 1903-1914*, knj. II, sv. 4/2, Beograd 2008, pp. 733-737.

168 Simić Pašiću, Beč, 25. 9. 1907, Pov. Br. 310, in: Aleksić-Pejković and Anić, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. II, sv. 4/1, pp. 476-477.

interests to the west and in the direction of the Adriatic Sea. The Bulgarian policy was entirely subjected to that of Austria in this matter. From the report of the Austrian Minister in Sofia, Count Thurn, on 6 December 1906, we know that Dr. Stanchov assured him that Bulgaria "would certainly undertake nothing that would be in the least directed against us" (i.e. Austria-Hungary) and that his colleague from the Finance Ministry stated he was unwilling "to allow his negotiations with Austria-Hungary to be spoilt by some silly Serbian tale." But there was no desire to meet Bulgaria's wishes at the Porte, just as there had been some hesitation about agreeing to those of Serbia. When the Bulgarians, in the course of their negotiations with the Turks in the first half of 1907, broached this question, they invariably met with resistance. Instead of the Čustendil-Skoplje-Salonica line, the Turks constantly proposed the Džumaja-Serres-Orfano line.

In the end, Austria-Hungary came forward with its old plan for a railway from the Bosnian frontier through the Sanjak of Novi Pazar to Kosovska Mitrovica, which would connect there with the existing Mitrovica-Skoplje-Salonica railway. This plan was energetically pushed by Vienna from February 1907 onwards, in all probability under the influence of the report that Serbia was working seriously on the plans for the Adriatic Railway. That month a conference was held, presided over by Baron von Aehrenthal, to discuss the Balkan railway plans. The following points were considered: 1) the linking-up of the Serbian railways with the Bosnian ones; 2) the construction of the Sanjak railway; and 3) seeking for a concession for the San Giovanni-Scutari railway as a counter-measure to the Italian Bar-Scutari railway and "to exercise influence over the proposed railway from Romania to the Adriatic." The Bulgarian railway scheme was also discussed, but no decision was made at the time;¹⁶⁹ Austria-Hungary later promoted this plan, to some extent, leaving it chiefly to the Board of the Oriental Railways Company to push the matter, as the projected Čustendil-Skoplje railway would increase the traffic on their own line from Skoplje to Salonica. The Austro-Hungarian Ambassador in Constantinople, Marquis Pallavicini, on receiving instructions from Vienna, entered into negotiations with the Porte and, in particular, with the Sultan for permission to construct the Sanjak railway, which was the most important and which would most effectively thwart and perhaps prevent the construction of the Serbian railway. He was aware, he told the Grand Vizier, that this demand would revive the "fairy tale" about Austrian penetration towards Salonica, but Austria-Hungary declared that it stood for maintenance of the *status quo* in the Balkans, "and it would be absurd to believe that the Austro-Hungarian Army could advance through the narrow

169 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXV, pp. 290-1.

and mountainous Sanjak”.¹⁷⁰ While Marquis Pallavicini was thus beguiling the Porte, the competent quarters in Austria-Hungary assigned to the Sanjak railway a different, and much deeper, significance. In the “strictly confidential” document of 7 September, No. 63.308, Baron Aehrenthal explained the new railway plans and said of the Sanjak plan, “that its object is primarily to serve our political and military interests; it will serve our economic interests only in a limited measure, and those of the Balkan states not at all” (*“vor Allem unsere politischen und militärischen, dagegen unsere wirtschaftlichen Interessen nur in beschränktem Masse und jene der Balkanstaaten schliesslich gar nicht zu befriedigen vermöchte”*). Supported by German diplomacy, Pallavicini obtained on 31 January 1908 the desired irade from the Sultan with the concession for the said railway line.

In a speech delivered on 27 January 1908 in the Hungarian Delegations, Baron Aehrenthal, certain of success in Constantinople, developed his plan for the construction of the Sanjak railway and his ideas as to its importance. “The line from Uvac to Mitrovica will unquestionably have to be kept as part of the communications policy, for it not only brings the Bosnian railway system into connection with the system of communications of the neighbouring states, but also opens up for us, generally speaking, new prospects for our communications policy. After the completion of the connection between the Bosnian and the Turkish railway systems, the trade from the Monarchy will be able, directly through Sarajevo, to gravitate towards the Aegean and Mediterranean Seas. We hope that the connection will be soon effected between the Turkish and the Greek railways at Larissa. In this way, the direct Vienna-Budapest-Sarajevo-Athens-Piraeus line would be established. This would be the shortest route from Central Europe to Egypt and India.” This speech and its motivation naturally caused a political sensation. In Serbia, it aroused both surprise and consternation. The Austrian railway plan, of which nothing had been said for so long, appeared now as an almost accomplished fact, something to be realized in a year or two. Whilst the Serbian plan had only been talked about, an irade had already been obtained and the necessary capital secured for the Austrian plan. Austria-Hungary went ahead of Serbia and it seemed that it was not just going to realize its intention before the latter, but would perhaps make that of Serbia impossible of realization. Would Turkey now allow two railway lines across Kosovo? Would it be possible to find the capital for the Serbian railway, when it became clear to the whole financial world that it would have to compete with the extant one that belonged to a Great Power? The Vienna plan isolated Serbia and passed over her this time, which was from Austria’s

170 Ibid., XXV, pp. 293-4.

political point of view quite justifiable. The assertion that the roundabout way across Bosnia, through Sarajevo and Sanjak, was “the shortest route from Central Europe to Egypt and India”, shorter than the route through the Morava Valley down to Skoplje and Salonica was blatantly untrue, but it clearly showed the object it had in view. It revealed Austria’s old leanings towards Salonica, and it was put forward at the moment when all the Great Powers were involved with the reforms in Turkey and insisted that they had no wish to acquire any immediate benefits for themselves. After the reform of the gendarmerie and of the financial system, the representatives of Russia and Austria-Hungary in Constantinople worked out jointly, from August 1907 onwards, the set of radical judicial reforms, which provoked a lively resistance on the part of the Sultan and the Turkish government.

Aehrenthal’s announcement about the Sanjak railway was preceded by frequent rumours, emanating from serious Austrian circles about the possibility of Austria-Hungary’s entering Macedonia and the need for it to undertake more direct cultural activities in Albania. General Wilhelm Wallisch wrote in August 1907 that “the intervention of the Monarchy should proceed together with the greatest possible consideration for the justifiable claims and the economic interests of our Yugoslav Crown lands, as well as of the territory under occupation. The military position of Austria-Hungary in the Balkans would thus be considerably strengthened and a much greater freedom of action secured in the event of a possible need for military intervention”.¹⁷¹ At one of the meetings of The Hague Disarmament Conference in July 1907, the Austro-Hungarian delegate and Military Attaché in Constantinople, Baron von Giesl, put forward the proposal “that an army occupying an enemy territory should be entitled to force the inhabitants to serve as its guides for further advance.” As this proposal was opposed, Giesl declared that he stood by it “in view of the difficulty to find roads and passes in the mountainous and insufficiently mapped out areas of the Balkan Peninsula”.¹⁷² Baron Leopold Chlumecky, a confidant of the heir-apparent Franz Ferdinand, wrote soon afterwards that there was a great deal of cultural work to be done in Albania and that it was “an unforgivable blunder that we have not long since energetically set about becoming the pioneers of civilization there”.¹⁷³ He obviously said this not as a criticism of the indirect cultural work which Austria-Hungary had hitherto done, but because he desired a more direct cultural action, probably on the pattern of that carried

¹⁷¹ *Österreichische Rundschau*, XII, 1907, p. 323.

¹⁷² Milovanović Pašiću, Rim, 27. 7. 1907, Pov. Br. 175, in: Aleksić-Pejković and Anić, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. II, sv. 4/1, pp. 214-217.

¹⁷³ L. Chlumecky, *Österreichische Rundschau*, XII, p. 401.

out in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Thus the political aspect of Vienna's railway scheme was particularly emphasized not only in the strictly confidential documents of the Austrian Ministers, but also in the public. There was no doubt about it. The matter of the Adriatic or the Sanjak railway at once assumed a distinctly political character and showed not only the divergence of the two lines of communication, but also the opposition of the two policies.

In Serbia, the Austrian plan met with the greatest distrust. Count Forgách informed Vienna as early as 1 February that in this respect the speech of Baron Aehrenthal had left a painful impression and that the publication of the plan, as well as the plan itself, would "have an unfavourable effect on our relations with the Sava Kingdom [Serbia] and make them difficult again." Forgách found that it was "a heavy blow (ein harter Schlag)" for Serbia and that even her eventual connection with the sea, through Bosnia, would be no adequate compensation for it. The plan "destroyed the dream, so dear to the Yugoslav fancy, of a better outlet to the Adriatic by means of a transversal railway which would not touch upon our territory."

The Austro-Hungarian plan also met with much distrust abroad. In Russia, this was expressed immediately and openly. Russia and Austria-Hungary had hitherto been in agreement in Balkan matters, and had pledged themselves at Mürtzsteg to act in concert. This one-sided step on the part of Baron Aehrenthal was therefore considered an act of disloyalty in St. Petersburg. "The publication at this moment of Austria's economic plans", the Russian Foreign Minister, Izvolsky, said to the German Ambassador, Count Pourtalès, on 1 February "has the effect of an alarm signal and will greatly increase the unrest seething among the Balkan peoples".¹⁷⁴ Russia had previously adopted a consistently reserved attitude in the matter of the Adriatic railway as to avoid provoking Vienna's objections, and it seemed to her therefore that she was now entitled to raise her voice in protest. The Russian Ambassador in London, Count Benckendorff expressed to the German Ambassador the following view of the matter: "The railway blow is not in the spirit of the Russo-Austrian Balkan agreement. The Pan-Slav idea in Russia will gain ground because of this latest proceeding on the part of Austria; the Slav Balkan nations, especially Serbia, are perturbed; the accord of the Great Powers in Constantinople is imperiled; the Sultan's resistance to the Powers will be strengthened; everything that has been accomplished in the way of reform will be undone, for Austria cannot ask, on the one hand, for concessions and, on the other, present notes demanding reforms in the seriousness of which the Sultan no longer believes; and there is

174 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXV, 2, 303. On 14 February, Izvolsky said to Pourtalès of Aehrenthal: "C'est une bombe qu'il m'a jetée entre les jambes." *Ibid.*, p. 303.

now a danger of the situation becoming again what it was before the Balkan agreement, when Austria and Russia faced each other *comme des chiens de faïence*.¹⁷⁵ The British Ambassador in St. Petersburg, A. Nicolson, informed his government on 18 February that the confidence in Austro-Hungarian sincerity had been lost in Russia, and that it was considered there that Austria-Hungary was pursuing her own selfish interests and that Germany was aiding her in accordance with a well-thought out plan.¹⁷⁶ During a special audience, the Emperor himself made a long complaint about Aehrenthal's proceedings.¹⁷⁷

The newspaper *Rosija* in its issue of 19 (6) February published the editorial article inspired by Izvolsky himself, in which the Russian point of view was explained tactfully but clearly. Austria-Hungary had justified her scheme by invoking the mandate assigned to it at the Congress of Berlin, and legally this was incontestable. But Austria had the twice confirmed treaty with Russia, under the terms of which it undertook to do nothing in the Balkans without a previous agreement with that Power. The two Powers had hitherto worked together for the introduction of reforms in Turkey. Would not Austria's independent action now imperil the success of that work? Zinoviev said to the German Ambassador in Constantinople on 25 February that Austria's step was a "*mauvais procédé*" and that, after that, the Austro-Russian agreement could no longer hold good.¹⁷⁸ A similar opinion was held even by the British government, and particularly by its Ambassador in Constantinople.¹⁷⁹ Sir Charles Hardinge told the Serbian Minister in London that the Mürtzsteg agreement was clearly sick.

Italy accepted the Austrian scheme as an accomplished fact, but not without some criticism, especially complaining that, although it was an ally, it had not been previously informed of the scheme;¹⁸⁰ and after that, together with Serbia, it cautiously facilitated the plan for the construction of an Adriatic railway starting from the Albanian coast – without taking the initiative too conspicuously. In a speech in the Italian parliament on 11 March, Tittoni openly

175 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXV, 2, 305. The Russian Ambassador in Vienna, Prince Ourossoff, spoke similarly to the Serbian Minister, Dj. Simić, on 23 February.

176 *British Documents*, V, p. 232.

177 A. Nicolson, *Die Verschwörung der Diplomaten*, Frankfurt 1931, p. 282.

178 *Die grosse Politik*, XXV, p. 340-1.

179 *Die grosse Politik*, XXV, p. 324; *British Documents*, V, pp. 225, 228, 230-1, 330, 334.

180 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXV, p. 335. There is some divergence of opinion in the matter of whether Italy was previously informed. The Italians have asserted that they were not informed and the Austrians that they were in certain form. *Ibid.*, p. 310. The Italian Ambassador in Vienna, Duke Avarna, said to his Serbian colleague on 3 February 1908 "that Baron Aehrenthal said nothing to him about it." See Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from Vienna, 4 February, conf. no. 77.

espoused the economic advantages which would accrue to Italy from the said railway, and he did not conceal its political character. He also emphasized that Italy could not look on without protest while one of the Great Powers monopolized the railway question. "In the Concert of Europe, Italy, which is opposed to any kind of monopoly in the Balkans, will remain faithful to that which is most in accordance with its interests, its principles, and its traditions" – those were his own words.¹⁸¹ Rome thought "that Baron Aehrenthal's action has established the rule, later confirmed by further categorical declarations on the part of Austria-Hungary and Germany, that political alliances and agreements in general, and in particular those which concerned the Balkan Peninsula, should not exclude full freedom of movement in the sphere of economic interests, and that Italy accordingly, while remaining faithful to all its alliance obligations, is entitled to lend its support to the building of the transverse Balkan railway, the enormous importance of which for Italian trade with the Balkans could not be contested".¹⁸² This time Italy took up the question very seriously, having another strong reason for doing so in the Austro-Hungarian railway plans for Montenegro, of which more will be said later.

The attitude of Constans, the French Ambassador in Constantinople and of Descos in Belgrade, was rather reserved. The latter even had no qualms about communicating some of his information to the Austrian Minister and to share with him his, and his colleague's in Constantinople, skepticism about the Serbian plan. The French government, however, constantly declared that they were willing to help the Serbian scheme and would bring their influence to bear in order that a financial syndicate for the construction of the railway might be formed as soon as possible – and it did so. The French Ambassador in London, Cambon, even believed that Russia should be especially influenced to raise the matter of the Adriatic railway in Constantinople and, in general, to counteract hostile activities. He asserted, and this was largely true, "that the Adriatic railway would be of much greater importance than the railway across the Sanjak".¹⁸³

In the wake of Aehrenthal's statement, Austria-Hungary addressed an aid-memoir to Montenegro in which it reminded of its right, according to Article 29 of the Treaty of Berlin, to build and maintain a railway on the Montenegrin territory, running from the Austrian border via Bar to Scutari or some other

181 The Italian Ambassador in Constantinople, Marquis Imperiali, carried out a policy of his own and he was more in favour of the Valona-Bitolj railway than of the Adriatic one.

182 Milovanović Pašiću, 23. 2. 1908. Pov. Br. 43, in: M. Vojvodić and Lj. Aleksić-Pejković, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije 1903-1914*, knj. III, sv. 1/1, Beograd 2010, pp. 469-472.

183 Milićević Pašiću, London, 16. 2. 1908, Pov. Br. 49, in: *Ibid.*, pp. 414-416.

point in Albania, which Austria might choose in accordance with the demands of the traffic. "On that road and the railway there will be complete freedom of communication, so that Montenegro will not be entitled to levy any customs, taxes or other dues either on goods or passengers, or to subject them to control. As it will be Austria-Hungary's duty to maintain that road and railway, it reserves the right to provide the necessary number of officials, which is not to be greater than what is considered necessary for similar undertakings in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Montenegro undertakes on its side to guarantee the safety and indemnity in case of damage, just like on other Montenegrin roads." The Montenegrin government contested Austria-Hungary's right and refuted the statement made by Baron Aehrenthal that a complete agreement on this matter had been arrived at between Vienna and Cetinje. The Montenegrin declaration read that, in their opinion, Article 29 of the Treaty of Berlin "gave no right to Austria-Hungary to build railways in the newly acquired Montenegrin coastal region, but only restricted Montenegro's right to do so by obliging that country to come to an understanding with the neighbouring Monarchy when it decides to construct a road or railway in that area. As for any agreement with Montenegro concerning Austria-Hungary's right to build a railway from the Austro-Montenegrin and the Montenegrin-Turkish borders, we are authorized to declare that no such agreement exists, and it is obvious that it could not exist contrary to the clear provisions of the Berlin Treaty." The manner in which the Austro-Hungarian Minister in Cetinje presented the opinion and wishes of his government in this delicate matter was decidedly aggressive. The Montenegrin Premier, Dr. Lazar Tomanović, the Serbian Charge d'Affaires wrote, "was so annoyed that he went to the Prince and to several of us to complain of Baron Kuhn, who treated Montenegrin ministers as if Montenegro were already an Austrian province".¹⁸⁴

This demand caused much surprise. Why should Austria-Hungary construct a railway via Bar to Scutari on foreign territory, when its most important Dalmatian ports were without railway connections? Nobody doubted that it was a question of political and not of economic nature. It was believed that Austria-Hungary sought to approach Albania from two sides by constructing new railways through the Sanjak and the Littoral; in other words, that the construction of the railway was a strategic preliminary to more direct political, and highly likely military, action in that direction. Encircled on two sides by Austrian railways, Montenegro was in danger of finding itself completely in Austria's embrace.

184 Jovanović Pašiću, Cetinje, 24. 2. 1908, Pov. Br. 75, in: *Ibid.*, pp. 485-486.

The unexpected reception of Aehrenthal's statement in Russian, British, and, to some extent, Italian circles and in the press forced the Vienna government to back down, but only at first. An attempt was made to soften the initial unfavourable impression by depriving the undertaking of any political character and giving it the appearance of a work, the sole object of which was to promote culture, communications and peace. Acting on the instructions from his government, Count Forgách made an official statement on 8 February (26 January) to the effect "that in putting forward its demand for the connection of the Sarajevo railway with the Mitrovica line, Austria-Hungary had no other intention but to facilitate communications and bring the East into closer contact with the West; but that it (i.e. Austria-Hungary) had nothing against Serbia's seeking any other lines of communication; not only that it indeed had nothing against this, but would assist both those communications and Serbia's national interests (Herr Forgách was thinking – the official Serbian report says – of the connection between the Serbian railways and the Mitrovica line, and possibly with the Adriatic Sea, but he believed there would be difficulties in passing through the Albanian-populated area from Prizren in the direction of the littoral)". According to an Austrian report, Pašić listened quietly to this message and expressed his satisfaction at the declaration that Austria had no territorial aims in the Balkans and that her intentions were purely economic in character. He clearly did this with a view to not irritating the neighbouring Monarchy or provoking any obstacles on its part to the Serbian Adriatic Railway project. In this, he was supported by the official Austrian statement, given through the Minister in Belgrade, that Vienna was willing to facilitate (*fördern*) any railway project in the Balkans. Otherwise, as he himself said, he considered the Austrian statement "a palliative for the purpose of our appeasement." It is interesting that the Austro-Hungarian Minister in Paris, Count Khevenhüller (and, it appeared, also the Ambassador in St. Petersburg) declared, in order to allay the excitement prevailing in diplomatic circles, that Austria-Hungary had negotiated with Serbia about the Sanjak railway before and even obtained her consent. The attitude of the Austro-Hungarian representative at Cetinje, too, soon changed. "Austria-Hungary's tone has softened in the last two or three days", the Serbian Chargé d'Affaires wrote on 3 March (18 February). "At first, it was very loud and harsh, and now it is lower and much milder. Outwardly, it is still maintained that Austria-Hungary is entitled to build roads in the Montenegrin Littoral and an attempt is being made to obtain the Prince's consent with various offers. I understand that guns have even been offered in return for his consent. But that and all else have been refused".¹⁸⁵

185 Jovanović Pašiću, Cetinje, 2. 3. 1908, Pov. Br. 78, in: *Ibid.*, pp. 537-538.

The conciliatory statements made by the Vienna government to Belgrade were not, however, sincere. This was very soon felt and seen. Indeed, as early as 17 February, the Serbian Minister in St. Petersburg, Dimitrije Popović, correctly said to Gubastov, the Assistant Foreign Minister, that he was convinced "that the subsequent attitude of Austria-Hungary and its action in this matter would not be in keeping with the statements it has made".¹⁸⁶ In his report of 23 (10) February, Milovan Milovanović also considered the pretended consent of Austria-Hungary and Germany to be a mere diplomatic maneuver, and he said that, to his best knowledge, their declarations were received "rather skeptically" in Paris, London and St. Petersburg. The Italian information from Vienna was to the effect "that Forgách had been much more positive and categorical than he should have been..... The slight difference is this: Vienna does not say that it will welcome or wholeheartedly help steps to this end, but that it has nothing against them and will not oppose them. In fact, Vienna thinks: we must achieve what we have set out to, and as regards compensation in the form of the construction of the Danube-Adriatic railway, we shall see whether that need be; in any case, it is better that it should not be".¹⁸⁷ And as it will be seen, this estimate of the situation was quite correct. Vesnić in Paris and Nenadović in Constantinople were, indeed, entirely in agreement with this, although less precise. On 23 February, speaking again with the Serbian Premier Pašić about the railway question, with the special authorization of his government, Count Forgách made the seemingly very conciliatory and friendly offer that Serbia should establish an outlet to the sea in Dalmatia by connecting her railways with those of Austria-Hungary in Bosnia. This offer, we have seen, was not new; we also know the secret motives which were behind it. With such an offer, Austria-Hungary now appeared before the world as a Power which was fulfilling Serbia's long-lasting wish and rendering her a great service at the moment when it was charged with having selfish aims in Turkey; in fact, it was a new political trap to retain Serbia's outlet to the sea under Austrian control and at the same time to prevent direct action being taken for the construction of the Serbian railway across Kosovo. In his instructions to Count Forgách on 25 March (21257/J. H. P.), Aehrenthal said openly that the object they wished to attain with this "practical" offer was to "render unnecessary" the other plan. He was even prepared to offer to make up to Serbia, if necessary, the deficit on the railway or to guarantee her the interest and redemption of the capital used for its construction. The Serbian Premier politely expressed

186 Jovanović Pašiću, Petrograd, 17. 2. 1908, Pov. Br. 56, in: *Ibid.*, pp. 425-426.

187 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from St. Petersburg, 4 February 1908, conf. no. 43.

his gratitude for the offer and the kindness shown, never thinking of refusing it, but he continued to work actively to obtain the concession for the Adriatic Railway, which he considered more pressing and important. Believing or pretending to believe in Austria's promise and seizing upon its apparent complacency, Pašić had the text of the Serbian note presented on 13 March in Constantinople, requesting the concession, communicated to the Austrian Minister on 15 March with the request that his government should support the Serbian demand. But he then learned that Vienna's promise was wavering, that is to say that Aehrenthal's intentions were showing themselves in their true colours, in accordance with the above mentioned Italian information. The Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister now found that he could not support the Serbian Adriatic railway project until he had known the proposed route and until the question of Serbia's outlet to the sea via Bosnia had been settled. Pašić replied that he understood that the offer for the connection of the Bosnian and Serbian railways was a transport-political combination, and not an Austrian invitation or a condition upon which depended the fate of the other project. After all, Serbia would not hesitate in principle to accept the Austrian proposal as regards the western railways, if necessary at once, but the acceptance of that proposal could not preclude work on the other project. Serbia preferred the Adriatic railway to the western one, Pašić said, for purely economic reasons: the Bosnian railways were narrow-gauge and the connection with them would remain local in character, whereas the Adriatic railway would be, like the Morava railway, standard-gauge and, as a transverse one, more international in character. Besides, Austria-Hungary, under the terms of the new commercial treaty, put obstacles in the way of the Serbian live-stock export to, and its transit through, its territory, and that was a matter of the first importance for Serbian trade. How could Serbia, under such circumstances, connect her only outlet to the sea with the Austro-Hungarian railways?

Meanwhile, in reply to Aehrenthal's statement, the Russian government's circular note of 3 March appeared, in which the Adriatic railway project was warmly recommended, adding a general declaration as to the necessity of the equal treatment of all the Balkan peoples and of the furtherance of their economic interests. Russia considered herself freed from her previous obligations towards Austria-Hungary and, to counter Austria's independent move in the Balkans, she attempted to make a move of her own. After Aehrenthal's statement to the Delegations, the first question which Izvolsky put to the Serbian Minister in St. Petersburg was: "What about the Serbian railway?" It was only then that he remembered Serbia's Adriatic railway project of the previous year. He now took up the idea that he should assist the Serbian plan both in Constantinople, where it was necessary to obtain the concession, and in Paris,

where the financial syndicate was to be formed. He announced to the Italian Ambassador in St. Petersburg with determination "that Russia would bring all her influence to bear in Constantinople for the success of the Adriatic railway." In St. Petersburg, the Serbian Minister was advised that Serbia's action in the railway matter "should coincide and be simultaneous with that of Austria" and that, for instance, Serbia should ask that the Turkish Commission appointed to investigate the question of the Sanjak railway with the Austrian engineers also investigate that of the Adriatic one. As a further argument it was said, on one occasion, "that both Italy and Britain think this important".¹⁸⁸ Izvolsky's assistant, Charykov, explained to the Serbian Minister that such proceeding was *inter alia* "advantageous also because if the two railway lines were completed at the same time, neither of them would have the precedence from the economic and commercial points of view." The Russian government also brought its proposal to the knowledge of Vienna, which opposed it strongly. Austria-Hungary based its right to the Sanjak railway on the decision of the Congress of Berlin, whereas it considered the Serbian plan a proposal or a wish such as any other state was at liberty to put forward. "To throw both plans into one and the same international pot", as Vienna called it, was therefore impossible for Austria to accept.¹⁸⁹ Aehrenthal repeated this to the Italian Ambassador, stressing the fact that he could not allow the Austrian plan, based on an international treaty, to be placed on the same footing with another "more or less fantastic railway project in the Balkans."

However, the Serbian government spared no effort to realize their plan for the Danubian-Adriatic Railway after the publication of Aehrenthal's plan. In St. Petersburg, Paris and Rome, the Serbian plans were received with sympathy. In the Italian parliament, Tittoni declared openly on 11 March that he was completely in accord with the Russian point of view as regards the new railway lines in the Balkans and that France was also in agreement with them. Besides these Great Powers, the Romanian government also promised to work for the Serbian plan. The Romanian Minister, Sturdza, told the Serbian Minister, M. Rakić, on 14 February that the building of a bridge over the Danube at Kladovo might start at once.¹⁹⁰

There was certain discontent with the Serbian railway plan in Montenegro. According to the Serbian scheme, the Adriatic railway was to reach the sea at

188 Popović Pašiću, Petrograd, 25. 2. 1908, Pov. Br. 72, in: Vojvodić and Aleksić-Pejković, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. III, sv. 1/1, p. 494; Popović Pašiću, Petrograd, 11. 3. 1908, Pov. Br. 100, in: *Ibid.*, p. 621.

189 *Die Grosse Politik*, XVIII, pp. 370, 373.

190 Ristić Pašiću, Bukurešt, 19. 2.1908, Pov. Br. 32, in: Vojvodić and Aleksić-Pejković, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. III, sv. 1/1, pp. 434-436.

San Giovanni and not at Bar, in order to avoid the maritime police supervision which Austria was entitled to exercise under the terms of Article 29 of the Treaty of Berlin. The Montenegrin government, however, considered this an intentional avoidance of Montenegro and embarked on a lively agitation in favour of Bar as the maritime terminus. The Serbian government was not opposed to a branch of the Adriatic railway running to Bar, but they could not give way in the matter of the main terminus. Their difficulty was that they could not openly explain and defend their main reason for their refusal, lest they should provide Austrian diplomacy with another argument against them, and certain people thus became convinced Bar was intentionally eschewed as a possible terminus.

Britain was the only Great Power which long refrained from joining the action of Russia, France and Italy on behalf of the Serbian plan. Having condemned Austria for seeking special and selfish benefits from the reforms in Turkey and thus striking a blow at the entire reform action of the Great Powers, it could not now agree to Russia's following Vienna's example, although it otherwise clearly saw that it was necessary. Austria's proceedings were bound to provoke others to embark upon similar undertakings in a sheer self-defense. The Serbian Minister was told in the British Foreign Office on 20 February that the British government "could support no proposals at the Porte designed to acquire special benefits, but that they fully understood our proposal and its importance for the complete emancipation of Serbia". The British official communication handed to the Serbian government on 21 February also stated that the British government, although having no objection to either the Serbian or the Austrian plan, could not agree to assist them at the present moment "when the Powers have considered to pressurize the Turkish Government to introduce certain, very important reforms which have long been engaging their attention." Under the influence of Britain's point of view, the unreliable Izvolsky declared to the Serbian Minister on 22 February that "the Adriatic railway is not a Russian question, and that Russia is taking no initiative, but would just help us in our work." He obviously desired to avoid criticism such as had been leveled at Aehrenthal and Austria. After some lapse of time, he even refused to allow Russian capital to participate in the syndicate for the construction of the railway, in order to avoid the possible charge that Russia intended to work to her own benefit and that the Adriatic railway might be considered something of a recompense for Russia. But he gave in later, so that the investment of Russian capital could encourage French and British capital, just as he gave way in the matter of taking the initiative in furthering the Adriatic railway project.

The struggle about the railway was thus made quite public, and two opposing tendencies became clear. German diplomacy, which on this occasion entirely supported Austria-Hungary, realized it would be politically inopportune openly to adopt an unfavourable attitude towards the Serbian plan, and Schoen, the Secretary of State, informed the Russian representative that Germany "in principle considers any railway undertaking in the Balkan countries a means of pacifying them and would therefore accept the idea sympathetically."¹⁹¹ Meanwhile, the Austro-Hungarian government declared in Berlin that in principle they had nothing against the Adriatic railway, but wanted "that Serbia's demand for a connection with the Adriatic be satisfied, if possible, along a route more favourable to Austria-Hungary." To meet this wish, that route would have to run through its territory from Užice to Vardište-Sarajevo-Metković. The Serbian railway project across Kosovo was obviously not favourable to Austria-Hungary. The German government was undoubtedly informed of the real intentions of their ally and immediately accepted Aehrenthal's plan on the following grounds: "In view of our relations with Austria-Hungary, we can hardly refuse our support to Baron Aehrenthal's plan. In relation to Russia, we might perhaps argue that by giving this support we are meeting her wishes also, her sole purpose being to realize the Serbian idea of a railway connection with the Adriatic."¹⁹² Accepting Vienna's wishes, Berlin realized that it was not doing what was asked of it and what it claimed to view with sympathy for the sake of higher pacifist interests; judging by their reply prepared for Russia, it is clear that the Germans seek, with certain perfidy, to get around their promise.¹⁹³ It is now clear that they were out neither for pacifism in the Balkans, nor for competition in cultural and transport matters in that area, but rather for the advancement of political plans of their allies in Vienna. It was for that reason that the German Ambassador did not join his colleagues, the representatives of Russia, France and Italy, on 17 March in exerting influence on behalf of the Serbian petition for permission to trace the line for and construct the Adriatic railway, although the Secretary of State, Schoen, had promised the Serbian Minister on 21 February that he would support the Serbian government, adding even that Berlin "is in sympathy" with the Serbian plan, because they had always been in favour of "the better transport

191 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXV, pp. 2, 349.

192 *Ibid.*, XXV, p. 349.

193 They had also made similar promises and statements to other governments, e.g. to the British government. Cf. *British Documents*, V, p. 339.

in the Balkans".¹⁹⁴ Berlin later went back on its word. On 12 March, the same Schoen told the Serbian Charge d'Affaires that Germany could not support Serbia until she had come to an understanding with Austria-Hungary, and that "Germany have no special interest in supporting our project to the same extent as the other Powers." On this occasion, Schoen spoke of the connection of the Serbian railways with the Bosnian ones,¹⁹⁵ thus showing clearly the reason for the change in Germany's attitude and for its going back on its word. Besides political considerations, there were also financial ones. According to the information of the Serbian Charge d'Affaires in Berlin, M. Bogićević, the financing of the Sanjak railway would be undertaken by the Deutsche Bank, which was already financing the construction of the Bagdad railway.

Meanwhile, the German Ambassador in Constantinople, Baron Marschall, saw matters clearly and pointed out on 6 March the difficulties concerning the other ally. If it were possible to ignore Serbian wishes and interests, and to deceive Russia, it would be much more difficult to deal with Italy. Rome insisted that the Adriatic railway lead to the Albanian coast. To disregard Italian wishes would mean to bring into question the relations within the Triple Alliance.¹⁹⁶ This aspect of the question had not been sufficiently taken into account in Berlin earlier, and it was thus necessary to abandon the plan dictated by Austro-Hungarian interests alone. "I am quite reliably informed", Milovanović wrote from Rome on 21 (8) March, "that Italian complaints have already been made in Berlin on account of the fact that Germany, whose voice is so powerful in Constantinople, has adopted so reserved and cold an attitude towards a matter in which Italian interests are deeply involved and where the specific interests of Germany are not, and cannot be, in the least compromised".¹⁹⁷ Tittoni took this matter very seriously. He said to both the Russian and Serbian representative that Turkey's refusal or intentional postponement of the requested concession should be met with energetic measures and even by a demonstration of the fleets of the three Powers, whose honour was too greatly involved; Germany's and Austria-Hungary's support for Turkey's resistance "would inevitably bring into question the survival of the Triple Alliance".¹⁹⁸ The effects of the Italian step were soon felt. As early as 3 April (21 March), Schoen informed the Serbian Charge d'Affaires, Miloš Bogićević, that the expression

194 Bogićević Pašiću, Berlin, 22. 2. 1908, Pov. Br. 45, in: Vojvodić and Aleksić-Pejković, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. III, sv. 1/1, pp. 460-462.

195 Bogićević Pašiću, Berlin, 11. 3. 1908, Pov. Br. 82, in: *Ibid.*, pp. 622-624.

196 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXV, p. 350.

197 Milovanović Pašiću, Rim, 21. 3. 1908, Pov. Br. 92, in: Vojvodić and Aleksić-Pejković, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. III, sv. 1/1, pp. 713-715.

198 Milovanović Pašiću, Rim, 17. 3. 1908, Pov. Br. 88, in: *Ibid.*, pp. 687-691.

Wohlfollen used to describe Germany's attitude towards the Serbian plan was "too weak, and that the German government follows our project with much sympathy and is willing to support all railway plans in the Balkan Peninsula, as it expects nothing but benefits from them, and that it considers that the same rights should apply to all. As far as Serbia is concerned, there are three or four proposals. They are indifferent to which proposal will be realized and let the interested parties, Italy, Montenegro, Austria-Hungary and Serbia, come to an agreement." He even thought it necessary to add, with regard to Austria's proposal for a connection between the Serbian and Bosnian railways, that he considered "the Serbian stance comprehensible from the Serbian point of view".¹⁹⁹

Baron Aehrenthal himself said later to the Serbian Minister in Vienna, Dj. Simić, on 7 April (25 March), "that he was well – disposed towards our Danube-Adriatic railway project, as he was of the opinion that the railway construction in Turkey would contribute more to ensuring the peace and welfare of the population than any European conferences. He wished success to our plan, and would certainly do nothing against it, although he was not in a position directly to support it".²⁰⁰ In a roundabout way, Aehrenthal officially contradicted the declarations made by the Austrian Minister in Belgrade on 8 and 23 February to the effect that Austria would further (the verb used is *fördern*) the Serbian plan, and returned to the question of linking up with the Bosnian railways, offering again to help Serbia with Austrian capital. Aehrenthal's statement shows clearly how the Vienna Cabinet looked upon the reforms question and pacification in Turkey. If railways were so powerful a means of ensuring peace as Aehrenthal himself insisted, what could be more natural than to facilitate their construction as soon as possible and in several directions? However, Aehrenthal's point of view can nevertheless be understood and defended. It would have been too much to expect him and Austria-Hungary to assist railway construction that would paralyze their influence in Kosovo and Novi Pazar. But the Serbs, as the weaker and more threatened party, could then hardly been blamed for having adopted an attitude of mistrust and fear, and even of hostility to the Austro-Hungarian plan. Each side was entitled to prevent what it considered to be in opposition to its own interests. In her opposition to the Sanjak railway, Serbia was fairly open; Austria-Hungary, however, was two-faced in the matter of the Adriatic railway. Her request for a concession from

199 Bogićević Pašiću, Berlin, 3. 4. 1908, Pov. Br. 134, in: Vojvodić and Aleksić-Pejković, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. III, sv. 1/2, pp. 826-828.

200 The Austro-Hungarian Minister in Belgrade, Count Forgách, was, however, at first of the opinion that the Serbian plan, which would in any case be realized one day, should not be attacked or openly hindered; it was, after all, only a project and there would be many difficulties to overcome before it could be realized.

Turkey, where it was one of the principal supervisors in the execution of the reforms and one of the Powers which played the most important part in the reform campaign, was not in keeping with European moral standards. Vienna was aware of this and made declarations of support for other plans, although it was at the same time resolved not to keep its promise. This was, it is true, a fairly ordinary occurrence in the old diplomatic world; it was quite possible for such statements to be accepted, even if the other party did not believe them, as long as there was no direct evidence to the contrary. On this occasion, however, there was such evidence.

Austro-Hungarian diplomacy endeavoured either to frustrate the plan completely or, if that proved impossible, to make the railway construction entirely dependent on Austria's consent. On 27 February, Baron Aehrenthal sent instructions to his Ambassador, Marquis Pallavicini, in which he entrusted him with the task of informing the Porte that the Danubian Monarchy was also willing to ask for concession for such railways "as either Turkey itself might consider necessary, or for which a third party might ask permission." The Porte should also be made to understand that Austria expected to be kept informed of any application for such concessions. It was blatant that it was the Serbian railway scheme in the first place which was aimed at. Vienna even thought of this: if it proved impossible to frustrate the Serbian plan, it should then endeavour to secure a concession for construction for a company controlled by Austrian capital or connected with Austria, such was the case with the Oriental Railway Company. It thus worked in Constantinople to obtain the Adriatic concession for the Austrian Hirsch Company. These endeavours were cut short, to some extent, by the declaration of the Italian government "that they cannot be indifferent as to which company will be given the concession for the construction of the Adriatic railway, and that they count on Austria-Hungary to place no difficulties in the way of an undertaking in which Italy will be financially considerably involved." Austria-Hungary did, however, make difficulties increasingly. The Russian Foreign Ministry was in possession of direct information and confidential reports to this effect from Constantinople and did not conceal that fact from Germany. The Sultan himself sent a message to the Serbian Minister in Constantinople that he would issue an irade for a commission "when Austria-Hungary has become less sensitive about that".²⁰¹ Aehrenthal said to the German Ambassador on 18 May that Austria-Hungary would not

201 Nenadović Pašiću, Carigrad, 2. 7. 1908, Pov. Br. 557, in: M. Vojvodić and Lj. Aleksić-Pejaković, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije 1903-1914*, knj. III, sv. 2/1, Beograd 2011, pp. 316-318.

“blindly” assist any railway project in the Balkans, not just in respect of Serbs, but also of its Italian ally.²⁰²

Out of consideration for Italy, and also, to some extent, for Russia, Germany acted more reasonably and cautiously from April 1908 onwards. To begin with, it repudiated any suspicion of having worked in this matter in agreement with the Vienna government, always emphasizing that it believed in Austria’s “good-will” in this question, although that was not strictly true, as has been seen. In reply to Russia’s reproaches that Germany was withholding its support for the Serbian plan, the latter insisted that this was not the case, as the Berlin government remained loyal to its declaration that it would support any railway plan as further contribution to culture and pacification. On 11 April, Bülow declared to Tittoni that “neither Germany nor Austria-Hungary will make any difficulties either in the case of the Adriatic railway or generally to the satisfaction and development of Italy’s legitimate interests in the Balkan Peninsula, provided the territorial *status quo* and the maintenance of Turkey’s independence are ensured”; he even promised that at a given moment he would “sincerely and energetically support the Adriatic railway” which was now at a standstill because of the Sultan’s resistance. It was therefore necessary not to prejudice a successful issue by too hasty an insistence.²⁰³ By putting the matter off, Prince Bülow worked initially very much in Austria’s favour, for it was to her interest that the question of the Adriatic railway not be made dependent upon that of the Sanjak railway, because of her own actions, and that the concession for it should not be obtained; when the excitement had subsided later, it would not be difficult to find new ways to thwart the matter. It was, therefore, in accordance with the prearranged plan that Vienna advised “dilatory tactics in this question.” That Austria would never be sincerely reconciled to the Adriatic railway, which would clearly serve the interests of Serbia and Italy, was clear to anyone familiar with the Eastern policy of the Danubian Monarchy. It had long been well-known to Rome. On the occasion of their meeting at Desio the previous year, Aehrenthal had openly declared to Tittoni that he considered the plan for the Adriatic railway contrary to the interests of the Danubian Monarchy; Vienna thus made it clear, and Aehrenthal officially stated it to Rome that they were very dissatisfied with Italy’s advocating the said railway in St. Petersburg. The German Ambassador in Vienna, Tschirschky, informed his government on 26 April that it was only under the unfavourable impression made by his expose that Aehrenthal had *faire bonne mine à mauvais jeu*

202 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXV, pp. 372–3.

203 Milovanović Pašiću, Rim, 13. 4. 1908, Pov. Br. 141, in: Vojvodić and Aleksić-Pejković, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. III, sv. 1/2, pp. 910–912.

and declared openly that he would do nothing against the Adriatic railway.²⁰⁴ Bülow's statements made in the name of both Germany and Austria were considered, therefore, an excuse and an attempt to find a means to bridge over, at least temporarily, the gulf which had been created. Moreover, Vienna was not much pleased with Bülow's negotiating with the Italians about the railway question and making promises without consulting Austria.

Under the influence of Bülow's advice, and to show its faith in its ally, Italy agreed to postpone the whole question until it had been ascertained what measures would be necessary to make it a success. As early as 13 April, Tittoni put forward some proposals along these lines to the Serbian government, declaring "that action in Constantinople would be ceased for the time being and Turkey would be given a bit of time to reflect".²⁰⁵ On the other hand, under the influence of the attitude adopted by Russian official circles, and of the arguments advanced by Italy, both Emperor Wilhelm II and Bülow, who had been in Italy in April and realized how bad impression Vienna's hesitation had created, now changed considerably their hitherto reserved attitude and appreciated that more goodwill must be shown in the railway question, or the necessary confidence would be lost and the two Powers definitely estranged from cooperation with them. With this in view, Emperor Wilhelm II took it upon himself to mediate personally and let it be understood in Vienna that a more conciliatory attitude should be adopted. According to his own account, he warmly recommended to Turhan Pasha, who came to greet him in Corfu in the name of the Turkish government, that the Sultan should grant the permit for the Adriatic railway. He later noted on a Report from St. Petersburg dated 14 April that Vienna "must" (he used that word!) support the Serbian project in Constantinople and that the German and Austrian Ambassadors should act in cooperation in recommending this plan at the Porte.²⁰⁶ On 17 April, he ordered that the German Ambassadors in Vienna, St. Petersburg and Constantinople be informed of the advice he had given through Turhan Pasha. But Vienna was still unwilling to be helpful, although the Russian government declared that

²⁰⁴ *Die Grosse Politik*, XVIII, p. 368.

²⁰⁵ His holding back was also influenced, to certain extent, by the attitude of the Ottoman Bank, the principal negotiator in the formation of a railway syndicate, which would not agree that French and Italian capital be represented in the syndicate with 50% each but, retaining 50% for themselves, offered only 30% to Italy. Tittoni saw in this selfish financial motives and the lack of consideration for Italian political and economic interests, which were far the more important. It was only after prolonged negotiations that an agreement was reached on the following basis: France to participate with 45%, Italy with 35%, Russia with 15% and Serbia with 5%.

²⁰⁶ *Die Grosse Politik*, XXV, pp. 362, 365.

they required overt support for the Serbian railway project as evidence that the Vienna government really cared to see the maintenance of good relations with St. Petersburg.²⁰⁷ Thereupon Emperor Wilhelm II had Vienna informed that he was forced to bring his influence to bear in Constantinople in favour of the Adriatic railway, hoping that thereby "it would still perhaps be possible to save the Austro-Russian agreement".²⁰⁸ The German Emperor's move was labeled in St. Petersburg "*une généreuse démarche*" and was received with gratitude. In Berlin, it was said to the Serbian representative on 15 May that the railway question was to be settled favourably for Serbia, since the matter "was now supported more effectively, along with other Powers" by Germany and Austria-Hungary.²⁰⁹

Under this moral pressure, in order not to contradict the German Emperor himself, Baron Aehrenthal informed Berlin that he would support both the Serbian and the Bulgarian plan to the extent of facilitating the Porte's irade for the tracing of a line and would not concern himself with further developments. It is obvious that he would have preferred not to have been placed in the position of having to give way, but seeing that it came to that, he saw to it that his support was as limited as possible. He therefore agreed only to support at present the action in favour of tracing the line, and not even the entire line. As a result of a compromise, the origin of which is not clear, although it appears to have originated with the Vienna Cabinet, it was indeed decided in Vienna and St. Petersburg to ask the Porte for concession on the line from Mrdare to Štimlje only, and not right through to the sea. The Serbian surprise and protests were met in St. Petersburg with the warning that patience was necessary and that this was to be considered just the first stage. "A section of the Mrdare-Štimlje line cuts across the Skoplje-Mitrovica line; as Štimlje lies to the west of it, it is clear that the construction of the railway cannot stop there, but will have to continue right through to the sea".²¹⁰ Austria thought, on the other side, that this division of the line into sections would create difficulties in the way of its realization and provide her with further opportunities

²⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 365.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., pp. 366-7.

²⁰⁹ Bogićević Pašiću, Berlin, 15. 5. 1908, Pov. Br. 203, in: Vojvodić and Aleksić-Pejković, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. III, sv. 1/2, pp. 1080-1081.

²¹⁰ The Italian and French governments were opposed initially to this proposal, as well as the Ottoman Bank for financial reasons. Cf. Milovanović Pašiću, Rim, 21. 5. 1908, Pov. Br. 193, in: Ibid., pp. 1107-1109; Vesnić Pašiću, Pariz, 16. 5. 1908, Pov. Br. 262, in: Ibid., pp. 1085-1086. Sir Charles Hardinge told the Serbian minister on 21 May that "this limitation could only be in the interests of Austria-Hungary, and in no event in our own interests." Milićević Pašiću, London, 21. 5. 1908, Pov. Br. 239, in: Ibid., pp. 1109-1110.

to exercise her influence with each new request for the extension of the concession. That Austria was not in favour of the Adriatic railway project is clear. Whereas Aehrenthal authorized, under German pressure, the Austrian Ambassador in Constantinople to support the Russian action, he told the German Ambassador in Vienna, Tschirschky on 5 May, that he could support neither the plan for a railway line which would be “primarily” in Serbia’s interests nor Serbian wishes in the Balkans generally, if Serbian policy in regard to Austria-Hungary were not entirely changed. He said this, it is alleged, rather angrily, obviously because he was dissatisfied with Germany’s advising him to give way; and Tschirschky thought, after a conversation with him, that “the delicate ground of Serbian policy might accentuate the differences which reappear between the Danubian Monarchy and Russia”.²¹¹ He later repeated to the Italian Ambassador that he could not “blindly” support any railway project, although he might otherwise be well disposed to help on the development of railway communications in the Balkans.²¹²

Thus, after such protracted negotiations, the matter was back to square one. Austria-Hungary did not really and sincerely want to further Serbia’s requirements until Serbia had changed her policy, and Serbia did not want to change her policy until she had been assured of the sincere goodwill on the part of the neighbouring Monarchy with regard to matters which concerned her. In one of his reports, dated 19 April 1908, Count Forgách wrote from Belgrade that Serbia was afraid of Austria; “that is”, he said explicitly, “that feeling which this country should and must always have for us.” With such conceptions, it was clearly impossible to establish relations based on confidence. That who provokes fear and wants others to be always afraid of them cannot count on their confidence and frankness. In fact, that was the case.

The Sanjak railway project and the obstacles placed in the way of realization of the Adriatic one only further strengthened Serbia’s mistrust towards Austria-Hungary and spread the conviction as to the Danubian Monarchy’s plans of conquest to those circles which viewed Vienna’s conservative policy with more faith. Thus, every outstanding question between Serbia and Austria-Hungary was turned into a political one and assumed severity characteristic of the growing differences between their conceptions and interests.

It was at this moment that complaints emerged from Vienna that Serbia “was agitating and inciting to revolt the people” of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This is how Austria-Hungary explained in St. Petersburg its hesitation to support Serbia’s railway plans in the Balkans. At the same time, as we have seen,

²¹¹ *Die Grosse Politik*, pp. 370-1.

²¹² *Ibid.*, p. 373.

Austria-Hungary offered to connect the Bosnian railways with those of Serbia, although in doing so it would naturally – if its complaints were justified – have facilitated the work of agitation and incitement. Strangely, it was Serbia that refused the offer and looked elsewhere. We shall return to this matter again, when speaking of the Greater Serbian propaganda; here we may only note the occasion when this complaint was laid before the Great Powers, the events with which it was connected, and the inherent lack of logic.

The question of the Sanjak railway gave rise to further diplomatic complications in the course of that same spring. As early as 30 April 1908, Aehrenthal stated at a Cabinet meeting that the judicial reforms in Turkey had fallen through, as the Russian government had declared that Austria's one-sided proceedings in the railway question "have created a new situation" and St. Petersburg government no longer considered itself bound by the Mürtzsteg agreement.²¹³

In the matter of the Adriatic railway, Turkey adopted a more than reserved attitude. It had never been favourable to it from a purely political point of view. Austria's attitude was therefore a welcome one, as Turkey could make use of it to defend itself both against Serbia and other Powers. After the German mediation and its compromise proposal for the Mrdare-Štimlje line, it pretended to agree to this partial concession, hoping, just like Austria-Hungary, that it might postpone the matter in that way. On 4 June (22 May), the Grand Vizier said to the Serbian Minister that he considered the issue of the irade for tracing the line settled;²¹⁴ to the Russian and French Ambassadors he said that the preliminary work would be approved "as soon as the necessary means were secured." When the syndicate for the construction of the railway was soon formed with the Salonica-Constantinople Railway Company as its chief representative, the Serbian government officially declared in Constantinople on 20 June that they conceded the concession to the said Company. However, when it came to deeds, the Grand Vizier requested the Company's representative not to expedite the matter, but to leave the tracing of the line for the next year. It was known and said in Constantinople that this procrastination originated from the Sultan himself, who cloaked behind Austria's susceptibilities. The Turkish promises remained empty words until the next summer, when the Young Turks revolution broke out. After the revolution, many people believed it inopportune to touch upon this question before internal affairs had been settled. For Turkey, there were other and more urgent problems. Nevertheless,

213 Baernreither, *Fragmente eines politischen Tagebuches*, p. 77.

214 Nenadović Pašiću, Carigrad, 5. 6. 1908, Pov. Br. 472, in: Vojvodić and Aleksić-Pejković, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. III, sv. 1/2, pp. 1189-1191.

Russian diplomatic circles considered that the question might be wound up, especially as the British government took this opportunity, when the activities of the Powers in the matter of the reforms ceased and the Powers were no longer under any kind of moral obligation, to declare through their Ambassador in Constantinople that in respect of the Adriatic railway they would request from the Turkish government the same privileges that had been granted to other railway projects. The British government officially informed Russia of this, that Power being particularly interested in the question, and on 9 August the British Minister in Belgrade also informed his Austrian colleague. After Britain's move, the Russian Ambassador in Constantinople was instructed "to make energetic efforts to get the irade issued". But the forthcoming events pushed the question of the Adriatic railway in the background and contributed to its being postponed.

In order to make itself more secure against the Austrian policy in the Sanjak of Novi Pazar and the Kosovo Vilayet after Aehrenthal's statement about the Sanjak railway, the Serbian government brought up again the extension of the reforms to those provinces which had so far not been included in the reform project, in addition to the question of the Adriatic railway construction. In early 1904, it had been said that the reforms would not for the time being be introduced into those provinces; in 1907-8, it was perhaps permissible to think, with some reason, that the temporary arrangement might be brought to an end, especially as the situation in the mixed Serbo-Albanian areas was in some parts worse than earlier, as the Albanians took their revenge on the Serbs for their complaints to the Turkish authorities, and the authority of the Russian consuls, after the defeat of the Russian army in Manchuria, had considerably declined throughout the Turkish Empire. On 14 September 1905, in a conversation with Vujić about an attack made on 8 September by the Albanians on the frontier station of Ugljarski Krš in Serbia, on which occasion Serbian military officials had been murdered, Count Goluchowski himself "in fairly strong terms ... condemned this lawlessness in Turkey" and declared that he had authorized the Ambassador in Constantinople to demand the cessation of this disorderly state of affairs.²¹⁵ It could have been expected that Austria-Hungary would at last agree to the reforms being extended to the hitherto excluded territory, from which all the perpetrators of these crimes and disorder arrived. Serbia had

215 Vujić Antoniju, Beč, 14. 9. 1905, Pov. Br. 298, in: Aleksić-Pejković, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. I, sv. 4/1, pp. 246-248.

always demanded this. When in November 1905 the Great Powers demanded from Turkey to accept their proposals for financial reform in the Kosovo, Bitolj and Salonica vilayets, and when they met its hesitation with a show of their fleets and the occupation of some of the Turkish islands and custom-houses, they addressed at the same time a special note to the governments in Sofia, Athens and Belgrade, warning them not to complicate matters or obstruct the work of reform. In its reply to this note on 6 December (25 November), the Serbian government asked that both its own position and that of the Serbian population in Turkey be ameliorated by the extension of the reforms to the mixed Serbo-Albanian districts. This proposal was considered "well-founded" by some of the representatives of the Great Powers, among them Buchanan, the British representative in Sofia.²¹⁶ Nevertheless, the proposal met with no success because it was constantly opposed by Austria-Hungary.

Meanwhile, the Serbian population perished by day. The Albanians had no respect for anyone. On 11 February 1907, they burst into Novi Pazar, occupied the post and telegraph offices and energetically demanded that the local gendarmerie commander be replaced. The Albanians did the same in Gnjilane and other places, protesting against the introduction of new taxes. When they showed such arrogance in dealing with the Turkish authorities, it is not difficult to imagine how the Albanians behaved towards the Serbs, who were in the position of serfs. In his report of 28 (15) May 1907, quoting a whole series of fresh atrocities committed after a temporary lull, the Serbian Vice-Consul in Priština, Milan Rakić, wrote with despondence: "One must think with despair of the future of our people if such a state of affairs is to last any longer. On all sides one hears cries of despair both from those who are suffering and from those who are helping the sufferers. Miserable help! Mr. Tuholka (the Russian Consul) writes to me from Mitrovica that "he has never seen such great distress and so little likelihood of help and of improvement in the situation, and Mr. Kutjepov from Prizren adds that God alone can help." From the village of Orahovac in the Prizren area alone, 85 Serbian families, numbering 620 persons, have been forced to flee on account of acts of violence. From a report that Milan Čemerkić sent to the Sima Igumanov Foundation on 5 July 1907, it may be seen that "hardly any village in which the Serbs live has not suffered from murders, thefts, blackmails, forced labour etc." and that "the authorities have not been able or willing to do anything." Zinoviev told the Secretary of the Serbian Legation, Živojin Balugdžić, at the end of the same summer, that he knew very well that the situation in Old Serbia was "desperate" and

216 Simić Žujoviću, Sofija, 12. 12. 1905, Pov. Br. 522, in: Aleksić-Pejković, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. I, sv. 4/2, pp. 632-633.

that it “was his greatest concern”; he also knew that the position of the Serbs could only be improved by the introduction of reforms, “but Austria-Hungary would not hear of it and it takes coming into conflict with it to get my demand through – and that could not be contemplated.” The Italian Ambassador in Constantinople, Imperiali, also refused to bring up the question again, as it was “disagreeable to Austria-Hungary.” The British Consul in Salonica, Graves, complained about the misfortunes of the Serbs in Old Serbia and condemned the attitude of Austria-Hungary “who neither wished to exert influence itself for the improvement of conditions in these provinces, nor to allow anybody else to attempt it, and avoided to touch, even slightly, on the Albanian question”.²¹⁷ Whitehead, the British Minister in Belgrade, said to Count Forgách, at the same time, that the justifiable demands of the Serbian government in this respect should be met, but his view was not accepted. “That is a misfortune!”, Zinoviev pointed out. “No one wants to cross Austria-Hungary, although everyone admits that things cannot, and must not, continue as they are.” He therefore advised the Serbs to address Vienna directly and ask for better conditions for their compatriots.²¹⁸

The Serbian government took up this suggestion. During his meeting with Aehrenthal at Semeringue on 7 September 1907, Pašić took it upon himself to act along these lines. After informing Aehrenthal – the latter so recorded – that the Serbian government did not think of meddling in the Bosnian question, considering it “settled and definitely removed from the agenda”,²¹⁹ and declaring that the position of Serbian statesmen was rendered considerably easier by Austria’s assurances that Vienna was not thinking of further penetration into the Balkans, he went on to speak about the reforms. He said openly that “the future of the so-called Old Serbian territory in the Kosovo Vilayet was of special importance to Serbia.” He therefore demanded “above all else” that the reform action be extended to it. Aehrenthal replied that he was not prepared to enter into discussion about the future of a province which was Turkish and which was likely, in view of the present attitude of the Powers, to remain Turkish in the foreseeable future. As for the reform action in the northern parts of the Kosovo Vilayet, that had not been undertaken so far, he assured,

217 Pavlović Pašiću, Solun, 2. 10. 1907, PP. Br. 464, in: Aleksić-Pejković and Žanić, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. II, sv. 4/1, pp. 534-536.

218 Balugdžić Pašiću, Carigrad, 20. 9. 1907, Pov. Br. 793, in: Ibid., pp. 455-458.

219 Pašić had spoken in this sense earlier to the new Austrian Minister, Count Forgách. According to the Minister’s report of 10 July, Pašić even made Austrophile declarations which, if they really accorded to what was reported (e.g. his approval of King Milan’s policy towards Austria, which “had often been good and fortunate”), were certainly not sincere.

for technical and not for political reasons. He did not, however, say another word as to when these technical difficulties might be removed, just as he, in general, did not make any promise that he would meet Serbia's wishes at all in this matter. On 9 October, Pašić again asked in the official reply to the notes of the Russian and Austro-Hungarian governments for an extension of the reforms. The Serbian Minister in Vienna, Dj. Simić, acting on his own initiative, also raised the question moved by the distressing reports from Constantinople. But on 13 November he also received, just like Pašić, a very reserved reply from Baron Aehrenthal to the effect that he would think over what could be done for the improvement in the situation, admitting that it was bad in those parts.²²⁰ When the Russians and Serbs together requested at the Porte that some troops be sent to the Peć area, with a view to protecting the Serbs there, which was not a dangerous measure for anyone except the criminals, Zinoviev again complained to the Serbian Minister on 15 (2) November 1907 that his Austro-Hungarian colleague had left him entirely alone in this matter. "He would not say a single word in support of my demands",²²¹ although they could be in no way detrimental to the Danubian Monarchy. Such an attitude on the part of Austria could only encourage the Albanian criminals to continue with their violence and seriously imperil the position of the Serbs in Old Serbia.

Serbia had also some purely political reasons for demanding the extension of the reforms. Working there alone, Austria-Hungary could develop whatever activities it wished; the Turks were too weak to resist and the Serbs did not dare and had no sufficient authority. The extension of the reforms, apart from the advantages to the Christian population in those parts, would introduce certain measure of European supervision.

The Serbs hoped on this occasion, in 1907-8, for more consideration from the Great Powers, including Austria-Hungary, for two main reasons: first because some Powers had started as early as 1906 to extend the reform area they controlled, e.g. Russia in Kasandar and Italy in Srbica, and because General di Giorgis demanded the same, as head of the gendarmerie, from Austria-Hungary, at least in Preševo and Gnjilane. However, Austria refused to do this in all probability lest, after Preševo and Gnjilane, the same should be required in the case of the more western regions. But it was believed in many circles that Austria-Hungary, in spite of all hesitation, would sooner or later have to agree to these measures, lest it should cause further suspicions and strengthen the old ones. The second reason was that the Albanian outrages in

220 Simić Pašiću, Beč, 15. 11. 1907, Pov. Br. 366, in: Aleksić-Pejković and Anić, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. II, sv. 4/2, pp. 789-790.

221 Nenadović Pašiću, Carigrad, 16. 11. 1907, Pov. Br. 936, in: *Ibid.*, p. 802.

1907-8 were no longer limited to the Orthodox Christians, but were in some cases also inflicted on Roman Catholics. Fearing the extension of the reforms to the Kosovo Vilayet, where the gendarmerie officers would probably again be recruited from the ranks of the Austro-Hungarian army, the Turkish authorities spared no effort to influence the Albanians to resist the reforms and to let the Austrians know that their entry would not be allowed without difficulties. The Austrians had plenty of opportunities to see for themselves how unreliable an element the Albanians were, and that their plans with them, when it came to the Sultan's interests or Albanian self-government, were based on somewhat unfounded premises. Late in the autumn of 1907 the Albanian Moslems started to attack the Albanian Catholic Fandi in the Nahiye of Djakovica. The Albanians even captured a Catholic priest, Father Luigi, while the Fandi started their revenge by desecrating Turkish places of prayer. In the Fandi village of Rakoče, some twenty houses were burned in retribution, and many people killed or wounded in the ensuing struggles. In early March 1908, the Albanians in Prizren and Djakovica again rose in revolt against the Fandi because, according to Albanian reports, they had thrown pig heads into two mosques in revenge. The angry Albanians started persecuting all the Fandi, burning their houses and driving them out of their lands, and struggled against their protectors, the Austro-Hungarian officials themselves, although the latter did not approve of the belligerent attitude and indolent provocations of the Moslems by the settlers. On 13 March, the Moslem merchants and tradesmen proclaimed a boycott of the Austro-Hungarian Consulate in Priština, but that was soon stopped through the agency of the Turkish authorities. Provocative incidents carried on nevertheless. When on 22 July, the Catholic school in Skoplje arranged for an excursion to Ferizović, the whole region of Kosovo and Metohija revolted and people gathered to prevent it. The entertainment pavilion was destroyed and all preparations stopped, while the houses of the local Albanians who worked for them were burned. All this, however, had no effect upon the official Austrian policy. Austria continued to oppose the extension of the reforms in the Kosovo Vilayet, and her persistent refusal affected also the attitude of other Great Powers.

Serbia also endeavoured to induce some of the Powers to open their consulates in Peć to help restrain the Albanians, but without success. After the publication of the Austrian plan for the Sanjak railway, the Russian Ambassador in Constantinople found this proposal a good idea and even promised "to present a request along those lines to the Porte in a few days' time." Izvolsky and Charykov at first accepted this proposal favourably; the latter even promised "that he would do everything he could to see it realized, for – he said – he

was familiar with the unfortunate condition of the Serbs in Old Serbia. They had – he continued – already sacrificed one of their Consuls in those parts, which were – he added – excluded from the reform action, although they are in greater need of reform than the provinces in which such reforms are introduced”.²²² But their enthusiasm for the said proposal soon cooled off, obviously because of the difficulties they encountered both with the Turks and the Powers concerned in this question.

The Young Turk revolution, which broke out in the summer of 1908, cut short all further work in this direction and the events in Turkey took a different turn and meaning.

²²² Popović Pašiću, Petrograd, 20. 2. 1908, Pov. Br. 61, in: Vojvodić and Aleksić-Pejković, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. III, sv. 1/1, pp. 443-445; Popović Pašiću, Petrograd, 25. 2. 1908, Pov. Br. 73, in: *Ibid.*, p. 495.

The Annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina

IV₁ The Greater-Serbian Propaganda

The Young Turk Revolution, which broke out on 3 July (20 June), soon after the Russo-British agreement at Reval and as a reaction to it, faced the European Great Powers and the Balkan states with entirely new questions. Turkey made an attempt at reformation of its own volition by which it hoped to render unnecessary both the reform programme of the foreign powers in its territory and any other foreign mediation. The attitude that the cabinets concerned would adopt towards the Young Turks's aims and the measures they would take in view of the changed circumstances in European Turkey were the questions of the greatest political importance. While Serbia, Montenegro and Greece waited to see how events would develop, Bulgaria was preparing to proclaim her independence. All the Great Powers except Austria-Hungary, taken aback by the more or less sudden change of circumstances and by the rapid development of the situation in Turkey, remained for the time being mere observers.

Austria-Hungary was, along with Bulgaria, the only country that prepared an activist reply to the Young Turk movement in order to avail itself of the opportunity thus offered to realize one of its long-cherished desires. Viennese diplomacy had long been planning the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It now seemed that the opportune moment had arrived. It defended its intentions and stance mainly along the following lines: the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy had been working in Bosnia and Herzegovina, developing them culturally, with a view to educating them gradually for political life. It had prepared the ground in these provinces for an autonomous constitutional administration, which would start with the organization of rural municipalities and end with the summoning of a diet at Sarajevo as the apex of the administrative and constitutional pyramid. Events in Turkey had upset this plan of gradual development; Austria-Hungary could not now afford to put off for any long time the settlement of certain questions, since a new political era had been inaugurated in Constantinople; Bosnia and Herzegovina would now remain the only countries in Europe without a constitutional life. But prior to the settlement of the constitutional problem in the occupied provinces, their status as a political unit had to be made clear; the summoning of a diet at Sarajevo could not take place without a clear sovereign right. For those reasons, Austria-Hungary had to hasten the settlement of the question of the allegiance of Bosnia and

Herzegovina. Such were the arguments Vienna put forward to the British government to justify its proceedings.²²³ At the same time, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy declared itself ready to renounce the rights in the Sanjak of Novi Pazar granted by the Congress of Berlin.

The official collection of Austro-Hungarian diplomatic documents contains a long official memorandum, dated 9 August 1906, and prepared by the Foreign Ministry, most likely on the instructions of Baron Aehrenthal, in which we find an explanation of Austria-Hungary's motives and of the intentions of Viennese diplomacy in dropping the Sanjak. From the military point of view, the Sanjak of Novi Pazar would not be convenient for the advance of an army from that territory into the interior of Turkey, as it would be threatened on one side by Serbia, on the other by Montenegro, while in front of an advancing army the resistance of the Albanians in cooperation with Serbia and Montenegro had to be reckoned with. The advance of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy into the Balkans could only be effected through Serbia. Such was the well-known opinion of military experts, which had already been expressed, as we have seen, in Danzer's paper, the *Armee-Zeitung*. Count Andr ssy had at one time advocated the occupation of the Sanjak in order to prevent the union of Serbia and Montenegro and the formation of a great Slav, i.e. Serbian state. In Vienna, however, it was now thought and hoped, in view of the supposed divergence of Serbian and Montenegrin aspirations, that the Serbo-Montenegrin union was a matter "which even after the division of the Sanjak would not lie within the bounds of probability" and that, moreover, "a conflict between the two states might break out in connection with their respective claims on the Sanjak territory." "If we were to occupy the Sanjak, Montenegro and Serbia would be united against us and the Sanjak would become a permanent source of disturbance for us." On the other hand, if Austria were to move further south, she would come into conflict with the Albanians and forfeit all her influence over them to Italy's benefit. "The strong Albanian settlements in the Sanjak and their fellow-nationals will bitterly resist any alien occupation; it might be only to our interests that such resistance be turned against the Serbs and Montenegrins, and so maintained the traditional hostility between the Albanians and the Slavs." If rotten Turkey fell to pieces one day, Austria-Hungary would certainly have to establish secure borders to the south, but "we will not have those secure borders without striking at the root of the evil and putting an end to Greater Serbian dreams for the future." "The antagonism between the Serbs and Bulgarians is already a factor to be reckoned with; in Bulgaria, the conviction is prevailing that the way into Macedonia lies over Serbia's body and it is certain that

223 *British Documents*, V, pp. 378-9; * sterreich-Ungarns Aussenpolitik*, I, pp. 103-4.

a most terrible struggle will break out between the Serbs and Bulgarians for the possession of Skoplje. If in that struggle we support the cause of Bulgaria and facilitate the formation of a Greater Bulgaria at the expense of Serbia, that will prepare the ground for us to lay hands, at a moment of favourable European constellation, on what remains of Serbia. We would then have the secure borders of which I have spoken earlier: Albania which, under our aegis, would become independent; Montenegro, with which we maintain friendly relations; and a Greater Bulgaria bound to us by gratitude.” Why, then, it might be asked – the memorandum continued – was the Sanjak railway required, if it were intended to abandon the territory through which it would pass? If this appeared contradictory – it was replied – the contradiction was only apparent. Austria-Hungary was not abandoning its economic aspirations as regards Salonika, which might as well remain foreign territory, just like Hamburg in case of Austrian exports to the north, or like Genoa, Trieste and Rotterdam in case of Germany’s. Moreover, it was necessary for Austria to put forward her claims lest she should lose the rights acquired by the treaty.²²⁴

At the meeting in Berthesgaden on 5 September 1908 between Baron Aehrenthal and Schoen, the German Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, the former repeated the principal points of this memorandum. With regard to Serbia, he frankly, but in strict confidence, admitted that he intended “to annihilate completely the nest of Serbian revolutionaries.... Serbia could be handed over to Bulgaria, which for Austria-Hungary would also mean a great advantage of having as a neighbour a state with the definite ethnographic borders.” This plan appeared “daring” to the German statesman and he did not hesitate to make certain reservations to the Austrian Minister. “We have no particular interest in Serbia”, he said, “but it seems to me that it is not without danger to allow the formation of a Greater Bulgaria. Neither the Romanians nor the Greeks nor even the Turks would be likely to accept that quietly. (The Emperor here added the marginal note: ‘Quite so!’). Baron Aehrenthal was less doubtful about this”.²²⁵ When the German Ambassador in Vienna, Count Tschirschky, subsequently asked Aehrenthal how he could suppose that, by ceding Serbia, Austria-Hungary would gain a fixed ethnographical border with Bulgaria, Baron Aehrenthal replied that he had not thought of handing over the whole of Serbia to the Bulgarians, but only certain areas along the Bulgarian frontier inhabited by Bulgarians. Austria-Hungary thought of taking itself the remainder of Serbia, including it within its own state and eventually forming a Yugoslav state as a third element of the Dual Monarchy. This plan,

224 *Österreich-Ungarns Aussennpolitik*. I, pp. 25-34.

225 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, I, pp. 27-9.

therefore, provided for the formation of a Yugoslav state within the framework of the Austrian Empire. This was the new Austrian thesis for the solution of the Yugoslav question and it clearly presupposed the disappearance of Serbia as an independent state. This admission is of considerable importance in connection with the question of the relations between Serbia and Austria-Hungary, coming from the most authoritative place in the Danubian Monarchy on the eve of the events which marked the beginning of its more active policy. In this connection, the German Chancellor, Prince Bülow, wrote to Emperor Wilhelm II on 17 October 1908: "In my most humble opinion, we must neither hinder nor particularly encourage the Austrian designs in question, for either attitude on our part might expose us to mistrust and suspicion. We should do well to show no particular interest in them, but to wait quietly for the fruit to ripen. In the meantime, we must, by our calm, friendly and firm, attitude, inspire Austria-Hungary with more confidence in us".²²⁶

The methods, as well as the aims, of the Austro-Hungarian policy towards Serbia are thus indicated clearly enough: Serbia should be kept at loggerheads with all her neighbours, Montenegro, Albania and Bulgaria, and thus isolated. Furthermore, she should be presented as a nest of revolutionaries (without any enquiry, of course, as to whether and to what extent such charges were founded on facts); she should be discredited in the eyes of Europe, so that any drastic measures undertaken against her might thereby be justified. At the same time, the statements made by Baron Aehrenthal clearly show that the assurance that Austria had no further plans for conquest in the Balkan Peninsula were not true. To prepare a secret partition of Serbia between itself and Bulgaria, to lay claims in the case of Salonika, and to declare at the same time that any stories of further penetration were only fabrications of its enemies was so contradictory that it is quite superfluous to lay special stress upon it.

It was not at all difficult, of course, to see through the attitude and the aims of Viennese diplomacy, especially those of the zealous military circles. "The forthcoming annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina", L. Mandl wrote, "has long been a constant object of concern for Austro-Hungarian statesmanship",²²⁷ and with it, of course, all the means necessary to achieve it. The Serbs in Austria-Hungary and Serbia, even if they were unable to find out all the details,²²⁸ found out a good deal nevertheless and accordingly made frequent

226 Ibid., XXVI, I, p. 28.

227 *Österreich-Ungarn und Serbien*, Wien 1911, pp. 32-3.

228 At the end of 1908, N. Genadiev, a former Bulgarians Cabinet Minister and head of the Stambulovist Party, said to the Serbian Charge d'Affaires in Sofia, Dr. M. Dj. Milovanović, in defense of Bulgaria's policy, that the Bulgarians could easily, not long ago, have attacked Serbia, but that they had not wished to do so. Bulgaria, he added, "could have done this all

corresponding changes in their attitude. This was not always very difficult after all. The gradual preparations for the annexation were followed vigilantly by the Serbian press from 1908 onwards, which could figure out much of what was going on.

1) In the relations between official Serbia and official Montenegro, complete cordiality had long been lacking; the dynastic antagonism between the Obrenovićs and the Petrovićs, continued under the Karadjordjevićs, often prevented more intimate collaboration which was eagerly desired by the people in both states. Montenegro had grown somewhat cold towards the Belgrade government, because it had not restrained the opposition of the Montenegrin students who, dissatisfied with the political regime in their country, especially after the introduction of the 1905 constitution, carried out a bitter struggle against the Cetinje regime. Austrian diplomacy hoped to take advantage of this struggle in order to turn the rift between the two Serbian governments into a chasm. Along with other means, it resorted to provocation. In Sarajevo, there was a student of philosophy, Djordje Nastić, the son of the old Austrian agent Jovan Nastić, who had died in Mostar in 1902. Nastić held a Bosnian government scholarship in the last year of his secondary school in Mostar, in 1902-3, and during the first years of his studies in Vienna. He was very gifted, but at the same time a very corrupt young man, deprived of any moral upbringing in the family, and unbridled in his personal needs. The modest scholarship was insufficient for his profligate life and when he found it impossible to obtain money, after two embezzlements and a theft, in any other way, he took to his father's profession and became a political agent. Having noted his intelligence and adroitness, Kosta Hörmann, the Chief of the Political Department of the Bosnian government, sent him to Belgrade on a very important mission.²²⁹ In order to enable him to win the confidence in the Belgrade circles,

the more easily in that she was already in agreement with Austria-Hungary. We knew for certain", he continued, "that we should receive Pirot, Niš and Vranje. But we were never willing to agree to that policy, being convinced that Austria-Hungary would sooner or later come to an agreement with a third party and partition Bulgaria too." See Milojević Milovanoviću, Sofija, 24. 12. 1908, Pov. Br. 634, in: M. Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije 1903-1914*, knj. III, sv. 3, Beograd 2014, pp. 791-792.

229 The editor of the Sarajevo *Hrvatski Dnevnik*, Heruvim Šegvić, publicly affirmed that during his absence K. Hörmann had published an insulting and provocative anti-Serbian article, whereby he had hoped to upset the relations between the Serbs and Croats and to provoke a Serb reaction. This article, it is true, caused demonstrations, in which Nastić took an active part in haranguing the mob. Šegvić's statement published in Zagreb was reprinted in the Mostar *Narod and Srpska riječ* on 29 December 1907. The Bosnian government did not dare to prosecute the respective editors for publishing this information lest they should demand to prove the truth in court, and even Hörmann himself did not deny

the Bosnian government placed at his disposal certain material, of no political importance, concerning the activities of the Jesuits in Bosnia, which Nastić published in a pamphlet entitled *The Jesuits in Bosnia* (Belgrade, 1906). He pretended to have fled out of fear, a political martyr, with this "secret" information, to Belgrade. The Austrian Legation in Belgrade was also informed of his mission. Baron Czikann reported to Vienna on 14 June 1907 that an agent whom he had paid had been unable to obtain admission to membership of the *Slovenski jug*. "Money is of no avail with the members of the club, who are political desperadoes. But admission will certainly not be refused to a Bosnian subject professing Austrophobia." This was a reference to Nastić, who had been very warmly received by his university colleagues. Nastić immediately sought the company of those youths who favoured the most radical measures due to their temperament and convictions, and once accepted into their midst, he endeavoured among other things to win the Montenegrin students over for an attempt on the life of the Montenegrin ruler, Prince Nicholas. The young Montenegrins, embittered by the action of the Montenegrin authorities against the Montenegrin opposition and by the dissolution of parliament, were prepared to resort to drastic measures. Nastić constantly urged them on, and at the same time vigilantly watched every move on their part and informed both his employers and the Montenegrin police agent in Belgrade, Nika Jovičević. When a few bombs were actually obtained and sent to the Montenegrin border, Nastić informed Sarajevo of that fact and some bombs were, without any difficulty, brought across the Bosnian and Dalmatian territory. A typographer, Stevan Rajković, an alleged conspirator, took most of the bombs to Cetinje himself and handed them over to the Ministry for Interior Affairs on 5 November (23 October) 1907. The role of Nastić was discovered in time. A clerk in the Bosnian Ministry in Vienna, Dr. Božidar Čerović, then a government counselor, learnt of Nastić's role and mission and considered it his duty as a Serb to prevent or disclose it. He therefore immediately, in the strictest confidence, informed both Vojislav Šola and one of his own friends, Mr. Milan Rešetar, Professor of Slavonic Studies at the University of Vienna. The latter confided the information to me. I thereupon relayed the whole thing to my brother in Mostar, as I had been asked to do, and at the same time I informed Jovan Skerlić in Belgrade, so that he could pass the information on. Mr. Stanoje Stanojević, a University Professor, has told me that a friend also drew his attention to the suspicious role of Nastić, and that he informed Pašić

it officially. The second editor of the *Hrvatski Dnevnik*, K. Cankar asserted that he himself had written the article, and that Hörmann had no part in it. Cf. Nos. 7 and 14 of his newspaper in 1908.

himself of the matter. Serbian circles in Sarajevo were already suspicious of Nastić in view of the fact that, after obvious provocations in their town, he was easily able to settle matters with the police. They therefore used all their skill to get hold of his papers. They succeeded thanks to Mr. Vasilij Grdjić and an academic painter, Mr. Špira Bocarić. Nastić's papers revealed everything. Mr. Atanasije Šola, one of the most prominent Serbs in Mostar was at once sent to Cetinje with an important authentic document to inform the authorities there of the whole surreptitious affair and its motives. Šola wrote to me that on that occasion the Montenegrin Premier, Dr. Lazar Tomanović, had told him "that he also knows Nastić is an Austrian spy." Nastić's confiscated correspondence was later published in the Mostar *Narod* and the aims of his activities made public. In the issue of 21 May (2 June) 1906, the first letter was published together with photographs. This letter established Nastić's role as an informer and his relations with Mihailo Forner, a General Staff Captain;²³⁰ in the issue of 4 (17) June, the rest of his correspondence was published. Moreover, the Chief of the Austrian General Staff, Conrad von Hötzendorf, himself admitted these relations in his work *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, 1906-1928, I, 1925, p. 83.

The Austro-Hungarian Minister at Cetinje also worked to make the relations between Montenegro and Serbia more strained. On 17 February 1906, the Serbian Minister at Cetinje gave a diplomatic lunch at which the Montenegrin Premier, Tomanović, was among the guests. The Austrian Minister had no qualms about telling him that he was surprised, in view of the political antagonism between the two governments, "to see him at that lunch".²³¹ Tomanović was annoyed by such a gratuitous remark and informed the Serbian Minister. The Austro-Hungarian Minister was, moreover, the only diplomat at Cetinje who approved of Nastić's testimonies and pointed out their importance.

In addition, the semi-official Sarajevo *Bosnische Post* was crucial in the attempts to make, with its information and articles, the deepest possible gulf between Cetinje and Belgrade. The editor of the paper published a statement in No. 274, 1907, wherein it was alleged that the Montenegrin Premier himself had accused Serbia of the attempted attentat, ascribing to her hostile intentions against the Prince and the dynasty. If the attempt had been successful, the confusion in Montenegro and the revolt that would have taken place in connection with it, would have been taken advantage of in order to bring about a general uprising of the Serbs in the Balkans, and especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina. On 10 December (27 November), the official paper, *Glas*

230 Forner's letter with photographs was also published by agreement in No. 116 of the *Srbobran* on 20 May (2 June).

231 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from Cetinje, 11 February, conf. no. 75 and 22 May 1906, conf. no. 93.

Crnogorica, denied that statement, the purpose of which was too obvious and the credence of which was non-existent to all reasonable people.

2) The same Nastić served the Austrian authorities for yet another purpose. In July 1908, after the Young Turk revolution, when Viennese diplomacy started definite preparations for the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, it found it expedient to refer to the direct menace of the Greater Serbian propaganda as one of the reasons for their action. Its official organs therefore published a pamphlet by Nastić entitled *Finale* (Budapest, 1908), in which nothing less was claimed than that in 1907 and 1908 (up to the month of July), the preparations were underway for a general revolution of all the South Slavs. Meanwhile, Nastić said of his mission, concealing of course his own role: "I was at that time (the beginning of 1907) blindly carried away by the idea that our people must as soon as possible be stirred by physical acts, that they must as soon as possible concentrate their forces on an illegal struggle, if there were to be any thought of their liberation, i.e., of their unification ... I have stressed these ideas of mine everywhere in Belgrade" (pp. 14-15). "I joined the society of the revolutionary Yugoslavs in Belgrade around 26 January last year and we immediately began to work energetically for the organization of revolutionary activities ... A sort of secretarial duty was entrusted to me and to the editor of *Slovenski Jug*, Ljubo Jovanović ... We issued in Belgrade a communiqué that ran along these lines: in principle, we favour a great and general revolution of the South Slav masses and we recommend that preparations for this revolutionary struggle be carried out as actively as possible, while individual terrorist actions must start at once in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Novi Pazar and Croatia." (pp. 17-18). Nastić has claimed that he succeeded to enter the explosives works at Kragujevac, and when the warning came from Mostar that he should not be trusted, he defended himself with the cynical remark that "as the Mostar politicians have already made an alliance with Minister Burian ... they were disappointed at losing the opportunity of reporting to their chief on the condition of the Serbian military factory" (p. 20). Although he was such a dangerous "revolutionary", Nastić returned from Kragujevac and Belgrade to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy without any difficulty and moved about freely, even obtaining from the police, under an assumed name (Wilhelm Lange), a permit to cross to Montenegro. And this was not all, for he was even in a position, thanks to his connections, to promise people that he could find them means of existence in Bosnia. On 6 April 1903, he wrote to Miloje Lazarević, whom he had tried to enlist as an accomplice, that he "would bring all his influence to bear to ensure him as good a life, if not better" there.²³²

232 *Srbobran*, no. 122, 1908.

At that time, there was much discontent in Serbia with Austria-Hungary and some of the more radical elements amongst the youth could be won over, with systematic incitement, to drastic action. But in spite of all Nastić's activities, that did not happen. Nastić, whose trustworthiness is clear from his statement about the "alliance" between Burian, the joint Finance Minister and the Mostar politicians, who were alleged to have been his informers about the circumstances in Serbia and the Military Works in Kragujevac,²³³ could not quote a single concrete instance of any revolutionary activities on the part of any responsible Serbian either in Croatia, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, or in Dalmatia. In the "revolutionary" activities emanating from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Dalmatia, nobody played any part at that time except Nastić himself. In reply to hundreds of requests to state what he knew and to prove and demonstrate what was going on, he could produce nothing of any significance, with the exception of a single document. That document was the "Provisional Statutes of the Organization for the Liberation of the South Slavs", written by Milan Pribićević, a Serb from Croatia. Nastić stated that he had suggested himself to Pribićević some of the ideas set forth in the Statutes.²³⁴ Pribićević was a highly cultured man with strong personal convictions, who would not have needed Nastić's cooperation in the drafting of the Statutes; if Nastić had had any part in it, or perhaps it would be better to say, if he had in any way instigated it (it is difficult to believe any of his statements either for or against), his role could only have been concerned with the inclusion of as much radicalism as possible in the Statutes. A national idealist who had left the Austrian and joined the Serbian army, Pribićević always wanted, even in Serbia, to have a free hand and therefore introduced into his statutes, as a fundamental clause, the proviso that the aim of the whole organization was "to remain always pure, free, and proud, dependent upon nobody" (p. 54). This organization, it should be particularly emphasized, was distinctly republican and not monarchist in character, and thus certainly not in the interests of the Karadjordjević dynasty, as the opponents would have had us believe.

3) Nastić's case was not the only one. Since Nastić was known in Bosnia and Herzegovina as an unreliable character whose family had a disgraceful record, his statements did not always have the desired effect, although on the strength of his statements many Serbs in Croatia and Slavonia were arrested, particularly Milan Pribićević's brothers, Valerijan and Adam, and the Serbs in Zagreb were put on trial for high treason. Further material was therefore sought. As

233 V. Pribićević and B. Budisavljević proved the falsity of his other statements in the *Srbobran*, nos. 169 and 174 in 1908. Cf. nos. 219-233, 1909.

234 *Wo ist die Wahrheit?* Sarajevo 1908, pp. 14-15.

early as the spring of 1908, posters were scattered throughout the Croatian district of Kostajnica with the offensive statements about the Imperial Household and the Emperor himself, inciting the people to revolt. The hostile press quoted this as indisputable proof of the Greater-Serbian and directly menacing propaganda, and this led to the long-discussed Kostajnica affair. But when a thorough enquiry was made into the whole business, it was established that this affair, too, was produced by an agent provocateur and it was quickly covered up. The two Croatian members of the Hungarian parliament, Dj. Šurmin and F. Supilo, disclosed the matter at a parliamentary session on 20-21 November, and demanded in vain a thorough and public investigation; Governor (*Ban*) Rauch's officials in Croatia did not consider it necessary to justify themselves and find the real culprits.²³⁵

The following case is still more serious. The Austro-Hungarian Legation in Belgrade employed a suspicious character named Mladen Sergijan (the illegitimate son of Mileva Vasić, who later took the name of Vladimir Vasić), an Austro-Hungarian subject whose duty was to steal and hand over to the Austrians the minutes from the meetings of the *Slovenski jug*, as well as its correspondence. Interested only in money, Vasić brought completely false or forged documents, which were photographed and partially copied in the Legation. On the strength of this material, which was later submitted to the Court of Belgrade, Dr. T. Masaryk established that certain documents were forged not only by Vasić, but also by the Legation interpreter, Victor Swietochowski.²³⁶ On the basis of the forged material handed over to him by the Foreign Ministry, Professor at the University of Vienna, Dr. H. Friedjung, published an article in the *Neue Freie Presse* on 25 March 1909, in which he collated various allegations about the Greater Serbian propaganda and brought serious charges against the members of the Serbo-Croatian Coalition in the Croatian Diet, accusing some of them of being directly paid by Serbia to undermine the Monarchy. A day after the publication of this article, the leader of the Coalition, Dr. Bogdan Medaković, president of the Croatian Diet, and Grga Tuškan, conscious of their own absolute innocence and that of their friends, challenged Friedjung in the press to expose the names of people who had been bribed. Offended by this

235 The suspected persons, the informers Max Kant and Nikola Kukić, who had been sent by the authorities and paid 7,000 crowns each to collect and send information in March-July 1907, were exposed by Dr. Dj. Šurmin in the Hungarian Diet on 6 March 1909. Cf. *Srbobran*, no. 40.

236 *Vasić-Forgách-Aehrenthal*, Prag 1911, pp. 54-62. Svjentoehowsky was a captain in the Austro-Hungarian Army, serving in the 70th Regiment. He entered into the service of the Belgrade Legation on 13 June 1903 as a head of the civil intelligence service, replacing the deceased Major Cvitash.

serious and false accusation, the entire Coalition pressed charges against the writer of the article and against the newspapers, the *Neue Freie Presse* and the *Reichspost*, which had published it, together with libelous additions and comments at the expense of the Coalition. In the course of the judicial enquiry, which started on 9 December 1909 in Vienna, the above mentioned documents were presented as evidence. It was soon established in court, however, that the documents were a very clumsy forgery. The language used in them did not correspond to the local dialect or to the language in literary use in Serbia, and there were a number of gross mistakes. The concrete statements contained in these documents could easily be contradicted by incontestable facts. It was at once established that there was no such person as Milan Stojanović, the alleged secretary of the *Slovenski jug*, who was supposed to have placed the documents at the disposal of the Legation. In the minutes for 18 October and 2 November 1908, the signature of Professor Božidar Marković figured as that of the chairman of the society then in attendance, although Marković was, according to the verified statement of the Berlin police, in Berlin at that time. Some documents from the Serbian Foreign Ministry referred to had false reference numbers. Dr. M. Spaljković, departmental head of that Ministry, who appeared of his own accord before the court to refute the libel, offered the representatives of the Great Powers to verify this themselves in Belgrade. In the face of such obvious facts, Dr. Friedjung faltered in his faith in the authenticity of the documents, and even Aehrenthal subsequently issued an official declaration to the effect that the Legation in Belgrade had been the victim of a swindler, of whose unreliability they were now convinced. This may have been the case; it may have been that the established complicity of some of the Legation officials in shady dealings with the forgeries was not a matter of their own initiative, but rather the work of Vasić; it is nevertheless very characteristic and symptomatic that it was possible on the strength of such material, unverified and no longer investigated, to publish charges of the most serious nature at a time when every word and every gesture were weighed carefully and when the consequences of such accusations might seriously affect not only individuals and groups – which was no light matter – but even the relations between the states. These documents were submitted to the heir-apparent, Franz Ferdinand, and, according to official information, to all the “leading persons concerned with the direction of the Monarchy’s affairs.” General Steb said during a conversation with Mirko Pisačić on 16 August 1908 that he had seen during an audience with the Emperor that even he had known about Nastić²³⁷ and about these denunciations; such material was used to justify all the measures taken

237 *Srbobran*. no 181, 1908.

against their own subjects and against Serbia. Such credulity – if that is what it was – was certainly reprehensible, because the most important decisions might have been involved. In many quarters in Serbia, however, it was firmly believed that this was not a question of mere credulity, but of intentional false imputation in order to justify all that was undertaken against the Serbs and Serbia. This belief was strengthened by the fact that not one of the responsible persons in this affair, after such disastrous revelations, was punished in any way, and that nobody in the Monarchy found it necessary to apologize for such unwarranted accusations. Serbia's suspicions were, to some extent, fed by the fact that Baron Aehrenthal started to refer more frequently to the danger of the Greater Serbian propaganda to justify the annexation, and not to the changed situation resulting from the Young Turk Revolution, as he had done at first in his official correspondence. On 29 September, Baron Tschirschky, wrote from Vienna, after a conversation with Aehrenthal, that the “annexation of the occupied provinces is an answer on the part of Austria-Hungary to the Greater Serbian propaganda which is carried out from Belgrade”.²³⁸

4) In connection with the preparations for the annexation, Baron Aehrenthal certainly wished to frighten Serbia, so that the latter, in fear of being involved in war with the mighty neighbouring Monarchy, would accept the act of annexation without public protest. The entire outcry about Greater Serbian propaganda clearly had this object in view. At a meeting with Tittoni, the Italian Foreign Minister, in Salzburg on 5 September 1908, Baron Aehrenthal expressed his views on all the outstanding political problems. To what extent he was truthful and sincere to his ally may best be judged from the fact that he informed him, at the time when he prepared the evacuation of the Sanjak, that Austria-Hungary would perhaps, if need arose, be forced to increase the number of garrisons there. On that occasion, clearly with the intention of having Tittoni let the Serbian government know, he told him that Serbia undermined the whole neighbourhood, that she became “a nest of revolutionary aspirations” and that Austria-Hungary, if Serbia did not settle down, would lose all patience and “we will be forced to punish that breaker of peace, who has become a real menace to the general peace of the Balkans”.²³⁹

5) The Bulgarian Minister in Belgrade, A. Toshev, confidentially informed his government on 13 July 1908 that his Austro-Hungarian colleague, Count Forgách, speaking of the secret relations between Serbia and Turkey directed

238 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, I, p. 44. Aehrenthal's conclusions based on the forged documents are admitted and noted down in the Austrian official collection. Cf. *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, I, pp. 81, 83.

239 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, I, p. 74.

against Bulgaria, had repeatedly advised that Bulgaria should attack Serbia while the latter was weak and unprepared. "At the present moment", he told him, "Russia is not in a position to hinder you at all. Austria and Germany are in full sympathy with you." Expatiating on the prospects for Bulgaria's gains in case of a Serbian defeat, Forgách particularly emphasized that the days of Khevenhüller's policy were over and that the Foreign Ministry was now directed by Aehrenthal, "whose feelings towards Bulgaria are well-known".²⁴⁰

It is obvious that Count Forgách would have made no such suggestion to his Bulgarian colleague on his own initiative – Austro-Hungarian diplomats were well disciplined in that respect – and it is not difficult to see what was the aim. Bulgaria would be the cat's paw for the Danubian Monarchy: she should defeat and humiliate Serbia, as it was stronger militarily and better prepared, in Austrian view, and thus render her incapable of taking any action when the annexation was proclaimed. The very provocative attitude of the Bulgarian press towards Serbia in the summer of that year should be viewed in this light; it reached such proportions that it made the fears of a Bulgarian attack seem justifiable and made the Russian government lodge serious protests in Sofia and send part of its Black Sea squadron to sail as far as Varna as a warning.

In Aehrenthal's programme, an important role was envisaged for Bulgaria. With her help, he intended to carry out more easily his plans in respect of both the annexation and relations with Serbia. It is by no means a mere coincidence that within a month of Baron Aehrenthal's appointment as Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister, his Bulgarian colleague in St. Petersburg, Dr. D. Stanchov, was returned to Sofia to become Foreign Minister, and that the latter soon took a hostile attitude towards Serbia. Aehrenthal's complacency towards Bulgaria was demonstrated in his first weeks in office, when he agreed on behalf of his government, that the system of capitulation be abolished in Bulgaria. In March 1907, at Vienna's suggestion, Austria-Hungary and Russia took joint steps in Belgrade and Athens against the *chetnik* activities in Macedonia, thus purposely omitting Bulgaria, who had been the first to resort to this kind of activity and provoked a reaction on the part of the menaced Serbs and Greeks because of the ruthlessness of her detachments. In the summer of the same year, Emperor Franz Joseph appointed Prince Ferdinand commander of the 11th regiment of his army. In Berthesgaden, Austria's plans for a joint action on the part of Vienna and Sofia against Serbia, and for the possible partition of the Serbian territory were fully expressed. Meeting Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria on 23-24 September 1906 in Budapest, Aehrenthal told him that Austria-Hungary, in agreement with Russia, would do what she could to uphold

240 Toshev, *Balkanskiti vojni*, I, pp. 181-2.

Turkey with its present territorial possessions, but that it would “set no obstacle in the way of the realization of any other wishes which the Principality might possibly entertain”; in other words, he gave his consent for the proclamation of Bulgarian independence. Another of his statements, equivocal but sufficiently transparent even in the Austro-Hungarian official style of writing, was to the effect that “the Principality should not embark on any adventurous policy which would not obtain the support of the Great Powers, but that, on the other hand, Bulgaria should be careful not to let slip any opportunity of realising her legitimate wishes or fail to exploit the supremacy in the Balkan, guaranteed to the Principality by its army as long as its present strength could be maintained.” At the same time, Aehrenthal let the Prince know that Austria-Hungary was preparing certain decisions in regard to Bosnia and the Sanjak.²⁴¹ What he was not loyal enough to say to his Italian ally, Aehrenthal said to the Bulgarian Prince no doubt because he had very good reasons of his own. It is highly likely, although there is no documentary evidence, that it was also agreed on that occasion that the proclamation of the annexation and that of Bulgarian independence should take place within a short period of time, in order to make it impossible for Turkey, surprised on two sides, to react energetically. The same result was expected in the case of Serbia. The annexation was publicly proclaimed on 7 October 1906, although Emperor Franz Joseph’s letter to Aehrenthal about the annexation was dated 5 October, which was the day when Bulgaria proclaimed her independence. The connection between the two events is so striking, especially after the visit of Prince Ferdinand to Budapest, that it is impossible to consider it *a priori* a mere coincidence. The whole diplomatic world realized this, and even German official circles. The German Ambassador in Constantinople, Baron Marschall, openly said as much to his Serbian colleague, Dr. J. Nenadović; Emperor Wilhelm II also believed that.²⁴² Moreover, the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador in Paris, Count Khevenhüller, told the French President as early as 3 October that the proclamation of Bulgarian independence would precede that of the annexation.²⁴³ “La Bulgarie ne nous suivra pas, elle nous précédera par cette proclamation!”, were his exact words, which undoubtedly referred to an agreement arrived at. The well-known Bulgarian scholar, S. Bopchev, told the Serbian Minister in Sofia, Simić, on 4 October (21 September) 1908 that the prominent circles had learnt a few days earlier that the proclamation of the annexation would

241 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, I, p. 74.

242 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, I, pp. 75, 84, 87.

243 *Ibid.*, p. 105.

follow immediately upon the proclamation of Bulgarian independence.²⁴⁴ The German Ambassador in Vienna, Tschirschky, also knew that the proclamation of Bulgaria's independence would precede that of the annexation, and said so to the British Ambassador, Sir E. Goschen.²⁴⁵ Count Khevenhüller contradicted this statement, it is true, but only after having been called to account because of it, and his denial was not made public, but was rather recorded in an official secret document.²⁴⁶ The assurances of Emperor Franz Joseph that he and his government had no idea that Bulgaria would act so rapidly and that Emperor Ferdinand had not made "the slightest reference to his plans in this respect either to himself (i.e. Franz Joseph) or to his ministers" deserve much more attention.²⁴⁷ The aged Emperor may have been so categorical as regarded himself personally and we may accept that statement as far as it concerns him, but it is rather doubtful that this was the case with his ministers. Such may indeed have been the information given to him, but it is by no means certain that he was given a perfectly straightforward and quite reliable explanation of the matter. None of these statements could dispel our doubts in this respect; we see that most of those who have written on this subject are also doubtful. Moreover, even if it were true, as Austro-Hungarian circles declare, that the Vienna government were not in the possession of a precise information as to the date of the proclamation of Bulgarian independence and that it came as a surprise to them, the political effect was nevertheless such that the whole world believed there was some connection between the two proclamations and formed their political judgments accordingly. These events were then, and are still, considered connected with much justification, especially as Austro-Hungarian official circles did not appear diplomatically compromised by Bulgaria's action, but decisively sided with Bulgaria, even in case of military complications, throughout the affair and immediately after the proclamation.²⁴⁸

The preparations for the annexation had started earlier in accordance with a fully-fledged plan. From 1906 onwards – it will be seen why it started then – the Greater Serbian agitation was cited as one of the main reasons for the annexation. We shall therefore pay more attention to this question with a view to proving two things:

244 Simić Milovanoviću, Sofija, 7. 10. 1908, Pov. Br. 518, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. III, sv. 3, pp. 169-171.

245 *British Documents*, V, pp. 445-6.

246 *Öst.-Ung.Aussenpolitik*, I, p. 242.

247 *British Documents*, V, p. 459.

248 *Öst.Ung.Aussenpolitik*, I, p. 246.

1) that the Greater Serbian propaganda as a direct menace was construed by those who, in their own political, military or nationalistic interests, desired the annexation to be effected as soon as possible, within a definite timeframe, and who without any tangible grounds for concrete accusations resorted to sending out provocators and to forgery. It was desired, for many reasons, to connect the annexation with the sixtieth anniversary of the reign of Emperor Franz Joseph in 1908; and since the opposition of the Serbian people both within and without the bounds of the Monarchy was counted on, it was considered necessary to paralyse it by means of accusations brought against the Serbs. The matter was urgent, and therefore instead of collecting strong concrete evidence, if there were such, easier methods were resorted to, or it was attempted to make something great and capital out of the insignificant and secondary.

2) The Greater Serbian aspirations, i.e. the aspirations of the Serbs to unify under a single authority, were not the product of a particular political period or of a particular Serbian government, but had been the constant aspiration of the whole people ever since the restoration of the Serbian state at the beginning of the nineteenth century. This frame of mind was nothing new either to European politicians and statesmen or to the Danubian Monarchy. The latter had plenty of time to counter Serbian aspirations with its own, not over a year or two but for many decades, since Austria had dealt with the Serbs for centuries and with the restored Serbia for a whole century.

Austria-Hungary explained and justified its whole policy towards Serbia on the grounds of the danger which threatened its Yugoslav provinces as a result of Serbian aspirations, which, it insisted, emanated entirely from Serbia proper, and aimed, especially of late, from 1903 onwards, at the unification of all the Serbs in an independent state – Greater Serbia – under the Karadjordjević dynasty. The entire Yugoslav enthusiasm at the beginning of the twentieth century was, according to Vienna, nothing but a wider framework of the same movement. Austria-Hungary had to suppress this action, the Austro-Hungarian patriots claimed, by every means at its disposal, as it threatened to deprive it of its southern provinces and, consequently, of the Adriatic coast in Dalmatia and the Croatian Littoral. In opposing Serbia and this movement, Austria-Hungary in fact only defended itself in the attempt to ward off the danger before it assumed larger proportions.

We do not intend to affirm that Austrian fears of Serbian and Yugoslav nationalism were without foundation. The restored Serbian state, which developed in the course of the nineteenth century, certainly manifested much vitality and a tendency to attract its co-nationals and, in accordance with the general nationalistic tendencies of that century which had triumphed in Germany and Italy, to accomplish the work of national unification. But the

other Balkan peoples, the Greeks, Bulgarians and Romanians, had the same aspirations, as was well-known in Europe. The Serbian, Bulgarian and Greek dreams of liberating their kinsmen from the Turkish yoke were not only well-known to all the European cabinets, including that in Vienna, but also assisted on many occasions. The work of Austria in Albania, under the Turkish rule, almost openly aimed at creating an independent state on that territory, if Austria were unable to attain her own ends there. The unification of their compatriots with a free national state at the expense of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was counted on not only by the Serbs, but also by the Russians, Italians and Romanians, and this was also known. The Serbs and their aspirations, therefore, did not represent a phenomenon unknown among other states and peoples, nor were they alone in Europe in cherishing national ideals which would arouse the opposition of those in possession of the land. "The non-correspondence of political and national borders, coupled with the idea that every people had the right to its own state, was one of the most powerful causes of unrest in European political life. The old borders, which had been fixed in the days of absolutism on the basis of reasons of state, were often considered a relic of by-gone times which had strangely projected themselves into the present with its different sentiments and requirements." These are the words of the well-known German historian, Erich Brandenburg.²⁴⁹ The problem in Austria-Hungary was particularly complicated because it was, as the only remnant in Europe of a great medieval, dynastic-diplomatic organism, composed of several races and peoples (the Slavs – Yugoslavs, Czechoslovaks, Poles, Russians, Ruthenes; the Germans; the Latin peoples – Romanians and Italians; the Hungarians), all of which, except the Germans, the Hungarians, and, to certain extent, the Poles, held themselves to be oppressed. Instead of offering all these peoples the possibility of enjoying equal rights and taking a proportionate share in the affairs of the state, in the shape of a federation of national states, as was particularly desired by the Slav peoples, the ruling circles in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy developed a theory of the leading races and peoples, and the Germans were proclaimed as such in one half of the Dual Monarchy and the Hungarians in the other. All the other peoples had to wage bitter struggles for their national rights and to overcome many difficulties before they could have national institutions of their own. The administrative system in Austria-Hungary was such that even the Czechs, whose politicians were confirmed Austrophiles until the mid-nineteenth century and whose theory was that if Austria had not existed, she would have had to be invented, endeavoured to liberate themselves from Austrian rule in the early

249 E. Brandenburg, *Die Ursachen des Weltkrieges*, Leipzig 1925, pp. 34-5.

twentieth century and to form a free state of their own. It is therefore easier to understand the aspirations of those peoples, who saw in their immediate neighbourhood free states of their own people, where the positive qualities of their fellow-nationals could find their full expression, while they themselves had to endure all kinds of difficulties and be handicapped by their status of second-class citizens. Austria rejected with contempt all proposals to become an enlarged version of Switzerland, considering that incompatible with her position as a Great Power.

It should be particularly emphasised that Austria-Hungary would have had less difficulties and would even have run less risks had it been content, after its experiences in Italy and Germany, with keeping what it already possessed, that is to say limited itself to a purely conservative and defensive polity, being politically and nationally heterogeneous. But that was exactly what she did not want. As early as 1878, Austria-Hungary made good its losses in Italy and Germany at the expense of the Serbs, and it later conducted its entire policy in the Balkans in such a way as to make it clear that it aspired to further conquests, no matter what, and to political supremacy in that peninsula. Even in 1908, when it attempted to give the impression that it had "had enough of" the Balkans, it in fact only thought of a temporary withdrawal, as has been disclosed in the above-quoted memorandum of 9 August, in order to advance even further at a more propitious moment.

Austro-Hungarian diplomacy and the public opinion presented the matter as if it was not before the early twentieth century that Serbia had arisen national feelings and national activities of Austria's Yugoslav subjects, especially since the accession of the Karadjordjević dynasty, and as if such aspirations had not existed earlier, or at least had not been so definite. Such interpretation is, however, tendentious, and easy to dispute with the well-known historical facts.

When at the beginning of the nineteenth century the uprising of the Serbs against the Turks in the Pashaluk of Belgrade was prepared, it was the Serbs from Austria who drew up plans for the organisation of the new state and established diplomatic relations with the outside world. The principal figure in these efforts was the Metropolitan of Karlovac, Stevan Stratimirović, who was the first to suggest the idea of forming a "Slav-Serbian Empire", which would include some parts of what was then Austria. In 1803, he even approached the Russian Court with this idea through reliable intermediaries. When the revolt broke out in 1804, the Serbs in Austria greeted it with joy. They sent volunteers to Serbia and munitions, arms and money, often against the wishes and orders of the Austrian authorities. A number of Serbs from Austria filled important posts in the restored Serbia; in the first Serbian government, the Minister of Education was the most prominent Serbian writer, Dositej Obradović, who

was born in the Banat. In 1807-8, the Serbian uprising provoked movements in Austria herself, in Srem and the Banat, against the local authorities and with clear sympathy for Serbia. In the early nineteenth century, the Montenegrins heroically defended Boka Kotorska against Napoleon's detachments, while the Montenegrin Prince-Bishop, Petar I Petrović Njegoš, exercised administrative authority in the Boka for a while. In 1834, the agrarian insurgents in the Sava valley in Bosnia asked for help from Serbia, just like the insurgents in Herzegovina later asked for it from Montenegro. The activities of *Vojvoda* Luka Vukalović and his friends against the Turkish authorities in eastern Herzegovina between 1852 and 1862 were linked with Montenegro and, on two occasions, led to war between Turkey and Montenegro and to European mediation to conclude peace (in 1858 and 1862).

The Yugoslav movement developed most intensely under the name of Illyrianism among the Croats who invited the Serbs and Slovenes to form a great national community as early as the 1830s. The leader of the movement, Dr. Ljudevit Gaj, came to Serbia to the Court of Prince Alexander Karadjordjević in 1846 and 1847, with the knowledge of Prince Metternich and established there a closer contact with members of the Serbian government and Serbian intelligentsia. Other Illyrians did the same both before and after this, among them some of the most prominent men of their day, such as Ivan Kukuljević, Bogoslav Šulek, Father Ivan Jukić. When the Hungarian revolution broke out in 1848, the Serbian government dispatched to southern Hungary a subsidiary volunteer army under the command of *Vojvoda* Stevan Knićanin to help the Serbian insurgents, and incidentally the Austrian Court, against the Hungarians. The Austrian government then accepted with gratitude the assistance and the influence of the Serbian government in the matter of the Serbian subjects of the Monarchy. On 16 October 1846, in accordance with the instructions of the Austrian authorities, the Patriarch of Karlovac, Josif Rajačić, appealed to the Serbs for help with the following message: "The (Austrian) Consul, Herr Mayerhofer, has issued a written declaration to the effect that he will personally guarantee the return to Serbia of any financial assistance she may give to our people engaged in the movement, and he therefore begs that help may be given".²⁵⁰ In 1848, Austrian officers in Srem were happy, as they reported to their superiors, "that the moral influence of the Serbian government is fortunately still so great that the local people dare not oppose it." Serbian officials then even guarded the dwellings of Austrian officers on the Austrian territory and saved those who were threatened, together

250 D. Pavlović, *Srbija i srpski pokret u južnoj Ugarskoj, 1848. i 1849.*, Beograd 1904, p. 92.

with General Hayer at their head, by taking them across the Sava to the Serbian territory.²⁵¹

During the Serbian literary and national romanticism in the 1860s, the most prominent supporters of the Pan-Serbian movement were mostly Austrian Serbs, the politician Svetozar Miletić and the poets Jovan Jovanović Zmaj, Djura Jakšić and Dr. Laza Kostić. The first assembly of the *Ujedinjena omladina srpska* (United Serb Youth), whose name was indicative of its programme, was held in the Austrian territory, in Novi Sad, in 1866, while the second one that was organized in Belgrade in 1867, was dissolved. The principal Serbian newspapers with romanticist national ideology were also published in the Austrian territory: the political *Zastava*, the literary *Danica*, *Javor* and *Matica*. The journal *Brankovo Kolo*, which was named after the popular *kolo* (ring, round dance) in Branko Radičević's poem was also published in the town of Karlovci, in Srem, between 1895 and 1913 – just like the poem written in 1847 it encompassed all the Serbs from all the regions they populated. *Brankovo Kolo* meant the same thing as *Ujedinjeno Srpstvo* (United Serbiandom). In the 1860s, Novi Sad was a place of refuge for the political emigrants from Serbia, whose authorities were considered too conservative, even reactionary, and not sufficiently active in the work of national liberation. From Novi Sad, the popular poet Zmaj ridiculed the Serbians for postponing from one spring to another the war against the Turks, calling them “the Belgrade grannies”. At that time, the Turkish authorities in Sarajevo, just like the Austrians later, talked about the Greater Serbian idea and punished the Serbian students in Banja Luka for singing “inflammatory Serbian national songs”.²⁵² National romanticism amongst the Croats led at the same time to the revival of the Illyrian movement under the new Yugoslav name and with the new Yugoslav institutions. The main representative of the Croats, the learned Bishop J. J. Strossmayer, maintained political relations with Prince Michael of Serbia, whose policy was clearly national and Yugoslav; when the Prince was assassinated in 1868, Petar Preradović, the greatest Croat poet, who was at the same time an Austrian general in active service, lamented in a memorial poem dedicated to the Prince that with his dead body many national hopes were buried.

The rebellion in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1875 was connected with Serbia and Montenegro, as the whole of Europe was well aware; because of this rising both Serbian states entered into war with Turkey and provoked the military intervention of Russia and, indirectly, the Congress of Berlin. Even at that time the insurgents's assemblies in Bosnia proclaimed the Prince of Serbia as their

251 *Spomenik srpske kraljevske akademije*, LXIX, Beograd 1929, p. 61.

252 Dr. J. Koetschet, *Osman Pascha*, Sarajevo 1999, p. 33.

ruler, and those in Herzegovina the Prince of Montenegro. On 20 June 1876, the leaders of the revolutionary movement handed a memorandum on the proclamation of a union between Bosnia and Serbia to all the Great Powers. Bishop Strossmayer wrote to the British statesman Gladstone that it would be “a just compensation for Serbia’s sacrifice of her blood in the sacred cause, if the autonomy of Bosnia were entrusted to her energetic hands with their fifty years of experience”.²⁵³ Prince Peter Karadjordjević, later King of Serbia, fought himself with a detachment in the Bosnian Krajina under the name of the old hero of the popular ballads, Petar Mrkonjić. The Hungarian authorities then imprisoned the leader of the Serbs in Vojvodina, Svetozar Miletić, accusing him of high treasonous intentions on behalf of Serbia, although he mostly provided support to the rebels in the shape of volunteers and money. On 1 March 1878, the Bosnian insurgents, foreseeing the occupation, petitioned the Russian Emperor Alexander II with the statement that “it is the eternal wish of the whole of our people to become an integral part of the Serbian Principalities” and that “we can enter into no political union with Austria-Hungary in any form whatever, nor do we desire occupation by Austria-Hungary”.²⁵⁴

In 1832, during the insurrection in Herzegovina and Boka Kotorska against the Austrian authorities, the Vienna government themselves asked for Montenegro’s cooperation to quell the insurrection. A publication dealing with this insurrection issued by the Austrian General Staff read: “The territorial border drawn up by the Congress of Berlin divides a people which is perfectly homogeneous in respect of customs, language and religion; their neighbours in Montenegro, connected by thousands of ties of blood relationship, are in the truest sense of the word the brothers of the Herzegovinians”.²⁵⁵ The same was true for the Bosnians, the Serbs of Serbia, and the other Serbs in the Danubian Monarchy. When in 1886-7 an attempt was made in Croatia to organize on the basis of a mutual agreement the united opposition of the Serbs and Croats to the regime of *Ban* Khuen-Héderváry, the Croat politicians sent Dr. Erazmo Barčić to Belgrade in the summer of 1887 to raise interest in this question among Serbian circles in the Kingdom. On 9 August 1889, after the conclusion of the concordat between Montenegro and the Vatican, Strossmayer wrote to Prince Nicholas of Montenegro that he hoped that the Archbishopric of Bar (which was in the Prince’s territory) would include, as in earlier times, “the whole of Albania, the whole of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and also the whole of

253 R. W. Seton-Watson, *Die Südslavische Frage in Habsburger Reiche*, Berlin 1913, p. 595.

254 *Ustanak u Bosni*, Novi Sad 1884, p. 201.

255 *Der Aufstand in der Herzegovina. Süd-Bosnien und Süd-Dalmatien, 1881-1882*, Wien 1883, p. 8.

Serbia", of course, under the Prince's leadership.²⁵⁶ As early as 1898, Edouard Richter, Professor at the University of Gratz, who prepared a major work on the geography of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the assistance of the Bosnian government, wrote that the Serbs in these lands, insofar as they had any political convictions, looked to their compatriots in Serbia and Montenegro and conceived of a Greater Serbia; for that reason, the Austro-Hungarian authorities "hold them down politically" and took harsh measures against them.²⁵⁷ At that time, even the Bosnian Muslims, who were Yugoslavs by race, but because of their religion felt themselves affiliated to the Turks, started to evince national aspirations in the Serb sense, envisaging borders "from the Timok to the Adriatic Sea", even in the Bosnian-Herzegovinian press, which was subjected to preventive censorship.²⁵⁸ "Among the Serbs", the Assistant Governor of Bosnia, Baron Benko said to Dr. Baernreither in 1908, "the national spirit is strong".²⁵⁹

With a view to all these facts relating to the nineteenth century alone, why was it necessary to the Serbian government to carry out national propaganda in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the neighbouring Yugoslav territories? If Austria-Hungary as a medieval organism had to win friends over with money and agitation, as it did in Bosnia and Herzegovina prior to 1878 and afterwards in Albania, Serbia and Montenegro, it was certainly unnecessary for Serbia to do so. The Serbian national consciousness and national solidarity were as strongly developed in all these provinces as in Serbia proper. For Serbia and Montenegro, it was unnecessary to foster any special connections with the people in these provinces, for such connections had existed for centuries and had been very strong. A good half of the intelligentsia in Serbia was born in and originated from, or had family connections with, the provinces under the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. In the Belgrade High School, and later at the University, more than half of the professors were Serbs from outside Serbia, and the same was true for the Academy. A few statistics obtained from a study of the settlements show how many Bosnian and Herzegovinian families, for instance, had settled in the Kingdom of Serbia. In the Jadar and Radjevina area, there were 150 families from Bosnia and 125 from Herzegovina;²⁶⁰ in the region of Kolubara near Valjevo and Podgorina, 2359 families were of Bosnian, Herzegovinian or Dalmatian stock, which was 22.34% of the total population;²⁶¹ in the Smederevo area along the Danube and Jasenica, 135 families came from

256 F. Šišić, *Politika*, 1932, no. 8622.

257 *Österreichische Rundschau*, VI, 1906, p. 150.

258 Cf. A. Karabegović, *Zora*, 1898, p. 330.

259 Baernreither, *Fragmente eines politischen Tagesbuches*, p. 61.

260 *Naselja*, Izdanja Srpske kraljevske akademije, IX, 1913, pp. 681-5.

261 *Ibid.*, IV, 1907, pp. 484-5.

Bosnia and 219 from Herzegovina;²⁶² in Kosmaj, there were 460 families from Herzegovina and 111 from Bosnia and Lika;²⁶³ in the Sokol region, the population from Bosnia, Herzegovina and Dalmatia numbered 2447 homes.²⁶⁴ In 1835-6, 2615 persons, fleeing from the Turks, came from the Bosnian Krajina via Austria to Lešnica and Loznica in the liberated Serbia.²⁶⁵

Just as it would be absurd to see anything strange or not permissible in the relations between Bavaria and the Tyrol, or between Saxony and Austria, it is equally absurd to maintain that the relations between Serbia and Montenegro and the neighbouring Yugoslav lands were provocative to Austria and worked up purposely and through agitation. That was, after all, well-known, even in those centers that later tried to give a different interpretation to these facts. Did not Bismarck, when he offered in 1866, together with the Italians and the Hungarians, to cooperate with Serbia against Austria, count on Serbian influence and connections across the border? Did not his reporter Lobero tell him correctly on 1 September 1865 that the Serbs and Croats in the lands of the Crown of St. Stephen took pride in Serbia and sympathized with her?²⁶⁶ If there would be any point in speaking about the sins in history, it was no doubt a sin on the part of Austria-Hungary to take upon itself, for purely imperialistic reasons, to enter with an army into Bosnia and Herzegovina and to attempt with its policy of denationalization to break those ties of race and blood which nature and centuries of historical life had created.

The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, it could be said, did not find these relations as such impermissible or dangerous, but rather took a dim view of Serbian propaganda, which was directed against it, and of the aspirations that the said provinces would one day break away by force. The principal reason for this conception was Austria's earlier experience with Italy. But even this point of departure was in a sense wrong. The agitation against Austria was not so much inspired by the Serbs from Serbia, but rather by the Serbs from the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. German national and literary romanticism brought about a similar movement among all the Slavs in Austria. The chief "Pan-Slav" centers were founded on the Austrian soil, in Vienna, Prague, Pest and Bratislava, and the main representatives of that movement were the Czechoslovaks Ján Kollár, Pavel Šafárik, Ludevít Štúr. The chief reason why the movement soon assumed anti-Austrian tendencies was certainly the attitude

262 Ibid., XIX, 1925, p. 255.

263 Ibid., XXIV, 1930, p. 30.

264 Ibid., p. 348.

265 Ibid., XXII, 1926, p. 279; T. R. Djordjević, *Iz Srbije kneza Miloša*, II, Belgrade, 1904, pp. 59-60.

266 H. Wendel, *Bismarck und Serbien im Jahre 1866*, Berlin 1927, p. 66.

of the Vienna Court and government towards the Slavs and the experience they gained in their dealings with them. As early as 1838, the British Consul in Serbia, George L. Hodges, noted that her Serbian subjects hated Austria and counseled Prince Miloš Obrenović not to take into his service the Serbs from Austria, "who were all supporters of Russia and had incited (Prince) Miloš to those acts which had offended Austria".²⁶⁷ The later attitude of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy towards its Serbian subjects only gave further food for agitation. The abolition of the Serbian Vojvodina in 1860 founded after the assistance which the Serbs had given to the Habsburg dynasty during the Hungarian Revolution, the disbanding of the *Ujedinjena omladina srpska* in 1871, the arrest of the most popular Serb in Hungary, Svetozar Miletić, in 1876, the violation of the autonomy of the Serbian Church under the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan of Karlovac, the prohibition in Bosnia and Herzegovina of the use of the Serb national name and the forcible imposition of "Bosnian" patriotism, all this, together with many other injustices and chicanes, estranged the Serbs from Austria. After taking Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1878 against the will of the vast majority of the population, Austria had a rather uneasy conscience. Bosnia and Herzegovina were supposed to compensate her for her losses in Italy and Germany; she entered there on the strength of a mandate asked of the Great Powers on the alleged mission of pacification, but in fact one of conquest. The words should not deceive us as to the meaning. The acquisition of these provinces, L. Thallóczy, a senior Austro-Hungarian official and a Hungarian historian wrote, was "a command of history".²⁶⁸ Perhaps, but not in the sense Vienna desired. To Austro-Hungarian statesmen, it had been clear since the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina that they had entered into a foreign domain and into national possession of other people. From that time onwards, Viennese diplomacy constantly feared the national reaction of the Serbs. For that reason, the proclaimed axioms of Austro-Hungarian policy were: 1) not to allow the formation of a strong Slav, i.e. Yugoslav, state in the Balkans, which might begin to play the role of Prussia or Sardinia; and 2) to prevent the union of Serbia and Montenegro by occupying the Sanjak of Novi Pazar. Serbia should be allowed merely to exist, but not to grow stronger; she should remain forever a stunted organism which would need external support in order to exist. Austria thus herself prepared the ground for the Serbian reaction, conscious from the first of the danger which she did not care to avoid in her greed.

267 M. Gavrilović, *Iz nove srpske istorije*, Beograd 1926, p. 153.

268 *Österreich-Ungarn und die Balkanländer*, Beograd 1916, p. 105.

Meanwhile, the Serbs were constantly aspiring to unification. The way to realize it, it was well-known, was long, very arduous and full of danger. The means and methods were therefore long contemplated. There was no unanimity in this respect and it was, not surprisingly, very difficult to achieve it. There were Serbs in Turkey and Austria-Hungary, the states which were much more powerful than Serbia in terms of using force of arms. While it was believed that Turkey was rotten and that it would be possible to count on the collaboration of the other Balkan peoples against it, who could carry out their own national programmes at the expense of Turkey's possessions, Austria-Hungary presented a much more difficult problem. It was much stronger and better organized, and had powerful allies. There were many people in Serbia and among Serbs outside the Principality who thought that the work of unification would have better prospects, if it were carried out with Austria than in opposition to her. Apart from that, even the most radical elements knew that the Serbian question could not be settled at once, because of the constellation of Powers in Europe, but only in stages, which would take a long time. Larger and more powerful states than Serbia were neither desirous nor able to carry on a struggle on two fronts, both of which were overpowering. When in April 1905 the question of the annexation of Crete by Greece was brought before Europe, Pašić considered the advisability of requesting the unification between Old Serbia and Serbia proper, if the Greek demands were favourably met. In 1885, the Bulgarians had obtained Eastern Rumelia and now the Greeks were about to receive Crete, so it was just, he thought, that the Serbs should also liberate a section of their compatriots. In an unfinished draft in his own handwriting, dated 16 April 1905, he pondered: at best, Austria-Hungary would respond to the unification of the Serbs by annexing Bosnia and Herzegovina. "Is Old Serbia", he asked, "a sufficient compensation to us for the loss which we shall suffer if Austria-Hungary annexes Bosnia and Herzegovina? To raise the question of Bosnia and Herzegovina means first and foremost a break with Austria-Hungary, a break not only in the political sense, but also in terms of commerce and communications; it means leaving Serbia exposed to reprisals and to the rage of a mighty neighbour, and without any powerful protector to defend her from Austro-Hungarian aggression. And to raise neither question means to sit with our hands folded and wait for fate to decide what is at last to become of Serbia." He gave no answer to that question, but it troubled him for long. In another draft, also unfinished and written nine days later, he returned to this matter, enlarging on the original question. What would happen if Austria-Hungary decided to enter into Turkey? What should Serbia do then? To join it or to resist it together with the Turks and other Balkan peoples? "If Italy were against Austria-Hungary's action and willing to oppose it with armed force, then our choice of the side to join would not be difficult." But

if that did not occur, what should be done then? This and similar questions, involving manifold possibilities, presented themselves to Serbian statesmen, who were in a dilemma as to how to answer them. Nevertheless, the liberation from the Turks seemed to be both more pressing and easier. In Turkey, where public security was on a very low level, where the Albanians and various *comitaji* bands were rampant, the Serbian people were threatened more directly. The attention of the whole Serbian nation had long been drawn to that direction, initially with the sympathy of, and perhaps with the aid from, Austria-Hungary according to the Secret Convention. It was only after 1900, when Austria-Hungary visibly changed its attitude towards the Serbian aspirations in the south on account of Serbia's rapprochement with Russia and embarked on a policy which gave grounds for the suspicion that it intended to penetrate, for her own ends, through Mitrovica towards Kosovo, that Serbia felt her interests were imperiled and saw that even in the Turkish question she was in conflict with Austria and that her entire national policy was increasingly dependent on the attitude of Vienna. It was then that Serbia embarked on a policy, the object of which was not only to prevent further Austrian penetration into the Balkans, but also to make it impossible for Austria to develop unrestrained influence in the Balkan politics, or to reduce such influence to a minimum. This resistance on the part of Serbia, to which Viennese diplomacy had not been used in the days of King Milan, was considered impertinent in Vienna and all possible means were used to break it.

The Serbian question, thenceforward, had a double importance for Austria-Hungary. It was not only afraid of Serbia's relations with its own Serbian and Yugoslav subjects – the similar relations existed in case of the Romanians in Erdelj, the Banat and Bukovina, although they had not so far given rise to such frequent conflicts – but it started to feel more acutely that a free and resistant Serbia, with aspirations to and influence in Old Serbia, was a great obstacle to further Austrian plans in the Balkans. A Serbia unwilling to be the obedient executor of Vienna's plans and with independent political schemes and aspirations would become an unpleasant political factor. In its Balkan policy, Austria-Hungary had to reckon with Russia and Italy, and it could not therefore be indifferent to the attitude of the Serbs, who were the first people to encounter in its further advance and who were the most numerous of all the Balkan peoples. The Austrian ill-will towards the Serbs was not just due to the danger they presented to the existing situation, but equally, if not more, to Vienna's plans for the future. The whole affair with the Sanjak and the Adriatic railway offers the best evidence of this.

Such a policy on the part of Austria-Hungary towards Serbia could not fail to influence its Serbian subjects. With their well-developed national consciousness and the sense of national solidarity, they could not approve proceedings

which were humiliating for their compatriots and threatened their future, or which were designed to help the Bulgarians and Albanians at the expense of the Serbs. "To us Serbs", the Sarajevo journal *Srpska Riječ* wrote on 16 (3) January 1906, "no one will ever suppress the instinctive feelings which we have for our brethren. These feelings are stronger than all the paragraphs in the world." There is no doubt that the Austrian Germans would have risen like one man, if their diplomacy had assisted Germany's enemies in any question of vital importance to Germany. When Count Goluchowski emphatically took the part of Germany in the Morocco Question, so insignificant to Austria-Hungary, he did so, among other reasons, largely because he knew that he acted in accordance with the inclinations of the influential Germans in the Monarchy and that any other attitude on his part would certainly have aroused their opposition. The attitude of the Serbs in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was not the result of propaganda from Serbia, but the spontaneous expression of their own convictions and of the need they felt to show themselves to be a political factor whose wishes must be taken into account.

There were many reasons why the attitude of opposition adopted by the Serbs in the Danubian Monarchy developed in a marked degree in the early twentieth century. The first and main reason was the conflict between Vienna and Pest, which assumed large, and at one point dangerous, proportions between 1903 and 1906. The Hungarian Independent Party with many traditions of Kossuth and with one of Kossuth's sons at its head, led the struggle for as complete emancipation of the Hungarians as possible, advancing certain demands which were intended to ensure for Hungary fully independent institutions, such as, for example, a Hungarian army, or at least the use of the Hungarian language in the army, a Hungarian Bank, etc. To suppress these demands and this sharp opposition, i.e. the obstructionism of the Kossuthists, the ruling Liberal Party resorted to, with the consent and on the advice of Vienna, to a series of severe measures, among which the forced reform of parliamentary rules of procedure, carried out on 18 November 1904, provoked a vigorous reaction from the opposition. This measure even made the members of other Hungarian political parties, which had hitherto shown less bellicose spirit, to join the ranks of the opposition and caused considerable secession from the ranks of the Liberal Club itself. The opposition coalition was formed in Hungary and assumed a very determined attitude in opposition to Vienna. At the elections held in January 1905, after the dissolution of the parliament, the opposition won and had behind it the vast majority of the people, with 231 seats against 159 won by the government. After the defeat of the Liberals, the government headed by General Fejérváry was formed, consisting of the

supporters of the Court, to which the parliament refused a vote of confidence and which consequently represented something of a commissariat. The attitude of the Yugoslavs was carefully watched both by Pest and Vienna during this struggle; both sides tried to win them over with promises. The Hungarians appealed to the Serbs and sought their assistance; they even tried to get into touch with persons in Serbia and from 1904 onwards organized demonstrative excursions to Belgrade. Certain members of the opposition parties, particularly that of Kossuth, even came to the Serbian Consulate in Pest to explain their opposition to Vienna. At Whitsuntide in 1906, around a hundred Hungarian journalists arrived in Belgrade, together with a number of members of parliament and of the House of Magnates and the Prefect of Novi Sad, and spoke vehemently against Vienna and its policy. Z. Lengyel spoke on that occasion against the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, since these were Serbian lands, and against Austria's attitude in the tariff war.²⁶⁹ When on the occasion of the transport of Rákóczi's remains and the celebrations in his memory, a private Serbian delegation in Orşova was prevented from participating officially, that incident provoked violent protests on the part of the Hungarian opposition. Questions were asked in Parliament and on 14 November 1906, a great torchlight parade was organized in front of the Serbian Consulate as a manifestation on the part of university students, who sided with the opposition, under the leadership of a number of members of parliament. The official Hungarian news agency accused Kossuth himself of maintaining contacts with Serbia through the leader of the Serbian Radicals in Hungary and the editor of *Zastava*, Jaša Tomić, and of publicly greeting Serbian politicians and journalists at the time "when there existed a breach of economic relations between our Monarchy and Serbia, so that it amounted to giving a moral support at the expense of our economic interests".²⁷⁰ The promises made by Hungarian politicians were, to some extent, taken seriously in Serbia and their help was hoped for in the contest with Vienna. Kossuth himself declared to the Serbian Minister in Vienna on 10 June 1906 that the part he and the Wekerle government played in the Serbian question consisted in "assuaging and soothing the attitude of Ballplatz towards Serbia in the matter of linking the commercial treaty with the question of our state supplies".²⁷¹ The Serbs in Serbia had much sympathy for the Hungarian resistance for the following two reasons: 1) that resistance weakened the strength of the hostile Danubian Monarchy; and

269 *Die Zeit*, 3 June 1906.

270 *Pester Lloyd*, 4 March 1906.

271 Vujić Pašiću, Beč, 11. 6. 1906, Pov. Br. 263, in: Aleksić-Pejković and Anić, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. II, sv. 1/2, pp. 1083-1085.

2) they hoped that that resistance might neutralize and perhaps render completely ineffectual the military element in Vienna, which desired more vigorous action in the Balkans.

On the other hand, Vienna influenced the Croats through the clerical and military circles. The Serbs and Croats had, however, ample experience from 1848-9. At that time, they had engaged in a difficult struggle against the Hungarians, largely for the sake of Vienna, and had incurred large-scale casualties, and it had all resulted in the withdrawal and annulment of almost had all the promises and privileges granted them earlier by the Court; in 1867, they had been abandoned once more to the Hungarians. Therefore, the Serbs and some of the independent-minded Court now modified their political attitude. Instead of uniting with Vienna against the Hungarians, they now showed their willingness to join the Hungarians against Vienna.

The Court and military circles in Vienna felt that the attitude of the Serbs and Croats in this crisis was the natural outcome of the development of political life in the Monarchy. The well-known Viennese Professor, Dr. Friedrich Wiesner, wrote in 1904 the following: "Since the dismissal of Taaffe our national politics has been marked by national passion; the clumsy hand of Badeni has pushed it into the phase of national crisis. All the party groupings which were subsequently arranged to form a strong majority and majority governments were broken up after a relatively short duration on account of the severity of national differences."²⁷² The private secretary of Crown Prince Franz Ferdinand, Paul Nikitsch-Boulles, has recounted that the Arch-Duke knew "perfectly well that from the moment Hungary had been given an independent government and the state had been thereby divided into two parts, the seed of discontent and the desire for independence had rapidly begun to grow among all the other nations in the Danubian Monarchy."²⁷³ Writing his great work about the last Austrian Emperor Charles, Count Arthur Polzer-Hoditz, says that Austria's problem was, to a great extent, rooted in the problem of Hungary. "The Hungarians were the first, with their desire to secede and their irresistible demand for a complete independence, who shook the Habsburg Monarchy to its foundations and provoked similar aspirations among the Slavs."²⁷⁴ "The center of gravity of the Serbian question", Lord Fitzmaurice, the British Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, rightly said to the Serbian Minister Milićević in the summer of 1906, "lies in the development of the

²⁷² *Österreichische Rundschau*, I, 1904, p. 189.

²⁷³ *Vor der Sturm, Erinnerungen an Erzherzog Thronfolger Franz Ferdinand*, Berlin 1925, p. 83.

²⁷⁴ *Kaiser Karl*, Anatheia Verlag, pp. 12-3.

situation in Austria-Hungary with regard to the question of nationality".²⁷⁵ The situation developed as described below.

On 2 October 1905, forty Croat deputies from Croatia, Dalmatia and Istria, assembled in Fiume and declared themselves in sympathy with the Hungarian struggle for national self-determination and constitutional rights and liberties. Twenty-six Serbian deputies from the same provinces assembled in Zara on 16 October and expressed themselves in similar terms. Soon afterwards, on 12 December 1905, the Serbo-Croatian opposition parties, just like the Hungarians, formed a coalition. In return for their collaboration they demanded, in addition to the unification of Dalmatia with Croatia, radical changes in the administration of Croatia and constitutional guarantees for full freedom of political activities. They were especially justified to do so, since the Hungarian leaders themselves admitted that the Croatian people been treated violently and unjustly. In one of his articles, F. Kossuth pointed out that the bad regime of the last twenty years in Croatia had been in accordance with the wishes of the Court camarilla, but had not had the support of the Hungarian people.²⁷⁶ In the 1906 elections, the Serbo-Croat Coalition obtained a strong relative majority and retained it until 1918, in spite of all the obstacles placed in its way by the Vienna circles and government commissars in Croatia. The Serbo-Croat Coalition was an irritant to Vienna, especially the military circles, but it was soon disappointed in the Hungarian Coalition. Frightened by Fejérváry's threat of a cabinet of "commissars" and by the proposal of the Interior Minister, József Kristóffy, for an introduction of universal suffrage in Hungary, the Hungarian Coalition showed itself inclined to make concessions and on 7 April 1906 accepted the government under the premiership of Dr. Wekerle, the Court candidate. Along with the government, it accepted the whole frame of mind of the Viennese Court, especially as regards the relations with the Serbs and Croats. The promises about the improvement of the regime were soon forgotten; moreover, further oppression followed.

In their relations with the Serbo-Croats and other nationalities living under the Crown of St. Stephen, the Hungarians had long showed a disregard which provoked opposition. Aware of the fact that they constituted the minority in Hungary, they wanted to change the ratio to their benefit by means of a state, and exclusively Hungarian, policy. They therefore embarked on the determined policy of Magyarisation. Their method was dictatorial and harsh, but

275 Milovanović Pašiću, London, 5. 7. 1906, Pov. Br. 167, in: Aleksić-Pejković and Anić, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. II, sv. 1/2, pp. 1192-1195.

276 Seton-Watson, *Die Sudslavische Frage in Habsburger Reiche*, p. 172.

systematic and consistent. From 1900 onwards, we may note several important dates in this process.

The Hungarian Minister of Education, Albert Berzeviczy, submitted to the Hungarian Parliament in the autumn of 1904 the Education Bill designed to facilitate the Magyarisation of the non-Hungarian nationalities, which provided in Article 14 for the introduction of Hungarian as the language of instruction in all schools where 20% of the pupils were Hungarian and in all the so-called repetition schools regardless of that percentage. The number of lessons and the curriculum for the Hungarian language in autonomous schools had to conform to those prescribed by the Hungarian Ministry of Education. Candidates for the training colleges were supposed to give evidence of their proficiency in Hungarian language. The Education Bill further required autonomous or private religious elementary schools "to teach every pupil to speak, read, write and calculate in correct Hungarian", i.e. children were required to master a foreign language, along with their mother tongue. The Assembly of the Serbs in Novi Sad pointed out in their memorandum: "To expect a child in the elementary school to learn another language correctly before it knows its mother tongue is like trying to teach somebody to ride before he can walk properly." The Bill further provided for certain subjects to be taught in Hungarian, even in the elementary schools of other nationalities, and for religious instruction in the public schools to be given in Hungarian even to non-Hungarians, while it depended on the Ministry of Education whether the child was to be allowed additional instruction in its mother tongue. In all the repetition schools religious instruction was to be given exclusively in Hungarian.²⁷⁷ This proposal stirred great excitement among all non-Hungarian nationalities and led to many protests. All the members of the Serbian ecclesiastical synod in Karlovci signed an appeal, summoning the people to a great protest rally to be held on 1 December 1904, but it was prohibited by the authorities and never took place. Similar meetings held in Vršac, Sombor, Petrovac and other places clearly showed the bitterness aroused among the people by the bill, which did not become law only because the Hungarian parliament came into serious conflict with the Crown on account of military matters and was dissolved. As soon as normal parliamentary conditions were resumed in Hungary, the same bill reappeared in a somewhat modified form. It was submitted to the parliament by Count Apponyi as Education Minister. It was accepted in 1907, although it clearly violated Article 9 of the 1868 law which granted the Serbs the right to decide on their own educational questions in their ecclesiastical

²⁷⁷ *Zastava*, 1904, nos. 229, 236, 239.

councils. The new law was clearly designed to serve Magyarisation purposes. Article 17 required the following: "Every school and every teacher, whatever the type of school and regardless of whether it is state-subsidized or not, must foster and strengthen in the children's mind the spirit of loyalty to Hungary and the consciousness of belonging to the Hungarian nation".²⁷⁸ Bjørnson, Bjørnstjerne felt it his duty publicly to raise his voice in protest against this law, and he did so on 20 October 1907. "To sever children from their mother tongue is like taking away hungry infants from their mother's breasts."

Hungarian educational policy in general was conducted without regard for different national elements. In the school year 1906-7, there were not more than 14 schools in the whole of Hungary for 188,552 Croats, whereas there were 65 Hungarian schools in Croatia for 90,000 Hungarians in 1910.²⁷⁹

In addition to Berzeviczy's bill, the Hungarian Premier, Count Tisza, decided on 23 October 1904 to transfer the bequest made by the benefactor Sava Tekelija to his Serb people from the Serbian Ecclesiastical Council to a commission appointed by the Education Minister. In doing so, the last will of the bequeather was violated, as well as express legal provisions. Article 19 of the Serbian Church Constitution of 1875 clearly established that all funds and properties left for the benefit of Serbian schools and Church should be administered by the Serbian National Church Council; this exception was therefore a twofold blow to the Serbs: it was an offence against the legal foundation of their autonomy and deprived them of the right to dispose of part of their national property. Prince Bülow has recorded in his memoirs that during his service in Bucharest he observed "too often" to what extent "the Romanians and Serbs were embittered by the mixture of megalomania and psychological shortsightedness, fanatical intolerance and lawyer-like distortion, which characterized Hungarian policy in regard to nationalities. But the contempt of the Hungarians for the smaller peoples on the territory under the Crown of St. Stephen was too deeply rooted for any arguments based on reason to counter it".²⁸⁰ At the suggestion of the German Minister Schillinger, the Austrian parliament passed a resolution on 16 December 1907, which required that the Hungarians, in the interests "of the successful life together and the strengthening of the Monarchy" apply the Nationalities Act of 1868 "in the spirit of complete liberty, justice and humanity" as this had clearly not been the case earlier.

278 Cf. *Srpski književni glasnik*, XVIII, 1907, pp. 950-2; *Glasnik Istorijskog Društva u Novom Sadu*, V, 1932, pp. 136-7.

279 Seton-Watson, *Die Sudslavische Frage in Habsburger Reiche*, pp. 133-4.

280 *Denkwürdigkeiten*, I, p. 160.

Forcible Magyarisation and the confiscation of material resources destined or bequeathed for the cultural development and national maintenance of the non-Hungarian nationalities in Hungary, was also extended by the Hungarians beyond their own territory, to Croatia and Slavonia, which were autonomous and with which Hungary was tied on the basis of the Compromise of 1868. As early as 1889, the Hungarians had raised the Croatian contribution to the joint administration of the Monarchy from 6.4% to 7.4%, transferring their own dues to the Croats. This and many other irregularities and violations of the Compromise forced the Croats to demand by constitutional means, through the Regnicular deputations, a revision of the financial compromise. In February 1903, all the Croatian proposals were rejected, which of course caused great irritation in the country. Inconsiderate in their proceedings, the Hungarians chose this moment of frustration to put up a sign in Hungarian language at the railway station in Zagreb and later attempted to do the same in other places. Irritation on this account soon turned into rage. On 27 March, a series of demonstrations began that soon spread from Zagreb into the interior. The Croats had been fighting the Hungarians for a whole century, ever since 1790, because of the language question. The Hungarian "language" policy had previously aroused the fighting spirit of the Illyrian movement and had been the principal cause of the Croat-Hungarian conflict in 1848. The memories of this were now revived. The Croats saw the action of the Hungarians as a systematic plan to exhaust them financially and, once they had been exhausted, to impose on them, among other things, the Hungarian language as the official medium in the joint administration. The feeling of bitterness in Croatia therefore reached such a high pitch that there was bloodshed in some places with the loss of life, and martial law was proclaimed in the country. This movement in Croatia echoed among the Croats in Dalmatia and Istria. It assumed such proportions that some thirty deputies of the Dalmatian and Istrian Diets applied for an audience with the Emperor to support the cause of their countrymen. But the Emperor did not receive them, thus giving cover to the attitude of the Hungarian government and *Ban Khuen-Hédervary*, its exponent in Croatia. The reason for this refusal to receive the deputies was that the Croats from Dalmatia and Istria, who were Austrian subjects, had no legal grounds to interfere with the affairs falling under the jurisdiction of the Crown of St. Stephen. That such purely juridical reason deeply wounded the national feelings of Croats and showed the absurdity of national relations within the Danubian Monarchy was not taken into account sufficiently. "It is notorious", Seton-Watson says, "that this was the turning point in the relations of the Habsburg dynasty with the Yugoslavs ... When the representatives of the people are prevented from approaching the throne, discouragement, discontent

and disappointment prevails".²⁸¹ And the natural consequence of such an attitude in the highest places was the desire to be rid of the limitations and all the harsh regulations of alien laws which did not allow brethren living together in one commonwealth to help each other. The Hungarians rejected the Croats from Dalmatia and Istria as aliens; was it any wonder then that the latter began to seek ways and means of arriving at a different constitution and at a national union in another framework, while at the same time they began to feel as aliens in relation to the chief centers of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy?

Although Pest was, after so many years of conflict with the Croats about the language question, aware of how sensitive the Croats were in these matters, the new Regulations for Railway Service, drawn up in 1907, still had a clause that required all employees in the railway service to speak Hungarian. In a government statement following the Bill, it was explicitly said that this requirement was made because the official language used on the railways in the lands of the Crown of St. Stephen was Hungarian. The Croats refused to allow this in their territory at any price. "According to this regulation, the knowledge of Hungarian is required of every railway worker, even of those who clean the tracks or drive the trucks."²⁸² The Serbo-Croat Coalition and the whole Croatian government rose in vigorous protest against this for another reason: because, from a purely legal point of view, such a decision could not be made by the Hungarian Diet in Budapest on its own initiative and without the consent of the Croatian Diet, without violating the Compromise. The Hungarians took no notice of this, and placed the Regulations on the agenda of their Diet, whereupon the Serbo-Croat Coalition responded with obstinate obstructionism. All Croatian public opinion supported the Croatian deputies. "The railway question has turned into the Croatian question", a prominent Zagreb newspaper wrote.²⁸³ The organ of the Croat Party of Right, the *Hrvatsko pravo*, wrote bitterly²⁸⁴ that the Hungarians were an "unjust, violent, greedy, impetuous people, who under the protection of Germandom have assumed the task of oppressing the non-Hungarian nations in Hungary, of repressing the Croats, of establishing predominance in the Balkans through the Croats." To crush the resistance of Croats, the Hungarian government changed the Croatian government and the *Ban*, and appointed Alexander Rakoczay, an official of Hungarian origin, as a new *Ban* who was supposed to carry out their decisions. On 28 June,

281 Seton-Watson, *Die Sudslavische Frage in Habsburger Reiche*, p. 131.

282 *Pokret*, 1907, nos. 115-6.

283 *Obzor*, 1907, 23 May.

284 13 April 1907.

the Serbo-Croat Coalition addressed a proclamation to the people in which they spoke as follows:

“Over the Bill concerning the Regulations for Railway Service, which aims at establishing the Hungarian language by law in the territory of the Kingdom of Croatia and thereby violating the explicit provisions of the fundamental laws of the state, the representatives of the Kingdom of Croatia and Slavonia in the joint Diet have come into serious conflict with, and have broken away from the Hungarian coalition government and the parliamentary majority. Not only will the representatives of the Kingdom of Croatia in the joint Diet, who belong to the Croatian and Serbian Coalition, never allow the natural and legally recognized right to their language to be thus trampled on, but they also deny the authority of the joint government and the joint Diet willfully and by the supremacy of numbers to evade the application of treaties entered into by the two countries on the basis of equality, which can be modified only in the manner prescribed by law ... The Hungarian government, unable to break down the resistance of the Croatian representatives, overthrew the Croatian national government, which fell a victim to intrigues and one-sided information. The *Ban* was replaced by a civil service official who was brought into Croatia twenty years ago to carry out the wishes and plans of a foreign power. In his appointment, the most basic constitutional and parliamentary principles were ignored, for although the constitution gives the Hungarian premier the right to propose the new *Ban*, the same law makes the *Ban* responsible to the Croatian Diet, and the opinion of this Diet was never sought in the settlement of the present crisis as regards the *Ban*.”

Immediately after this, the Regulations for Railway Service were withdrawn in Pest and replaced by a law which consisted of a single paragraph. It was hoped, by this arbitrary procedure, to evade the Croatian-Serbian opposition and to break down its obstruction. The one paragraph contained all that was needed: only Hungarian citizens, with the knowledge of Hungarian language, were eligible for appointments in the state railway service. In the Croatian and Slavonian territory, the knowledge of Serbo-Croatian was also required, in addition to Hungarian which was mandatory for all, but only in the case of clerks and officials whose duties brought them into contact with the public or the local authorities.

The feeling of bitterness increased to an unexpected degree throughout the country as a result of this action on the part of the Hungarian government, which was sanctioned by the Court. The *Pokret*, one of the principal organs of the Serbo-Croat Coalition, the largest political party in Croatia and Slavonia and the party which had until recently been in power, wrote afterwards without hesitation that the Croats, rejected by Vienna and Budapest in such

a dictatorial manner now had no other way of continuing the struggle than seeking for support among the wider circles of their compatriots. In no. 151 of 4 July 1907, the same paper voiced its conviction in the following terms: "In accordance with national, democratic and social principles, we too demand that every people, including our own, be united in one land, within the bounds of which it lives in continuity; that the people be independent in every respect, and also in terms of statehood. We go even further in considering public law and all laws to be only means to this end. We go even further: we set no barriers to this territory, nor impose any limitations on this union, but emphasize relations and alliances with the neighbouring peoples. These are the natural rights, these are the elementary rights of every people. The sovereignty of the people is recognized in a constitutional state and a sovereign people cannot be guilty of high treason." The obstructionism was later increased in the Pest Diet, and the Croatian Diet was dissolved in retribution on 12 December 1907.

Is it necessary then to examine particularly whether the Serbian government in Belgrade and Greater Serbian propaganda, or the Austrian Court and the government in Pest were responsible for the mood prevailing in Croatia?

Here again we have another example, from another province and of another kind. The Governor of Dalmatia, Baron Handel, carelessly said on one occasion, in his pompous bureaucratic manner, that he attached no value to the Dalmatian word of honour. When the whole Dalmatian Diet consequently threatened to break off all relations with the administration in the country as long as Handel remained at its head, it was not Handel, the cause of the rupture, who was removed, but rather the Dalmatian Diet that was dissolved 23 September 1904. It is difficult to believe that the Vienna government would have thus dissolved and insulted a German Diet or a Hungarian municipal assembly, had a similar insult been uttered by some Slav official at the expense of their people. Is it any wonder then that the Yugoslavs, embittered by such proceedings, grew cold towards their rulers in Vienna and Budapest, even without any intellectual and idealistic aspirations to national unification? H. Wickham Steed has recounted that one of the most prominent and influential Croats in Dalmatia, Dr. A. Trumbić, mayor of Split and a national deputy, called upon him in April 1904 with the request that the *Times* should make public the Hungarian prosecution of F. Supilo, whose offence had consisted in speaking favourably in his *Novi List* of an agreement between the Italians and the Slavs on the Adriatic question.²⁸⁵ People were seeking for help wherever they thought they could get it, for in Austria-Hungary itself, with the existing

285 H. Wickham Steed, *Mes souvenirs, 1892-1914*. I, Paris 1926, pp. 204-5.

division of authority, it was impossible for them to ensure the respect for their convictions or even for their rights.

A similar case was that of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The two Yugoslav provinces were exploited as if they had been two colonies. The officials there, brought from various parts of Austria and Hungary, often unqualified and largely recruited from the lower ranks of the army, with a scanty knowledge, if any, of the Serbo-Croat language, behaved without much consideration, becoming wealthy in illegal ways and arousing among the people a sense of disgust both for them and the administration they represented. As early as 1904, 34.5% of the officials in the occupied territories were from Austria, 38.29% from Hungary and only 26.48% from Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the gendarmerie, 88% were the Austrians and Hungarians, and only 12% the natives. As a result, a very strong movement was created in these lands against these foreigners, or *kuferaši* (suitcase carriers) as the people called them pejoratively, and it was demanded that the native element be given more prominence in the administration. The system of denationalization carried out in too obvious and clumsy a fashion caused considerable discontent in the country. After the uprising in 1882, which was put down by force, this discontent was expressed by various deputations and memoranda of protest. In 1896, the Serbian municipalities began a struggle for the autonomy of the Orthodox Christian Church and their national school, because they felt themselves threatened by the alien authorities, whose object was to proscribe and suppress their national consciousness, and by the Roman Catholic propaganda conducted by the Jesuit Order and extensively assisted by the authorities. The (Roman Catholic) Archbishop of Sarajevo, Dr. Josip Štadler, even came into conflict with the representatives of the Franciscan Order, who came mainly from Bosnia and Herzegovina, and accused them, among other things, of religious tolerance and inactivity, although the Franciscan Order in Bosnia and Herzegovina had preserved the Roman Catholic faith at the price of many personal sacrifices and sufferings during the Turkish rule. The Muslims joined the Christian Orthodox movement in 1899. From 1901 onwards, university students from these provinces, educated almost exclusively in the Austrian universities of Vienna, Graz and Chernivtsi, and to a lesser degree in Zagreb, began to play a part in public life and commenced their stinging writings and vigorous activities for the cause of political liberties. Their action was echoed particularly among country people, among wretched serfs whose relations with the *aga* land-owners had not been settled by the authorities, although the agrarian question was an old social evil which had sparked many conflicts and to which the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister, Count Andrassy, referred in Berlin as one of the most pressing concerns in the new provinces. Discontent with the regime was also shown by the

representatives of the otherwise small working-class and, in 1906, it resulted in the first strike in Bosnia and Herzegovina organized by the Socialists and in demonstrations in some of the larger towns. On 3 May that year, there was bloodshed in Sarajevo; the gendarmerie opened fire, and five men were seriously wounded and two killed; on 14 May, there were seven wounded and four killed in Zenica.

As long as the preventive censorship existed, the authorities were able to suppress the expression of this discontent and to prevent it from spreading publicly, but when on 16 April 1907 the Press Act came into force, providing for certain freedom of speech, the long suppressed criticism and protests burst out with such force as to surprise and perturb all the circles concerned. Their position at once became decidedly difficult. From 1878 to 1907, for nearly thirty years, they had been used to being criticized only by their appointed superiors and they had behaved accordingly, paying almost no heed at all to public opinion. Public criticism, galling, sharp and merciless seemed to them like some elementary disaster. As it was difficult for them to admit that so much discontent in the country, both among the Orthodox Christians and Muslims, among peasants and workers, was a disastrous record of their administration, they resorted to the excuse that the discontent came from outside, i.e. that it was the fruit of foreign agitation. Even if this excuse, which was quite false, had been accepted, it would still have spoken badly for the regime in Bosnia and Herzegovina. If foreign propaganda met with such widespread approval in the country, it must have meant: 1) that that country offered favourable soil for such propaganda, for there could be no such understanding and reception in contended provinces; and 2) that after thirty years of administration, Austria-Hungary had not succeeded in conquering the hearts of its new subjects, or in convincing them that to live in a union with it was a necessity for their cultural and economic development. Viennese circles were fully aware that a plebiscite in Bosnia and Herzegovina would go against them, and they therefore did not dare to bring the question of the annexation before the people of those lands; for the same reason, they did not dare to grant a constitution to the occupied lands before the proclamation of the annexation. They even openly admitted this in the Vienna, Zagreb and Sarajevo press,²⁸⁶ without realizing how that fact was damning for them, even if their thesis that propaganda from Serbia was responsible for the opposition of the two thirds of the population (in Bosnia and Herzegovina, according to the official statistics for 1910, 43.5% were Christian Orthodox, 32.2% Muslim and 22.9% Roman Catholic; the Orthodox and Muslims formed an overwhelming majority in the

286 Cf. in particular *Bosnische Post*, 1907, nos. 266, 270.

opposition) were accepted. We know, however, that this was not the case. As early as 1903, Goluchowski said to the Italian Minister, Count Nigra, explaining that Austria-Hungary had no desire to obtain the infertile and ill-disciplined Albania, for it had already had a bad expedience with Bosnia and Herzegovina: "In spite of Mr. Kállay's best efforts and his disinterested optimism, nobody in this country conceals the fact that Austrian influence has not advanced a single step in the occupied territories and that [Austria] has won no sympathy there".²⁸⁷ The well-known Croatian Frankist politician, Dr. Isidor Kršnjavi, who cannot be said to have been a friend of the Serbs, wrote at the end of 1907: "There is no doubt that the Serbian movement in the Croatian lands, which in Bosnia they already dubbed as 'boiling', is viewed with much goodwill in Serbia, but it would be self-deception to put down the difficulties with the Serbs which are felt in Bosnia and in Budapest entirely to influence from abroad. They are more probably the consequence of mistakes made in Austria-Hungary."²⁸⁸

A former Austrian Minister of Commerce and a member of the Delegations, J. M. Baernreither, published in 1908, after a journey to the provinces, his impressions and information about Bosnia and Herzegovina.²⁸⁹ He wrote fairly conscientiously and frankly. He found that the reports of the revolutionary spirit in these lands were overrated and unfounded, and that the entire government machinery was functioning without resistance. But the difficulty lay in the fact that the Bosnian government and the people had no contact except through their official relations. "The government is entirely self-centered." However, new political life blossomed around it. Political parties were organized and programmes drawn up. The government had no means of exercising its influence upon political life, and this was, he thought, not a danger but certainly a warning to the ruling circles. "We must", he says, "come to a decision as to the participation of the people of these lands in public affairs, and thus bridge over the unnatural gulf between the public administration and political life." He further mentions the still unsettled agrarian question and then the terrible fact that as late as 1908 only 14.33% of the children in Bosnia and Herzegovina attended school on account of the lack of school buildings. As he obtained his information mostly from the government sources in Sarajevo, it is no wonder that he lays stress on the Greater Serbian danger and its roots in Belgrade; but at the same time, his arguments offer sufficient foundation for the conclusion that the discontent of the people arose, to much greater extent, as a consequence of the mistakes and omissions of the occupation authorities.

²⁸⁷ *Documents diplomatiques français*, 2^e Serie, III, Paris 1931, p. 85.

²⁸⁸ *Österreichische Rundschau*, XIII, 1907, p. 399.

²⁸⁹ *Bosnische Eindrücke*, Wien 1906.

The *Srpska Riječ*, therefore, could rightly emphasize in an editorial article published in no. 356 for 1907 that "instead of attempting during the last three decades to remove the causes of the discontent, the gentlemen in power have clamped down with all their power on the consequences."

There is the fact, and nobody thinks of contesting it, that both the Serbian population in Serbia and Montenegro and the governments of the two countries were actively interested in the fate of their compatriots in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and that in some of the crises which the latter endured, they endeavoured to support them with sympathy, advice and intervention on their behalf, and in some cases, when they suffered, with material assistance to them or their families. That interest was lesser or greater at a given moment, either because Serbia was at times more concerned with her own internal difficulties, or because Austrian pressure on her was more direct and stronger, and her interest had to be concealed, although it never ceased; there were also times without political events of much importance and when the proceedings of the Austro-Hungarian authorities gave less cause for recrimination. But there was not, and could never have been, any government in Serbia indifferent to the fate of its compatriots in the Danubian Monarchy, and to the way in which they were treated. Only a third of the entire Serbian nation lived in Serbia, and much more than a third within the boundaries of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. And there is no nation in the world that would not be concerned for such a large number of its members, or endeavour to help them to preserve their identity. It was often said in Austria-Hungary that there was a feeling of friendliness towards Austria in Serbia under King Milan, and that Serbia's attitude at that time rarely gave cause for complaint. To persons with only a superficial knowledge of the situation, this statement seemed credible, and it was therefore often repeated in the press. However, King Milan was alone in Serbia in favour of a completely Austrophile policy, and even he was not unconditionally in its favour, while the two largest political parties in the country, the Radicals and Liberals, were against it and sought for support in Russia. Although the disappointment in Russia was great in Serbian circles after the Treaty of San Stefano, Austria-Hungary still did not succeed in suppressing Russia's influence. The Austrian regime in Bosnia was not friendly towards the Serbs, and Austria's Balkan policy in general was not very sincere. Between the alien Austria and the Slav Russia, the Serbs opted for the latter. One of the principal reasons for King Milan's political failure was that he pursued a policy contrary to the popular feelings; even the Progressive Party on which he depended did not share his views on many subjects. From the reports of the Austro-Hungarian Minister in Belgrade we know that Vienna was fully aware that even M. Piroćanac, Prime Minister in the Progressive

Cabinet under King Milan, was not of the same opinion as the King in respect of a policy towards Bosnia.²⁹⁰ The Vienna government knew this, and its diplomatic representatives often had conversations on the subject with the authorities in Vienna and Belgrade, and complained of the writings of certain papers or of statements made by certain people even during the reign of King Milan. Baron Thömmel, who became Minister in Belgrade in 1889, vigilantly followed the writings of the Serbian press and “carefully noted down not only suspicious articles, but even suspicious expressions, such as, for instance, ‘national aspirations’, ‘Slav solidarity’, ‘brothers under the yoke’; even the expression ‘Serbdom’ was not to Baron Thömmel’s liking”.²⁹¹

As soon as King Milan abdicated and the Radical Party, the largest party in the country that represented four-fifths of the people, took power in 1889, it was felt that relations were beginning to change. In accordance with tradition from the time of King Milan, Austria continued to interfere with purely internal Serbian affairs. The government intended, for instance, to reinstate Metropolitan Mihailo, who had been dismissed because of a political disagreement with the Progressive government and because he was a devoted Russophile. The Austrian authorities endeavoured by all means to prevent this, saying that the Metropolitan was their enemy and that he would become a center of nationalist propaganda. But the Serbian government would not give way to them on this point, considering that it had the sole right to judge the acts of its Church dignitaries. In 1890, the Austro-Hungarian border was closed for the first time for the Serbian export of pigs, and Vienna started to complain about the writing of the Serbian press. In 1896, the first meeting between King Alexander of Serbia and Prince Nicholas of Montenegro took place; this meeting of the heads of the two Serb dynasties aroused considerable national excitement, for the Serbs chose to see in it a new political spirit and a step towards the realization of national ambitions. In the same year, during the celebration of the millenary of the coming of the Hungarians to their present lands, the flag of Serbia, as a former vassal of Hungary, was carried among others in the Hungarian ceremonial procession. This offended the Serbian government, which then refused to take part in the celebrations in Pest, although they were of an official character; in Belgrade, students burned the Hungarian flag in retaliation. This attitude on the part of Serbia was viewed even more unfavourably in Vienna, because the Progressive Party was in office and it was considered at least partly Austrophile. If such an attitude in the matter had been adopted by that party, it was not difficult to suppose how much

290 Cf. A. Ivić, *Arhivska gradja*, III, Beograd, 1932, p. 290.

291 S. Jovanović, *Vlada Aleksandra Obrenovića*, I, p. 77.

more bitter would have been the attitude of the other two parties, the Radicals and Liberals. After the return of King Milan, during the period from 1897 to 1900, the relations improved again, but the Secret Convention of 1881 was not renewed. King Milan himself felt its inconvenience, and he could see how greatly the political situation had changed and how much colder the attitude towards Austria-Hungary had grown since then. After King Alexander's marriage and King Milan's departure from Serbia, in the summer of 1900, relations grew worse again. We have already traced their development and Vienna's ill-will towards Serbia in the first chapter of this book.

The statements made in Viennese and other circles to the effect that the relations between Austria and Serbia became particularly strained from 1903 onwards and that through some special fault of Serbia, or the change of the dynasty in Serbia, are therefore quite inaccurate. We have already seen the unfriendly designs of Emperor Franz Joseph and Goluchowski in regard to Serbia on the eve of the Mürzsteg meeting in 1903, only two months after the arrival of King Peter in Serbia. Their hostile decisions with regard to the future development of Serbia and Serbdom had in general been made long before and were the result of a long-established programme. Serbia and the Serbs had developed their national ideology for a century past, publically in the press and in debate, and Austria had adopted on her side hundreds of different measures in her own territory and in Serbia and Montenegro, in order to compromise that ideology or suppress it or make her own combinations against it, including a Greater Bulgaria, a Greater Albania or a Yugoslavia within the Austrian framework, which would include the remainder of Serbia after her partition with Bulgaria. The Berlin decisions made in accordance with Vienna's wishes in 1878 showed a clear tendency to prevent the process of Serbian unification; the yeast of mistrust and foreboding was present there. Serbia had had earlier no serious conflict with Austria-Hungary; thenceforward, the Serbian question was always to the fore. Montenegro was also part of it no less than Serbia; its interests were the same and sometimes, during King Milan's reign, even more active than those of Serbia. Some American historians thus view, with good reason, the allotment of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy by the Congress of Berlin as the origins of future hostilities.²⁹²

That the Serbian national movement did in fact come to fuller expression after 1903 was mainly due to three fundamental facts: 1) that from that time onwards the Serbian government was in the hands of cabinets which represented the real attitude and feelings of the nation, which required more

292 J. S. Ewart, *The Roots and Causes of the War (1914-1918)*, New York, II, 1925, p. 948; Bernadotte Schmitt, *The Coming of the War 1914*, I, New York, London 1930, p. 108.

political high-spiritedness and development of their own strength, while the new King Peter, as a constitutional monarch, did not adopt the role played by King Milan, nor opposed national desires, as Austria had expected him to do;²⁹³ 2) that in 1902 the reforms in Turkey were begun with Austria taking the lead and showing tendencies opposed to Serbian interests and even open hostility; and 3) that in Austria-Hungary itself the attitude of the Germans, and even more the Hungarians, had provoked the resistance of other nationalities, especially the Yugoslavs, and had led to their open reaction.

The Viennese circles especially emphasized that their uneasiness was caused by the activities of Serbia in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which were alleged to have been particularly zealous after 1906. But political relations between the Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina and those in the Kingdom of Serbia during the twentieth century were the same as they had been in the previous century. A river could not divide a people conscious of its national unity and constantly forced by foreign pressure to look for mutual support. When because of the very active Catholic propaganda in the country and of the attacks of the authorities on the Serbian church schools, the Serbs of Bosnia and Herzegovina started their struggle for religious and educational autonomy in 1896, they from the first met with understanding not only in Serbia, but also in the whole of Serbdom. Men were found amongst the Serbs in Hungary who placed their experience and their knowledge at the disposal of their less qualified compatriots. Dr. Djordje Krasojević, Dr. Nikola Djurdjević and particularly Dr. Emil Gavrilica, the editor of the Novi Sad *Zastava*, at once became the legal advisers of the Orthodox Christians and Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina.²⁹⁴ When the struggle assumed larger proportions and when, in order to suppress the nationally very conscious Serbian laity in administration of church and school, the Austro-Hungarian government attempted, with the help of the corrupt Greek Patriarchate in Constantinople, with which the Bosnian Orthodox Church was connected, to force on the Serbian people a church statute providing for the powerful influence of the authorities and of a higher clergy dependent on the authorities, the Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina made an appeal to the Serbian government for moral support in 1899. What else could they do? The Austrian authorities were working against them and against their aspirations; the anti-Orthodox policy of the Habsburg Court had been the Viennese tradition

293 Steed, *Mes souvenirs*, I, p. 184.

294 Commander A. Heyrowsky, who writes very maliciously and with little knowledge of Serbo-Austrian relations, states incorrectly that one of the Serbian leaders, V. Šola, came into contact with Gavrilica as late as 1910, after the opening of the Bosnian Diet. See *Neue Wege zur Klärung der Kriegsschuld*, Berlin 1932, p. 15.

since the eighteenth century, and even after the Toleration Act of Emperor Joseph II the Orthodox Church had only been tolerated; but it had always been seen as an element outside the unifying process of the religious, and in connection with that, political community. Wherever it was possible to weaken the influence of its adherents, that was done throughout the nineteenth century in such consistent manner as to indicate that it was systematic. In 1885, the Orthodox Metropolitan in Sarajevo, Sava Kosanović, was removed from office, only because he had made an energetic protest against the proselytizing activities of the newly introduced, militant Jesuit Order in Bosnia. When, however, at the beginning of 1903, the Archbishop of Sarajevo Štadler gave permission to a Muslim woman and two of her children, who were under age, to be christened in disregard for the provisions of the law and refused to return the children, even on the express demand of the authorities, the *Neue Freie Presse* pointed out on 28 March 1903 the injustice of such proceeding and considered it necessary to expose the case to public condemnation. But even this was of no avail. It was impossible to do anything against Štadler as the most senior officials in the province and in the country were on his side. When he was actually brought to account, in connection with another case in 1905, Dr. Štadler sent a written statement to a government official in Sarajevo on 17 January 1906, openly and clearly saying, "I must not and never will observe" the government's orders in the matter of conditions required for conversion from one faith to another, the Bosnian government having issued this order without previous agreement with the Holy See. This open refusal, which was published in the newspapers, to observe orders issued by the authorities took place without any serious consequences for the intolerant Archbishop, who was supported by the Court itself. One method of procedure was applicable to an Orthodox Metropolitan and another to a Catholic one. The Serbs in Serbia had long before perceived the tendencies of the militant Jesuits and readily responded to the call to help their compatriots in their action. This assistance was initiated – this should be particularly emphasized – at the time when King Milan was still in Serbia as Comander-in-Chief of the Army and when the Austrophile Cabinet of Dr. Vladan Djordjević was in office. But since Serbia was too weak to oppose the powerful influence of the Danubian Monarchy in Constantinople, she asked for help from the Russian Embassy after 1900, and that help was given. Russia and Serbia, as two Slav countries of the same faith, used all their influence with the Greek Patriarchate, which was rather anti-Slav, in order to prevent that the Serbian people in Bosnia and Herzegovina be given a church law which might work against their interests. The Serbian clergy, too, at the requests coming from Bosnia, appealed through the Archimandrite Aleksa Ilić from Belgrade to St. Petersburg itself for the protection of the Orthodox religion, and they

met with the full sympathy from the principal representative of the Russian Synod Pobedonostsev. In 1899, the Muslims also started their struggle for religious autonomy, similarly embittered because of some proselytizing acts of the Jesuits, and, in January 1902, their deputation arrived in Constantinople under the leadership of the Mufti of Mostar, Ali Fehmi Efendi Džabić, to ask the Sultan, as their Caliph, and the Porte to intervene for the protection of their faith. Like the Orthodox Christians, they too had to take their struggle beyond Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in order to attain the desired results through the intervention of other parties, who were of the same faith and therefore had more understanding for their needs and their offended susceptibilities. The Austro-Hungarian administrative circles naturally looked upon these proceedings with much mistrust, although it made them adopt a more conciliatory attitude, especially as they probably realized themselves that some actions of the Jesuit Order, as well as their own, had been tactless and aroused bad blood unnecessarily. Therefore, after the death of Kállay in 1903, who had been the principal representative of the old system of oppression, they entered into negotiations with the Orthodox Christian leaders and granted them religious and educational autonomy in 1905; they granted the same to the Muslims in 1909, during the Annexation Crisis.²⁹⁵

In exposing these facts, we must especially emphasize that it was the Serbs, Orthodox Christian and Muslims, of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who asked for help from Serbia and Turkey, and that the initiative did not come from Belgrade or Constantinople. The movement for religious and educational autonomy was at the same time the first movement of national opposition against the regime; the whole people, as well as the authorities, saw it as such. The authorities thus immediately started to persecute it. At the head of the Orthodox movement were Gligorije Jeftanović of Sarajevo, Vojislav Šola of Mostar, Kosta Kujundžić of Lijevno, Laza Jovanović of Tuzla and others, all rich merchants and landowners, with the old and honourable family traditions, highly respected not only locally, but also throughout the country. Ideologically, these men, just like others in those lands, were in sympathy with Serbia both before and after the Austrian occupation; they rightly did not separate in their minds Serbdom from Serbia. This is a fact which cannot be contested. After all, they demonstrated it whenever it was necessary. In late 1901 and early 1902, when the movements of Austro-Hungarian troops took place in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Gligorije Jeftanović and Vojislav Šola considered it their duty to communicate to the

295 On this struggle, cf. M. Maksimović, "Crkvene borbe i pokreti" in: P. Slijepčević, ed., *Napor Bosne i Hercegovine za oslobodjenje i ujedinjenje*, Sarajevo 1929, pp. 79-106; O. Hadžić, *Bratstvo*, XIX, 1929, pp. 217-248.

Belgrade government the news which reached them of these preparations. It would never have occurred to any government, and certainly not to the government of the unpopular Alexander Obrenović to ask for such services of people of so high a social standing, nor could have any amount of money induced such men to do this. They did it out of the deepest national convictions and out of their fear for the national future, just as their fathers and grandfathers had done at the time of the Turks.

It should be noted that the Yugoslavs in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy never concealed their sympathies for Serbia and her national mission, but rather gave public expression to their sentiments. At the coronation of King Peter in September 1904, a large number of Yugoslavs from all parts of the Monarchy openly went to Belgrade, with the passports approved by the Austro-Hungarian authorities. The King's Coronation was hailed by the popular poet, Aleksa Šantić, a member of one of the most prominent and most independent families in Herzegovina, in a poem which contained the following verses:

Fulfilled is our long-felt wish,
 For on one of George's line,
 Pure and shining as the sun,
 Sparkles now King Lazar's crown,
 Warms our hearts with freedom's ray.
 Hail to thee, our new-found strength!
 Hail, thou blessing of the Serb!
 All hail!
 Glory to thee,
 O shining crown! In thee lies a nation's hope!²⁹⁶

This poem was published in Sarajevo, in the *Bosanska Vila*, no. 23-4, in 1904, under the nose of the provincial government of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and it passed the censorship, just like all else that was published in the province. The Novi Sad *Zastava*, no. 202 wrote on 7 September 1904: "Not just the Serbs, but all the Yugoslavs today look joyfully to Belgrade and Serbia. They see that Serbia is becoming what she should be, the brightest spot in the Slav South." The *Dubrovnik*, no. 2 of 18 September, declared "that the Serbs of Dubrovnik, as members of the Serbian and South Slav spiritual community, participate in spirit with the joyful hearts in the Belgrade celebrations", while the seriously ill Antun Fabris wrote in no. 40 that the celebration of the centenary of the First

²⁹⁶ Aleksa Šantić, *Celokupna dela, Izdanje Narodne prosvete*, II, pp. 250-5.

Serbian uprising and the coronation of King Peter, with a crown forged from one of Karadjordje's guns, gave "the celebrations a symbolic significance for the welfare and progress of the Serbian nation and, with it, the whole South Slavdom." Almost all the Serbian literature of that period, with all its most prominent figures, was markedly national. The most active and probably the best were the writers from Austria-Hungary: A. Šantić, Jovan Dučić, Petar Kočić, Svetozar Ćorović and a Muslim, Osman Djikić, from Bosnia and Herzegovina; Simo Matavulj, Marko Car, Ivo Ćipiko, Mirko Korolija from Dalmatia; Stevan Sremac, Veljko Petrović, Milan Jakšić, Tihomir Ostojić, Vasa Stajić from Vojvodina. The most active and enthusiastic students of Serbian history came from the provinces across the Sava and Danube, from Djordje Branković and Jovan Rajić in the eighteenth century until the present time. Neither of the two professors of national history at the University of Belgrade before the war was from Serbia proper; they were Ljubomir Jovanović from Dalmatia and Stanoje Stanojević from Bačka. The most popular literary work was *Jazavac pred sudom* (The Badger on Trial), a satire written in 1903 by the gifted Bosnian writer, Petar Kočić. It is not only a keen parody of the occupation regime, but also a clear expression of national feelings. A Bosnian peasant, pretending to be naive and loyal to the new administration, says he cannot, while in fact he does not want to, admit that the Austrian Emperor is his Emperor, and asks in the court whether it would be possible to take the Serbian King and the Montenegrin Prince, and "hew out [of them] at least a medium-sized Emperor, for we Serbs have long yearned an Emperor." This work published in Zagreb in 1904 had had some ten editions before 1914 (an unprecedented thing in the Yugoslav literature in such a short period of time) not only in Austria-Hungary and Serbia, but also among the Serbs in America. The best of the younger writers among the Serbs in Hungary, Veljko Petrović, born in Sombor, lamented in 1906, in his poem *Kenigrec*, "the hot, foolish Serbian blood" which had been shed for Austria, while in his powerful poem *Avala*, named after the mountain near Belgrade, of which the Serbdom had high expectations, he even reproached Serbia:

Thou heedest not the aching of the half-healed wounds,
Thou hearest not the woe of the millions enslaved.

A new wave of social and national romanticism rose, with much enthusiasm and faith in itself and with the inclination to self-sacrifice, which took hold over the younger generation and gave a new impulse to the whole society.

The Austro-Hungarian authorities, of course, saw all this themselves, but as long as no direct preparations for the annexation were made, they found that

no more importance should be attached to this than to many similar cases in the past. On the occasion of the Yugoslav congresses of writers, artists, doctors, journalists and young people held in Belgrade at the time of the coronation, the Austrian Minister in Belgrade wrote on 25 September, self-confidently and haughtily, that "Yugoslavism is no more than an ethnical notion which could not respond to a single actual need of any of the nations concerned, so their misty dreams for the future might be quietly left out of consideration." Leopold Mandl, an Austrian journalist and an enemy of Serbia, assured the public in 1911 that the Greater Serbian agitation and the Yugoslav movement did not present any serious danger to Austria-Hungary. Even the Serbs in Bosnia, particularistic by tradition, were, in his view, the loyal subjects of the Danubian Monarchy; the Greater Serbian movement had no stronger influence in Croatia among the "Serbian masses". The unification of the Serbs was not originally a Serbian idea, "but a plant imported from Romanic and German lands".²⁹⁷ What do such statements mean on the part of a distinguished diplomat in one case, and of a journalist connected with official circles in the other? Was it really a failure to understand the people's true state of mind, in spite of such clear public admissions?²⁹⁸ Or was there a deliberate attempt to present matters in such a way as to make it appear that the Yugoslavs were so content in Austria-Hungary that they did not wish for any better solution of the problem, and that the Yugoslav idyll in Austria-Hungary was only being temporarily spoiled by Serbian propaganda? This is difficult to say, especially when one takes into consideration the fact that during the Annexation Crisis all the official press and the most responsible persons presented the Greater Serbian propaganda as a direct danger to the Danubian Monarchy. In any case, based on such examples, one cannot be wrong in stating that the Austro-Hungarian authorities used the so-called Greater Serbian propaganda mainly as a political pawn, describing it, according to their own political needs, sometimes as a great danger and sometimes as misty dreaming.

Instead of assessing correctly the above mentioned and other similar expressions of the popular mood in their provinces, made publicly before the whole world, with the intention of letting everyone see what the Serbian people were thinking and feeling and what the Yugoslav movement was actually about, a movement of the Yugoslav idealists, who, although Austro-Hungarian

297 *Österreich-Ungarn und Serbien*, Wien 1911, pp. 24, 29, 35.

298 F. Wiesner, a Cabinet Minister and Professor at the University of Vienna, still declared in 1919 that in Austria "there were no centrifugal tendencies towards co-national states beyond the borders [of Austria-Hungary] to that extent as it was claimed." *Österreichs Ende*, Berlin 1919, p. 47. This means therefore that the lack of understanding was so profound that people could not grasp the reality even after the war.

subjects, openly put forward their national question and demanded the unification of their kinsmen, the Austro-Hungarian authorities, taught for decades to see political idealist movements with the eyes of the police, behaved with incredible coarseness in this matter. When expedient, they regularly attributed the whole movement to ugly personal and material motives, still being unable to understand, just like earlier in Italy and Germany, not only the national ideology, but even the national psychosis, and to sense in time the spirit of a new generation of the intelligentsia, anxious for a larger and wider field of action and for better conditions for national progress in general. Their informers, often men from the lowest classes, and almost always “former men” and cynics devoid of all morals, brought them absurd reports, which they usually accepted at their face value and on the basis of which they built up long and fantastic stories. Their only aim was to find secret channels and underground ways through which the new national movement was supposed to flow, directed exclusively from Belgrade, although it would have been better had their conscience prompted them to look at home. From the beginning of 1906 onwards, rumours circulated in the offices of their most important administrative institutions of Serbia’s alleged hostile and purely military plans against them. It was claimed that Serbia was planning an uprising in Bosnia and Herzegovina and was already actively working for that end. From one of the Hungarian Premier’s papers dated 22 February 1906, no. 931 M.E., we learn that on the strength of information supplied by *Ban* of Croatia, no other than the well-known scholar, Dr. Jovan Cvijić, was alleged to be the head and organizer of the whole revolutionary movement, while Frano Supilo of Fiume was a member of his Bosnian-Herzegovinian committee. The Minister in Belgrade, Baron Czikkann, wrote to Vienna in vain on 21 February 1907 that he considered any possibility of the idea of an uprising in Bosnia supported by Serbia absolutely “excluded”. He even said that it would be “an unjustified underestimation of the level-headedness of N. Pašić, this cunning Serbian statesman” to ascribe to him any serious intentions of that kind. In connection with the Nastić business, the Serbian government insisted in a paper dated 11 August (30 July) that “there is certainly no serious and reasonable politician in Serbia who could entertain the idea of Serbia’s starting a revolutionary movement not only in Montenegro and Bosnia, but also in the Serbian and Croatian lands of the Kingdom of Hungary.” How far this casting of suspicion was taken is illustrated by the following example. Two distinguished British ladies, Miss Irby and Miss Mackenzie, well-known for an excellent book they published about the conditions in Turkey in the 1870s, founded a school in Sarajevo in 1870 on their own initiative and at their own expense for the free education of Serb girls. In 1907, after almost half a century of serious work, they were also suspected and the

question was asked: "Why was this school founded, with whose money, and for whose ends?" It was even spoken of it as being connected with the Greater Serbian propaganda.²⁹⁹ This casting of suspicion, which developed into a regular system, was applied first to individuals, then to whole organizations, and finally to the whole of Serbia, without any sense of proportion and often without any restraining criticism. Thus the whole movement was made out to have been instigated, which was particularly offensive for those of us who were living and working in the provinces of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. All our ideas for the future had been developed publicly and frankly, and until the very proclamation of the annexation we nowhere and never used any illegal means for their realization. We believed that our ideas would sooner or later be victorious; time and the right of the people to their own life were our excellent allies.

At the time of the Tariff War, when serious charges were made in the press on both sides and when irritation was increasing on both sides of the border, many voices were raised among the Yugoslavs on behalf of Serbia. In Mostar, for instance, in the summer of 1906, a number of merchants proposed that, as a sign of protest against the policy of Vienna, all commercial relations with Viennese firms should be broken off and that the orders should be placed with rival firms in Pest and Trieste.

This unfriendliness on the part of Mostar was still more conspicuous in August 1906 when official reports were circulated that Emperor Franz Joseph was coming in person to attend the joint maneuvers of the fleet and the armed forces on the Dalmatian coast near Dubrovnik, and that he was going to pay a visit to Trebinje on that occasion. It was believed that his journey was connected with the proclamation of the annexation, in favour of which the signatures of the supporters of Archbishop Štadler were publicly collected with the knowledge and benevolent tolerance of the Sarajevo authorities, on the subject of which the Archbishop's organ, the *Hrvatski Dnevnik*, published several articles. In no. 164 of 25 July 1906, it was openly declared: "If the authorities wish to secure these provinces for His Majesty", then Bosnia and Herzegovina should be joined to Croatia, and that, of course, could only be done after the annexation. Before that, the wording had been a little more discreet, although this paper had worked and written in that spirit from its first issue on 1 January 1906; it was started primarily with that object in view. At a great meeting of Štadler's supporters held in Travnik on 14-15 August 1906, the annexation was spoken of and there was discussion as to what was to be

299 *Hrvatski Dnevnik*, no. 147, 1907.

done to realize it as a first step towards the tripartite reorganization of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. In no. 187 of Štadler's organ, on 17 August, it was openly demanded that Bosnia should be "annexed to Croatia". That was the conclusion reached at the Travnik meeting, which further decided that a special deputation from Bosnia and Herzegovina should present a memorandum to that effect to the Emperor in Trebinje. While the members of the Serbo-Croat Coalition recommended that the question of the annexation not be imposed by violence, but rather that the people should express their will in a referendum or in the Bosnian Diet, Dr. Štadler's supporters, on the other hand, the majority of whom were foreigners in Bosnia and Herzegovina, just like Štadler himself, demanded, as we have seen, that the question be settled arbitrarily, contrary to the will of the vast majority of the Orthodox Christians and Muslims. In no. 213, the *Hrvatski Dnevnik* openly declared itself against the "will of the people". "No state in the world has been formed by the will of the people, or by a referendum", it was professed and, as an example of the futility of taking into account the will of the people, the case of Alsace and Lorraine was quoted. Did the Germans, this paper asked, "consult the people before they annexed Alsace and Lorraine to the Empire? Bismarck appealed to the historical right and to force of arms." In other words, the method advocated was that of violence, oppression, and quite anti-democratic and illegal means. The *Hrvatski Dnevnik* was right when it affirmed in no. 202 of 4 September that the very word annexation "deeply wounds the hearts of the Serbs." Their attitude against it had always been well-known. As early as 1901, on 13 April, the students of Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted a resolution in which they said that "the great majority of the Bosnians and Herzegovinians were opposed to any annexation of their country, and would therefore work with all the legal means in their power against any attempt at an unnatural settlement of the political status of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Anyone acting or speaking to the contrary would be considered an enemy and a cause of still greater disorder and unrest."³⁰⁰ The Serb statements were openly against an annexation, but declared that all legal means would be used in the struggle against it; their opponents, however, who demanded the annexation, appealed to force of arms and counted upon it. The Serbs were conscious of their popular support and hoped that the triumph of democracy would fulfill their wishes; their opponents, protected by the authorities, avoided an appeal to the people and worked for the application of the principle that might is right.

That the Travnik meeting with such conclusions and such expressions of opinion would provoke a reaction on the part of the Orthodox Christians and

300 *Srbini*, 1901, no. 12.

Muslims could certainly be expected. The reaction did in fact come, and very quickly at that. At a meeting held on 27 August, the representatives of the Orthodox Christians and Muslims in the Mostar municipality, Petar Šantić and Mujaga Komadina, declared with the full approval of their friends that they would not attend the welcome ceremony for the Emperor as representatives of the principal town in Herzegovina, if their arrival were in any way connected with the annexation, and if on that occasion any petitions for the annexation were presented, or the annexation publicly demanded or perhaps proclaimed.

Along with the Croatian newspaper of Štadler, the Hungarian press also discussed the matter, but energetically opposed the Viennese military-clerical combinations and laid stress on its own point of view, which was that Bosnia and Herzegovina could only be annexed to Hungary, with which they had been in connection for many years and the suzerainty of which they had often recognized at the time when they had constituted an independent state. The Hungarian public even believed that Emperor Franz Joseph dropped his journey to Dalmatia and Herzegovina at their request, in order to avoid an awkward discussion of the state-legal status of those lands.³⁰¹

When the Emperor's visit was cancelled, and instead of him the heir-apparent, Franz Ferdinand, visited Dubrovnik and Trebinje, the editor of the *Hrvatski Dnevnik* sent him on 13 September a greeting telegram, expressing the "warm wish that he might unite us through the Kingdom of Croatia to the Habsburg Monarchy." The reception of the heir-apparent in Dubrovnik was, however, a great disappointment for all the circles who led this agitation. The Serbs and most of the Croats were strictly official and very cold in their behaviour to the Archduke, and they cheered demonstratively the otherwise not very popular Montenegrin heir-apparent, Danilo, who arrived as the Archduke's guest.³⁰² In doing so, they wished to emphasize in this place, which had been the Austrian territory for hundred years, how dissatisfied they were with the whole regime and with the policy, including the annexation question, which had been pursued in recent years. Franz Ferdinand was surprised at their attitude, and even a year later, in a letter to his aide-de-camp Brosch written on 16 July 1907, he said that the people had behaved "infamously" on that occasion.³⁰³

The rumours of the annexation alarmed many of our people. A deputation of the Orthodox Christians and Muslims of Bosnia and Herzegovina went to the Turkish Minister in Belgrade, Fethi Pasha, and while expressing their good

301 *Pesti Napló*, 16 September; a translation in *Hrvatski Dnevnik*, no. 109, 1906.

302 Steed, *Mes souvenirs*, I, pp. 220-2; Chlumecky, *Österreichische Rundschau*, XII, pp. 172-3.

303 Chlumecky, *Österreichische Rundschau*, XII, pp. 44-5.

wishes on the occasion of the Sultan's birthday, whom they acknowledged as their sovereign, they asked for information regarding Turkey's attitude in this question. Fethi Pasha soothed them by saying that he knew nothing of such a step and at the same time informed the Austrian Minister, although not quite fully, of the whole matter. When the provincial government in Bosnia and Herzegovina started later to prosecute the opposition press (e.g., a Dalmatian Stijepo Kobasica, the editor of the *Srpska Riječ* in Sarajevo), in the midst of the irritation that had been caused by the tariff war and the annexation rumours, several meetings were organized in Serbia to show the solidarity with the persecuted. These meetings created a very bad impression in Austrian circles. In his report *On the Austro-Serbian Problem until the Declaration of the War*, a one-sided and ill-informed account, Dr. Roderich Gooss declared, mostly according to the indictment of the Serbs in the Zagreb high treason trial, that the Greater Serbian propaganda started to be "conspicuously intensive" from the summer of 1906 onwards. In view of the existing European tension, he says, Belgrade prepared an "offensive policy" against Austria-Hungary, so that "by provoking internal disorders in the Monarchy, the Yugoslav question might be raised and settled in the Pan-Serbian sense".³⁰⁴ Gooss fails to quote any concrete evidence in support of that very serious accusation of Serbia's pursuing an offensive policy. The behaviour of the Bosnians and Herzegovinians was a spontaneous expression of their anti-annexation attitude, which, as we have seen, was not of late and developed as a reaction to the above mentioned preparations and provocations, in which a number of people closely connected with the provincial government in Sarajevo, and even some of its members, e.g. the head of the Department for Internal Affairs, Kosta Hörmann, an intimate friend of Archbishop Štadler and a confidant of the higher military circles, were implicated.

The annexation rumours which appeared in the summer of 1906 could not be suppressed. The politicians gathered around Štadler publicly advocated, after the cancellation of the Emperor's visit to Trebinje, that a special address be sent to the Emperor in Vienna, requesting the annexation in the name of the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina. But this agitation again met with no response from the Orthodox Christian and Muslim population, which was dissatisfied with the Austrian administration and would do nothing on its part to strengthen it. But this agitation, and certain advances on the part of the authorities to some of the more prominent national representatives, with the object of winning them over by offering privileges and sinecures or by threats, produced a nervous tension among the people. This was particularly

304 R. Gooss, *Die Vorgeschichte des Weltkrieges*, X, Berlin 1930, p. 36.

increased by the news published with confirmation in the *Hrvatski Dnevnik* on 11 June 1907 that a separation of the military from the civil authority in Bosnia was under consideration, and that the latter authority would be handed to the *Ban* of Croatia. In reply to these rumours, a statement made by the Hungarian Premier, S. Wekerle in the Pest parliament on 3 July was published to the effect that the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina was of a permanent character and that the Crown of St. Stephen laid claim to those provinces. The sharp polemic that followed in this connection between the Viennese, Zagreb and Sarajevo press was not a good omen. How could these alarming declarations be issued from such responsible quarters? Why should they be made in time of peace? If journalists and certain temperamental politicians sometimes lose their calm, such a thing ought not to happen to a premier such as Weckerle, who was experienced, old and very moderate. Could it not rightly be considered a public response to some of the questions raised or discussed in places to which he could not be indifferent and to which he wanted to make clear the point of view of the Hungarians?

Seeing that something was in the making, people started to be afraid lest events should surprise them. On 16 April 1907, the *Hrvatski Dnevnik*, no. 86, published an article about a *coup d'état* "which might occur in the near future" and which might bring about a new solution in respect of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In order not to be caught unprepared by forthcoming events, the Serb politicians in Bosnia and Herzegovina came to think they should organize the people and thus be able to profess their political programme clearly and publicly. The first proclamation concerning the formation of the Serbian National Organization in Bosnia and Herzegovina issued on 24 (11) May 1907 by a few, mostly younger, people from these lands clearly expounded, to counter other demands, "the complete independence of our fatherland" as the goal of that organization. The "complete independence" or political autonomy of Bosnia and Herzegovina was thus demanded on behalf of the vast majority of the people as a counterpoise to the annexation; in opposition to the sovereign rights of the Habsburg dynasty, the unnecessary emphasis on which was considered a preliminary to annexation, both the Orthodox Christians and Muslims started to lay stress on the Sultan's sovereign rights which had been guaranteed by Austria herself in a secret protocol drawn up in Berlin on 13 July 1878 between Count Andrassy, then Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister, and the Turkish representatives. In 1901, when the Muslim opposition was more active, an attempt was made in Sarajevo officially to celebrate the Sultan's birthday, but the police suppressed the preparations. This question was now raised again. The *Srpska Riječ* in Sarajevo openly discussed it in theory in several articles published in July 1907, nos. 147-8, 161 and 175. When the Mostar-based Muslim newspaper,

Musavat, no. 25, demanded that in August of that year, 1907, after the birthday of the Austrian Emperor, “the provisional mandatory entrusted by the European Powers with the reorganization of Bosnia and Herzegovina”, the birthday of the Sultan, “our sovereign” also be officially celebrated, this idea was taken up by the Serbian press as well. Consequently, the Serbian National Organization, after having included in its political programme the autonomy of Bosnia and Herzegovina at its assembly held in Sarajevo on 9-13 November 1907, considered it necessary, taking into account the political status of those lands, to lay stress upon the Sultan’s sovereign rights (“Bosnia and Herzegovina form an integral part of the Turkish Empire, administered by Austria-Hungary under the mandate of the European Powers.”).

This movement was, to a large extent, anti-Habsburg in its character, although not at the same time Greater Serbian. The most radical Serbian newspaper in Bosnia, Petar Kočić’s *Otadžbina*, published an article about the irredentism in no. 20 in 1907. “It is not that we reject the idea of a unified Serbdom”, it read. “We are few in number as it is, and united we should be a power which our enemies would have to take into consideration. What kind of a German would rise against the unification of Germany, what kind of an Italian would fight against Mazzini, Cavour and Garibaldi?! ... He would be a degenerate even in the eyes of the most bureaucratic Bosnian public prosecutor. Nor shall we, if fate so wills it, show ourselves degenerate – we shall give all for Serbdom. ... But the main thing for us now is to state openly here our wishes. We look today neither to Serbia nor to Turkey, but to Bosnia and Herzegovina.” Another radical Serbian newspaper in Bosnia, the *Srpska Riječ*, wrote in no. 58 in 1908: “Our people wish to obtain its freedom and autonomy by evolution and not by revolution, and solely by legal ways and means. We have emphasized on innumerable occasions that we shall not lead our people to the slaughter – as our enemies would like us to do – because we know that in that way we should best serve the cause of our opponents.” On 22 (9) April, the Serbian National Organization also published a statement signed by the members of its presidency in which it stressed: “The Assembly of Serb national representatives, having proclaimed in its programme that the complete autonomy of our fatherland through the agency of civil liberties and parliamentarism is our objective in terms of state status, has previously emphasized its respect for international treaties in which the state-legal position of Bosnia and Herzegovina has been determined. In this respect, we are also a conservative element and we can say without hesitation that five-sixths of the entire population are at one with us in this matter. Therefore, the revolutionary character of the Serbian National Organization is excluded; therefore, its connections with any foreign state and any external agitation are also excluded.”

That this attitude of keen opposition was unpleasant for the Bosnian government and for all those who worked for the annexation is self-evident. They were much surprised by this reaction and by the emerging liberal spirit among the people. They fondly recalled the good old times when the people simply kept silent under military pressure. As late as 10 August 1907, in an official order given by the head of the department, K. Hörmann, which the *Srpska Riječ* published in no. 166, the government allowed the Serbs to gather at a meeting of their organization in Sarajevo, but "no political discussion of any kind can take place at that meeting." As the supporters of the annexation had been agitating for a whole year without interference, such a decision was necessary to prevent the expression of any other views and thus to avoid the failure which would be obvious, if it were seen that a great majority was against the annexation. The people refused to take any notice of this prohibition. Politically mature, they intended to make use of their right to freedom of speech in a matter of such importance and to frustrate so obvious an attempt on the part of the authorities to treat the people in an unequal manner.

The opponents of autonomy and of the political programme of the Christian Orthodox and Muslim population of Bosnia and Herzegovina asserted that this idea had been suggested to the Bosnians and Herzegovinians from Serbia through Dr. Miroslav Spalajković, who had become a son-in-law of Gligorije Jeftanović of Sarajevo in late 1906, and through the Serbian General Staff officer, Captain Milan Vasić. These two men were indeed in Sarajevo in October 1907. The same accusations are repeated even to today.³⁰⁵ This speculation is, however, entirely inaccurate. The movement for political autonomy was not new in Bosnia. Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century all the movements led by Bosnian beys, even against the Sultan's Istanbul, were clearly of that nature. Husein-Bey Gradašćević, the "Dragon of Bosnia", acquired a great reputation among the people in 1830-32 because of his heroic attempt to liberate Bosnia from the direct authority of the *Turkuša* and the Ottomans. After the occupation, the new movement for political autonomy developed out of the movement for religious and educational autonomy. When in 1905 the Orthodox Christians obtained their religious and educational autonomy, almost all the younger intelligentsia did not want to drop its opposition to the regime, as some of their older comrades preferred, but rather requested the struggle to be continued and to demand civil and constitutional liberties. The reluctance on the part of the government to meet these requests on the pretext that the people was not mature enough for such liberties made the opposition more determined and radicalized even those people who had

305 Cf. Gooss, *Die Vorgeschichte des Weltkrieges*, p. 46.

earlier favoured certain compromises. When the annexation question was pushed to the fore in 1906, this opposition felt the need to articulate its activities in a concrete political programme. Along with that programme and the strengthening of national consciousness, there was something of a xenophobia. Together with the local Roman Catholics who numbered 22.9 % of the population, it was the foreigners, newcomers from the Monarchy or *kuferaši* as the people called them with scorn, who demanded the annexation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. These behaved as the masters in the province and requested all the rights to themselves. This led to further outrage. The Bosnians and Herzegovinians had no rights whatever in Austria and Hungary, and the people from these countries had all the rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina. When in February 1908, during the debate about the municipal statute of the town of Sarajevo, the majority of municipal assembly that consisted of the Orthodox Christians and Muslims decided not to admit the status of town-dwellers to foreigners and not to give them the right to vote, the government's functionaries and organs were up in arms against that decision. The *Bosnische Post* published a special issue on 9 February, stating that this was too a result of Serbian propaganda. Everything was put down to that propaganda without any regard for the extent to which the accumulated dissatisfaction, which sought an outlet to be vented, contributed to such a decision.

Furthermore, it was well-known that the Serbian National Organization was a bitter opponent of Gligorije Jeftanović, Spalajković's father-in-law, in 1907 because he had accepted the membership in the executive board of the privileged *Zemaljska banka* (Provincial Bank). The Mostar *Narod* then published a large supplement to its issue no. 18, condemning the Serb leader for the lapse from political integrity; Jeftanović was consequently not elected as a representative in the National Organization, and not only that he did not attend its meeting in Sarajevo, but was even against it. Spalajković himself had no connections with the younger Bosnian-Herzegovinian intelligentsia, which founded that organization; he did not even seek any connections on account of the clash between it and his father-in-law. Milan Vasić probably tried to get into touch with people who might serve for the purpose of military intelligence, but as far as I have been able to learn from the surviving Serbian politicians in Bosnia and Herzegovina from that time, they had no political connections with him, and some of them did not even know him.³⁰⁶ After all,

³⁰⁶ Intelligence officers were very active in the course of 1907-8 on both the Serbian and the Austro-Hungarian side. On 12 July 1908, Captains Schimanko and Seitz of the Austrian General Staff were arrested in Raška, where they had come from Kragujevac and Kraljevo. At about the same time, another General Staff officer, Lieutenant Karlo Hörmann, who

given all that has been said above, it would be more than naive to believe that a captain, whoever he was, could lecture about patriotism and give instructions for political activities to men whose national consciousness was so highly developed and who, both then and later throughout their political lives, were accustomed to think for themselves.

No conscientious person would think of denying that some of the more prominent politicians in Bosnia and Herzegovina were in contact with, and had acquaintances among, politicians and other public figures outside the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. But what we categorically affirm is this: Bosnian-Herzegovinian politicians themselves worked out their own political views and methods, from motives of their own and on the basis of their own experience. "We can say with pride" the *Srpska Riječ* wrote on 21 May 1908, "that our national movement is self-made, set into motion by common people, the natural expression of an age-long struggle against oppression." The best proof of this is undoubtedly the fact that there was often disagreement and friction among the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Serbs themselves because of divergences of opinion either in questions of tactics or even in the question of the importance of certain events, problems or relations, which was an obvious sign that their views were independent, based on their own convictions, and not on any foreign instructions. Concrete proofs of this are not lacking. The group connected with the Mostar *Narod* did not, for instance, agree with the idea of celebrating the Sultan's birthday, and their representatives were not present at the meeting of the municipal assembly when this question appeared on the agenda. The Bosnian politicians, as we shall see later, disagreed with the view of the Serbian government in the matter of compensations during the Annexation Crisis, although the Serbian government attached the greatest importance to this question. There were many differences between the Mostar *Narod* group and that of the Banja Luka *Otadžbina*, especially in the agrarian question, which the latter group regarded as of primary importance, not always sparing the susceptibilities of Muslims. And these were all important questions of principle about which there could not have been any divergence of opinion, if outside instructions had been obeyed.

There is one point which should be specially emphasised in this connection, and about which no mention has so far been made by anyone who have dealt

had ridden from Priboj across Čajetina to Užice and reached Bajina Bašta, was also captured. On this journey, he had taken notes and photographed various objects. Due to the mediation of the Austro-Hungarian Minister on 10-13 July, the Serbian authorities released the officers and allowed them to return, although the object of their journey was known, and the Serbian General Staff had established their guilt as evidenced in the document designated conf. General Staff Department/I no. 759.

with the question of Greater Serbian propaganda. It is this. We have seen that Austria-Hungary insistently proposed in the first half of 1908 that Serbia should link up her railways with those in Bosnia, and Serbia refused that offer. This fact is very significant. Had Serbia wished to develop her agitation in Bosnia at all costs, would not this connection have been precisely what she required most? Would it not have opened wide the doors for the closer and more intimate contact with Serbia which was, in this matter too, greatly desired and sought by the Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina? When instead of this link with the Bosnian railways, Serbia tried to get a line to the Adriatic across Kosovo, did she not obviously show that her interest at the time lay primarily in that direction? Furthermore, if the Greater Serbian propaganda, as it was stated in Vienna, had been in full swing in Bosnia after 1906, and even threatened the vital interests of the Danubian Monarchy, what political naiveté it would have been on the part of Vienna to extend her sphere of action and improve the conditions on which her success depended!

Austria-Hungary's charge against the Greater Serbian propaganda in Bosnia and Herzegovina was also unconvincing in other respects. The population of these lands consisted of the adherents of three religious groups: Orthodox Christian, Roman Catholic and Muslim. The Viennese circles claimed that the Catholic Croats were reliable, while the Muslims en masse had no developed national consciousness. If propaganda was coming from Serbia, it could therefore only count on the Orthodox Serbs. The Muslims, however, were just as determinedly against the Austro-Hungarian regime as the Orthodox. The Vienna Government, although fully aware of this fact, was not prepared to admit it. It was not considered advisable to accuse Turkey of disseminating propaganda among the Muslims, although their Muslim leaders were in touch with Turkish statesmen, they went to Constantinople and stayed there, as did, for example, the Mufti of Mostar, A. Effendi Džabić, and they even, as we have seen, wished to celebrate the Sultan's birthday in Bosnia with public demonstrations. If the Orthodox had demanded autonomy as a step towards a union with Serbia, as it was said in Vienna, then it might also have been said that the Muslims had demanded it as a step towards a union with Turkey. As a matter of fact, both had taken up the idea only in the desire to set their country free as far as possible from political and economic dependence on Austria and Hungary. What the final solution of this question might be eventually was a matter which was not discussed at that time; everyone was free to make their own combination. The Orthodox Christians, although a relative majority in the country, could not decide the matter alone; its final solution required the consent of a large part of their fellow-countrymen of Muslim and Catholic faith. The Joint Finance Minister and Minister for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Baron

Burian, stated at a Cabinet meeting held on 1 December 1907 that “the Serbian autonomist tendencies have so far been within the occupation framework, and no tendency to look abroad can be noted, nor any danger of a revolutionary movement.”³⁰⁷ A civilian minister felt that a struggle against ideas could only be successfully waged with ideas, and that force could only be used when there was an attempt to realize some idea. In opposition to the Greater Serbian idea, Greater Austrian (*Grossösterreich*) and Greater Croatian ideas were put forward, and very vigorous propaganda carried out in their favour even by very highly-placed persons in the entourage of the heir-apparent, Franz Ferdinand. When this agitation directed more or less against the Serbs was encouraged, it was impossible to place obstacles in the way of the Serbian agitation without showing openly that there were no equality of rights in Austria-Hungary. The Cabinet meeting nevertheless concluded that “the attempts to start a movement in Bosnia were not out of the question” and “it referred to the tendency of the eastern peoples to see conciliatoriness as a weakness”;³⁰⁸ making preliminary conditions for the use of force. Against the opinion of the civilian Minister, who presented matters too optimistically in the first part of his above mentioned statement, the military point of view, which presented matters too pessimistically, carried the day.

When during the Annexation Crisis Austro-Hungarian diplomacy started to construe specific charges against the Greater Serbian propaganda, to give particulars as to the numbers and whereabouts of the Serbian detachments that were supposed to raid Bosnia and the number of rifles, bombs and cartridges were given, when, in other words, it was sought to prove that the Serbs had passed from ideas to material revolutionary activities, it turned out that all this was based on the forged minutes of the *Slovenski jug*, which the above mentioned V. Vasić had brought to the Austro-Hungarian Legation in Belgrade and which the Minister, Count Forgách, had submitted, with inflammatory comments, not only to his government, but also to other diplomats in Belgrade.³⁰⁹

On 1 October 1908, the most reputable Vienna review, *Österreichische Rundschau*, XVIII, 1, published an article, clearly designed to pave the way for the annexation, on “King Peter and the Greater Serbian revolutionary movement” written by I. Tvrtković. This article was based on Nastić’s pamphlet *Finale*, and it posited all, both false and true, that the official circles in the

307 Franz Conrad von Hötzendorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit 1906-8*, 5 vols, Wien, 1925, I, p. 518.

308 *Ibid.*, p. 519.

309 Cf. *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, I, pp. 371, 447; Forgách’s dispatches, 3 and 15 November 1908; cf. pp. 458-9.

Monarchy were able to collect and produce against Serbia. In addition to the statements mentioned before, the following assertions were made:

1) The *Jugoslovenski klub* (Yugoslav Club), i.e. the *Slovenski jug* in Belgrade was the work of Svetislav Simić, i.e. of the Propaganda Department of the Foreign Ministry, of which Simić was the head, and that the object of the society was to foster and develop connections between the Yugoslav peoples and the consciousness of their unity. There was no reason why a state official should not form such a society quite openly and even be a member of its committee, if necessary, since its aims were noble and in no respect improper. But *Slovenski jug* was not organized by Svetislav Simić, but rather by other, and mostly younger, men and a few professors from the Great School. The first members of the *Slovenski jug*, as well as the editors of the homonymous journal started in early 1904 were students. On 17 (4) November 1905, the Club opened a public reading-room, and its committee then included persons outside the ranks of students, such as literary men, scientists and politicians. "The programme of the *Slovenski jug* club is of a purely cultural character", it was said at its opening, "for its objective is the cultural unity of the four Yugoslav peoples, the Serbs, Croats, Bulgarians and Slovenes".³¹⁰ "For the realization of the Yugoslav idea", the *Slovenski Jug* wrote on another occasion, "the incessant work of several generations will be required, the work of years and decades, perhaps of a whole century".³¹¹ As time went on, the author of the Austrian article claimed, the club and its leaders went further than the government intended and embarked on a policy of their own, but the government was responsible for it as long as its activities were allowed. The author, however, was not conscientious enough to admit that the Radical government had sharply attacked the *Slovenski Jug* in the columns of the semi-official organ *Samouprava* and disagreed from the beginning with it on many points, considering its articles detrimental to Serbia's interests in some aspects. The *Slovenski Jug* argued with the *Samouprava*. The author of the said article further fails to say that the leader of the Bosnian Serbs, Gligorije Jeftanović, was undeservedly attacked in the columns of the *Slovenski Jug* (e.g. in nos. 26 and 29 in 1905), while at the same time other individuals were praised who were later connected with the Bosnian government, in spite of the fact that Jeftanović was a man of whom it was always said, and not without truth, that he was one of the main people truly loyal to Serbia. Because of its independent writing, the *Slovenski jug* was not only deprived of support from the authorities, but even experienced

³¹⁰ *Slovenski Jug*, no. 12, 1906.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, no. 34, 1907.

difficulties and was therefore forced to suspend its work from 24 February to 26 October 1907. After 3 June 1907, other people with a higher sense of responsibility entered into its management. The *Slovenski jug*, it was further stated, had organized celebrations of a Yugoslav character in connection with King Peter's coronation. Although this is not entirely true, since other institutions, such as literary and medical societies etc., were very active on that occasion and held their congresses, this charge may be safely admitted. In arranging celebrations which took on a Yugoslav character, the club was acting entirely in the spirit of its programme. It was founded publicly before the whole world with that object in view. The *Slovenski jug* organized an exhibition for the occasion and invited all the prominent Serbs, Croats, Slovenes and Bulgarians. That much the *Slovenski jug* could do, but it could not force independent and distinguished people to attend the exhibition, if they themselves had no interest in these matters. If the response was good, it was not due to the *Slovenski jug*, but it rather indicated that many people among the Yugoslavs were truly feeling "Yugoslav" and gladly availed themselves of the opportunity to take part in Yugoslav manifestations.

2) Pašić desired a personal union of Serbia and Bulgaria under Prince Ferdinand, and the conspirators under King Peter. The latter were therefore working for the murder of King Ferdinand, who was consequently afraid of Serbia and avoided her. It is not said whether Pašić, on the same pattern, contemplated the murder of King Peter. Even if these allegations, absurd as they were, had been quite true, would they have been any proof of the existence of Greater Serbian propaganda against Austria-Hungary?

3) Serbia and her government-aided patriotic societies, such as the *Srpska braća* (Serbian Brethren) and the *Kolo srpskih sestara* (Circle of Serbian Sisters), it is said, organized detachments for fighting in Macedonia more against the Bulgarians than against the Turks. There were Serbian officers and soldiers in these detachments. It is no longer secret today, in fact it is well-known, that certain patriotic societies in Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece assisted the detachments in Macedonia, and even sent them there, if not always with the knowledge of the respective governments then certainly with their friendly tolerance. But the initiative for the *chetniks* activities had not come from the Serbs or from the Greeks, but from the Bulgarians; the first Serbian bands were formed only in the autumn of 1903, after the Bulgarian uprisings of 1902-3, and after the formation and dispatch of the first Greek bands. Insofar as these activities were wrongful, the Serbs accepted their share of responsibility, with the above reservation. But Austria-Hungary was hardly justified in protesting against these activities, not because they were not directed against it, but because it had taken advantage of them in Macedonia against the Serbs, by maintaining

relations with the Bulgarian bands and with the organization which controlled them.

4) An agreement between the Orthodox and Muslim Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina was drawn up in 1905, and in 1907 the foundations were laid for the Serbian National Organization. The inaccuracy of both these statements is clear from the following facts: the movement for religious autonomy of the Orthodox Christians was initiated, as we have said above, in 1896, and the Muslim movement in 1899; the two converged, as a result of the nature of their struggle, in 1901. Dr. Miroslav Spalajković, it is said, prepared the foundation for the Serbian National Organization. We have already pointed out the inaccuracy of this statement and shall not therefore repeat here what has already been said on that point.

5) The editors of certain Bosnian newspapers, it is further stated, were journalists from Serbia for a while, even officials of the Serbian Press Bureau, Dragomir Janković in the Banja Luka *Otadžbina* and Pera Taletov in the *Srpska Riječ*. This is true. But it is also true that the editors of most Bosnian papers were foreigners, for in Bosnia and Herzegovina, despite a fair number of public workers, there were not enough experienced native journalists, and the most radical of them were imprisoned on account of their writings in 1907-8 (P. Kočić, Smail-Aga Ćemalović, Risto Radolović, Stevo Stefanović and others). Thus the Sarajevo *Hrvatski Dnevnik* was edited at one time by Heruvim Šegvić of Zagreb and later by Kalikst Tadin of Dubrovnik and Dr. K. Cankar of Ljubljana; the official *Sarajevski List* was edited by Ivan Popović from Vojvodina, the *Bosnische Post* by Isidor Steinhart, and the *Sarajevoer Tagblatt* by Hermengild Wagner, the last two, I think, being from Vienna. The editor of the *Srpska Riječ* before Taletov, until the end of 1906, was Stijepo Kobasica of Dubrovnik, who was banished by the authorities, and after him, after July 1908, Aleksandar Omčikus from Croatia and Veljko Petrović of Sombor. Even the Bosnian government appointed a Montenegrin, Jovan Ivanišević, as a chief correspondent to its official paper, while in Sarajevo the editorship of the *Srpska Štampa*, the pro-government newspaper, was entrusted to Milan Pavlović from Serbia. Janković and Taletov were paid in Bosnia as long as they worked there by the management of their respective newspapers, and when Taletov was banished from Bosnia (20 May 1908) the Serbian government reappointed him to his old post. Moreover, both Janković and Taletov were duly registered with the authorities and they could have controlled their work and their movements or, if desirable, put an end to their activities.

The press is no doubt an influential factor in the formation of public opinion and it is no wonder that certain governments endeavour to influence it for their own purposes. Did Austria-Hungary not have its own paid papers and

journalists in Serbia? Do not all governments do the same thing? We would not therefore condemn the cases of press propaganda and the subsidizing of friendly journals, but it would be a grave insult to the principal representatives of the Bosnian press and to the best journalists, such as the distinguished author Petar Kočić, editor of the *Otadžbina*; Rista Radulović, editor of the *Narod*; Vasilj Grdjić, chief editor of the *Srpska Riječ*; Osman Djikić, editor of the *Bosansko-Hercegovacki Glasnik*, and Smail-Aga Ćemalović, editor of the *Musavat*, to imagine that their radical views were due in any measure to the influence of foreign propaganda, and not the result of their personal experience and their deepest national conviction.

6) Every visit from Serbia was interpreted not only as an act of propaganda, but as a direct link in the chain of revolutionary preparations. When Spalajković came to stay with his father-in-law in Sarajevo, he was said to have done so in order “personally to direct and supervise” the preparations for revolution in Bosnia. The same circles declared that the scholar Jovan Cvijić was also involved in these preparations and spoke ironically of his travels for the research purposes. “Naturally”, it is admitted, “Belgrade did not contemplate a serious rebellion in Bosnia, which would have been hopeless because of the presence of strong garrisons there. But they wanted to draw Europe’s attention to Bosnia by means of riots, murders, bombs, etc., and thus to raise the Bosnian question again, as the Bulgarians had done in Macedonia.” However, nothing speaks more eloquently against such an allegation than the fact that no assassination was committed, no bombs thrown, nor any uprising attempted in Bosnia and Herzegovina prior to the annexation and even prior to 1910, although even the reputable press in the Monarchy (e.g. the *Pester Lloyd*) affirmed from early 1908 onwards that in Bosnia “everything was prepared for an uprising against Austria-Hungary on the model of the Macedonian organization.” It was even stated – the article in the *Österreichische Rundschau* is more cautious – that the whole of Bosnia was divided into districts and that a *vojvoda* recruited from the ranks of the Macedonian organization was allotted to each district.³¹² On the strength of such reports and information, the Bosnian authorities carried out a number of searches in Bosnia and Herzegovina not just in private houses, but also in churches and even the altars, but found neither arms nor munition. When in the spring of 1908 a number of suspicious characters appeared in the Bosnian Krajina, claiming to be *chetniks* from Macedonia, the *Srpska Riječ*, no. 94, warned all Serbs to be on their guard and to report such persons at once to the authorities. Nastić’s case had taught people to beware of *agents provocateurs*. After this public warning from the Serbian side, those

³¹² *Bosnische Post*, no. 93, 1903.

suspicious characters disappeared, for the maneuver with them, being already half exposed, could no longer have the desired result. About the same time, a Belgrade newspaper also found it necessary to warn the public that some persons had tried to acquire arms for Bosnia and offered large sums of money for rifles from Kragujevac with the Serbian state imprint.³¹³ Who needed this? Clearly, not the Serbs when they drew attention of the authorities and of the public to such cases. During the second half of 1908 and the first half of 1909, thorough investigation and the trial of the Serbs in Croatia accused of high treason took place and failed to reveal any real evidence of the existence of a revolutionary organization, or of the planning for activities against the Monarchy, and instead of bombs the prosecution had to produce glasses painted with patriotic pictures and carpets with the Serbian coat-of-arms as an evidence in support of their assertion about the direct danger from the Greater Serbian propaganda.

All these, as may be seen, were distorted, invented or alleged facts which were circulated among the public with the sole object of justifying the act of annexation. That they would be later or even instantly proved absolutely untrue seems not to have much concerned certain elements in the Monarchy. The matter had to be carried through, and any means that led to the desired end was good enough.

But there was one matter about which the Viennese official circles deliberately kept the public in the dark and which is of great importance for verification of these allegations. This was the fact that after 1903 Serbia had never been involved in such a serious internal political struggle as in the course of 1907/1908. A tenacious obstruction against Pašić's Radical government was started in the parliament in the spring of 1907 and the government was forced to resign. There was a temporary respite after the Minister for Interior Affairs, Stojan Protić, had been sacrificed. During the tenure of his successor, Nastas Petrović, two prominent members of the anti-conspiratorial group, Milan and Maksim Novaković, were killed in prison on 29 September 1907, as a consequence of their having seized arms in the guardroom and opened fire. This occurrence caused further bitterness, which was increased by other things. In the spring of 1908, fresh obstructionism commenced as a result of which the parliament was dissolved on 13 April and the elections were held on 13 May. These elections weakened the position of the Radicals and Pašić was forced to

313 *Srpska Rijec*, no. 104, 1908. Even earlier the Zagreb *Srbobran*, no. 28 of 31 January had published an appeal to the Serbs "to soothe and warn the people everywhere not to be fooled by hired troublemakers. Only with quiet and dignity the conscious and enthusiastic people will win over those who relied entirely on the army and the prison."

resign and hand over the power to the more conciliatory group in his party. Pera Velimirović became the new Premier on 20 July, and Dr. Milovan Milovanović Foreign Minister. The whole struggle was extremely bitter and it took such a hold of the people that to many outside observers it seemed that important national questions were pushed into the background on account of party passions. Even Count Forgách informed his government on 20 July that "Serbia is in an anarchical situation." And indeed Serbia was in the crisis which had a depressing impact upon the people and their initiative and activity.

The new Foreign Minister, the learned and perspicacious Milovanović, was a man of compromise, far from belligerent nature, and, as such, disinclined to open new questions which might lead to conflict, as acknowledged even by the Austrian diplomats with whom he came into contact. It was his sincere desire to reach an agreement with the neighbouring Monarchy. He made a point of having the commercial treaty between Serbia and Austria-Hungary passed in the parliament as soon as possible, and he paid a first diplomatic visit abroad to Baron Aehrenthal in September.

The Austro-Hungarian views of the movement of Orthodox Christians and Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina were considerably divergent. While the Viennese circles condemned it and considered it indicative of "revolutionary" tendencies and an obstacle to their own plans, Pest met it with open sympathy. The Hungarians preferred that Bosnia maintained its autonomous status rather than to be annexed to Croatia and thus serve, at their expense, as a basis for the new trialist reorganization of the Danubian Monarchy. Vienna was sometimes too careless in publicly showing the Hungarians the danger which threatened them. Dr. Aksmann, a representative of the most powerful Austrian political party, the Christian Socialists, declared at the February meeting of the Delegations in 1908 that Zagreb and Sarajevo were the keys to the solution of the Hungarian question. The Croats were, he said, "the natural allies" of Vienna, and the Serbs those of the Magyars.³¹⁴

The Hungarians indeed tried on their part to frustrate the plans of those Viennese circles which were unfriendly to them. The Hungarian government allowed a permanent office of the Executive Committee of the opposition Muslim People's Organization to be opened in Pest, while the previous Hungarian opposition had openly urged on the Bosnians and Herzegovinians in their struggle against Vienna's schemes. Certain politicians in Vienna were not ignorant of this. Baron L. Chlumecky, the confidant of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, was clearly incredulous when he stated "that Serbism in

314 *Hrvatski Dnevnik*, no. 50, 1908.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has been developed under Hungarian protection”,³¹⁵ although it would be correct to say, to certain extent, that Serbism as an anti-Austrian frame of mind and as a movement that opposed Vienna, found its allies in Pest. When the Bosnian government prohibited the formation of the Serbian National Organization and even fined its promoters, Baron Burian, the Joint Minister and a Hungarian, reversed that decision and authorized both the meetings for election of the members of the organization and the great assembly in Sarajevo. The Bosnian opposition to the regime of the Danubian Monarchy thus occasionally profited from the help of Pest, although there was never any enthusiasm for closer relations with Hungary. In his aforementioned report to the parliamentary committee, Dr. Goss takes no account of this question of the relations between the Bosnians, on the one hand, and Vienna and Budapest, on the other, nor does he attach to it the significance which it clearly had for the strengthening of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian opposition. The opponents of the Hungarians in the Viennese military and clerical circles, who followed these matters carefully, went as far in their emphasizing this fact as to directly accuse Burian of complicity in the Greater Serbian propaganda. On 17 March 1908, the Viennese organ of the Christian Socialist Party, the *Reichspost*, published an article which was reproduced the following day in the *Bosnische Post*. It read: “The enemies of the Monarchy are artificially nourished, they have been helped everywhere; let that who is responsible for this answer to his conscience and to his Emperor.” L. Chlumecky still repeats these accusations and adds a few details which suggest that Franz Ferdinand was of the same opinion.³¹⁶ As we have seen, accusations of high treason were easily made in Vienna. They were leveled against anyone who did not share the prevailing political conceptions, or who made plans and moves of his own against them. Of the irresponsibility of such accusations concerning the Greater Serbian propaganda, the best example is that no other than a Cabinet Minister of the Monarchy, and one of its three joint Ministers at that, was labeled as an abettor of that propaganda! The accusations against him continued until 1918, when Burian became Foreign Minister of the Danubian Monarchy. The sort of accusations brought up against him can best be seen from the tendentious writings of Dr. I. Pilar (L. v. Südland, *Die südslawische Frage und der Weltkrieg*. Vienna, 1918), who has gone furthest in the condemnation of the Serbs, tracing the roots of the Greater Serbian propaganda as far back as to their medieval culture and blaming it not only on the Magyars and other contemporary peoples, but even the ancient Byzantium and the Orthodox Church.

³¹⁵ Chlumecky, *Österreichische Rundschau*, XII, p. 188.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 188 ff.

Hungary's friendly attitude towards the opposition continued until the Hungarian government, as a result of its conflict with the Serbo-Croat Coalition about the Railway Regulations, changed its attitude towards the Serbs in general. From the second half of 1907 onwards, Pest moved much closer to the point of view and methods of Vienna in its relations with the Serbs and Croats, and it was prepared to agree to the introduction of an oppressive regime throughout the Yugoslav lands under the Habsburg rule. Burian alone remained consistent to the end and refused to allow the fabricated high treason trials in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and he endeavoured as far as he could to prevent the extension of pressure to the opposition as a whole. That he failed in this was not his fault.

It should be noted that the sharp rupture of relations between the Serbo-Croat Coalition and the Hungarians was not at all to the liking of the Serbian government, which relied upon the promises of the Hungarian opposition and hoped for its support in certain questions under discussion with Vienna, and especially in that of the negotiations for the new commercial treaty, which were scheduled for 24 June 1907. The conflict between the Hungarian government and the Coalition would inevitably result in the coolness on the part of the former towards the Serbs in general, and Serbia in particular. This was, in fact, the case, although the Serbs were not all of the same opinion in the matter of the Railway Regulations. Two Serbian Radicals, Dr. Dj. Krasojević and Dr. M. Lisavac, who belonged to the Coalition, left it immediately after the rupture between Zagreb and Pest, as they disapproved of their friends's tactics. In the conflict between Vienna and Pest, the Serbian Radicals from Vojvodina considered it advisable to stand by Pest to the end and not to cease their collaboration with the Hungarians on account of secondary questions – and they viewed the Railway Regulation as such. A large number of Radicals in Serbia agreed with them. Even the main Radical organ in Belgrade, the *Samouprava*, no. 41, 1908, found it necessary publicly to declare that it did not consider the attitude of the Coalition wise or its obstructionism the result of an accurate assessment of Hungary's intentions. It is difficult to believe that Vienna and Pest were not in possession of the exact information concerning so considerable and important a matter, but they had no use for it at the time. On the contrary, the tendency in certain circles was to discredit Serbia as a disturber of peace in her neighbourhood. The outcry was then extended to all Serbs and even to all Serb national symbols. The exponents of Vienna and Pest in the south were not defending themselves from an attack, but they were rather on the offensive.

Serbia's intention was, the Austro-Hungarians said, to attach to herself Austria-Hungary's Yugoslav subjects and lands sooner or later, if not at once. Having been aware of these intentions, Austria-Hungary was entitled to

preempt Serbia at the most opportune moment for itself, without waiting for Serbia to become strong. It is not difficult to answer this line of argument. Nobody is ever brought to account merely for their intentions, but only for their deeds or their attempts to realize their intentions. During the whole period from 1878 to 1908, Austria-Hungary was unable to bring forward a single concrete fact to prove that Serbia had actually done anything which threatened the integrity of Austria's territories, with the exception of her participation in the literary and social development of national ideology. A preventive war on the part of a Great Power like Austria-Hungary, with her fifty-two million inhabitants, against little Serbia, with less than three millions, would have been merely shameful both from the military and political point of view. For no matter how strong Serbia might become, she would nevertheless always be nearly twenty times weaker than the neighbouring Monarchy, and the latter could never be in danger of suffering at Serbia's hands.

But the idea of a preventive war established itself in the head of the Chief of the Austro-Hungarian General Staff, whence it spread to the officers and gradually took hold of the civilian authorities. At the suggestion of the heir-apparent Franz Ferdinand, Lieutenant Field-Marshal Conrad von Hötzendorf became Chief of the Staff on 18 November 1906. He had a clear and lively mind, but he was inconsistent, impulsive and full of activist ambitions. Relying on his powerful patron, he was self-willed, overbearing and always on the offensive. The old Franz Joseph could not bear him, finding him too much of a "theorist" and too unstable, and that he always wanted something new. "He is clever, but he is not wise", the Emperor is reported to have said of him.³¹⁷ In his combinations, he was visibly influenced by the clerical circles and he liked arbitrary measures. He introduced the type of a general-politician, who negotiated in the name of the "higher" circles with various political parties and arranged for political combinations on all sides. The idea of a preventive war became an obsession for Hötzendorf, not only against Serbia, but also against all possible enemies of the Monarchy. He became Chief of the General Staff on 18 November 1906, and he proposed a preventive war against Italy as early as 6 April 1907, after merely six months in office. "In my memorandum of 6 April and the supplement of 13 April" he wrote, "I pointed out the divergence of interests between the Monarchy and Italy, and urged that at that moment, i.e. in the spring of 1907, military supremacy was still on the side of the Monarchy, and that therefore it seemed wise to take advantage of this situation before it had changed to our detriment."³¹⁸ In the same year, he also expressed his views in regard to

317 J. Redlich, *Kaiser Franz Joseph von Österreich*, Berlin 1929, p. 429.

318 Hötzendorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit 1906-8*, I, p. 64.

Serbia. In a letter sent to Baron Aehrenthal on 18 December 1907, he said that at the time of the occupation in 1878 it had been "clear to him that the solution of the Yugoslav problem lay only in Serbia, i.e. in an extensive campaign the ultimate objective of which is the annexation of Serbia ... If we had our troops in Niš, if we established ourselves as masters there, our influence in the north-western Balkans would be assured, and, which is even more important, in the Balkans in general".³¹⁹ In his plans, he counted on the resistance of Russia, Italy and perhaps Turkey, and in order to paralyze them, he planned to attack Italy, to tie Turkey's hands by means of Italy (?) and Greece, and to satisfy Russia in the matter of the Dardanelles. Apart from this aggressiveness, which was absolutely uncalled for, his plans are surprisingly naive, and lack the statesman-like understanding to weigh relations and consequences. Hötzenndorf and his entourage constantly demanded war as soon as possible and, with this object in view, urged an active and ultimately offensive policy on the part of the Monarchy. Italy should be attacked first "because I think a conflict with Italy is inevitable for the settlement of the Balkan question, and I can never cease to hope that we may settle our accounts with Italy before the Balkan question becomes acute, so as to rid ourselves of our opponents one by one and not to have to deal with them all at the same time."³²⁰ The war that the Chief of the General Staff had in mind, it is clear from his own explanation, should not be a preventive war of defense, but a preventive war to make possible the smooth solution of the Balkan problem, i.e. to further Austro-Hungarian plans and action in that territory. It was essentially a war of aggression, not a defensive war. The military circles in the Monarchy were far from any policy of peace; they condemned the conservative habits of the authorities and emphatically demanded that the Monarchy be more energetic and active in its attitude. "As regards the Balkans", Hötzenndorf wrote in his memorandum of 31 December 1907, "I have never understood the policy of *status quo* which takes into consideration only the peace, well-being and preservation of that which exists, for history never stands still and, in spite of the pious wishes of a few individuals, thousands of others care nothing for these pious wishes, but actively pursue their own ends, so that it is therefore only natural that in the long run the one who thinks only of 'preservation' gets the worst of it, falls out of the game, and has to watch his possessions dropping away one after another, while his more enterprising neighbour at last reaches the goal in spite of the temporary setbacks, as he has always been dynamic. Only an aggressive policy

319 Ibid., p. 530.

320 Ibid., p. 531.

with a positive aim can save [us] from ruin and achieve success.³²¹ He who has not the courage to adopt such a policy, must be prepared to go under.... As regards the Balkans, the first aim we must have before us is to ensure our position in the Balkans, so as to be able to exert our influence there, and the securing, i.e. the acquisition of those territories which are necessary for the survival of the Monarchy. This amounts to the annexation of the occupied territory and the acquisition of Serbia down to the central territory around Niš." In this memorandum, which shows the inner motives of the Viennese military circles as regards the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Baron Hötendorf detailed all the reasons for which the annexation of Serbia seemed necessary to Austria-Hungary: 1) "An independent Serbia is a permanent fulcrum to those aspirations and machinations whose object is to separate our Yugoslav territories"; 2) "the possession of the central territory around Niš would permit us to exert a decisive influence on all events in the Balkans; we could then without risk occupy Raška, which should belong to us anyway, and which would only then be truly valuable"; 3) "our position in the Adriatic is a base on which we could rely in pursuing the most immediate aggressive aim of the Monarchy, which is the development of our naval strength and our maritime trade"; 4) with Serbia within the Monarchy, the Yugoslav question would be solved, and internal equilibrium and the balancing of national forces be achieved. Hotzendorf thus demanded war with Serbia at all costs at the very beginning of the Annexation Crisis, and he was so impatient that Franz Ferdinand wrote to the head of his War Office on 20 October 1908: "Please restrain Conrad. He should give up this war-mongering (*diese Kriegsgehetze*)."³²²

The annexation was not proceeded with, it was asserted in Vienna, only on account of the Young Turk revolution, which took place in the summer of 1908. This event only served to precipitate a solution that had been prepared earlier – that is clear after the publication of the official documents. The strengthening of the garrisons in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the dispatch of troops to those parts and to the Serbian and Montenegrin borders started as early as the autumn of 1907. The Serbian Minister in Vienna learnt from a friendly source in early December that year that this was done "not in view of the pending annexation, but because of the alliance between Montenegro and Italy", that is to say out of fear that in the event of war between the Danubian Monarchy and Italy, the latter might send an army corps via Montenegro to attack

321 Khuen-Héderváry, the Hungarian Premier, and other influential people in the Monarchy held the same point of view. Cf. Steed, *Mes souvenirs*, I, p. 197.

322 Chlumecky, *Österreichische Rundschau*, XII, p. 99.

Herzegovina.³²³ The annexation was discussed as early as 1 December 1907 at the meeting of the Joint Ministers and the Austrian and Hungarian Prime Ministers, and it was then decided that it should be carried out “as soon as circumstances might require or permit it.”

With a view to such clearly defined plans openly hostile to Serbia in the course of 1907, it is easy to understand why the systematic campaign against Greater Serbian propaganda was initiated in 1908 in the press close to the military and clerical circles, with invented, distorted and often intentionally imputed reports;³²⁴ it is clear why agents provocateurs were set to work and why an officer of the General Staff, Captain M. Forner, came into contact with Nastić.

The extent of the hatred for, and provocation of, the Serbs is best seen from the official indictment of the Serbs for high treason in Zagreb, in which it was professed that “in the territories of the Kingdoms of Croatia and Slavonia the Serb name was unknown a few years ago to the masses of the people, especially among the peasants.” This unfounded statement, which could be refuted by a host of examples and which contradicted the imperial Court that had recognized the Serb nationality in its public documents for years, was only intended to humiliate the Serbs, to present them as an element without national consciousness or tradition, dependent on foreign propaganda even for their name. Judging by the veracity and credibility of this point in the indictment, it is easy to conclude what was the worth of the remaining points and what was the degree of objectivity prevailing in the official quarters in the Monarchy. S. Wekerle stated in vain on 27 January 1909 in the Hungarian parliament that neither he nor the *Ban* could be brought to account “for the manner in which certain documents pertaining to the court proceedings have been drafted” and added that he himself saw that some passages in those documents might be interpreted as “being directed against the entire people or nationality.” The prosecution indeed mounted an attack upon the Serbian flag, the Serbian coat of arms, the Cyrillic script as the Serbian alphabet and the Serbian schools.

323 Simić Pašiću, Beč, 4. 12. 1907, Pov. Br. 426, in: Aleksić-Pejković and Anić, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. II, sv. 4/2, pp. 878-880.

324 Here is an example of the kind of absurdities that the Viennese press circulated: the *Reichspost* reported on 25 April 1908 that 15,000 dinars sent from Belgrade to an unknown address for revolutionary propaganda had been seized in the Sarajevo Post Office. This information was repeated on 30 April by the *Hrvatski Dnevnik*, which perfidiously allowed the responsibility for it to remain with their Viennese colleagues, although it could have checked and disproved the report on the spot, if its senselessness was not apparent enough.

In this connection, there followed the prohibition of the flag, of the Cyrillic alphabet and of the Serbian schools, and the persecution of the people who supported them. Even the Orthodox Church was suspected. The bitterness these proceedings produced among the people is best shown by the fact that the strictly loyal bishopric of the Orthodox Church in Austria lodged a public protest on 1 February against the humiliation of the Serbian nationality and the offence meted out to the Serbian Church. The Serbian Committee in the Hungarian Diet associated itself with this protest, and all of them, together with many municipalities, appealed to the Court for protection. The Court was fully aware of the services which the Serbs had rendered to the dynasty; it had thanked them on countless occasions for their attitude; the Court knew likewise that it had solemnly guaranteed to the Serbs their religious freedom and granted them various prerogatives and privileges; finally, the Court knew that the positive laws which it had confirmed in favor of the Serbs and their rights, were trampled upon. Nevertheless, the Court remained silent the whole time and by no word or gesture let it be understood that it would not permit such proceedings, which were an insult to an entire nation. It even seemed as if the Court itself were desirous that the Serbian people both within and outside the borders of the Monarchy be stigmatized as rebellious and possessed by the spirit of revolution, so that all measures against it might be justified without much consideration for the consequences which such behaviour might have in the future.

In order to present matters in as threatening a light as possible and to succeed in bringing about a solution in accordance with their plans, the military circles exaggerated to an incredible extent. One of Hötzenndorf's memoranda written in March 1908 stated that the revolution had already started in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This memorandum read: "The Serbian agitation in the occupied territory, stimulated from abroad, directed against the dynasty, against Catholicism and against the authority of the state, has become during the last few weeks more ardent than ever, and is practiced in such a way as to already make the country look like a *terra irredenta*, a province seething with discontent. The permanent causes for this movement, the growing self-consciousness of the people and the plotting of the neighbouring Serbian states have of late received a fresh stimulus: directly from the difficulties created by the Hungarian Independent Party; indirectly from the Sanjak railway project."³²⁵ This accusation was extended to Montenegro as well, so that the accusations against the Serbs might assume as large proportions as possible, and the concrete material for it was supplied by two newspaper articles, one of which welcomed the

³²⁵ Ibid., p. 567.

Hungarian Minister Ferenc Kossuth on his arrival in Bosnia while the other sharply criticized the Austro-Hungarian plans for the Sanjak Railway. How far this is from an actual movement of rebellion "in full swing" (*eine irredente, in voller Garung begriffene Provinz*)! The semi-official organ of the Bosnian government, the *Bosnische Post*, published in its no. 152 of 4 July a note in which it referred to such items of news as "rockets" and ended with the words "that we in Bosnia have no idea (*keine Ahnung haben*) of the rebellion or of the dangers which are threatening us." Such exaggeration can only be understood if the intention was to force the issue and bring about a solution entirely in accordance with the suggestions put forward by an interested party, that is to say the military party.

When all the facts are put together, we can form a different assessment of the events which took place at that time in the Yugoslav lands under Austria-Hungary. Now we understand why Baron Pavao Rauch, a well-known antagonist of the Serbs and a man who was brutal rather than energetic, must have been appointed *Ban* of Croatia on 6 January 1908 with the consent of the Hungarian premier. He was the candidate of the Viennese military circles; he was not even considered a reliable friend of the Hungarians, but they accepted him all the same, since Vienna needed him for that particular post and for a particular purpose at that moment. Rauch's coming into power had only one object in view: to compromise the Serbo-Croat Coalition in Croatia and make it impossible for it to hold office at the time of the annexation. The new *Ban*, therefore, began during his first month in office to accuse the Coalition, reproaching it for treasonous intentions and disloyalty to the dynasty, although he failed to produce any proof whatever of this, even when he was most insistently called upon to do so. When on 15 January he arrived in Zagreb as the new *Ban* and was met with mass hostile demonstrations, he at once presented this political failure as an act of high treason. A theory was worked out that the demonstrations against the *Ban* meant in fact demonstrations against the sovereign who had appointed him, which was therefore nothing less than an act of open disloyalty and indeed of high treason. It is obvious that the *Ban* and his followers would not have had recourse to so strained a proof of high treason had they had stronger and more substantial evidence. The eighteen Serbs, members of the Coalition, who had been elected to the Croatian Diet demanded in their open letter of 10 April 1908³²⁶ that the *Ban* sue them and produce the evidence of their treasonous activities to which he had alluded on several occasions. However, he considered it wise to give the following answer to this public request as evidence in support of the grave accusations he had made: the

326 *Srbobran*, no. 77.

Serbian Independent Party and its organ, the *Srbobran*, give proof of their own anti-governmental attitude “in that they look with sympathy upon the Greater Serbian dreams, which are put forward in the press outside the Monarchy, and that they very readily engage themselves in such dreams.” Can this sympathy for an ideal be evidence of high treason? All Austria knew that the Poles were dreaming of the restoration of the Polish state, and not only did nobody ever accuse them of high treason, but instead the Poles were one of the pillars of the parliamentary majority and always had one or two of their representatives in the Cabinet. Consequently, the Serbian deputies, greatly incensed, replied to the *Ban* on 15 April in another open letter with many signatures, in which they told him that he had “lied, slandered and falsely denounced” them.³²⁷

Even in Croatia and Slavonia the new *Ban* met with no response. In the elections, which took place in February 1908, he was completely defeated, for the Coalition obtained 57 out of the 88 seats, while the *Ban*’s followers failed to secure a single one! In a country where parliamentary principles are observed, we know that such an electoral result could only have one outcome – i.e. the resignation of the *Ban*. Not only did that not take place, however, but this man, who had suffered a complete defeat and whose prestige was obviously shaken, was even given a free hand to do what he liked. He ruled afterwards without the Diet and made no further attempt to hold elections. The Hungarian government stood by and protected him, thus showing only too clearly that the parliamentary spirit in their country was of a doubtful nature, especially when their own interests, which after all were problematic on this particular occasion, were at stake. “Three years have not yet passed”, Seton-Watson wrote, “since the Hungarian Coalition – then still an opposition party – was filling the whole of Europe with passionate appeals against the alleged attempts on the part of Austria to reintroduce absolutism in Hungary. And now this same Coalition, after sacrificing the principal items in its programme to its lust for the government fleshpots, endeavours to impose an absolutism of the narrowest and worst sort upon its brotherly Croatian people.”³²⁸

That the *Ban* would at once begin to ascribe his failure to Greater Serbian propaganda and to separatist tendencies was only to be anticipated. But although this kind of excuse had become habitual in official circles, one nevertheless wonders at their shortsightedness. If Serbian propaganda in Croatia, which had been united to Hungary since 1102 and under the Habsburgs since 1527, was so strong that not a single government candidate was elected, should that not have been grave warning to the ruling circles in Vienna and Pest,

327 *Srbobran*, no. 81.

328 Seton-Watson, *Die Sudslavische Frage in Habsburger Reiche*, p. 184.

indicating that they had lost the influence with the Yugoslavs? If propaganda succeeded to such an extent as to win over three-fourths of the population in Bosnia and Herzegovina and to defeat all the candidates of the government party in Croatia, in a manner unknown in the history of European parliamentarism, then that propaganda was no longer merely propaganda, but rather an irresistible national movement. Would not such an admission have meant at the same time a completely negative estimate of their work? The truth indeed lay in that. An anti-Austrian and anti-Hungarian attitude had been formed, and it was not to be changed, whether Serbia were beaten down and defeated by the Monarchy or not; the situation could only have been improved if Vienna or Pest had made radical changes in the attitude they had hitherto adopted and embarked on a policy of sincere and unselfish conciliation with the Yugoslavs. In that case, there would have been no need for them to experiment with war.

IV₂ The Development of the Crisis

1

In proclaiming the annexation, Austria-Hungary acted entirely on its own initiative and without regard for other Great Powers, which were also the signatories of the Treaty of Berlin and which had entrusted the Danubian Monarchy with the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Austro-Hungarian diplomacy had derived manifold advantages from the mandate and the rights granted at Berlin; not long before the annexation, by appealing to those rights, they had secured the privilege of tracing the Sanjak railway and had tried to obtain a line across Montenegrin territory. Continually, the Serbs had to bear the burden and the serious consequences of the provisions of the Berlin Congress, which they nevertheless observed and upheld, although to their own disadvantage, as obligations arising out of an international agreement. The Danubian Monarchy to which the Berlin Congress had given more than to any other party, and without the sacrifices which others had to make, had taken every opportunity thus offered to secure on the basis of the treaty everything that was to its own interest, and now it simply tore that treaty to pieces, regardless of the rights and interests of others. In European diplomatic history of recent years, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was the first Great Power to make a law of its own will.

It is, therefore, quite comprehensible that the proclamation of the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina was received in the greater part of Europe with astonishment and condemnation. Even those who otherwise found it only

natural that after thirty years Austria-Hungary should pass from occupation to annexation considered not only that its manner was unsuitable, but also that it created a very bad precedent in international relations. The fact that Austria-Hungary had not waited for the assent of the other Powers, that it had failed to bring the whole matter before them, that it had kept secret all its preparations showed plainly that Viennese diplomacy was not sure of its right and therefore wanted to face the world with an accomplished fact, and, in case of disapproval, to meet a pacific Europe with its own, and its German ally's, bayonets. Might was to take the place of right. The advice that Baron Aehrenthal had given Prince Ferdinand to the effect that he should not fail to take advantage of the supremacy of his army over possible enemies was based on the convictions which ruled his own decisions. Europe had either to accept the situation thus created or at once to enter into a war which Austro-Hungarian diplomacy did not fear, believing that Austria and her German ally were militarily better prepared than Russia, exhausted by war and revolution. In the negotiations between Vienna and Berlin, the possibility of war was a frequent topic, the general belief in the competent quarters in both cities being that they were stronger and that they should take advantage of their strength, and force others to give way by showing themselves to be determined not to alter the settlement which had been reached, even at the cost of war. In handing to the Grand Vizier a note about the annexation, the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador, Count Pallavicini, stated without hesitation the views of his government: the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina was a *fait accompli*, an accomplished fact, "and whoever is not in agreement with that fact can declare war on us." "We are not going to enter into any discussion about this either with Turkey or with the Powers."³²⁹ The "argument of force" could not have been stated more clearly; such an attitude obviously indicated a readiness to trample upon all other considerations as long as force was believed sufficient to guarantee the success of that attitude. Similar legal and diplomatic arguments later came from Germany through the voice of Prince Bülow: "So long as we two (Germany and Austria-Hungary) stand together, we form, just like the old German Federation for fifty years, a block that none will lightly dare to oppose."³³⁰

When the Serbian Minister in St. Petersburg, Dimitrije Popović, made enquiries on 12 August (30 July) 1908 at the Russian Foreign Ministry as to whether there was any substance in the reports on the pending proclamation of the annexation, the Assistant Minister Charykov replied: "Austria-Hungary has

329 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, I, pp. 139, 172.

330 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, 1, p. 46.

indeed surprised the world with its Novi Pazar railway, but this move on its part is justified by the provisions of the Treaty of Berlin. The annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, however, is impossible, as it would mean the violation of the Treaty of Berlin, which was signed by all the Great Powers and which is the foundation of the entire political order of the present day. It is certain that no Power would agree to that, for it would mean a further dangerous complication in the already chaotic state of affairs in Turkey".³³¹ On 2 September (20 August), Charykov again said to the Serbian Minister that he thought "Austria had no interest in making such a mistake" and that the Austrian rumours of annexation seemed to be a *ballon d'essai*; on 26 (13) September, he added that the annexation question was not an Austrian but rather an international one, and that no Power signatory to the Berlin Treaty would consent to such a desire on the part of Austria-Hungary".³³² On the same occasion, Charykov told the Serbian Minister that he "had no idea" whether there had been any talk of the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina during the meeting between Izvolsky and Aehrenthal. H. Wickham Steed has recorded that Izvolsky told him personally in Carlsbad on 25 August that he did not think Aehrenthal would carry out the annexation in the near future, although he had long borne it in mind.³³³ We know now from Charykov's memoirs that he was not entirely sincere with the Serbian Minister and that he was hiding from him Russia's negotiations with Vienna about the annexation and the Bosphorus. But these memoirs also clearly show³³⁴ that St. Petersburg counted on a European conference for the definite settlement of those questions. A very unfavourable impression was therefore produced in St. Petersburg by the reliable report that the annexation of Bosnia was fixed to take place in October (September, Old Style) without waiting for any such conference. Count Berchtold, the Austrian Ambassador in St. Petersburg, himself reported to Vienna on 18 October: "It appears that the letter in which Your Excellency informed Monsieur Izvolsky of the pending annexation has had the same effect as the first Japanese gunshots had upon the peaceable Port Arthur garrison."³³⁵ This was especially the case as the Russian

331 Popović Milovanoviću, Petrograd, 12. 8. 1908, Strogo Pov. Br. 347, in: M. Vojvodić and Lj. Aleksić-Pejković, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije 1903-1914*, knj. III, sv. 2/2, Beograd 2011, pp. 725-726.

332 Popović Velimiroviću, Petrograd, 2. 9. 1908. Pov. Br. 373, in: Ibid., p. 888; Popović Milovanoviću, Petrograd, 26. 9. 1908, Pov. Br. 408, in: Ibid., pp. 1020-1021.; D. Popović, *Izvoljski i Erental*, Beograd 1927, p. 16.

333 Steed, *Mes souvenirs*, I, pp. 261-2.

334 N. V. Charykov, *Glimpses of High Politics*, London 1931, p. 269.

335 *Öst.-Ung.Aussenpolitik*, I, p. 251.

government was not in agreement with Izvolsky's action, of which he had not previously informed even the Prime Minister Stolypin.³³⁶

When on 5 October Charykov informed the Serbian Minister that the annexation was going to be proclaimed in two days' time, he immediately qualified this act as "a one-sided violation of the Treaty of Berlin" and declared that Russia would demand the convocation of a European conference to revise the entire treaty and arrange that Serbia should be given some territorial compensation in the border area of Bosnia.³³⁷

In all his official communications Aehrenthal affirmed that at his meeting with the Russian Foreign Minister, Izvolsky, at Buchlau on 15 September 1908, he had come to an agreement with him about the annexation, but that he had not then informed him of the exact date. In some of his reports, he also declared that he had also come to an understanding in this matter with Tittoni, although "more academically".³³⁸ But all he said was very indefinite and seemed more like some sort of a hint or a vague scheme, at least in conversation with Tittoni. For that reason, after having received the news on 29 September of the possibility of an early proclamation, Tittoni asked through Avarna, the Italian Ambassador in Vienna, for postponement of the proclamation, so that he and Aehrenthal might come to a more direct understanding. Izvolsky declared, just like Tittoni, that Aehrenthal's remarks at their meeting had been so general and indefinite, that he did not form the impression that the matter was so imminent and that it would be settled in such a way, without the consent of the other signatory Powers.³³⁹ We shall not here deal with the question of how far the discussions between Aehrenthal and Izvolsky were indeed open and precise; we shall merely note that Izvolsky was undoubtedly right when he declared that he had always considered the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina a European question. In his memorandum of 2 July (19 June) 1908 to the Vienna government, he expressly stated that the Russian government was of the opinion "that the question of a change in the situation created by Article 25 of the Berlin Congress, i.e. the annexation of Bosnia, Herzegovina and the Sanjak of Novi Pazar was eminently a European question, and not such as to allow of a settlement by means of a separate agreement between Russia and Austria-Hungary".³⁴⁰ The Russian Ambassador in

336 Charykov, *Glimpses of High Politics*, pp. 269-270

337 Popović Ministarstvu inostranih dela, Petrograd, 5. 10. 1908, Pov. Br. 1788, in: Vojvodić and Aleksić-Pejković, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. III, sv. 2/2, pp. 1071-1072.

338 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, I, p. 102.

339 *British Documents*, V, pp. 383-5.

340 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, I, p. 192.

Vienna, Prince Urusov told the Serbian Minister on 9 October (26 September) that Aehrenthal had really said a good deal about the annexation at Buchlau, "but that he had not given the impression that it would soon take place" and that Izvolsky had insisted, without opposing the change in principle, that it "could not be made without the consent of the signatory powers of the Treaty of Berlin".³⁴¹ Izvolsky himself told the Serbian Foreign Minister, Milovanović, at Carlsbad that Austria-Hungary would carry out the annexation, but that he knew neither the date nor the manner of it, and he least of all expected that which Aehrenthal chose.

The matter of the proclamation of the annexation was carried out by Vienna in a clandestine manner, which was not loyal even to its closest allies and which immediately aroused protests both in Rome and Berlin, as well as the serious displeasure of the German Emperor himself.³⁴² On 20 October, under the immediate impression produced by the first news of the annexation and its effects, the German Emperor wrote angrily of Aehrenthal's action: "He told us nothing about it. To Izvolsky and Tittoni he gave such veiled hints that they both consider themselves to have been completely deceived; he has not taken the Sultan into account at all, although the matter concerns him more than anyone else; he has allowed his master to be suspected of having been in agreement with Ferdinand, the violator of the peace treaty; he has made the Serbs boil, irritated Montenegro to the extreme, incited the Cretans to revolt, ruined our Turkish policy built up steadily for twenty years; he has annoyed the British and given them our place in Istanbul; he has vexed the Greeks by his friendship with the Bulgarians; he has broken the Treaty of Berlin and reduced the Concert of Europe to complete helplessness; he has angered the Magyars, for Bosnia should have been annexed to them, and alarmed the Croats, who had themselves planned to take her. This is, as a piece of work, a European record that no diplomat has ever accomplished. A far-sighted statesman he certainly is not!"³⁴³ Prince Bülow, who at the time of the Annexation Crisis energetically supported Austria's point of view, also considered that Aehrenthal's action was

341 Simić Milovanoviću, Beč, 10. 10. 1908, Pov. Br. 518, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. III, sv. 3, pp. 217-219.

342 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, p. 53. The Emperor himself wrote the following note on one of the reports concerning the annexation: "*Ich bin persönlich auf das tiefste in meinem Gefühlen als Bundesgenosse verletzt, dass ich nicht im Geringsten vorher von Seiner Majestät in's Vertrauen gezogen wurde.*"

343 *Die Grosse Politik*, I, p. 154. It is also true that when he met Aehrenthal himself at the beginning of November, the Emperor called him to his face "a wise statesman".

not “quite fair, to use in this instance British word which is fitting”.³⁴⁴ Emperor Wilhelm II was so embittered that in his first bout of anger he thought of demanding the revocation of the annexation and the dismissal of Aehrenthal. Bülow has claimed that he had much difficulty in dissuading him. Bülow did not wish to vex Austria, which was necessary to Germany, while on the other hand he promised the Emperor that he would see to it that this should not lead to a European conflict.³⁴⁵

Marschall, the well-informed German Ambassador in Constantinople, wrote to Berlin on 4 October that the consequences of the proclamation of the annexation would be “as bad as it gets”. “The tearing up of the Treaty of Berlin will shake the foundations upon which the political order in the Balkans rests today.... Baron Aehrenthal’s action raises the entire Eastern question at the moment when peace is more needed than ever.” He had written earlier, on 30 September: “If Baron Aehrenthal believes that in the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina he has found a weapon against the Greater Serbian propaganda, he is very much mistaken. With this measure, he will only provoke a strong Muslim movement in these provinces, in addition to the Serbian one.”³⁴⁶ To the Serbian Minister, Dr. J. Nenadović, he said openly and honestly on the very day of the annexation that Germany had not been informed of the annexation, and otherwise it would perhaps have influenced the proceeding and its consequences, and that he particularly appreciated the difficult position of Serbia. “The annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the joint activities of Austria and Bulgaria are of special and great importance for your country, which has thus been placed in a very difficult and serious position politically. The situation created by the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina presents a great danger to you.”³⁴⁷

In a conversation with Stemrich, the Deputy Secretary of State in Berlin, the French Ambassador Cambon referred bitterly to Emperor Franz Joseph’s letter about the annexation, which had been received in Paris the day before, saying: “It is now the rulers who make revolutions.”³⁴⁸ The French Premier, Clemenceau, declared to the British Ambassador in Paris that Austria-Hungary’s action could not be allowed to pass without protest, for it was the “grave

344 *Denkwürdigkeiten*, II, p. 336. Cf. his condemnation of Aehrenthal’s action expressed to Hardinge, *Mémoires de Edward Grey, vicomte de Fallodon, ministre des affaires étrangères de Grande-Bretagne*, Paris 1927, p. 184.

345 *Ibid.*, pp. 341-2.

346 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, pp. 82, 99.

347 Nenadović Milovanoviću, Carigrad, 7. 10. 1908, Pov. Br. 833, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. III, sv. 3, pp. 173-176.

348 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, p. 100.

violation of a treaty obligation and an offence against public morality, which might, if tolerated, create a bad precedent".³⁴⁹

The manner in which the annexation was announced created a particularly bad impression in Britain. Sir Edward Grey and Sir Charles Hardinge declared in the name of the British government that they could not recognize the right of any government arbitrarily to change international treaties. Austria-Hungary had even undertaken in writing in the protocol of 17 January 1871 annexed to the Treaty of London that neither it nor any other Power would violate the obligations of the treaty, or modify its provisions without the consent of other contracting Powers. The latter, therefore, were unwilling to recognize the act of annexation without a previous understanding between the signatories of the Berlin treaty and Turkey and the Sultan, who was still the sovereign of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian territory. "Nothing can justify the action of Bulgaria, and still less that of Austria", Sir Edward Grey explicitly said to the Serbian Charge d'Affaires, Slavko Grujić, on 7 October.³⁵⁰ The German Emperor himself made a note on a document to the effect that the British point of view was "quite correct".³⁵¹ In Vienna, very serious people expressed their surprise, both then and later, insisting that the relations between Britain and Austria-Hungary had hitherto been very correct and that the British attitude now became incomprehensible.³⁵² They therefore sought all other possible causes, but were long unable to realize the sincere revolt of the British government and public opinion at such an obvious violation of legal obligations. Of Baron Aehrenthal himself and his sincerity, Grey formed a very unfavourable impression, while Hardinge went as far as to say outright: "Since he came to Vienna, he has played the fool."³⁵³ The annexation, wrote H. Asquith, then the British Prime Minister, was "an insolent violation of European public law." "The illegal annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina undertaken on Austria's initiative and with Germany's complicity, which opened the eyes of the world to the value those two Powers attached to the sanctity of international obligations, is a fact of the greatest significance in the history of the origins of the Great War."³⁵⁴ Count Metternich, the German Ambassador in London, reported to

349 *British Documents*, V, p. 387.

350 Grujić Milovanoviću, London, 7. 10. 1908, Pov. Br. 441, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. III, sv. 3, pp. 176-179.

351 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, pp. 106-7.

352 Cf. T. von Sosnosky, *Die Balkanpolitik Österreich-Ungarns seit 1866*, II, Stuttgart und Berlin, 1914, p. 156 ff.

353 *British Documents*, V, pp. 388-9; *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, p. 106. The German Emperor made the following marginal note: "Very tart, but not untrue."

354 *Der Ursprung des Krieges*, München 1924, pp. 52-3.

his government on 6 October that Sir Charles Hardinge had spoken of the annexation as follows: "It is a Jesuitical form of justification to say that the need to give Bosnia a constitution was the cause of Austria's action. That circumstance might have provided a good excuse for bringing the question before the Powers. Since the action of Russia in 1871, no such flagrant violation of a treaty has taken place, and it was then established by protocol that no Power should be able to withdraw alone from international treaty obligations."³⁵⁵

In the opinion of the whole of Europe, both public and official, most resentment was caused because the intended annexation was not only concealed, but even denied. As an example of the way in which Vienna concealed its intentions in this respect even from those who were directly concerned, we may cite, in addition to the case of Tittoni, the following instances which concerned the Turks. The Turkish Ambassador in Vienna, Reşad Hikmet, was told "categorically" in the Foreign Ministry, about a week before the proclamation of the annexation, "that there has never been any question of anything except the (Bosnian) Diet."³⁵⁶ Ahmed Riza Bey, the well-known Young Turk leader, was assured by Aehrenthal³⁵⁷ as late as 22 September that he (Aehrenthal) would preserve the *status quo* in the Balkans, but he was not told a word about what was going to happen in Bosnia.

King Edward VII's letter to Emperor Franz Joseph sent on 11 October 1908 in reply to the information about the annexation, openly criticized that action and contained in substance the above mentioned reproaches.³⁵⁸ The King of Britain felt greatly injured that on the occasion of his meeting with Emperor Franz Joseph in August that year he had not been told a word about the intended act. He could not fail to feel the sting of that mark of mistrust on the part of the

355 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, p. 106.

356 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, I, p. 140.

357 Aehrenthal's sincerity was in general very doubtful. To the British Ambassador, Goschen, who questioned him about the proclamation of Bulgarian independence and about the conversations which he had had with the ruler of Bulgaria on 3 October, on the instructions of his government and on the strength of reports which were fairly reliable, Aehrenthal replied with a few commonplaces and said that he knew nothing definite about it. On the same day, however, Count Khevenhüller handed to the President of the French Republic the famous declaration of Bulgarian independence. When the matter became almost public property, the British government and Sir Edward Goschen were indignant at Aehrenthal's attitude. At a Court luncheon in honour of King George of Greece, a very awkward explanation took place between Aehrenthal and Goschen in the course of which the latter openly questioned Aehrenthal's sincerity. Cf. *British Documents*, V, pp. 379-82; 389; Steed, *Mes souvenirs*, I, pp. 263-4; S. Lee, *King Edward VII*, London 1927, pp. 633-4; Chlumecky, *Österreichische Rundschau*, XII, p. 97.

358 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, I, p. 193.

old Emperor. When he received the official notification of the annexation on 8 October, he was, according to one of his biographers, exceedingly annoyed. "I never saw him so upset", it has been stated. He simply felt "betrayed and cheated". The Austrian Ambassador, Count Mensdorff, of whom he otherwise held a high opinion, he received with coldness bordering on insult.³⁵⁹ The unilateral proclamation of the annexation was also condemned by Emperor Nicholas II in his letter to Emperor Franz Joseph of 22 (4) November 1908.³⁶⁰

The general opinion about Baron Aehrenthal's action, of which all official Austria-Hungary then approved, was very unfavourable in all European circles, even in Germany. The principal reasons for this adverse opinion were succinctly and clearly summed up in four words uttered by Goschen, the British Ambassador in Vienna: "the principle, the precedent, the moment and the manner".³⁶¹ Aehrenthal's proceeding is now spoken of with condemnation even by the chief leaders of the Austrian activist policy of that time. Franz Ferdinand's confidant, Baron Leopold Chlumecky, does not hesitate to say that Aehrenthal's method was "the most unsuitable that could have been imagined" and that many influential persons even then disagreed with it, among others the heir-apparent, Franz Ferdinand himself.³⁶² The Austrian Premier, Baron M. Beck, also wrote on 12 August 1908 to his first secretary that he was worried about Aehrenthal's plan, because it seemed to him that he "was treating the matter both superficially and carelessly. It is a policy of aggression (*des Draufgehens*), although the consequences of his action in connection with the Sanjak railway ought to have warned him to be more careful".³⁶³ But all the same Beck did nothing to check that policy, or to dissociate himself from it.

After all these criticisms, foreign and domestic, we have nothing to add. We can only say what our impression would be, if similar things were done by a private individual, and not by a statesman: that a deed obviously cannot be straightforward and justifiable, if its perpetrator lack the courage to do it openly, publicly and in the full light of day, but resort to concealment, to tearing up of treaties, and as a last resource to violence.

359 J. A. Farrer, *Die europäische Politik unter Eduard VII*, München 1926, p. 269; Lee, *King Edward VII*, pp. 127, 633.

360 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, I, p. 389.

361 Simić Velimiroviću, Beč, 9. 11. 1908, Pov. Br. 548, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. III, sv. 3, pp. 473-474.

362 L. von Chlumecky, *Erzherzog Franz Ferdinands Wirken und Wollen*, Berlin 1929, pp. 95, 97.

363 R. Sieghart, *Die letzten Jahrzehnte einer Grossmacht*, Berlin 1932, p. 137. The Austrian politician Ernst von Plener held similar opinion. Cf. K. Tschuppik, *Franz Joseph I*, Avalum-Verlag, pp. 522-3.

The impulsive German Emperor, whose frequently expressed negative opinion of Aehrenthal's proceedings is quoted above, would only have increased the general unfavourable impression, if he had said publicly what he did indeed subsequently say in private to an Austro-Hungarian diplomat: "He would gladly forget the privileged position in Constantinople on account of the increase in prestige which Austria-Hungary had gained by its action and which was highly welcome to Germany, too. The Monarchy has thereby become the leading Power in the Balkans."³⁶⁴ To illustrate the Emperor's inconsistency and thoughtlessness, the following note which he made on a dispatch received on 15 October from Hans von Miquel, the German Chargé d'Affaires in St. Petersburg, is extremely characteristic: "If the Russians desire to obtain compensation, let them follow Aehrenthal's *modus procedendi*; let them simply drive through the Dardanelles and the question will be settled without a conference!"³⁶⁵ This is a conception of international treaty obligations that was given rise after Austria-Hungary's action and an indication of how all sense of legal procedure was shaken in Vienna and Berlin, where the motto that might came before right had already been in existence. To follow Austria-Hungary's example and put into effect the German Emperor's suggestion would mean "simply" to destroy international treaties and international law, and to reduce European legal relations to power relations. In Vienna and Berlin, according to their own declarations, this was, in fact, the object in view; in their own words, this was a good opportunity for "a trial of strength" (*Kraftprobe*). Their solidarity in this matter was not only an expression of the community of their interests, but also, to a large extent, of their similar conceptions, which was so obvious, in spite of all Germany's initial reservations, and so full of ominous consequences.

The attitude of the Russian Foreign Minister, Izvolsky, in the annexation matter was unusual. In a conversation with M. Vesnić in Paris on 6 October (23 September) 1908, he advanced the view, probably with the intention to sooth the Serbs, that the proclamation of the annexation was in reality a gain for them. "You Serbs could not have thought of driving Austria-Hungary out of Bosnia and Herzegovina by force of arms. On the other hand, we Russians cannot make war on it for the sake of those provinces. Austria-Hungary, in fact, gains nothing by making this step. On the contrary, it loses an established gain

³⁶⁴ *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, I, p. 225. The Austro-Hungarian Ambassador in Constantinople, Pallavicini, made a similar declaration on 21 October: "The form and manner in which we carried the matter through, i.e. the daring establishment of a *fait accompli*, which took more or less the whole world by surprise, made an impression and showed once more that a strong offensive is the best policy." *Ibid.*, I, p. 273.

³⁶⁵ *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, p. 172.

by renouncing its right to the Sanjak of Novi Pazar and withdrawing from it, and that will raise the spirit of the Serbian people, as it will open up a prospect of bringing the borders of Serbia and Montenegro closer together. Austria will make this sacrifice at our request, as Milovanović knows from our conversation in Carlsbad, where he himself was of the opinion that the Serb people and Serbia proper, if Austria thus retired from the Sanjak, might well agree to the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. I foresaw this step on the part of Austria-Hungary and was not surprised by it. I therefore expressly made our recognition of it subject to the above mentioned condition. The proclamation of the annexation will go hand in hand with the renunciation of the Sanjak of Novi Pazar. After that will come the revision of the Berlin Treaty, which we shall demand, and on the occasion of which Serbia might attempt to secure the rectification of her borders. I declared last winter in the Duma that I was an optimist, and I am still one today. I did not protest even last winter when Aehrenthal made his blunder about the Novi Pazar railway, but instead I at once assisted the plan for the Adriatic railway. I still think it was better to secure Austria's withdrawal from the Sanjak in favour of the Serbs than simply to protest. In 1878, Austria brought Russia and her allies to account in Berlin; now we are going to do the same to her. Von Schoen, to whom I was the first to communicate Austria-Hungary's decision to give up the Sanjak for the sake of the annexation, was greatly surprised by the thoughtlessness of Viennese policy. It looks as if Vienna only desired to give the old Emperor a satisfaction at the end of his reign."³⁶⁶

Izvolsky probably did not wish to seem to the Serbian representatives as a man who had not seen through the matters and who had been deceived by Aehrenthal. To make himself and his attitude appear more important, he made statements which did not always correspond to the truth. Austria-Hungary did not decide to drop the Sanjak at his request – we have seen its reasons for doing so – nor did he ever make that request in so categorical a form. In his negotiations with Aehrenthal, he linked the annexation with Austria's consent to the Dardanelles being opened to Russian warships, but he did not say a word to Vesnić about that. Judging by Milovanović's attitude throughout the Annexation Crisis, it does not seem probable that he could have made the statement which Izvolsky attributed to him, although the Serbian representative was present and he could have easily verified it. Milovanović himself never admitted he had made that statement, even in the most intimate Serbian circles, and we have been unable to find any trace of it or allusion to it in the entire correspondence concerning the Annexation Crisis. Izvolsky never made

366 Archives of the Serbian Legation in Paris, Report of 24 September 1908, conf. no. 509.

any reference to such important a fact when he asked Serbia to keep quiet and curb her opposition, although that would certainly have been a very powerful weapon in his hands. On 28 (15) September, Milovanović telegraphed to the Serbian Minister in St. Petersburg: "Explain to Charykov that every day we have fresh reasons to fear that Austria-Hungary intends to carry out the annexation of Bosnia. With this object in view, as can be seen, high treason affairs have been invented and slanderous campaigns started in the press against Serbia. We are doing all that lies in our power to give no grounds for any accusations against Serbia. Serbia and the whole of Serbdom would consider the annexation a national catastrophe. Can Russia give us any hope that this catastrophe will pass us by?" This telegram does not seem to have supported Izvolsky's statement. In the course of his diplomatic career, Izvolsky had elsewhere proved himself to be a man whose words could not be taken unreservedly; he was such on this occasion. In addition to this characteristic, there was in the case of this conversation a certain bragging note which was somewhat ill-considered and badly timed. The only thing that appears certain, apart from the negotiations about the annexation, is that Izvolsky firmly believed in the convocation of a conference to sanction the modifications made. He therefore constantly linked the recognition of the annexation with the summoning of a conference and made a definite statement to that effect to Milovanović on the occasion of their meeting in Berlin. It is also certain that he fully realized his mistake in the negotiations about the annexation and the Dardanelles later in Paris and London, where he was taken aback by the very unfavourable opinion of the annexation and where he failed to obtain what he wanted in the Dardanelles question.³⁶⁷

Austria-Hungary was, to a large extent, surprised at such sharp and general condemnation of its proceedings and instead of attempting to smooth matters over, it began to defend its action with arguments that were astonishing in their shallow sophistry. The Austro-Hungarian Ambassador declared in London that the recognition of the annexation did not concern other Great Powers; that the Treaty of Berlin contained no provision concerning the sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and that therefore the whole matter concerned only Austria-Hungary and Turkey, the latter Power being the only one which had the right to protest.³⁶⁸ It was not difficult, especially in London, to answer such assertions. Austria-Hungary had received a mandate for the occupation at the proposal of Britain in agreement with the other Great Powers at

367 Cf. *Memoires de Edward Grey*, pp. 168-178; M. de Taube, *La politique russe d'avant-guerre*, Paris 1929, pp. 192-3; Nicolson, *Die Verschwörung der Diplomaten*, pp. 293-4.

368 *British Documents*, V, p. 405; *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, I, p. 151.

a European Congress. If this agreement was then necessary for the act of occupation, it was clearly necessary for the new act of annexation. Austria-Hungary had not received its mandate to occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina from Turkey, which had been opposed to it, but on the basis of the decision of Great Powers. Decisions reached at an international congress cannot be modified without an agreement between the international factors which have made them. In Berlin, Austria-Hungary had received a mandate for the military occupation and administration of Bosnia and Herzegovina; had that mandate been wider, the Danubian Monarchy would certainly have interpreted it so in its own interests. Moreover, Austria-Hungary's convention with Turkey concluded on 21 April 1879 included the explicit obligation that the occupation should not interfere with the sovereign rights of the Sultan. In addition, there was a written commitment that Austria-Hungary made in Berlin on 13 July 1878 at the wish of the Turkish representatives to the effect that the sovereignty of the Sultan would not be diminished by the act of occupation, and that the occupation would be considered provisional (*que l'occupation sera considérée comme provisoire*).³⁶⁹ Also, the Administration Act for Bosnia and Herzegovina of 22 February 1880 clearly stated that that administration was "provisional", this surely being in connection with the Turkish convention. It was later explained that this was inserted in the text of the Act in order to soften the opposition of both the Austrian and Hungarian parliaments, which had been against the occupation. According to J. M. Baernreither, this expression was an "incautious but comprehensible concession".³⁷⁰ A year before the annexation, at a joint Cabinet meeting held on 1 December 1907, Aehrenthal himself had drawn attention of his colleagues to the secret treaty with Turkey "which expressly recognised the provisional character of the occupation".³⁷¹ All this, however, could not prevent the responsible quarters from contending certain legal points and making the following assertion³⁷² in the official explanatory statement concerning the annexation addressed to the Austrian and Hungarian parliament: "Austria-Hungary did not accept the occupation and administration as a fleeting task; that was handed over to it as a permanent right." Austria-Hungary, they said, exercised full authority in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and its consulates protected, and took care of, the Bosnian-Herzegovinian subjects abroad and even in relation to Turkey. "This relationship, and especially the fact that Austria-Hungary alone represented Bosnia and Herzegovina not just in

369 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, I, p. 152.

370 *Bosnische Eindrücke*, Wien 1908, p. 50.

371 Hötendorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit 1906-1918*, I, 1925, p. 519.

372 *Fremdenblatt*, no. 313, 1908.

relation to other states, but also in relation to Turkey cannot be compatible with the continuation of Turkey's sovereignty over the two provinces." The representatives of the Austro-Hungarian authorities were well aware of this; they had carefully negotiated with the Turks about the form of the occupation and all questions connected with it, and they had nevertheless expressly promised to respect the Sultan's sovereignty. However they subsequently explained it, their proceeding was a one-sided and arbitrary rejection of the accepted commitments. "By His August Decision of 5 October 1908, whereby His Majesty has extended His sovereign rights to Bosnia and Herzegovina, the state of affairs which have long been in existence is declared to be legally unchallengeable. This declaration affirms that His Majesty not only exercises the right of sovereignty over Bosnia and Herzegovina, but that He is also the sovereign in the legal sense, and that he rules over Bosnia and Herzegovina not on the basis of the treaty right, but on the basis of His own right." These words of the explanatory statement marked the annexation proceedings as clearly arbitrary.³⁷³

The representatives of the Serbian National Organisation in Bosnia and Herzegovina considered it necessary, in a public declaration which they issued on 20 (7) April 1908, to clarify their attitude towards the present and the impending political questions. They demanded, as we have seen, "the full autonomy of our fatherland", which would respect "the international treaties that determine the state-legal status of Bosnia and Herzegovina." Later at Ilidža, on 7 September (25 August), when Burian arrived in Sarajevo, the Executive Committee of the united Orthodox and Muslim organisation handed him a memorandum, in which they demanded a constitution for Bosnia and Herzegovina, but without any change in the state-legal status of those lands. In this connection, the Committee made the following official announcement: "The basis of our joint work lies in mutual sincerity and in the conviction that only together and by legal means we can achieve constitutional liberties, which will be to the general advantage of the whole of our people and preserve the integrity of our homeland from the demands for conquest, so

373 On the occasion of proclamation of the annexation, in the explanatory statement presented by the Hungarian government, there was a sentence to the effect that Hungary's "ancient historical legal title to Bosnia was an additional justification for the annexation." In appealing to historical rights, this explanatory statement particularly annoyed the Serbs, for they could claim many such medieval "rights" and, moreover, the right of the national majority in those lands. It is true, however, that such an explanatory statement was contrary to the understanding that the Hungarian government had reached with Austria; on 12 November 1908, Aehrenthal thus addressed a letter of protest to the Hungarian Premier, Wekerle, and also complained to the Emperor. H. Friedjung, *Das Zeitalter des Imperialismus*, II, Berlin, 1922, p. 234.

that by respecting the international treaties, which define our present state-legal status, we are entitled to demand that others, too, should respect them." When the annexation was announced, the entire Committee issued a proclamation to the people on 11 October (29 September), saying "the annexation has taken place without consultation and contrary to our will and yours." The principal opposition organ, the *Narod*, published the following message to the people on 24 October: "Our common fatherland, Bosnia and Herzegovina, looks only to us, for it knows that it can be conquered only by those who conquer the hearts of its loyal sons." To express the dissatisfaction of the Bosnians and Herzegovinians with the annexation before foreign Cabinets, Atanasije Šola, Dušan Vasiljević and Risto Radulović were sent to Paris, London and St. Petersburg on behalf of the Serbian National Organisation, while Dr. Murat Sarić was sent to Paris on behalf of the Muslim Organisation. Other representatives of the latter organisation, Ali-Bey Firdus and Šerif Arnautović, went to Constantinople to adapt their attitude to that of official Turkey.

In Serbia, the proclamation of the annexation carried out suddenly without the consent of Great Powers, regardless of the interests of the Serbian states, and against the will of the people in Bosnia and Herzegovina, created the utmost tension. All was at stake. National sympathies urged the Serbs in Serbia and Montenegro not to remain passive. For the sake of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro had once before, in 1876, entered into war with the Turks, thus staking their very existence to help their compatriots. For the sake of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the two Serbian states were ready again for any sacrifice.

On the Austrian side, it was emphasised that nothing was in fact changed in regard to Bosnia and Herzegovina, that Bosnia and Herzegovina had already been in Austria's hands, and that no one could expect the Monarchy, being a Great Power, to give up those provinces except under military pressure. Besides its civilizing mission in these provinces, the beneficial results of which could not be contested, although they might be criticised, Austria-Hungary also insisted on the fact that during her thirty-years of administration of Bosnia and Herzegovina it had invested a great deal of capital there, thus giving it to be understood that it regarded these provinces as permanent acquisitions. Lastly, in proclaiming the annexation, it even made a sacrifice: it renounced the Sanjak of Novi Pazar, thereby proving that it did not think of further penetration.

The Serbs took a different view of the matter. The mandate granted to Austria-Hungary at Berlin had been temporary, but that country now turned it into a permanent one by force. The conditions under which it had obtained the mandate had been modified considerably between 1878 and 1908, and before

arriving at a definite decision as to the ownership of the provinces, those conditions should have been revised. The great majority of the people in Bosnia and Herzegovina were profoundly dissatisfied with the regime instituted by the Danubian Monarchy and rightly demanded that their opinion, too, be heard, since their fate was being decided in time of peace. Austria-Hungary's action, with its arbitrary proclamation of the annexation, had disturbed the sense of justice of all nations, and especially of the Serbs. It was impossible to find any reason whatever to justify such a step, even as a matter of necessity, while from the legal point of view it was quite indefensible. Throughout 1908, whenever there was talk about the Sanjak railway, Austria appealed to her rights under the Treaty of Berlin; the same year, and before the same governments, she was the first to trample on that same treaty, when it seemed to her that it was no longer to her interest. Her diplomacy required Serbia to abide strictly by all the provisions of the Congress of Berlin, when they tied the hands of the Serbs, but she allowed herself to discard them as soon as she found it opportune to do so. Serbia was not a signatory of the Treaty of Berlin; the treaty was imposed on her as it was imposed on the other smaller states. But she respected it all the same. Austria-Hungary was a signatory to it, and it was therefore its duty to defend it from violation, and not to be the one to tear it up. "Whenever we in the Balkans have made a move for the sake of our natural rights of nationality, of our very existence, against obvious and crying injustice, there has been a great outcry that we were disturbing the established order, that we must wait for the intervention of Europe, that we should submit to international treaty law, that our maturity would be judged by our patience, our moderation and our submissiveness to the will of Europe, and our reward or recognition be determined accordingly ... The older and more educated among us have grown grey-haired teaching the people this European wisdom. All of a sudden, by Austria's latest action, which is arbitrary in every respect, all this has been wiped out."³⁷⁴ This is what the old Serbian statesman, Stojan Novaković, who would soon become Prime Minister, said.

With the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Austria-Hungary definitely established itself as a Balkan Power. The principle of "the Balkans for the Balkan peoples", which was alone capable of guaranteeing the free development of the Balkan states and nations, was flung aside. For a Great Power like Austria-Hungary, little Serbia was an insignificant obstacle to further plans which the Danubian Monarchy did not renounce, despite of all assurances to the contrary. Serbia felt the pressure of Austria-Hungary all along her northern and western borders; her neighbour in the east was Bulgaria, which was hand

374 S. Novaković, *Najnovija balkanska kriza i srpsko pitanje*, Beograd 1910, p. 32.

in glove with Austria-Hungary and, together with that Power, had flung aside the Treaty of Berlin; in the south, she was up against the obstacles that Vienna placed in her way, for example in the matter of the Adriatic railway, in Kosovo and in the Sanjak; in fact, Serbia had either to let herself be choked or to subdue to the Danubian Monarchy. According to the decision of the Congress of Berlin, as Jovan Cvijić rightly pointed out in 1908, "Serbia was almost an encircled country and we became a nation under arrest",³⁷⁵ Serbia's future became still darker when the Berlin provisorium was translated into a definite situation. Politically and economically, her entire future was at stake. In his letter to Prince Bülow written on 20 February 1909, Aehrenthal said that the significance of the annexation was clearly apprehended in certain Slav quarters. "As Turkey grew weaker and was gradually forced back to Asia, the process of state-formation naturally began afresh on our south-eastern border. We had to take an attitude in that matter, and that was what happened thirty years ago with the occupation and now with the annexation. Both these acts mean the destruction of the dream of a Greater Serbian state between the Danube, the Sava and the Adriatic."³⁷⁶

Conscious of all this, suddenly realising the difficulties of their position, the Serbs promptly pulled themselves together. The annexation was not considered merely as the sanction of an earlier act, but as a further development in a policy which aimed at striking at the Serbs both in the western and southern territory which was ethnically theirs. The annexation therefore simply opened their eyes. The inflamed passions of party politics died down, all classes in the country clearly saw the common danger. The majority of the Serbs were indeed resolved to resort to the most desperate measures; among the masses of the intelligentsia and the people, the conviction began to gain ground that war was the only way out of this situation. Although the country was not prepared for war, although a military catastrophe was more than certain, the majority of the people and of their leaders nevertheless wanted to make a move. If there was nothing to do but perish, it was better to perish with honour and for a cause to which the conscience of Europe could not remain completely indifferent. There was now no political party in Serbia which, like the former Progressive Party of the intellectuals, would want or sought for any support from the Danubian Monarchy. Sir Edward Grey shrewdly said to the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador in London, Count Mensdorff: The Dual Monarchy did not indeed take or occupy anything this time, "but it has stirred the racial feeling to its greatest depths." "In all our conversations about Macedonia, Grey always drew

375 Jovan Cvijić, *Govori i članci*, I, Beograd 1921, p. 208.

376 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, I, p. 854.

attention to the danger which might arise in the Balkans through the reawakening of various intense national feelings, and now this has been brought about by the action of the Imperial and Royal Government itself.”³⁷⁷

The Serbs had further reason for considering that they ought to be taken into account in any eventual revision of the Treaty of Berlin. The Serbs had been badly affected by the Treaty of Berlin, which was anti-Slav in substance, but they had not made any attempt to modify it. Since the Congress all the other states and peoples in the Balkans had breached its provisions: the Bulgarians had carried out their union with Rumelia in 1885 and had proclaimed themselves independent in 1908; after the unsuccessful war of 1897, the Greeks had partly gained Crete, where a prince of their reigning dynasty was appointed a governor, and now their union with Crete was proclaimed; Austria-Hungary had annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Serbs alone had gained nothing. The *status quo* in the Balkans, which had been constantly emphasized for thirty years, which had served as something of a political article of faith, and on which Viennese diplomacy had particularly insisted, was now disturbed again, and again to the detriment of the Serbs. The fatal provisions of the Congress of Berlin stood against them everywhere, in Bosnia, in the Sanjak, in Old Serbia, in the Littoral. It would only be just, therefore, to give some compensation to Serbia when these provisions were now crumbling down. When everyone in the Balkans gained something, why should Serbia and Montenegro alone remain without their share? From the Congress of Berlin to 1908 it had been clearly seen that the conditions of Serbia's politically independent existence were very relative; now that the provisions of the Congress of Berlin were to be modified, perhaps for a long period of time, that should also be taken into consideration. Serbia's desire for an outlet to the sea had from the first been entirely justifiable and undoubtedly very modest. Political wisdom might have led anyone who wished to avoid causes of conflict to meet this wish lest, at some moment of irritation, greater, more difficult and more complicated demands should later emerge.

On 7 October (24 September), after having learned the news of the annexation, the Serbian government dispatched a note of protest to all the Great Powers:

“The Government of His Majesty the King of Serbia, appealing to the incontestable rights of the Serbian nation, which are the foundation of Serbia's very existence, appealing also to the clear provisions set forth in Article 25 of the Treaty of Berlin, protest most vigorously against the union of Bosnia and

377 Ibid., p. 347.

Herzegovina with the lands of the Habsburg Monarchy, which the Emperor and King of Austria-Hungary has proclaimed today in his manifesto.

The Royal Government believes that the Treaty of Berlin, the more so as we did not participate in its drafting, but were forced to accept it in its entirety insofar as it concerned ourselves, must remain valid not only insofar as it imposes duties and obligations, involves the losses and demands sacrifices from Serbia and the Serb people, but also insofar as it offers protection to our rights, at least within the narrow limits in which they received explicit recognition in the provisions of that treaty.

It further states that, although under the influence of the ambitions and demands of certain Powers, Serbian claims were satisfied by the Congress of Berlin to a disproportionately smaller degree than it was warranted by the sacrifices of the two Serbian states, Serbia and Montenegro, in the war, and although Serbia still carried out in full and more scrupulously than any other the obligations which stemmed from the Treaty of Berlin, none of the changes made in the course of the past thirty years in the situation created by the general international treaty regulations in the Balkan Peninsula were beneficial to Serbdom, whereas many and important violations and changes of the treaty have been made which have benefitted others.

This belief, together with the statement of these facts, lead the Royal Government to hope that the voice which it raises today, claiming justice and protection from the signatory Powers of the Treaty of Berlin against this fresh and flagrant violation committed by a single Power on the exclusive basis of the right of the stronger and of the satisfaction of its selfish interests, and regardless of how deep an injury is thereby made to the feelings, interests and rights of the Serbian people, will not remain unheard.

Serbia can receive no full satisfaction in this case unless the situation created by the Treaty of Berlin in respect of Bosnia and Herzegovina has been completely restored.

Should this prove impossible, the Royal Government, in appealing to the sense of justice of the Powers signatories of the Treaty of Berlin, demands that Serbia be awarded an adequate compensation, so that the guarantees for her independent national life should be upheld and the general conditions necessary for its national existence restored to the Serbian people, at least in such measure as they were granted by the Treaty of Berlin."

The excitement gripped not only the Serbs of Serbia proper, but also those in the other territories inhabited by Serbs. In Montenegro, which immediately sided with Serbia, the people's fury was no less. Prince Nicholas himself, who had endeavoured not to burn all the bridges with Austria-Hungary, declared to Kuhn, the Austrian Minister at Cetinje, that he "was not a fanatic and is

convinced that both provinces would have a better lot under the government of His Imperial and Royal Apostolic Majesty than under any other government, but he must not forget he is a Serb and must take into account the wishes of his people and his government." "He is afraid", he later said on the same day, 8 October, "that the mood of the country would have consequences for which he could take no responsibility."³⁷⁸ If his hopes of certain territorial compensations remained unfulfilled, he said on 18 October to the Austrian Minister, "he would owe it to his honour and to the history of his people even to stake his own existence".³⁷⁹ To the Serbian Minister, Jovan M. Jovanović, he said on 13 October: "The annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina means the end for us. You in Serbia can at least exist, but we cannot go on like this. Such is the opinion of all my people, as well as my own. Both they and I want to make war. I have grown old and have nothing more to expect after this blow. *Je veux tenter un grand coup et les Autrichiens paieront cher leur brigandage, on en parlors, l'Europe frémira.*"³⁸⁰ The same year he wrote on the subject of the annexation and soon afterwards published a poem of which the title is indicative of the contents: *Ave Caesar, morituri te salutant.*

In the Vienna Foreign Ministry, in the absence of Baron Aehrenthal, who was in Pest for the session of the Austro-Hungarian Delegations, the Serbian Minister, Djordje Simić, was received on 8 October by the departmental chief, Muller. The latter refused to accept the above mentioned Serbian note of protest, declaring that "Serbia has no say in the matter", although he "understood the excitement which the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina has aroused among us." He also knew that the general excitement in Serbia assumed unusual proportions. On 5-6 October (22-23 September), the reservists were called to arms, with some limitations. The Secretary of the Austrian Legation, Otto Franz, correctly informed his government in a dispatch sent from Belgrade on 6 October of the mood of the people: "The popular movement reckons that war will later make it possible for the Powers to bring their influence to bear in favour of Serbia, and that the situation could not be less favourable for Serbia even after a defeat than it would be if she allowed the annexation."³⁸¹

Aehrenthal thereupon immediately threatened Belgrade, stating that Austria-Hungary was "in full agreement" with Russia and Italy. He also demanded an explanation for the mobilization of the Serbian reserves, and in

378 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, I, pp. 158-160.

379 *Ibid.*, p. 247.

380 Jovanović Milovanoviću, Cetinje, 15. 10. 1908, Pov. Br. 2468, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. III, sv. 3, pp. 270-272.

381 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, I, p. 137.

case that explanation was inadequate, or the mobilization order was not withdrawn, he threatened that the Monarchy, too, would take steps.³⁸² On the same day, 7 October, Vienna informed all the Great Powers of Aehrenthal's action in Belgrade and asked them to counsel "moderation and correct attitude" there. Vienna's dissatisfaction with the Serbs and their protest was such as to make all its friends fear that Austria might shortly undertake the most drastic measures against them. War was mentioned on all sides as a very likely possibility.

The declarations of the Austro-Hungarian government, such as that about the "full agreement" between themselves, Russia and Italy in the matter of the annexation, which was found that very day not to correspond to the truth, or at least not in so definite a form, together with their arbitrary refusal to recognize that Serbia had any right to raise her voice in this question, could only intensify the excitement and make war more probable. And that was indeed the case. The Serbian National Assembly passed the following resolution at its meeting on 12 October (29 September), as an expression of its extreme determination to resort to all measures: "Painfully shaken by the great injustice which have been done to Serbia and the Serbian people by the arbitrary violation of an international document without consideration for the people it concerns or for those who were its signatories and upholders, deeply convinced of the danger which menaces the entire Serbian race as a result of these events, creating a dangerous precedent for Serbia's independence and existence, shaken thereby to the core in its adherence to the interests of universal peace and justice, firmly determined to do all that is necessary to safeguard the interests of Serbia and our compatriots in the crisis provoked by these violent incidents, the Serbian National Assembly.... unanimously declares its confidence in the Royal Government and expects it to work energetically to safeguard Serbia's imperiled interests. With this object in view and with these unanimous feelings, the National Assembly places at the disposal of the Royal Government the entire forces of the whole and united Serbian people." The complete unanimity of the people was felt throughout the country, as hardly ever before in Serbian history during the second half of the nineteenth century. To a shrewd observer, this was a feature which ought to have been given serious consideration. Instead of threats which were only irritating, other means should have been sought to secure moderation and correct attitude in Serbia; they who failed to find such a means, and at the right moment, ran the risk of later being unable to find, or of finding with much difficulty, the right moment and the right tone for a friendly agreement.

382 Ibid., p. 146.

In the late 1860s, when Bosnia and Herzegovina were still Turkish provinces, the Austro-Hungarian diplomats from the entourage of Count Andrassy had had the idea of partitioning Bosnia with Serbia and, with this object in view, had entered into negotiations with Belgrade in the autumn of 1870. The then Austro-Hungarian Consul-General, B. Kállay offered Serbia the prospect of obtaining Bosnia and Herzegovina up to the Neretva and Vrbas under certain conditions which he himself dictated to the Regent, Jovan Ristić.³⁸³ Even in the Treaty of Reichstadt, concluded between the Foreign Ministers of Russia and Austria-Hungary on 26 June 1876, Count Andrassy agreed to Serbia's annexing, in case of victory, parts (*quelques parties*) of Old Serbia and Bosnia, while Montenegro should annex Herzegovina and a port in the Adriatic. The same year Serbia and Montenegro entered into war with Turkey because of Bosnia and Herzegovina and it was Austria that profited from their losses, obtaining a mandate for the occupation of those provinces. It was now suddenly found not necessary to take Serbia into consideration, that she had nothing to say, and that the national sentiments of the Serbs should be disregarded. Such an attitude was insulting and provocative. In addition, the Tariff War and Austria-Hungary's attitude in the question of the Adriatic railway had caused Serbian statesmen serious concern for the economic future of the country. In Vienna, as we have seen, the official circles intended to see Serbia suppressed, weakened and forced into vassalage, or even partitioned with Bulgaria.

In an attempt to pacify Serbia, Russian diplomacy declared from the first that Serbia must not think of a military action. On 8 October (25 September), Charykov sent word to Belgrade "in the most serious and most friendly manner" to the effect that Serbia should avoid anything which might give Austria-Hungary a chance to carry out its threats. That would mean "the downfall of Serbia and Serbdom and nobody could help us. Everybody wants peace." Similar messages also came from Paris and London. But at the same time Russian diplomacy undertook to obtain for Serbia, at a conference summoned to decide on the revision of the Congress of Berlin, certain territorial compensations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the vicinity of the Sanjak, in order to make it possible for the Adriatic railway to run straight through Serbo-Montenegrin territory. M. Bogićević, whose writings are to be taken with considerable reservations, partly because of his ignorance of the facts, and partly because of his undue bias, declares that the ideas of territorial compensation emanated from the Serbian Foreign Minister, Dr. M. Milovanović. He affirms that Milovanović

383 J. Ristić, *Spoljašnji odnošaji Srbije*, vol. III, Beograd 1901, pp. 140-3.

told him so himself.³⁸⁴ We have found no confirmation in the Serbian documents; one thing only is certain, and that is – as we shall show later – that the most responsible Serbian statesmen were not enthusiastic about this proposal and supported it partly out of consideration for Russian diplomacy, partly in view of the necessity to obtain some compensation at least in this unfortunate affair. Izvolsky had already spoken to Aehrenthal about territorial compensation at Buchlau, and on 7 October he telegraphed from Paris to Prince Urusov in Vienna, appealing to Austria-Hungary to “decide spontaneously on the rectification of the Serbo-Bosnian border” to which previous reference had been made.³⁸⁵ Immediately after the proclamation of the annexation, during his tour, he proposed the same thing to London and Paris, but his proposal met with a very reserved reception, for both Powers counted *a priori* on the resistance of Austria-Hungary and negative messages had been received from Vienna, as Aehrenthal had already clearly intimated in Buchlau. The Paris Cabinet, knowing this, modified Izvolsky’s original proposal for the programme of a conference, and substituted the word “privileges” (*avantages*) for the word “compensation” for Serbia, which might mean economic, transit, or any other privileges. This was done to allow for the conference to take place, Vienna having let it be understood that Austria-Hungary would certainly not be present at the conference, if territorial compensation for Serbia and the manner of the annexation were to be discussed. Paris constantly advised giving way; it was well-known there that Russia, after her recent war and revolution, was not in a position to defend her point of view persistently and to the end. The Ministerial Council in St. Petersburg already decided on 21 January 1908 that the Russian Foreign Minister could not at present count on the government’s support for any more active policy, but only for a “strictly defensive” one.³⁸⁶ Some of the French diplomats, although they did not approve of the action of the Vienna government, nevertheless tried to defend it, to some extent, at least in the eyes of the Serbs, partly to pacify them, partly because they dreaded complications, and partly from conviction. For example, the French Ambassador in Vienna, Crozier, said to the Serbian Minister, Dj. Simić, that Austria-Hungary “has gained nothing more by the annexation than she had so far on the basis of the

384 M. Bogićević, *Serbien und der Weltkrieg*, Berlin 1931, pp. 79–80; Steed, *Mes souvenirs*, I, p. 262, however, states, on the strength of what Milovanović said, that Izvolsky had asked the Serbian Minister to give him some suggestions about compensation for Serbia, which he did on 10 September. From these statements it would seem clear that Milovanović could not have made the remark about Serbia’s agreeing to the annexation, at least not in the form which Izvolsky quoted to Vesnić in Paris.

385 Popović, *Izvoljski i Erental*, p. 14.

386 M. Pokrowsky, *Drei Konferenzen*, Berlin 1920, pp. 29–30.

mandate granted her by Europe. On the contrary, by abandoning the Sanjak of Novi Pazar, it has made it clear that she does not think of penetrating further to the east, as has been alleged so far." With the annexation, Serbia "has lost nothing materially and therefore her excitement is excessive".³⁸⁷

The support of the British government was somewhat firmer; Sir Edward Grey went as far as to declare to the Russian Ambassador on 28 January that "he finds it important to inform the French government that the London Cabinet promised to lend their diplomatic support to the Russian government in the matter of compensation for Serbia and Montenegro." However, seeing the attitude of the Vienna government, he added that "in the interests of peace it is necessary to limit the Serbian demands as much as possible".³⁸⁸ He had promised earlier, on 28 October, to Milovanović that he would support the proposal for compensation as long as Russia stood by it, but that this support "must remain on the diplomatic ground and go no further." He expressed at the same time his doubts about the success of any such support, as he found Austria-Hungary's attitude in this question uncompromising, while the Serbs had no clear legal grounds for their demands.³⁸⁹ He, in fact, supported these demands and proposed economic concessions because of a sincere wish to see the passions subside and some agreement reached, if possible.³⁹⁰

The Vienna government, however, was even opposed to the emendation suggested by Paris. They found that the word "privileges" had wide and undefined meaning. They generally denied that Serbia had any legal grounds for opposing the annexation. If and when these reproaches were made in Britain, which adopted a purely legal standpoint in the whole question, such an attitude on the part of Serbia could be understood; but when legal principles were invoked against her by Austria-Hungary, which had itself violated a legal instrument, it could only give rise to expressions of irony and protest. In keeping with its medieval traditions, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy never had sufficient psychological understanding of the national sentiments of its subjects or its neighbours, and it therefore made major political errors throughout the nineteenth century. The same thing happened in this case.

In Serbia, the annexation crisis aroused an extraordinary wave of political and national energy. Serbia and Montenegro, which there had previously been an attempt to divide, found themselves suddenly in agreement, and

387 Simić Velimiroviću, Beč, 10. 11. 1908, Pov. Br. 551, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. III, sv. 3, pp. 480-482.

388 Cf. *Graf Benckendorffs Diplomatischer Schriftwechsel*, I, Berlin and Leipzig 1928, p. 27.

389 Cf. *Mémoires de Edward Grey*, p. 179.

390 Milovanović Ministarstvu inostranih dela, London, 29. 10. 1908, Pov. Br. 2442, Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. III, sv. 3, pp. 387-388.

both prepared for extreme measures. All Austria-Hungary's offers at Cetinje, whether of a diplomatic, economic or financial nature, with a view to preventing Montenegro from siding with Serbia, were in vain. On 9 October, Milovanović instructed Jovan Jovanović to go to Cetinje and renew diplomatic relations. Serbia called upon Montenegro "to stand together, shoulder to shoulder as becomes the sons of one and the same people in joint defense of their mutual cause and of the whole of Serbdom." The Serbian government at the same time submitted a draft agreement for this joint action. It consisted in the following: "in case it should prove impossible, as it seems very likely, to prevent the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and to restore a situation conformable to the provisions of the Treaty of Berlin": 1) Bosnia and Herzegovina must be given a constitutional regime and internal autonomy. 2) Austria-Hungary must not only withdraw its garrisons from the Sanjak of Novi Pazar, but must once for all renounce all rights in connection with it granted under Article 25 of the Treaty of Berlin and must declare "that it is not opposed to any arrangement which might be made between Turkey, Serbia and Montenegro in respect of it (the Sanjak). Serbia and Montenegro will on their part ask of the Powers that the Sanjak of Novi Pazar be reserved to their influence and control and, if possible, that the rights which Austria-Hungary previously enjoyed be henceforward vested to themselves. In any case, both in the exercise of these rights and in the possible occupation of the Sanjak, Serbia and Montenegro will partition the territory of the Sanjak into equal parts between themselves, following a line parallel with their present borders." 3) "Austria-Hungary shall agree to the rectification of the borders in favour of Serbia and Montenegro, and that chiefly along the northern border of the Sanjak of Novi Pazar, so that the Sanjak be separated from Bosnian and Herzegovinian territory and Serbia and Montenegro acquire in this way a common border. The main object of this rectification of the border will be definitely to confirm Austria-Hungary's renunciation both of the Sanjak and of all further designs of penetration into the Balkan Peninsula and occupation of Serbian lands." 4) Austria-Hungary renounces her rights acquired under Article 29 of the Treaty of Berlin "as regards the Montenegrin ports and the Montenegrin littoral, and also all its claims as regards Montenegrin railways." The Montenegrin government replied on 16 (3) October that they wholeheartedly accepted Serbia's collaboration and they immediately dispatched Janko Vukotić to Belgrade on a special mission.³⁹¹ They also accepted all the proposals of the Belgrade government

391 On his way to Belgrade as Envoy Extraordinary of the Montenegrin government, Janko Vukotić, although in possession of a *laissez-passer* issued by the Austro-Hungarian minister in Cetinje, recommending him to the border authorities, was held up at Zagreb on

with the exception of that contained in paragraph 2 which they rejected out of consideration for Turkey as a possible ally. The Cetinje government added the following item to the Belgrade draft: "Should Montenegro and Serbia fail to obtain satisfaction for their common and just demands along the lines of the above mentioned claims at the projected European conference, Montenegro is determined, together with Serbia, to resort to military action against the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy." On Vukotić's arrival, the agreement between the two Serbian states was signed on 24 (11) October in Belgrade. Its three principal clauses read as follows:

"1) That Montenegro and Serbia are in full agreement, both in their estimate of the grave situation created by the recent events in the Balkans on account of the violation of the Treaty of Berlin, especially on the part of Austria-Hungary, and also in regard to the serious damage which this violent act has caused to the incontestable and most fundamental rights and interests of the Serbian people, menacing its further development and the very existence of both Serbian independent states.

2) That there is the most complete and closest harmony between Montenegro and Serbia in regard to their joint fraternal action for the protection of their common national and state interests.

3) That the two brotherly states have decided in principle jointly to defend all their rights and interests even by force of arms, should need arise, which the competent authorities of Montenegro and Serbia will assess and decide in agreement."

As well as with Montenegro, Serbia entered into negotiation with Turkey. In mid-October, Stojan Novaković was sent to Constantinople to present to Turkey the dangers which Serbia envisaged for her future from the annexation, and to offer Turkey her alliance and collaboration in resistance to the Viennese annexation policy. In the document setting forth the purpose of the mission, dated 30 (17) October, it is clearly stated that "the object of an alliance is to be the defense of the Balkan Peninsula against the claims and imperialist tendencies of the Great Powers, especially Austria-Hungary, in the spirit of the principle 'the Balkans for the Balkan peoples'. Accordingly, the Serbo-Montenegrin-Turkish alliance would be the beginning of a general

19 October, taken to the police with his companions, and searched there. The civil and military authorities worked together in this matter. He was set free only at the intervention of the Viennese Foreign Ministry. The reason for this hold-up was of course, on the admission of the Austro-Hungarian authorities themselves, fabricated. Cf. *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, I, p. 264.

Balkan Alliance, to be joined also by Greece and Bulgaria. The annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary presents an immediate danger to the Balkan states, and the question of a Serbo-Turkish alliance is therefore of the most pressing importance and stands out at the present moment as the foremost political necessity." In Belgrade, it was believed with much naïveté that Turkey's bitterness about the annexation was sincere and profound, and that the Turks would be ready to avenge the violation of their rights. The declaration of the Grand Vizier to the Serbian Minister and to Stojan Novaković that Turkey would never recognize the annexation, and intended to act in this respect, were so definite as to generate the belief, in spite of all experience of Turkey's unreliability and fertile imagination, that there must have been at least some truth in them. To the Turks, however, the Bulgarian question appeared more urgent and more immediate and they took advantage of their negotiations with the Serbs through Stojan Novaković in Constantinople mainly in order to exercise pressure on Austria-Hungary, to which they continually communicated some information about the negotiations.³⁹² Turkey was not prepared for war on either side, but it wanted to influence, with its war-like attitude and negotiations for a military alliance with the Serbs, both Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria, as well as the other Powers, so that they might be as generous as possible in their concessions. Turkey had long considered the loss of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a foregone conclusion, aware of the fact that its authority there would never be restored; it would perhaps have preferred Serbia to hold the two provinces rather than the far more dangerous Dual Monarchy, but it was clear that it was not prepared to enter into war with Austria-Hungary because of them. Ahmed Riza Bey, president of the parliament, said openly that Turkey had nothing to gain from a war with Austria-Hungary over Bosnia and Herzegovina, for even if it were victorious the two provinces would not go to her. Moreover, the Young Turks, whose chief strength and support lay in the Army, did not dare, knowing how unprepared they were, to enter into war, as they feared, on the one hand, to risk their army in the field lest they should thereby lose everything and, on other hand, that

392 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, I, p. 359. The communications made to the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador by the Grand Vizier Kâmil Pasha and the Foreign Minister Tevfik Pasha to the effect that Serbia had offered her alliance to Turkey against Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria, but that Turkey had refused it on the grounds that it did not intend to make war on Austria-Hungary and was capable of dealing with Bulgaria itself, do not strictly correspond with the truth. Turkey, in fact, specifically asked for an alliance with Serbia against Bulgaria and was very insistent on its conclusion. Cf. *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, I, p. 599. Serbia was at first willing to collaborate with Turkey against Bulgaria only in case of Bulgarian action against Macedonia.

Sultan Abdul Hamid and his friends might restore themselves in power while they were engaged at the front. They also feared that Bulgaria was in agreement with Austria-Hungary and that, in case of war with the Danubian Monarchy, she might attack them in the rear. Conscious of this, fearful of losing the sympathies of the people because of their inactivity and thus supplying their enemies with a useful weapon against them, they wanted to use the negotiations for an alliance and the boycott of Austro-Hungarian and Bulgarian goods to create an appearance of resistance, while in fact they endeavoured to settle everything by diplomacy at a conference which they desired and from which they expected much, or in the last resort by direct negotiations. If the worst came to the worst, they perhaps counted on a war with Bulgaria, although not much was expected from it. Serbia sought the alliance with the Turks which they themselves offered on 29 October in the form of a secret military convention of an offensive and defensive nature for the following reasons: 1) in order to increase her military strength and improve her diplomatic and political position; 2) to prevent Turkey from recognizing the act of annexation under certain conditions by direct negotiations with Austria-Hungary; and 3) because Turkish recognition of the Serbian interests in Bosnia and Herzegovina would weaken Austria's negative attitude in that respect, and would offer further moral justification for Serbia's point of view in the eyes of the rest of Europe. The conditions which Serbia laid down on 2 November 1903 for her acceptance of the proposed convention with Turkey were as follows:

"1) Serbia and Turkey will not agree without previous mutual understanding to any solution of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian question, either directly with Austria-Hungary or at a conference;

2) In case of any offensive, a previous understanding and agreement between the two governments is necessary; the principle of equality requires this, as it is impossible to leave the right to declare war to Turkey alone;

3) This convention refers only to European territory."

In offering this alliance, the Turks were not thinking of Austria but of Bulgaria, but they wanted to have clearly regulated relations with Serbia in case of any future emergency. For Serbia, the matter of Bulgaria's independence could never have been a reason for dissatisfaction, and had it not been effected in agreement with Austria-Hungary, Serbia would have been the first to greet it wholeheartedly. The Serbian government therefore replied on 12 November: "The Serbo-Turkish convention should be based on the broad idea of a general Balkan alliance. Such was initially the point of view of the Grand Vizier as well. This point of view should be maintained. It would therefore not be at all proper to introduce into the convention any provision which would

exclude the possibility of Bulgaria's joining our alliance at a later date.... What we need is a Balkan bloc against Austria, and we do not want to do anything which might cause Bulgaria to throw herself into Austro-German hands, as she might find justification for doing so, if the Serbo-Turkish alliance were directed against her." The alliance was not concluded on account of this divergence of opinion. "It is very significant", Novaković reported to his government on 8 December (25 November), "that during all the six or seven weeks of our negotiations the Turks have weakened from day to day in their eagerness for war and for the alliance, although to the best of my knowledge it was they who took the initiative and made the first draft for these negotiations. At the beginning of October, they were frightened on account of the Bulgarian affairs, and that fear was the cause of their anxiety. The Bulgarian trouble is now looked upon as mainly settled by the influence of the Powers, hence the cooling off of Turkey's eagerness. The influence of the Powers has constantly worked against us, for they systematically avoid anything that might lead to war. That Belgrade asked for support in this matter from Britain, France and Russia only had a negative effect on the matter of the convention. The friendly Powers listened and tried to obtain information from the government in Belgrade about our activities in Constantinople, while they were obviously working against our convention here. I have certainly seen no sign of the British, Russian or French Embassies assisting my work in any way. The fact that the negotiations which we had started and conducted for the purpose of concluding an offensive and defensive alliance ended with the declaration about an entente cordiale is, in my opinion, largely the result of their work."³⁹³

This opinion proved rather accurate.³⁹⁴ The Great Powers of the western group, Britain, France and Italy, together with Russia, did not want this question to flare up to such an extent as to present the danger of a great war. The Russian government declared from the first that the annexation was no reason for war, and that they were not prepared to go to war because of it. They were therefore very active in their endeavours to soothe Serbia's bitter feelings and to push aside anything that might nourish Serbia's irritation with hopes of military success. Russia, Britain, France and Italy were not indifferent to Serbia's fate, and sought to prevent her defeat, and perhaps a catastrophe, in case of a conflict with the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. As they had no intention of resorting to the use of force, their activity in this direction could only consist in

393 Novaković Milovanoviću, Carigrad, 8. 12. 1908, Pov. Br. 3752, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. III, sv. 3, pp. 720-722.

394 For the British comments on these negotiations, about which they were fully informed, see *British Documents*, V, pp. 493-4, 498-9, 506, 516, 525-6.

their advising Austria-Hungary to give way to some extent and in their restraining Serbia from any impetuous step. And such a step, it was thought, would be more likely, if the Serbo-Turkish military alliance were concluded.

Russia considered that the Serbs might be pacified by some kind of a guarantee for the future and some territorial compensation, no matter how small. The practical solution of the question of territorial compensation would be found in Serbia's obtaining certain territory in south-eastern Bosnia and north-western Herzegovina, through which she would establish contact with Montenegro and obtain an outlet to the Adriatic Sea. Politically, the importance of this compensation would have been far greater. The union of Serbia and Montenegro would have formed a barrier to Austria-Hungary's further penetration into the Balkans and it would have been at the same time a definite guarantee for the Serbs that their national interests in Turkey would be safe from direct Austrian menace and from Austrian influence. The danger arising out of the annexation would thus have been considerably diminished, for much of the opposition to it arose from the fact that Austria-Hungary was thought to have definitely established itself in the Balkan Peninsula, with a view to making it a base for further advance at some opportune moment. Had Austria-Hungary accepted the idea of compensation, she would have destroyed that conviction and would have done much towards calming Serbia's fears, not only for the time being, but also for the future. Its stubborn refusal of any discussion of the matter only intensified the conviction that it had ulterior motives and that its inflexibility arose from its realizing the political implications of the compensation, not because it represented a material loss to it or because that was degrading to its dignity as a Great Power. Such was the opinion of the Serbian government and Foreign Minister Milovanović. In explaining Serbia's wishes in this matter to Sir Edward Grey in London, Milovanović said that this was a "capital question for Serbia and Montenegro and for the future of the whole Balkan Peninsula; that it was the only possible guarantee against Austria-Hungary's further penetration and, consequently, a barometer of Austria-Hungary's future intentions, it having neither reason for nor interest in accepting, if it sincerely thought of no further conquest in the Balkans."

Although the general excitement in Serbia affected even the government and forced it into taking many steps which showed that it counted with the possibility of a war (the order that as large a number as possible of reservists must pass through the barracks; the demand, granted by the parliament, for armament credits to the amount of 16,000,000 dinars; the negotiations for an alliance with Montenegro), the government was nevertheless open to friendly advice. After the first moment of excitement, it was firmly resolved not to embark on any action before all available means of coming to a peaceable settlement of the dispute had been exhausted. Acting on the instructions of

his government, the Serbian Minister calmed the bellicose elements in Cetinje with the shrewd remark: "We cannot be the aggressors, if we hope to keep what we have got." Heeding the advice of the friendly Powers, the government decided to wait for the results of their negotiations for the convocation of a conference and the settlement of the whole question, and in the meantime to interest European public opinion in the Serbian cause. They therefore directed the Foreign Minister, Milovanović, to visit Berlin, London, Paris and Rome in the course of October in order to inform all circles there of the Serbian point of view and to seek their diplomatic support for the settlement of the Serbian claims. A special delegation, including the heir-apparent, Prince George, and Pašić, went to St. Petersburg to ask for Russia's support. At the same time, a number of competent men were dispatched to various European centers to explain Serbia's situation and the Serbian question in general in the press and by means of lectures. In doing so, the Serbian government was able to satisfy, to some extent, the excited public opinion that they were doing everything in their power to find friends and support for the Serbian point of view; at the same time, after deciding upon these steps, they clearly showed they would do nothing on their own initiative against the neighbouring Monarchy.

Taken aback by the act of annexation, Serbia did not have a detailed plan of action and therefore there were sometimes discrepancies and inconsistencies in her demands. When the proposal for the convocation of a conference was put forward, the first thought in Serbia in connection with the questions to be put before the Great Powers was that nothing should be demanded for Serbia herself, but that Bosnia and Herzegovina, i.e. the Serb element there, should be assured of their existence by granting autonomy to those provinces under European guarantee. This attitude was at first adopted by Turkey as well. The Turkish statesmen declared to Stojan Novaković at the end of October that they and the Sultan demanded a broad autonomy for Bosnia and Herzegovina with a European prince at the head, but under Turkish suzerainty. In putting forward the demand for autonomy, Serbia desired to emphasize two things: that she did not want to profit herself from the misfortunes of her compatriots, and, secondly, that, in demanding nothing for herself, the Bosnian-Herzegovinian question might be brought before Europe devoid of any selfish interests. But as this proposal in fact meant that Austria-Hungary would either have to give up Bosnia and Herzegovina or recognize a foreign controlling authority there, none of the Powers, knowing the attitude of Vienna, paid any attention to it,³⁹⁵ but instead Russia suggested the idea of a compensation, as it was

395 Only Noel Buxton, on behalf of the Balkan Committee, considered on 3 February 1909 that the demand for autonomy, as "a more practical proposition" than that of a territorial compensation "might be taken into consideration" and that the committee would favour

thought that this would be easier to realize and that Vienna would take it into consideration.³⁹⁶

Accepting the Russian suggestion afterwards, in which he himself had perhaps had a hand and which seemed to be politically more practical, and in view of the necessity that Serbia's demands be definitely formulated, Milovanović demanded on behalf of the Serbian government, on 13 October (30 September) 1908, with a view to "the full rights of communication across the Sanjak of Novi Pazar" that Serbia and Montenegro be granted a rectification of the border "along the northern side of the Sanjak of Novi Pazar". This would enable the Serbian states "to shake hands with each other, thus closing the way to any further conquests on the part of Austria-Hungary of the Serbian lands under Turkey. This is in the interest of Turkey, as well as in that of Serbia and Montenegro." But this attitude was soon abandoned for two reasons: 1) it was believed that it would be possible together with Turkey to organize a joint resistance to Austria-Hungary either immediately or in the future, and it was not desired to embitter Turkey against Serbia, as some sort of a new usurper, as such opinions had already been professed. The Montenegrin government pointed out the same difficulty in its note of 16 (3) October; 2) because Vienna emphatically opposed this course and the idea was not to Britain's liking, which brought all its influence to bear in favour of the new Turkey of Young Turks, considering that the latter should not be weakened by further loss of territory, regardless how small. Moreover, the idea was gaining ground that compensation should be demanded from Austria-Hungary, or, as it was held at one point, from both Austria-Hungary and Turkey. Novaković was even instructed to try and win over the Turks in Constantinople to this plan, but he soon abandoned this attempt when he saw how dissatisfied the Turks were with the news of such combination. Serbian diplomacy thereupon demanded compensation from Austria alone. It was Austria that profited on this occasion and it was more just, it was said, to demand compensation from her than from Turkey the loser. Milovanović, who had so far hesitated in his search for a satisfactory solution, now seized enthusiastically upon the idea of compensation from Austria-Hungary. During his visits to the European capitals he insisted with all his eloquence on the new plan. In Marienbad (Mariánské Lázně), in conversation with the British Ambassador in Vienna in the summer of 1909,

it. See Grujić Milovanoviću, London, 5. 2. 1909, Pov. Br. 22, in: M. Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije 1903-1914*, knj. III, sv. 4, Beograd 2014, pp. 240-242.

396 It is interesting to note that Prince Nicholas of Montenegro asked at the end of October that Bosnia and Herzegovina be partitioned between Turkey, Serbia and Montenegro. See Novaković Velimiroviću, Carigrad, 31. 10. 1908, Pov. Br. 3574, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. III, sv. 3, pp. 496-497.

Milovanović asserted that statesmen in Serbia were sure that the compensation demanded could not be obtained, but that they had been forced to support the proposal in order to calm down the excited public opinion. We are not of the opinion that there were no such doubts, but we nevertheless consider that Milovanović's explanation was too general and that it should be understood only as an attempt at justification after the failure. The energy and activity with which compensation was demanded show that some result was expected and hoped for.³⁹⁷

397 A committee of experts, consisting of Stojan Novaković, Jovan Cvijić, Ljubomir Kovačević and Ljubomir Jovanović, drew up the expository statement of Serbia's demands for territorial compensation. It runs as follows:

"Whereas Austria has renounced the rights granted her by the Treaty of Berlin in respect of the Sanjak of Novi Pazar, and whereas the plan conceived in 1878 of keeping Serbia and Montenegro apart has thus come to nothing, whereas there is also (as it would appear) some intention of ceding to Austria the provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina and establishing thereby a definite border between Austria and the Turkish Empire, it is indispensable that the possessions of the other states, Serbia and Montenegro in the north-western part of the Balkan Peninsula should also be determined and causes of friction and intrigue thus removed and justice done by those small states towards which the Treaty of Berlin was both unsympathetic and unjust. Serbia and Montenegro rely in this matter on Europe's sense of justice and trust that their interests will not be neglected.

If Europe agreed to this, Austria would be separated from the countries of the Balkan Peninsula by the joint territory of Serbia and Montenegro, as Russia is separated from them in the east by Romania. Such a remodelling of the borders would appropriately adjust the balance of the influence of the Great Powers in the Balkan Peninsula, which is always a matter for consideration in international negotiations.

This plan, if accepted, would be most easily realizable if these southern and eastern parts of the occupied territories of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which form a geographical unit, were ceded to Serbia and Montenegro so that their territories met and Serbia obtained some such outlet to the sea as she had in the Middle Ages.

For this purpose, it would be fitting to cede to Serbia and Montenegro the whole of the Podrinje (the Drina basin) and the region of Trebinje now forming part of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian territory.

Neither of these areas is Bosnian either in tradition or geographical configuration. They were united to Bosnia by successive conquests. The Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus, moreover, notes that Bosnia was considered in the first half of the 10th century as embracing only the area around the source of the river Bosna. When the Serbian state began to rise in the 10th century after the power of Bulgaria had waned, the Drina basin on both sides (the entire basin of the river) became the center of the new Serbian state under Časlav. The region around the source of the Drina, i.e. the upper Podrinje (Goražde and Foča), together with the region of Trebinje, was for the most part an integral part of the Serbian state almost until the Turkish conquest.

Professor K. Jiriček notes that the region of Trebinje was an integral part of the Serbian Kingdom in the 13th and 14th centuries. King Tvrtko in the last quarter of the 14th century was the first ruler of Bosnia who, claiming as a descendant of the Nemanjićs the

To greater extent and more energetically than on the occasion of the reform campaign in 1904, Serbia now let it be seen that she was determined to oppose any further Austro-Hungarian expansion in the Balkans and that her opposition must be taken into account. The abandonment of the Sanjak did not seem in and of itself a sufficient guarantee that Austria-Hungary was not thinking of any further conquest: the public statement made in Danzer's military journal that the most convenient route to Macedonia was not through the Sanjak corridor, but down the Morava Valley, was alone enough to make the Serbs suspicious. Serbia therefore demanded more direct proofs that Austria-Hungary had given up its plans of conquest in the Balkans. There was sufficient reason

Serbian royal title, in alliance with Prince Lazar subjected these areas, which had been Serbian from the earliest times, to Bosnian rule. As regards the middle and lower Podrinje, Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus is a witness that Tuzla (Soli) belonged to Serbia, as was only natural, in view of the well-known custom in the Middle Ages of drawing borders along the basins of rivers. This was seen again later. The whole of the middle and lower Podrinje, i.e. both sides of the basin, were held both by Stefan Lazarević at the beginning of the 14th century and Djuradj Branković.

The geographical composition of the Drina basin can be seen from the Bosnian feudal rulers in feudal Turkey, a state of affairs that lasted until nearly the middle of the 19th century. The following are mentioned at that period: the Pasha of Goražde (in the upper Drina basin), the Pasha of Srebrenica (in the middle basin), and the Pasha of Zvornik (in the lower basin). According to Haji Khalifa, the Turkish geographer of the mid-16th century, Bosnia was divided under the Turkish rule at that time into Sanjaks. Mention is made of: the Sanjak of Bosnia, the Sanjak of Herzegovina, the Sanjak of Klis (now in Dalmatia), and the Sanjak of Zvornik. At that time (the middle of the 17th century), the Sanjak of Zvornik embraced: Zvornik, Gračanica, Bijeljina, Srebrenica, Osat, Šabac, etc., i.e. places on both sides of the Drina. This division, except for the parts on the right bank of the Drina after the liberation of Serbia, was maintained until Turkey's direct rule came to an end, and can be established by comparison with the division of the country for administrative purposes.

The separate existence of the Sanjak of Zvornik as a geographical unite can also be seen from the ecclesiastical administration; for until the occupation, Zvornik was the seat of an Orthodox Metropolitan, who was independent of the Metropolitans of Sarajevo and Mostar.

The occupied territories, therefore, do not form a geographical or historical unit, such as Egypt, Bohemia, Greece (not to mention islands such as Sicily and others). They form part of a greater whole, of the Dinaric system (which also includes certain parts of Austria-Hungary, Serbia, Turkey and the whole of Montenegro). There is then no reason why they should necessarily pass to Austria-Hungary in their entirety. It is more advisable and more consonant with the present situation, that Serbia and Montenegro should be given those parts of the occupied territory which form together with them smaller but separate units.

It remains for Europe, by raising its mighty voice, to do justice by the smaller states whose principal strength lies in their belief in Europe's enlightened sense of justice."

for her doubts in that respect. M. Auffenberg General-Inspector of the Military Schools and Aehrenthal's military adviser and later War Minister, himself says that the abandonment of the Sanjak was considered a welcome way out of a strategically awkward situation, and that Aehrenthal's raising of the question of the Sanjak railway was "the first impetus for Austria-Hungary's activities in the great south-eastern direction."³⁹⁸

A draft letter of Dr. Milovan Milovanović on the subject of the Serbian explanations of their demands, as they appeared to him, shows clearly that he tried to justify them both to the European cabinets and European public opinion, as well as to the Serbian public:

"Serbia demands that guarantees be given for the maintenance of her political and economic independence, which has been undermined by the mere proclamation of the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary and by the consequences which this act inevitably and fatally involves, if its realization is not prevented or its effects neutralized by the raising of barriers against further Austro-Hungarian penetration into the Balkan Peninsula. The Serbian government points out that the dangers which as a result of this step on the part of Austria-Hungary threaten in the first place Serbia and Montenegro, present at the same time a danger to the whole Balkan Peninsula, to all the Balkan states and peoples, as well as to European interests in general, since the independence of the Balkan Peninsula is an essential condition of the maintenance of the balance of power and permanent peace in Europe.

The Serbian government at the same time declares that the fate of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian people, which, just as much as the people of Serbia and Montenegro, is an integral part of the whole Serbian people, cannot be a matter of indifference, that injustice or misfortune which affect the Bosnians and Herzegovinians will continue, as in the past, to stir the whole Serbian race to the core, and that, therefore, the satisfaction of the vital national rights of Bosnia and Herzegovina is one of the essential conditions for peace in the Balkans.

In keeping with former communications and explanations which the undersigned has had the honour of presenting directly and orally both to H. E. Count Izvolsky and to the Foreign Ministers of Britain, France and Italy, the Serbian government has the honour to submit the request that the interests of Serbia should on this occasion receive the necessary satisfaction through the adoption of one of the following solutions:

398 M. Auffenberg, *Aus Österreichs Höhe und Niedergang*, München 1921, pp. 171-8.

1) the establishment in regard to Bosnia and Herzegovina of the *status quo* along the lines of the Treaty of Berlin, the delimitation of the mandate entrusted by Europe to Austria-Hungary being at the same time clearly defined, as well as the rights and obligations arising therefrom, the terms of its duration, the modality of its liquidation and the conditions which are to follow;

2) the confirmation of the autonomy of Bosnia and Herzegovina, this being understood as an autonomy of an international juridical character, which, therefore, would lay the foundation of a new sovereign state, a new political organization. Without dwelling on the details of this autonomous Bosnian-Herzegovinian state, we would only mention that Eastern Rumelia might here largely serve as an example and that the Great Powers might in addition guarantee the integrity and neutrality of Bosnia and Herzegovina after the Bosnian-Dalmatian border had first been adjusted and defined.

3) If it proved impossible to realize either of the solutions proposed above, the Serbian government would then be satisfied with non-recognition of the annexation and the question of the fate of Bosnia and Herzegovina being left open. Believing that both the actual treaty rights and the natural rights are on the side of Serbia and the Serbian people in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and that consequently the longer the question remains open the stronger will be the forces in favour of its solution along the lines of Serbia's wishes, the Serbian government guarantees that Serbia will peaceably await a definite solution and give no cause for war.

4) In case none of the foregoing solutions can be realized, Serbia demands as the most indispensable minimum guarantee, without which she would be driven to lose all hope for the future, that she should be given a part of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian territory which would link her own territory with that of Montenegro and thus with the Adriatic Sea, and by means of which Bosnia and Herzegovina, handed over to Austria-Hungary, would be completely separated from the Sanjak of Novi Pazar, which would be restored to full Turkish sovereignty. Refraining from any exact delimitation of the territorial zone to be ceded to Serbia and Montenegro, the Serbian government points out, on the one hand, that it should be sufficiently wide as to make it possible to establish lines of communication there, and, on the other, that for both geographical and historical reasons it might embrace the whole of the Podrinje, Austria-Hungary having no special reasons for opposing the cession of any part of the Podrinje, if its assurances of having renounced any designs of conquest in the Balkan Peninsula are serious and sincere."

In order to spare Austria's susceptibilities, Milovanović thought, and said so to Izvolsky on the occasion of their meeting in Berlin, that the modality of

the cession might be arranged as follows: Austria might surrender the said "zone" to Turkey, as a kind of compensation for the annexation, having in fact acknowledged in principle Turkey's right to some compensation, and Turkey would then hand it over to Serbia and Montenegro.

The idea of compensation of this kind was rather unusual and was difficult to defend from any point of view. If the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina adversely affected Serbia's interests how could the cession of a territorial zone improve matters? Belgrade replied: it would be a guarantee that Austria-Hungary did not think of advancing further and that the Serbian population on the other side of the Drina would not be menaced with its expansion. But in that case, Serbian patriots both in and outside of Serbia said, it would look as if Serbia were pursuing a selfish policy and sacrificing her compatriots for the sake of her own security. If Serbia could not prevent the annexation, they said, let her not profit from it, and her receiving an indemnity would in a certain sense mean payment for her recognition of the annexation. Vienna would not hear of any such compensation. Had it been agreed to, nothing could have been more damaging to the prestige of the Serbian government's policy in the eyes of the Austrian Serbs. For those reasons, certain Serbian statesmen, headed by Pašić, were against the idea of compensation and advocated it, when they had to do so, without conviction. From the very beginning, they demanded only the autonomy of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and that, if possible, outside the framework of the Austrian Empire or, if not, under the control of Europe. The Serbs of Bosnia and Herzegovina themselves opposed the idea of compensation, for the cession of a part of their territory to Serbia and Montenegro would have meant weakening their strength for resistance.

Dr. Milovanović's speech in the parliament about the Bosnian-Herzegovinian question was circulated by the Foreign Ministry on 3 January (21 December) 1909 to all the Legations abroad, as a fairly comprehensive presentation of the point of view of official Serbia in regard to the problem as a whole, this being done after three months of crisis and after all the relevant conversations. This speech was made after the delivery of Charykov's message from St. Petersburg on 21 (8) December to the effect that Serbia should formulate her demands "freely, without hesitation." Milovanović spoke of the matter in principle and programmatically, without emotion, which might perhaps have dictated stronger expressions, but with a frankness which was truly expressive of the feelings of the greater part of Serbia; he first pointed out that the annexation implied the violation of the Treaty of Berlin, which had been very hard on the Serbs, but the provisions of which Serbia had loyally fulfilled in the hope "that the trifling guarantees then given to her and to Serbian interests would be kept, that, in fact the doors then left half-open to Serbian hopes would not be closed, but

would be opened wider.” With this fresh violation, a blow was struck at the most sacred national rights of the Serbs. The annexation was a Serbian question. At one time Europe had considered Russia as the chief danger in the Balkans, and the Congress of Berlin had been the culminating expression of that mistrust. It had been decided that Austria-Hungary should become a Balkan state, to neutralize Russia’s activities and influence until the Balkan states themselves became strong enough to defend the independence of their territory. Russia no longer demanded anything for herself in the Balkans, the Balkan states had reached a sufficient level of development, and Austria-Hungary might therefore have declared her mission at an end. Instead of that, it was perpetuating it. “The reasons put forward in 1878 for the Austrian occupation of Bosnia sound like irony today ... It was then said that it was necessary to close the doors to the Russian invasion and open them to the civilizing mission of Austria-Hungary. It was the Russian invasion, however, that from 1812 to 1878 created or helped to create all that now exists in the Balkan Peninsula. It created or helped to create Romania and Greece and Serbia and Bulgaria, whereas the civilizing mission of Austria-Hungary envisages, in its first stage, to enslave definitely the two Serbian provinces and render impossible the completely free and independent life of both Serbia and Montenegro.” Austria-Hungary presented the main danger to the Balkans for the Balkan peoples principle; its existence as a Balkan state would by force of circumstances make it an adversary of and a danger to the other Balkan states. With regard to the Serbian question, the emancipation of Bosnia and Herzegovina was of vital importance. The freedom of those lands must at least be such as to allow Bosnia “to enter, in accordance with her own views, sympathies and interests, into close political and economic relations with Serbia and Montenegro.... In the absence of free political and economic relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina our future cannot be permanently guaranteed”.³⁹⁹ Bosnia and Herzegovina would have “to form a new state, either a sovereign or semi-sovereign state, or a state under European control.” But the great question was whether it would be possible on this occasion to reach so fundamental and general a solution. Europe did not want war, and everything would in all probability be settled by diplomacy, by means of a compromise. “While awaiting the final solution”, Serbia suggested a less general proposal of her own based on the idea of indemnity. The Serbian question became a European one and came within the sphere of the

399 In their declaration of 22 (9) January 1909, the Serbian government expressed themselves more definitely as follows: they demanded “not only administrative, but also political autonomy with an international status, which would entitle Bosnia independently to regulate her relations with Serbia and Montenegro.”

important question of the European balance of power. It was impossible to say what would be the final issue of the whole matter, but "it would be in our own, in the Balkan, and in the general European, interest, and, I have no hesitation in expressing my conviction, in Austrian interest too, rightly understood, if we were to receive satisfaction as far as might be necessary for the preservation of our political and economic independence and for the indispensable guarantee of the security of our nationality in Bosnia and Herzegovina ... It is my belief that Serbia and the Serbs need not necessarily be driven to hostilities and a fatal struggle with Austria." The Serbs might serve as a link between Austria-Hungary and the Balkans, if the Danubian Monarchy were willing to remain a peaceful Power, without selfish motives, and if it remained within its historical borders along the Sava and Danube. "On the other side of the Sava and Danube, although millions of the Serbo-Croat people live there, it might be our friend, but on the right bank of the Sava, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it presents a permanent danger to us, a permanent threat. By occupying Bosnia and Herzegovina, by fending off Serbia from the Adriatic Sea and preventing our connection with Montenegro, Austria-Hungary is forcing Serbia and the Serbs into a life or death struggle sooner or later."

This speech made a great impression in Vienna both because of its contents in general and of the frankness with which it set forth the Serbian question. Because of the expression "enslavement of the two Serbian provinces", Milovanović was at once called to account and satisfaction was demanded. This demand was accompanied in the Viennese press and the more bellicose circles by the harshest threats. The necessity for an ultimatum was even mentioned. Milovanović gave an explanation, with some modification of the interpretation of his words, which was accepted, although not without reproaches (to enslave was explained in the sense of the word "to subject" – *assujettir*). Milovanović was convinced that special emphasis had been laid on these words in Vienna with the object of diverting attention from the general arguments of the speech and of presenting the Serbian demands as an insult and as an expression of aggressiveness. The speech was accorded a varied reception abroad. Sir Edward Grey considered that Milovanović had "made a clear and proper distinction between, so to speak, the ideal solution of the question and that which it might be possible to reach at the present time in accordance with the existing circumstances and with the disposition of the Powers".⁴⁰⁰

400 Grujić Milovanoviću, London, 11. 1. 1909, Pov. Br. 526, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. III, sv. 3, pp. 870-871. Cf. Lončarević, *Kaiserliche Katastrophen-Politik*, pp. 269-275.

In Rome, on the other hand, it was very badly received, both in the Foreign Ministry and in diplomatic circles. The speech was found immoderate.

In Vienna, the Serbian demands were openly rejected *a limine*. Above all, Vienna did not want to give Serbia an opportunity to achieve a “success” of any kind; the strengthening of Serbia, and especially in a conflict of this nature, was not in the interest of the Dual Monarchy. Vienna was therefore, as we have seen before, equally opposed to Serbia’s and Montenegro’s having a common border; it was prepared to hinder any step in that direction even in foreign territory, let alone to make it possible by the cession of the territory held by Austria. To make compensation to Serbia, after Serbia had publicly protested, would mean to give way “to a small neighbour” for Viennese diplomacy. Before the annexation, Vienna had not intended to make any move in Belgrade with a view to arriving at an agreement, and now after the annexation it seemed no longer possible to do so. This meant, therefore, that there was no way of reconciling the Serbian and Austro-Hungarian points of view, and that force alone would dictate the solution. At the time when the will of one Power made the provisional status of Bosnia and Herzegovina a permanent one, and when the inhabitants of those provinces, the vast majority of whom were Serbs, were dissatisfied with the change and openly protested and asked for help, Serbia and Montenegro, which had shed blood earlier for those provinces, had a real, vital and national right to raise their voices. To deny them that right and to reject all their wishes and demands meant provoking them to deeds; it meant driving them to dangerous national activities.

Relying on the unconditional approval of Germany and on its own strength, Austria-Hungary remained uncompromising to the end. The idea of a European conference was beginning to appear impossible. When Russia had declared in 1871 that she no longer considered herself bound by the provisions of the Treaty of Paris as regards her Black Sea fleet, she had nevertheless to attend the conference in London. On that occasion, Austria-Hungary had particularly insisted on the principle that no Power alone had the right to modify the terms of a treaty. Izvolsky now made the express reference to this instance and said to the Austrian and German representatives that “what had been then asked of Russia could now be asked of Austria-Hungary”.⁴⁰¹ The proposal to convoke a conference was accepted by the governments of Britain, France and Italy, such being the only proper method of restoring the authority of international treaties. The Vienna government, however, explicitly declared that it would only attend the conference, if it were guaranteed in advance that the annexation would be treated as an accomplished fact. It excluded any criticism

⁴⁰¹ Cf. *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, I, p. 487.

or discussion of its action. Austria's dignity did not permit, Viennese statesmen claimed, to have her actions being subject to the criticism and judgment of others. Even Emperor Wilhelm II made a note to the effect that: "It would be better for Austria not to go to the conference, lest she should give rise to the impression that she ought to be judged";⁴⁰² he added elsewhere that he had himself strengthened Vienna in the determination to maintain its point of view.⁴⁰³ In addition, Austria-Hungary refused to agree to the question of compensation or privileges for Serbia being raised at the conference, denying in principle that the latter had any right to indemnity. The conference would only have satisfied Austria if its sole work had been to recognize and sanction the accomplished fact. In the words of Prince Bülow, the conference would have had to be a mere "*bureau d'enregistrement*".⁴⁰⁴ To such a conception of the conference, after the flagrant violation of international obligations, it was impossible to agree; such proceedings at a conference would have sanctioned the right of might. "To us Austria's attitude appears suspicious", Hardinge said on 30 November to the Serbian Minister in London, "it is bizarre ... She has replied to Russia that she would attend the conference, but only on condition that there is no discussion of the annexation. How can she imagine that five Powers will agree to decide a question, the discussion of which has been in advance precluded by a sixth Power which is in fact responsible for the raising of the question?"⁴⁰⁵

However, the prospect of a conference was the principal argument used by the friendly Powers to pacify Serbia. They recommended her to wait for the discussion and decisions of the conference. The Serbian question was placed on the agenda and was going to be discussed, they said, both between the individual cabinets and at the conference. Russia was especially active in this respect. Izvolsky, who had not taken Serbian interests into sufficient consideration in the summer of 1909 when he opened negotiations with Vienna, now found himself in a very difficult situation. He had not received what he had hoped for – a free passage through the Dardanelles – and at the same time he had aroused suspicion in his negotiations with Aehrenthal and exposed too soon Russia's weak points. The bitterness of public opinion in Serbia, Russia and a large part of Europe, which he had not expected to such a degree, disconcerted him and made an impact on him so that he began to incline to more

402 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI 1, p. 172.

403 *Ibid.*, p. 177.

404 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, I, p. 345.

405 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from London, 18 September, conf. no. 500.

energetic measures; on the other hand, Russia's powerlessness and his own conception of the whole problem tied his hands and inclined him to draw back. But he defended the idea of a conference to the end and even made its success a matter of personal concern. He was mainly consistent with Serbia. He constantly said that caution and moderation were necessary. He said to the Serbian Minister, Dimitrije Popović, and later, on his return from Paris, London and Berlin, to Nicholas Pašić on 29 (16) October "that Serbia should in principle remain quiet and do nothing that might provoke Austria-Hungary, since war with Austria-Hungary would mean suicide. Russia could not and would not go to war because of Bosnia and Herzegovina." He further said to Pašić and Popović, as well as to Vesnić in Paris, that "the previous situation was not much changed by the annexation" and that, with her demonstrations, Serbia made it more difficult to work to her advantage. The benefit to her would, of course, appear after the discussion at the coherence. The prospects of compensation, which at first appeared very slight, would be better if Serbia modified her attitude.⁴⁰⁶ "Your army is unprepared, the officers are divided, and Austria would take Kragujevac in a few days." Pašić replied with self-confidence: "We are careful to avoid provocation, but if, in spite of our will, it comes to a conflict, it will not be as easy as that. We can send 200,000 troops to meet the Austrian Army, and until at least half that number fall, the Austrians cannot take Kragujevac. The spirit of sacrifice and enthusiasm for the defense of the country is on our side." Izvolsky's advice placed Serbia in a difficult dilemma. If Serbia did not raise an energetic protest, her demands would be treated with still less consideration, for it would be believed that she had resigned herself to her fate; if, on the other hand, she protested vigorously, it might result in her being refused, because she had been too insistent and thus provoked Austria. The Serbs nevertheless constantly pointed out that the conference would be meaningless, if the Powers came to it with their hands tied, or if the Austrian point of view completely prevailed. In such a case, it would be better to leave the question open.

Emperor Nicholas II of Russia told Pašić in an audience on 10 November (29 October) that he had great sympathy for Serbia, "for our cause is just", but that it was impossible to undertake any stronger measures against the Danubian Monarchy. Russia was not prepared for war and could not carry it out. But she would not recognize the annexation. "Russia will not approve the annexation, you may be assured", the Emperor said in no uncertain terms and, on the same occasion, declared his conviction that Austria-Hungary

406 Pašić Ministarstvu inostranih dela, Petrograd, 30. 10. 1908, Pov. Br. 2444, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. III, sv. 3, p. 396.

would not agree either to autonomy or to territorial compensation and that "the Bosnian-Herzegovinian question would only be settled by war".⁴⁰⁷ Under the existing circumstances, he thought, "Austria-Hungary would not attack Serbia, but she should not be provoked." His advice was therefore in favour of "an agreement with Turkey, a peaceful attitude, military preparations, and waiting".⁴⁰⁸ He particularly recommended a Balkan agreement. "An alliance of the Balkan states would bring major advantages to all." The Emperor's conception corresponded, to a large extent, with the wishes and the point of view of the Serbian government. If Russia could not prevent the annexation and force Austria-Hungary to attend the conference, or obtain some territorial compensation for the Serbs, she could at least refuse to recognize the annexation and thus leave the question open. In Serbian diplomatic circles it was believed that Austria-Hungary would have to give way, if confronted with such a decision. On 5 November, Dr. Milovan Milovanović assured the French authorities in Paris, which feared war, that the danger of war would be less "if the conference were postponed and the question left open, the demand for territorial compensation for Serbia upheld, than if the demand were rejected and the question settled unfavourably for Serbia." Pašić for his part attempted similarly to convince Izvolsky. At a reception on 29 (16) October, he told him that "Serbia would retain her faith in the better future, if Russia did not recognize the annexation and used her influence to secure the unanimity of the Balkan

407 Izvolsky also spoke fairly openly to the German Ambassador on 15 January 1909: "The Eastern question cannot be settled except by a conflict." The agreements between Russia and Austria-Hungary were directed to postponing the conflict for some considerable time. The Mürtzsteg Treaty had rendered valuable service in that respect; it had been possible to overcome every difficulty by mutual agreement. It was, of course, contrary to the spirit of that agreement that one party should profit at the expense of the other. "As soon as the Vienna Cabinet began a more active policy with its Sanjak railway scheme, the agreement was abandoned and the danger of a conflict, without which, as I should like to point out again, there can be no solution of the Eastern question, was brought considerably nearer again. This conflict may arise in five or ten years' time, but it is inevitable and Baron Aehrenthal is to blame for having destroyed the possibility of its postponement for an indefinite period." He upset the earlier agreements and showed no readiness to come to new ones. *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, p. 398.

408 Pašić Ministarstvu inostranih dela, Petrograd, 12. 11. 1908, Pov. Br. 2568, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. III, sv. 3, p. 489. The account given by M. Pavlović in the *Vreme* of 20 February 1930 of Pašić's audience with the Emperor is based on what Pašić recounted, and there can be no certainty of the accuracy of Pavlović's report. It is there said that the Emperor "promised nothing, but sympathized with our difficulties. He said that we must wait eight or ten years and endure everything, and I saw that he was sorry to have to say so, for he hastened to console us and said: 'We shall never abandon you.'" The account given in the text is in accordance with Pašić's authentic notes and reports dated 29-30 October 1908.

states in waiting for the solution of the open question.” “If Serbia obtained no territorial compensation which would make her contiguous with Montenegro, she would consider that nothing had been gained, and her belief in Russia’s support would be destroyed if Russia agreed to the annexation without territorial compensation.” While Charykov, the Assistant Foreign Minister, at once considered these to be “new and excellent ideas”, Izvolsky did not completely agree with them. Even after the above mentioned declaration of the Emperor, he said to Pašić outright: “In order to avoid any misunderstanding between Russia and Serbia, I consider it my duty to declare and emphasize this: since Russia wants the conference to take place, she cannot say that she will not recognize the annexation, but that she will accept the decision of the conference. None of the Powers, including Russia, wants to go to war on account of Bosnia and Herzegovina. If the Emperor really said that Russia would not recognize the annexation, he did not fully envisage the meaning of that word, nor did he take into account its consequences.”⁴⁰⁹

In the spirit of this decisive declaration, the Russian Minister in Belgrade communicated to the Serbian government the instructions he had received from St. Petersburg on 16 (3) November, in which Russia promised to help Serbia diplomatically at the conference and elsewhere, but added that Serbia “could not count on our military support”. Judging by the disposition of St. Petersburg circles, the Serbs nevertheless remained under the impression that their demands, although they could not at present be realized, would still not be completely abandoned. Pašić confidentially informed Belgrade on 2-3 November that the change in Russia’s attitude in favour of Serbia was increasingly felt, and that Russia would not attend the conference or recognize the annexation, if there were to be no territorial compensation for Serbia and Montenegro. Izvolsky’s reservations were considered an expression of diplomatic caution rather than his real and unshakeable conviction. Russian public opinion, which was decidedly on Serbia’s side, and the disposition of the *Duma* were counted on to shake Izvolsky’s attitude. Pašić formed the impression that the final settlement of the whole question might turn out as follows: Austria-Hungary could not be indifferent to the fact that the recognition of the annexation remained open, and therefore, in order to obtain recognition from Russia and other Powers, it would in the end have to make some concessions. Austria had caused an upheaval in Europe and it was in her own interests to wind up the affair as soon as possible without provoking further crises by her

409 Pašić Ministarstvu inostranih dela, Petrograd, 30. 10. 1908, Pov. Br. 2444, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. III, sv. 3, p. 396. Cf. Popović, *Izvolski i Erental*, p. 12.

uncompromising attitude or damaging her prestige by arousing negative criticism of her behaviour in large sections of the public.

The King of Italy, too, was counting on the conference. He told Milovanović on 14 November, when the latter visited Rome in the course of his European tour, that the discussion of the territorial compensation should be retained on the agenda. "If it proved impossible to obtain it, it is important that the question should be raised and our (good) arguments discussed before a competent European forum." "On my remarking", Milovanović wrote, "that I should like the conference, which would probably be held in Rome, if it took place at all, to consider the Serbian question in the form in which Cavour had put it at the Congress of Paris, he answered me very flatteringly that he was convinced that I was capable of putting it with equal skill and that he believed in Serbia's star."⁴¹⁰ But even Italian competent circles, headed by Tittoni, pointed out openly that their support could go no further than the expression of sympathy. Like Russia, Italy declared that it could not go to war on this account, and that, moreover, it was not easy for it to "make an undignified withdrawal". Tittoni could only positively promise Milovanović that he would as far as possible support Russia's steps and suggest that Britain, if possible, be induced to take the lead in the matter, as that country alone could "influence Austria-Hungary to become less proud and more amenable." There was even an idea, although it was *a priori* impossible of realization, that Britain might send its fleet into the Adriatic with a view to making a greater impression. For all his intelligence, Milovanović was not devoid of certain political naiveté, and he regarded this as a serious possibility.

Serbia was led to believe that the conference would take place not only because of the attitude of Russia and Italy, but also by that of Turkey, who had been the first to make a formal proposal for the convocation of a conference. The Grand Vizier declared to the Serbian Minister on 27 November "that the Turkish Cabinet continued to abide by its intention not to negotiate about the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the independence of Bulgaria, directly with the countries concerned, but to leave the settlement of both questions to the signatory Powers of the Treaty of Berlin."⁴¹¹ The Turks later departed, to some extent, from their point of view and entered into direct negotiations with Austria-Hungary, on the advice and wish of some of the Great Powers, which endeavoured to settle the contested points before the conference; nevertheless, the Turks maintained to argue for a conference.

410 Milovanović Ministarstvu inostranih dela, Rim, 15. 11. 1908, Pov. Br. 2609, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije 1903-1914*, knj. III, sv. 3, pp. 536-537.

411 Nenadović Milovanoviću, Carigrad, 27. 11. 1908, Pov. Br. 958, in: Ibid., pp. 632-633.

Although before the other Powers it denied the right of Serbia and Montenegro to raise their voice against the annexation and to demand any compensation, Austria-Hungary in fact acknowledged this right. On the instructions of the Vienna government, Kuhn, the Austro-Hungarian Minister in Cetinje, announced to Prince Nicholas on 7 October that his government were prepared to renounce the provisions of Article 29 of the Treaty of Berlin which limited the full sovereignty of Montenegro in the Littoral and that they would give it financial support for the construction of railways, on condition that the Montenegrin government adopted a correct attitude "towards the accomplished fact of the annexation". This offer was supplemented by Baron Aehrenthal on 10 October, when he authorized Kuhn to offer Prince Nicholas personally the sum of 500,000 crowns to influence "his personal attitude and decisions".⁴¹² Why should he have done this, if he had really been convinced that Montenegro had no right or any feasible reason to protest? The Austro-Hungarian offers were not accepted in Cetinje. The Montenegrin government not only protested, but also proclaimed on 7 October that in view of the violation of the Treaty of Berlin, they considered themselves no longer bound by Article 29 of that treaty, if the Powers recognized the changes made by the others. The concessions which Austria-Hungary offered them in respect of this article were, moreover, of no real value. For even if Austria-Hungary refused to renounce the rights conferred upon it by this article, how could it now, after tearing up the Treaty of Berlin itself, appeal to it and use force in its defense? The offers made to Montenegro were also aimed at separating that country from Serbia, so that it might be said the two Serb states were not at one on the subject of the annexation. When the offers were refused in Cetinje, Montenegro was threatened, although not to the same extent as Serbia.

The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy also offered some concessions to Serbia, when it saw the impression created by the annexation. Aehrenthal informed St. Petersburg on 24 October that he would take into consideration the position of Serbia as a Danubian state and give her an outlet to the sea across Bosnian territory.⁴¹³ As we have seen, Austria-Hungary had made that offer to Serbia earlier, in order to frustrate the construction of the Adriatic railway, and it had even then met with a very cold reception. The first concession, which meant that Serbia as a Danubian state would obtain a seat in the Danubian Commission, was of so minor an importance in this great question that nobody in Belgrade would even consider it. Serbia indeed took it as an insult that compensation for the damage done to her national interests should

⁴¹² *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, I, pp. 149, 181.

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 297-8.

be made by means of economic concessions, and one of the most peace-loving men in the country, the old scholar Stojan Novaković, declared that such an offer should be thrown back with contempt in the face of whoever made it. The fact that Austria-Hungary was willing to make this concession undoubtedly goes to show that it realized that Serbian interests had been injured through the annexation. It might be said that it showed its goodwill and its readiness to meet Russia's wishes and contribute to the pacification of Serbia. There is probably some truth in this, because if the annexation had not aroused such condemnation in Russia and the rest of Europe, Austria-Hungary would certainly not, at least at that time, have proposed even so insignificant a concession. But by making these offers, it weakened the position which it had taken up in denying Serbia's right to protest. After all, concessions are certainly not offered to anyone who is not entitled to them. The Italian public also protested at the time of the Annexation Crisis; Tittoni himself appealed to Vienna with the request that the Italians be given some satisfaction, for instance, that their university be opened, that they be given Aquileia or something else, but the Ballplatz was not willing to meet the wishes of an important ally.⁴¹⁴

The Austro-Hungarian offers to Montenegro were supported by Germany. Its Minister at Cetinje, Pilgrim-Baltazzi, even made Prince Nicholas written proposals as to how Montenegro might enter into closer relations with the neighbouring Monarchy. We find some extremely interesting information in the dispatches of the Serbian Minister in Cetinje, Jovan M. Jovanović, dated 4 and 22 December. "In early November, the German Minister here had a long talk with the Prince about the political situation in general and that of Montenegro in particular. In the course of the conversation, Her von Pilgrim-Baltazzi told the Prince that both the economic and political situation of Montenegro would be better, if it entered into closer relations with Austria-Hungary. On that occasion, the German diplomat spoke with unusual emphasis about this matter, praising the position of the Duchy of Luxembourg. Prince Nicholas agreed with his fundamental idea of an agreement with Austria-Hungary and requested him to put down on paper what he had said. Pilgrim-Baltazzi did so and handed the Prince a memorandum containing several points (among them were the following: Austro-Hungarian teachers for Montenegrin schools; a curriculum similar to that in Austro-Hungarian schools; an Austro-Hungarian civil service until the Montenegrins trained in Austria-Hungary were prepared to undertake it; a postal, monetary and customs union; lastly, an eventual military union.) The Prince put this paper into his pocket, after receiving the assurances of the German representative that he was acting on his own initiative

414 Ibid.

and requested that the matter should be kept strictly secret.”⁴¹⁵ The German and Austro-Hungarian official collections say nothing about this suggestion; perhaps it indeed emanated from the Minister’s personal initiative and was more in nature of a theoretical discussion. But in that electric atmosphere it left a marked impression. People did not believe that a well-disciplined representative of the German state could make so serious a suggestion, and in writing too, without the knowledge and approval of his government. This sounding carried out when a question of the greatest importance for Serbia’s future and for the relations between the two Serbian states was at issue, was intended, in view of the Serbs, not only to separate Montenegro from Serbia, but also to lead the former country in a direction planned for Serbia too: Montenegro and Serbia might have the prospect of Austro-German support only if they were in a semi-vassal relationship towards the Danubian Monarchy. Perhaps the German Minister did not think of this, perhaps he said more than was necessary, but his words were so understood and interpreted.

Among the foreign factors to which Austria-Hungary attributed the influence on Serbia’s attitude, Russia came first. Vienna considered that Russia, as the old rival of the Danubian Monarchy, was encouraging the national ambitions of the Serbs in order to exploit them in her own interest at some opportune moment.

It was well-known that the collaboration between Russia and Austria-Hungary in the Balkans had never been sincere. Their rivalry, although they sometimes arrived at compromise, always temporary, could never be hidden. It was visible to the whole world, and, naturally, to all the nations of south-eastern Europe. From the Congress of Berlin to 1914, the Balkan matters brought these two Powers into several conflicts, sometimes, for instance in the Bulgarian affair of 1886-8, making a war an imminent possibility. After the Congress of Berlin, Austro-Hungarian and German policy had taken hold over the Balkans. Even prior to 1878, a Hohenzollern had ruled in Romania; in Bulgaria, which had been liberated by Russian blood, Ferdinand Coburg, an Austrian army officer, had been placed on the throne; the Secret Convention had been concluded with Serbia; in Constantinople, German influence had predominated since the mid-1890s, and the Turkish army had been reformed by German officers. Russia had been pushed into the background deliberately and without much consideration. In those days, she had felt herself completely

415 Jovanović Milovanoviću, Cetinje, 4. 12. 1908, strogo Pov. Br. 2794, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. III, sv. 3, pp. 692-693. Cf. O. Hoijer, *Le Comte d’Aehrenthal*, pp. 131-2.

isolated and Emperor Alexander III greeted Prince Nicholas of Montenegro as "his only friend". Austria-Hungary came to have the advantage over Russia. Behind it stood the powerful Germany, which itself endeavoured, in view of its policy in Asia Minor, to establish a reliable foundation for German supremacy in that part of Europe through the Danubian Monarchy attached to Berlin. The great Hamburg-Bagdad railway plan was inconceivable without securing the route which it was supposed to follow. Italy was bound to the Triple Alliance and long afraid to oppose Austro-Hungary's aspirations. In its long struggle against Russian influence in Constantinople, Britain found a supporter in the Vienna government, the collaboration of which it required in Berlin. It was Britain's collaboration with Austria-Hungary that won the day in the Bulgarian crisis of the 1880s. Apart from these diplomatic advantages, Austria-Hungary was in a better geographical position in the Balkans than Russia. While Russia was separated from the Balkans by Romania, an ally of the Triple Alliance, Austria-Hungary was in fact a Balkan state after the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It concentrated its entire attention on that peninsula, whereas Russia was also engaged in the Far East, in Persia and elsewhere. Any Austro-Hungarian gain was a direct one, any Russian gain only indirect.

But Russia had more of a moral prestige in the Balkans than the Danubian Monarchy. All the Christian Orthodox nations and states looked on her as the protector of their faith and the enemy of the Turkish oppressor. Since the sixteenth century, Russia had helped the Orthodox clergy and their churches, and they in return spread her fame among the people. Aside from religion, Russia was connected with most of the Balkan Christians by their common Slav origin to which reference had so often been made since the beginning of the nineteenth century. Russia had appeared as a liberator. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries she had kept nothing in the Balkans for herself. The masses of people knew nothing of the motives which determined the actions of her government; all they saw was her struggle against the Turks. Most of the Balkan Slavs, until nearly the end of the nineteenth century, not merely had nothing against Russia's raising the cross on Santa Sophia, but would indeed have joyfully greeted that act, while the opening of the Dardanelles to Russian warships always seemed to them something to which Russia had the most natural right. Austria-Hungary, on the other hand, always sought its own gains in the Balkans and on two or three occasions effected a virtual occupation of Balkan territory which did not always leave positive results. Russia had contributed most towards the liberation of the Balkan Christians from the Turks. She had been the first to take an interest in the uprising under Karadjordje in 1804; she had concluded an alliance with Serbia in 1807 and fought with her against the Turks until 1812; she had made it possible for the second uprising

under Miloš Obrenović to succeed in 1815; between 1829 and 1856 she had been the protector of the new Serbian state and had been recognized as such by the Porte; in 1830, she had helped Serbia to obtain recognition of her autonomy. Russia had intervened more than anybody else on behalf of the Greeks, after their uprising in 1821, and fought the Turks on land and sea in order to secure for them a free existence. Bulgaria had been liberated by Russian military intervention in 1877-8. Montenegro enjoyed constant Russian support from the time of Emperor Peter I until the World War, and on several occasions Russia exerted an active influence in both the internal and external affairs of that country. Although the Russian representatives in these countries sometimes abused their position, although Russian diplomacy sometimes made grave mistakes with regard to them, the majority of the people nevertheless remained loyal to the Russian Court and Russian people, if not to official Russia.

The Serbs often felt that the very fact that Slav and Orthodox Russia existed and that her wishes had to be taken into consideration preserved the freedom and alleviated the hard lot of the South Slavs. The attitude of Jovan Ristić, a Serbian statesman who was twice Regent and Foreign Minister at the time of the Treaty of San Stefano and afterwards, but nevertheless remained Russophile, represented the true feelings of the majority of the Serbian people. Why did the Serbs take up this attitude? For the simple reason that on the other side there was still less hope of success. Serbia could only have had a true friend in Austria-Hungary, if she had completely renounced her own national policy. Russia, on the other hand, was willing to understand the aspirations of Serbs and, although she was unable always to satisfy them and sometimes neglected them, she at least managed to convey the assurance that she had them in her mind and to encourage the hope of their realization, however distant. "In all the Slav national aspirations", Bismarck explained to the German Minister in Belgrade in 1880, "among the Serbs and the South Slavs in general, as well as among the Slavs in the northern parts of Europe, there runs a common thread; the tendencies change according to circumstances and relations, but only in form and appearance."⁴¹⁶

The Russo-Austrian rivalry in the Balkans was extremely well grasped and explained by Milovanović in his dispatch from Rome on 8 November (26 October) 1903. "In the Balkans, the diametrically opposed interests of Russia and Austria-Hungary had to be reconciled, as neither of the Powers was strong enough to impose its will on the other. And the more obvious it became that it was impossible to maintain the *status quo* in the Balkans, the more pressing became the necessity for Russia and Austria-Hungary to find a common

⁴¹⁶ The Viennese State Archives, *Diplom. Berichte aus Belgrade*, 8 May 1880.

solution or at least some procedure for arriving at a settlement acceptable to both. Hence the Russo-Austro-Hungarian agreement, which from the first bore, and still bears, and as long as it endures will continue to bear, the marks of constraint and mutual distrust. Neither Russia nor Austria-Hungary is a party to it because they wish to be so, but because they must put up with it. In concluding the agreement, neither expected that it would help them realize more fully their political programme in the Balkans, or obtain the greatest possible satisfaction for their interests; their motive was to secure themselves from each other so that neither could do anything against the will of the other. The differences between them have neither been removed nor settled, but have only been patched up to prevent their becoming so acute as to develop into an open quarrel. Under such circumstances and such conditions, the forces on either side are being measured and the results obtained will be in proportion to these forces. As a result, which at first sight appears surprising and contradictory, but which must be considered, when the substance of the Russo-Austrian agreement is more closely scrutinised, its most logical end inevitable consequence, Russia and Austria-Hungary are, on the one hand, working together, according to an agreement, taking joint action and even preparing and effecting mutual settlements, while on the other hand, both in the Balkan Peninsula and elsewhere in Europe, they are each working for themselves, and in fact in opposition to each other, to strengthen in every possible way their respective positions in relation to each other, to increase their endurance, to secure the eventual supremacy of their respective standpoints, to obtain a fuller measure of satisfaction for their respective interests in the joint undertakings to be carried out under the agreement."

Theoretically, Milovanović has provided undoubtedly the most accurate interpretation of the tendencies of the two Powers and of their activities in the Balkans. But in the practical policy of Russia and Austria-Hungary in the Balkans since the beginning of the twentieth century certain phases may be more precisely defined. At the beginning of the century, Russia started to improve her standing in that quarter. From the summer of 1900 onwards, Serbia had turned to her, abandoning her former attitude of reliance on Vienna. Jovan Ristić, one of the most important Serbian statesmen of the nineteenth century, affirmed as the result of his experience in dealing with Austria-Hungary, "that Serbia cannot at the same time be on good terms with both these states".⁴¹⁷ Although the change of policy at the time of the inconstant King Alexander Obrenović had not been permanent, and there had been attempts to change it again, as has been explained above, Serbian policy tended in the main to

⁴¹⁷ Ristić, *Spoljašnji odnošaji Srbije*, III, p. 234.

free itself from Viennese influence and to look for support, if not always, to Russia, then at any rate to the Powers friendly to Russia, such as France, or less friendly to Austria, such as Italy. After 1902 an evident rapprochement was felt between Bulgaria and Russia, which even resulted in a kind of alliance and in a number of political manifestations which almost amounted to demonstrations. After 1903, however, the situation changed. Russia became increasingly involved in the Far Eastern questions and, fearing complications there, sincerely desired to allay the revolutionary temper of the Balkans by the introduction of reforms and by restraining the Balkan states from undertaking any action against Turkey. The Russian agreement with Austria-Hungary in 1903 was directed towards maintaining the *status quo* in the Balkans, as any change in it would have called for more attention on the part of Russia, and perhaps even for mediation, for which she did not have then sufficient strength or a free hand because of Japan. When in 1904-5 she became involved in the difficult and unfortunate war with Japan, and when in 1905-6 revolutionary unrest emerged at home, Russia, weakened and somewhat fainthearted, allowed Austria-Hungary to play the main role in the Balkans, whereas she merely followed, sometimes quite passively, the endeavours of her western friends to frustrate the activist ambitions of the Vienna government.

For long Serbia benefited very little from her relations with Russia. From 1903 until 1906, Russia went hand in hand with Austria-Hungary in the question of the Macedonian reforms and allowed it to push through the exclusion of the Kosovo region from the reforms and to reserve the Skoplje area for the Austro-Hungarian gendarmerie. During the Serbo-Austrian Tariff War, Serbia was not sufficiently supported by Russia. The Russian Minister in Belgrade, Gubastov, was even called to account by Count Lamsdorf in early February 1906 because of the largely unfounded complaint of the Austrian government to the effect that he had incited the Serbs to resistance. On 21 March 1906, while the Serbian Charge d'Affaires, Dr. Slavko Grujić, was explaining to him in detail the difficulties with Austria, Count Lamsdorf kept silent and "did not want to say a single word".⁴¹⁸ When the Serbian government explained the entire development of the dispute to the Russian government, St. Petersburg interpreted it as an appeal for intervention, and the new Foreign Minister Izvolsky answered the Serbian Charge d'Affaires on 6 June 1906 that he found "that direct intervention on their part would be inconvenient as they were not directly concerned", but that he would use his friendly influence for the favourable settlement of the dispute. This exercise of his influence must have been lukewarm – if

418 Grujić Antoniću, Petrograd, 22. 3. 1906, Pov. Br. 43, in: Aleksić-Pejković and Anić, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. II, sv. 1/1, p. 605.

indeed it had occurred – for it was felt nowhere. The Serbian Charge d’Affaires reported on 25 July that complete indifference to the whole dispute prevailed in the Russian Foreign Ministry and in the press. The Russian Ambassador in Vienna, Prince Urusov, even went as far as saying to his Serbian colleague that Serbia ought in any case to cease arming. “That is superfluous”, he said, “for the Serbs will not settle the Balkan question.”⁴¹⁹ During the initial negotiations in connection with the annexation, Izvolsky started to bargain with Aehrenthal to make a political deal: Russia would take a friendly attitude in the matter of the annexation, while Austria-Hungary would take similar attitude in that of the passage of Russian warships through the Dardanelles. After pursuing such a policy, Russia could clearly not have used her influence in Belgrade to induce the Serbian government, in the role of Russia’s exponent, to oppose Austria-Hungary and provoke Vienna too much. After 1905 it did not suit Russia to see Balkan affairs take a course which would make it necessary for her, in her present unsettled and unprepared condition, to take a more active part or to expose herself to diplomatic defeat. The assertions as to Russia’s incitement of the Serbs against Austria-Hungary at that time were therefore no more than the excuse of an easy-going diplomacy, which did not peruse the question more deeply and independently. Russia’s intervention on behalf of Serbia in the matter of the Adriatic railway and in that of the annexation was no incitement; it was made, as may be seen from what has so far been made public or is known on the subject, only in defense of the interests of the Balkan states and of the Serbs against the arbitrary moves of Viennese policy, which were arousing mistrust on all sides. The aggressiveness was not on Russia’s, but on Austria’s side; Austria indeed was counting on Russia’s weakness and hoping to exploit it as far as possible.

It is difficult absolutely to establish the fact (because not all the material concerning this question is yet available), but the impression is strong that the Vienna government would have taken more active measures in the Balkans even earlier, if they had been absolutely certain of Germany’s collaboration. However strange this may at first sight appear in view of Germany’s aspirations in the East and its interests in Asia Minor, as well as of its endeavours to secure a direct route for the traffic on the Hamburg-Bagdad line, Germany was still not prepared in 1903-6 to go the whole hog with Austria. The German official collection and Prince Bülow’s statements give ample proof of this. Germany’s Balkan policy was suspected at that time more than it deserved to be. Germany no doubt wanted to see Austria-Hungary gain a foothold in the Balkans, play the principal part there and become Germany’s bridge to Asia

419 Vujić Pašiću, Beč, 4. 10. 1906, Pov. Br. 418, in: *Ibid.*, pp. 406-407.

Minor. But it was Germany's policy that the entrenchment of Austria in the Balkans should be carried out without violence and without provoking the bitterness and aggressiveness of others.⁴²⁰ It was not in Germany's interest that excessive aggressiveness on the part of Austria-Hungary estrange the Turks and provoke their resistance to German influence not only in Europe but also in Asia. The Berlin government similarly did not want to estrange Italy, but to keep that country in the Triple Alliance, and was therefore active in smoothing over the differences between Italy and Austria-Hungary, or in finding a suitable solution for them to compromise. Apart from this, the German Emperor considered it one of the main tasks of his policy in those years to attract Russia to his side. The Russo-Austro-Hungarian agreement on Balkan questions suited his plans, although he preferred his Viennese ally to benefit thereby. Emperor Wilhelm II thought that Russia, in view of her increasingly complicated interests in the East, would in time gradually lose interest in the Balkans and that a fresh and more comprehensive division of the spheres of influence there might thus come about without a conflict. He therefore did what he could to divert Russia's attention as much as possible towards the Far East.⁴²¹ At the time of the Russo-Japanese war, Germany tried in every way to convince Russia of its loyalty and allowed no change in Europe which would be to Russia's obvious detriment. In his letters to Nicholas II, Wilhelm II personally laid stress on his attitude and assured him that he could count on him as a "true friend".⁴²² When on 8 April 1904 the Franco-British colonial agreement was concluded, Wilhelm II presented this to Nicholas II, in view of the Anglo-Japanese alliance, as a sort of treachery on the part of France and earnestly hoped that his policy of attracting Russia would be successful. For those reasons, Germany could not even agree to Austria-Hungary's taking more active steps in the Balkans, lest Russia should feel hurt and become suspicious of their loyalty. This attitude of Germany was quite clear to Vienna, where it was feared lest Germany should renew Bismarck's famous treaty of mutual guarantees with Russia; Goluchowski even spoke to H. Wickham Steed of the possibility of Germany's betraying Austria.⁴²³

But after 1906 the whole political situation changed completely. Germany's endeavours to separate Russia from France did not succeed. On 31 March 1905, as an expression of German dissatisfaction with the Franco-British agreement, the German Emperor disembarked at Tangier and the Moroccan question was

420 Cf. C. Bornhak, *Die Kriegsschuld Deutschlands. Weltpolitik 1890-1914*, Berlin 1929. pp. 352-4.

421 Cf. Bülow's *Denkwürdigkeiten*, II, 1930, p. 63 ff.

422 *Correspondence entre Guillaume II et Nicholas II*, Paris 1924. p. 99.

423 Steed, *Mes souvenirs*, I, p. 206.

raised in opposition to France's plans and interests. Germany openly opposed the French Foreign Minister, Delcassé, the architect of the agreement with Britain, and demanded Delcassé's resignation in Paris. Under German pressure, Delcassé was indeed forced to leave the government on 6 June 1905. His fall was, however, not sufficient for Germany, which now demanded, in order to force France into still greater submission and to separate her from Britain, that an international conference be convened to decide the Moroccan question as a matter of international significance. The first decisions about Morocco had been made in 1880 at an international conference in Madrid and Berlin insisted that no changes in Moroccan relations could be made without the consent of the Powers which had taken part at that first conference. Germany's claim was conceded, after having declared that it would otherwise resort to other measures both in Morocco and elsewhere. During the same summer, on 23 July, at the meeting in Björkö, Emperor Wilhelm II submitted to Emperor Nicholas II, who was annoyed with Britain because of its support of the Japanese, the draft of a Russo-German defensive alliance and insisted on the latter's immediately signing this agreement, which had been drawn up in the greatest secrecy. Nicholas II did so without sufficiently envisaging all the consequences which such an alliance would entail. His Foreign Minister, Lamsdorf, who was not present during these negotiations, at once saw that the existing Franco-Russian alliance was called into question by this treaty. The Russian government, therefore, found itself in a position to choose between Germany and France, and, with the Emperor's approval, decided for the latter.⁴²⁴ This naturally created a bad impression in Berlin, where it seemed as if all the efforts made for the sake of a closer agreement with Russia and all the proofs of friendship given had failed to achieve the desired and openly sought effect. At the Algeciras Conference (16 January–7 April 1906), at which the Morocco question was discussed, Russia together with Britain supported the French throughout; Italy mediated but also sided with the Western Powers in decisive matters; of the European Powers, Austria-Hungary alone supported the German point of view. Germany found itself isolated and, surprised by the attitude not only of Europe but also of the United States, was compelled to give way. In its further policy Germany was guided by the principle that it must not lose Austria-Hungary too, whose Foreign Minister, because of his attitude in Algeciras, Emperor Wilhelm II called "his brilliant second" and it therefore promised to render Austria similar service at the first opportunity as a proof of its gratitude. On the other hand, Russia had to be made to realize

424 Cf. *Memoires d'Alexandre Iswolsky*, Paris 1923, pp. 45–89. *Krasnii arhiv*, V, 1924, pp. 5–49; M. de Taube, *La politique russe d'avant-guerre*, pp. 45–84.

how unfavorable an impression had been created by her attitude on that occasion and, in general, by her definite decision not to abandon the French alliance. Vienna was not long in perceiving this change in the German attitude towards Russia, and Austro-Hungarian policy after the Algeciras Conference therefore became more active and much more determined. The replacement of Goluchowski by Aehrenthal in the autumn of 1906 contributed to this.

The Serbs were, of course, among the first to feel the effects of this change. The Serbian Minister in Vienna heard from several sources that during his visit to Vienna in July Emperor Wilhem had said that Serbia was "the first obstacle in the way of Austro-German policy in the Balkans." The aim of German diplomacy now was to remove that obstacle. As early as the second stage of the Tariff War, Berlin circles, which had previously been rather forthcoming to Serbia, became more reserved. In the matter of the Adriatic railway, Germany definitely took Austria's side. The German Ambassador in Constantinople, Baron Marschall, was of the opinion, as he explained in his letter of 30 December 1907, that it would be a mistake for his government to advise moderation to Austria-Hungary or put obstacles in its way when it decided on a more vigorous action.⁴²⁵ Two weeks earlier, Marschall had personally discussed the matter with Aehrenthal, who, knowing the attitude of Berlin, justified his new Balkan undertakings by his fear of a Russo-British agreement which would be to Austria's detriment. When Aehrenthal's plan was published and aroused Russian protests, Berlin considered Russia's annoyance merely superficial and designed for the public consumption, not realising how sincere it was and how it dangerously reawakened the old Russian suspicions of Vienna. This time Berlin was wrong in its calculations. In undertaking to support Vienna's action in the face of such irritation on the part of Russia, Berlin exposed itself to the inconvenience of being misunderstood especially as, in defending the disloyal action of its own ally, Germany tried to cast suspicion on the proceedings of the Russian ally. In his instructions of 3 March 1908, Bülow directed Count Pourtalès, the German Minister in St. Petersburg, to draw attention of the Russian Premier Stolypin to the unreliability of republican France, "which is eaten up by Radicalism and undermined by Socialists", and liberal Britain as supporters of the Russian Imperial regime. Pourtalès was supposed to speak against Russia's connection with these two countries and to recommend instead relations with Germany and Austria-Hungary, the countries of purely monarchist convictions.⁴²⁶ Pourtalès himself, however, formed a fairly correct estimate of the political situation in St. Petersburg. He saw that,

425 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXV, pp. 294, 296.

426 *Ibid.*, XXV, pp. 347-8.

owing to Germany's policy in Turkey and Asia Minor, the conviction was gaining ground in Russian circles that Germany started to collide with Russian interests there and that Austria-Hungary alone, without support from Berlin, would not readily embark on a more vigorous policy in the Balkans.⁴²⁷ Noting the growth of Russia's dissatisfaction with Germany's attitude, the German military representative in St. Petersburg, General Albano von Jacobi, proposed to Emperor Wilhelm II on 16 March 1908 that, in reply to the Russian policy, "the only counter-measure lay in their showing the Russians that they did not need them, and that Russia could only count on Germany's support if she did something definite on her part".⁴²⁸

As Austria-Hungary, by its action in the Sanjak railway question without the previous understanding with Russia required by their earlier agreement, had made a breach in the existing relations between them, and as Germany had followed its Viennese ally, Russia entered into a closer understanding with Britain in further pursuit of her policy in the Balkans – since 1903 London had shown a constant interest in the reforms in Turkey and had urged on several occasions that the Russo-Austrian action there not be left entirely to those two Powers. By her request for a concession for the Sanjak railway, Austria had violated the principle of disinterestedness in the Balkans which had formed the basis of the agreement between herself and Russia. "In view of this state of affairs", Izvol'sky said to the Serbian Minister, Dimitrije Popović, "Russia was bound to swing to the other side and that led to the Reval [Tallinn] meeting and the joint action of Russia and Britain in the matter of reforms in European Turkey, without Austria-Hungary".⁴²⁹ The first documented discussion in the Russian Cabinet regarding the direction of Russia's Balkan policy and the agreement with Britain took place on 2 February 1908 after Aehrenthal's statement to the Austro-Hungarian Delegations. Thenceforward Russia refused to support and carry out further reform projects in agreement with Austria-Hungary, as she had done before, but rather demanded that all the signatory Powers be given equal rights in the reform institutions. As early as 24 March 1908, Aehrenthal complained to Tschirschky that "Russia has definitely abandoned the idea of an agreement" with them. The German Secretary of State, Schoen, in his memorandum of 27 March, noted in this connection that Russia's step was no surprise, as the agreement did not correspond with Russia's intentions in the Near East. "While Austria-Hungary is full of a sincere desire to settle and regulate the various relationships in Macedonia, Russia appears today to have precisely

427 Ibid., pp. 353-5.

428 Ibid., p. 357.

429 Popović, *Izvoljski i Erental*, p. 9.

the opposite aim", he wrote neither loyally nor accurately. "Disappointed in her hopes in the Far East as a result of the unfortunate war with Japan, Russia is again looking to the Near East as the principal field for her political activities. But she can hardly make trouble there if conditions are really settled, so she has no interest in establishing order in the Macedonian vilayets, the strengthening of Turkish authority there and the consequent assurance of the *status quo* in the Balkans. Austria-Hungary, on the contrary, is interested in this."⁴³⁰ How far the German statesman erred in this is best shown by the events of the latter half of 1908.

The meeting at Reval on 9-10 June 1908 between Emperor Nicholas II and King Edward VII caused much dissatisfaction in Berlin and Vienna. The Anglo-Russian agreement meant the failure of Germany's attempts to persuade Russia to join the conservative monarchies instead of the liberal Powers of the West. It was considered, although incorrectly, that the policy of "encircling" Germany, which was a part of Edward VII's programme, found its expression in this act. The Reval meeting was much more innocent than was then believed; its significance lay in the mere fact of the meeting taking place and the attempt to reach an understanding rather than in any conclusions which might have been arrived at on that occasion and of which, in fact, there were none.⁴³¹ After the Reval meeting, Germany bound itself still more closely to Austria-Hungary as the only country on whose collaboration it could still count with certainty. Bülow himself has said that Berlin started intentionally to encourage Austria, "so that she should not lose her head and jump into the jaws of Russia", because she was gripped by unrest, "not to say fear".⁴³² On the first report Count Pourtalés sent from St. Petersburg on 12 June, after the meeting at Reval, Emperor Wilhelm II recorded: "Much direct taxation, a powerful fleet, a powerful army! Dry powder!"⁴³³ On 29 May, immediately after the news of the proposed meeting had been received, he made a speech at a military parade in Döberitz, in which he said: "The German has never fought better than when he had to defend himself on all sides. Let them only come! We are ready."⁴³⁴ During the Annexation Crisis, on 27 October 1908, Bülow instructed the Ambassador and Military Plenipotentiary in St. Petersburg to explain the refusal of the proposal for a conference and the cold reception of Izvolsky in Berlin: "Since Russia demonstratively went over to Britain after Reval, we could

430 Ibid., pp. 398, 401-2.

431 Nicolson, *Die Verschwörung der Diplomaten*, pp. 283-9; cf. H Kantorowitz, *Der Geist der englischen Politik*, Berlin 1929, pp. 389-90.

432 *Denkwürdigkeiten*, II, p. 325.

433 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXV, p. 454.

434 Ibid., p. 456.

not abandon Austria." "Russia has thrown herself ostentatiously into the arms of Britain, which is mainly responsible for all the Russian defeats and crises of the last five years; she is neglecting Germany, which has remained faithful to the Russian cause, at the risk of its own security and in spite of the outcries of all European Radicals." They were even instructed to say explicitly that Germany's attitude during the crisis was, for that reason, stiffer than it would have been otherwise.⁴³⁵ "My government has never hesitated in the present Eastern crisis to leave no doubt about the fact that the interests of Austria-Hungary are most closely connected with our own and that its enemies are also ours", Emperor Wilhelm wrote on 26 January 1909 to Emperor Franz Joseph.⁴³⁶ Thus we understand also why Prince Bülow stubbornly defended the uncompromising and bellicose attitude of Austria, although at the same time he condemned Aehrenthal's action and made unfavourable reference to him during the crisis even in front of foreign statesmen, as for example in front of Hardinge during King Edward's visit to Berlin.⁴³⁷

Therefore, Germany's decisions at this time were not governed by reasons of state or by a sense of justice, but by certain spite and by its connection with Austria-Hungary. Berlin did not now mind that this was in evident contradiction to its recent political attitude. In asking for a conference on the Morocco question, Germany had given as a reason, as we have seen, that the earlier decisions in Madrid had been made by an international assembly and that a similar assembly should make any new decisions. However, Germany was now decidedly opposed to a conference. The reason for this change lay, of course, in its conviction that Austria-Hungary's action might meet with condemnation and in its fear that Germany and Austria-Hungary might be voted down; therefore, the aim was not to resolve the affair, but rather to safeguard the prestige of the Danubian Monarchy and to have its action accepted as an accomplished fact without any criticism or discussion. When the question was put in such a manner, it was impossible to avoid the danger of humiliation for one side or the other. Berlin did not hide the fact that Germany desired the humiliation of Izvolsky and Russia, if not as a punishment, at least as a lesson for Russia's attitude in Algeciras and for her friendly agreement with Britain.

In addition to Russia, some Austro-Hungarian circles also accused Italy of supporting Serbia. The Italian Minister in Belgrade, Marquis Guiccioli, a Venetian, was said to have been brought up in the Austrophobe spirit and worked in Belgrade against his ally. Count Forgách openly reproached him

435 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI 1, pp. 216-7.

436 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, I, p. 771.

437 *British Documents*, V, pp. 597, 608.

when on one occasion he called Serbia the Piedmont of the Serbs and spoke of their justifiable national aspirations. In Vienna, it was even affirmed that the Italian Military Attachè had prepared a plan of operations for Serbia in case of a war with Austria. Italy did, in fact, count on the collaboration of the Balkan states in the pursuit of its Balkan policy. Victor Emmanuel's marriage to Princess Helena of Montenegro in 1896 was not without political significance. The thesis of Italian diplomacy was then that closer political cooperation between the Balkan states was necessary, if they wanted to retain the Balkans for themselves. The penetration of Austria-Hungary was prejudicial to Italy's interests in Albania and Rome wanted to prevent it as far as it could. Serbia therefore derived considerable benefit from Italy's friendly attitude between 1902 and 1908. In the question of the Macedonian reforms, Italy was, in its own interest, opposed to Austria-Hungary's preponderant role and it was mostly responsible for the fact that the Macedonian question became a European one; at the time of the Tariff War, Italy assisted the Serbian export trade; it took up the question of the Adriatic railway almost as if it was its own affair. Italy's moral and material help undoubtedly strengthened the hand of the Serbs and prevented their being completely pushed against the wall. But Italy did not seriously think of the possibility of creating complications or causing others to do so; it felt its own strength inferior in comparison with that of Austria-Hungary, of which it was apprehensive. The unfriendly attitude of Austro-Hungarian military circles was certainly well-known in Rome, and therefore, when the situation became critical during the Annexation Crisis, Italy drew back and urged the Serbs with much conviction to give way as well. The new Italian Minister in Belgrade, Baroli, considered it necessary to make excuses to Count Forgách because of the Serbian attitude, allegedly surprised that Serbia placed her hopes in his country, while Tittoni himself made excuses to Bülow and interpreted Italy's agitation as a reaction to the example set by Britain.⁴³⁸

Lastly, Vienna started violently to blame Britain in 1908. The Austrian Ambassador in London reproached Sir Edward Grey at the beginning of December 1908 for the anti-Austrian tone of the British press; with rather transparent allusions he let it be understood that it had been noted that Serbia was receiving an influx of money and munitions, apparently from British sources.⁴³⁹ Aehrenthal himself repeated this later to the British Ambassador, complaining of the activities in Serbia of Mr. Noel Buxton, a member of the London Balkan Committee, who was only a private individual.⁴⁴⁰ The official

438 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, p. 747.

439 *British Documents*, V, pp. 522-3.

440 *Ibid.*, pp. 535-7.

Austro-Hungarian collection of documents contains the 5 February 1909 memorandum prepared by an official in the Foreign Ministry, in which it is said that Britain renewed diplomatic relations with Serbia (on 20 August) in order to make use of her, since she was restless and full of great ambitions, as a convenient “point of attack” against German interests. This idea was developed in various forms by the entire Austrian press. After 1906, the memorandum says, “a rapid growth of the Greater Serbian conspiracy has been noticeable on our southeastern frontier.” The British attitude “encouraged Serbia to inaugurate an offensive policy against Austria-Hungary”.⁴⁴¹ Emperor Wilhelm II himself wrote on the margin of a report in 1909 that even the Annexation Crisis “would not have arisen had it not been for the active policy of Britain”.⁴⁴² A report from the Austro-Hungarian Minister in Belgrade dated as early as 10 March 1907 spoke at length of the growth of British influence in Serbia and how the Serbs “looked on the British representative as a protector of Serbia” and informed him of everything that went on in respect of Austria-Hungary. The document even affirms that the Serbian politicians “were receiving instructions directly from Mr. Whitehead.” It is true that in the course of the Tariff War Britain realized the political importance of Serbia and agreed to restore diplomatic relations with her after the question of the principal conspirators who had taken part in the murder of King Alexander in 1903 had been settled.

In this matter, Britain – if we may be allowed to digress – remained consistent. It demanded that the regicides be removed from the high positions they occupied, not wanting its representatives to come into contact with them. A similar attitude was at first adopted by Austria-Hungary and its diplomats and even the Emperor himself declared publicly that Serbia must wash off the “moral blame” brought upon her by the deeds of the conspirators, if she wanted to maintain relations with them and her reputation in Europe. When, however, the question arose of the order of *Škoda* guns, Viennese circles at once changed their opinion and their press expounded that “the establishment of a normal state of affairs in Serbia was more important for the peace of the Balkans than the conspirators question.” Count Goluchowski himself, in a conversation with Marquis de Reverseaux, said at the beginning of April 1906 that the conspirators issue was no longer acute.⁴⁴³ This was due to the inclination shown by a number of the influential conspirators to meet Austria’s wishes, so that the neighbouring Monarchy might maintain them in power

441 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, I, pp. 801-2.

442 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, p. 859.

443 Vujić Antoniju, Beč, 9. 4. 1906, Pov. Br. 143, in: Aleksić-Pejković and Anić, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. II, sv. 1/1, pp. 716-717.

with its authority. In the Austrian Legation in Belgrade, protracted discussions took place and many possibilities were examined. At the same time, the renewal of relations between Britain and Serbia was by no means agreeable to Vienna. In a conversation with the Marquis de Reverseaux, Goluchowski asked with a touch of irony: "Why Britain needs Serbia and why Serbia needs Britain?" The strengthening of British influence in Serbia, which was already strong in Greece and Bulgaria, and British interference in Balkan questions in general, did not suit the plans of Viennese diplomacy. The British Acting Chargé d'Affaires in Belgrade, Visé-Consul W. Thesiger, reported to London on 18 April 1906 that Sava Grujić's Independent Radicals government had fallen the previous day, because it had been unable to retire the principal conspirators. This was attributed, he said, and not without reason, to the influence of Austria, the policy of which aimed at subduing Serbia and would be hampered by the presence of a British representative or, for that matter, by anything else "which might lighten the burden under which this country is labouring". Austria-Hungary feared, Thesiger wrote in another report dated 2 May, that a British Minister might incite the Serbs to resist Austria's "excessive demands". After Russia's failure in the East, the Russian Minister in Belgrade was playing a passive part, and Austria-Hungary felt she was without a rival; the coming of a British Minister and his joint action with the French and Italian Ministers might encourage Serbia to expect moral and political support, which she needed very badly in the crisis provoked by the Tariff War, and which would result in the economic liberation of that small country from its present dependence on Vienna. Her relations with the West might also relieve Serbia of her political legacy, which involved constant friction between the Russian and Austrian influences in the country. For all these reasons, Thesiger thought, Austria-Hungary would oppose the renewal of relations between Serbia and Britain, and together with the question of the order of guns from the *Škoda* works, this would be an additional motive for its willingness to support even the much-decried conspirators.⁴⁴⁴

The British Government, as it is well-known, looked with suspicion on the policies of Vienna and Berlin in the Balkans and Asia Minor. Serbia's attitude in the Tariff War with the neighbouring Monarchy attracted their attention and aroused a greater interest in that small country. In renewing relations with Serbia and following closely Serbo-Austrian affairs, the British representatives were in a position to satisfy themselves that Serbia's attitude had been

444 *British Documents*, V. pp. 140, 152-3; J. M. Jovanović, "Srpsko-engleski odnosi", *Srpski književni glasnik*, XXXII, 1931, pp. 141-5; E. Rathmann, *Die Balkanfrage 1904-8 und das Werden der Triepelente*, Halle 1932, pp. 91-6.

dictated throughout by the instinct of self-defense rather than by aggressiveness. Dimitrije Popović, then Chief of the Political Department of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, has told me that the new British Minister, J. B. Whitehead, said that the Serbs did very little for their compatriots, especially for those in Bosnia and Herzegovina. British opposition to Austria-Hungary in the matter of the Sanjak railway and especially in the annexation issue was not, however, dictated by any special sympathy for Serbia, but rather by indignation at Vienna's violation of international treaties and moral conventions. Moreover, the British government, always maintaining a juridical standpoint, let it be known to the Serbian government at the very beginning of the Annexation Crisis that they did not accept Serbia's point of view as regards the violation of her rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Hardinge told the Serbian Minister on one occasion that he recognized that the annexation injured Serbia's interests but not her rights.⁴⁴⁵ The British government reacted to Vienna's action, but raised no question concerning Balkan politics which would have benefited the Serbs alone or allowed them to hope for special advantage. Meeting the British Ambassador in Vienna on 4 November 1908, Aehrenthal complained to him of the state of British public opinion, saying that the British people, together with the Russians, assumed a heavy responsibility because of their unfriendly attitude towards Austria. Sir Edward Goschen then answered Aehrenthal that he always spoke of the responsibility of other people, whereas the principal responsibility for the existing state of affairs in the Balkans and the general unrest lay entirely with the Austro-Hungarian government.⁴⁴⁶ Grey similarly told the Austrian Ambassador on 8 December that Austrian public opinion accused Britain as if it, and not Austria, had upset the *status quo* in the Balkans.⁴⁴⁷ If Austrian diplomacy felt hurt and neglected because of the Russo-British agreement at Reval about the Macedonian reforms, Serbia could not be blamed for it, and the agreement itself, however disagreeable to the Vienna government, could not be held to disturb the existing state of affairs in the Balkans.⁴⁴⁸

445 Grujić Milovanoviću, London, 27. 2. 1909, Pov. Br. 43, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. III, sv. 4, pp. 360-362.

446 *British Documents*, V, p. 485.

447 *Ibid.*, pp. 524, 530.

448 Some German scholars have also proved on the basis of unquestionable evidence that it was Austria that showed the intention of changing the *status quo*. Cf. Rathmann, *Die Balkanfrage 1904-8 und das Werden der Triepelente*, pp. 147 ff. Of German statesmen, this is admitted by Baron Schoen himself, whose memoirs I have only been able to obtain in French translation: *Mémoires*, Paris 1922, pp. 95-7.

Vienna's interpretation, whereby Serbia's resistance was explained as a result of the suggestions of various Great Powers, could only help the cause of Serbia. If Britain, France, Italy and Russia found it possible to defend Serbia's point of view, it meant that the Serbs, either by their attitude or by the justice of their arguments, succeeded in creating the conviction that they ought to be helped and that the Serbian question was deserving of the attention of Europe. This was by no means an easy matter, when we consider how indignant European public opinion was at the murder of King Alexander and Queen Draga. Until 1904-6, the foreign Powers had not paid much attention to Serbia, with the partial exception of Russia and Italy, and had thought nothing of her political and military significance. The fact that they changed their opinion meant that the recent crises had opened their eyes to the Serbian question, and these crises, as we have seen, became acute only because Austria-Hungary had been too insistent in imposing its policy on Serbia.

According to all the above Viennese accounts, Serbia was more or less a puppet in the hands of Europe, or at least in those of the main Powers, Russia, Britain, Italy; the initiative for her attitude against Austria-Hungary and her persistence in it did not thus come from her. But such an interpretation was incorrect. It was the result of a desire to look for the culprit anywhere but not at home. Britain did not support Serbia on every occasion – and when it did, it certainly had some reasons for it. Vienna would not, or could not, understand and interpret those reasons; any assistance given to Serbia, even when Serbia was incontestably in the right, was taken as an unfriendly act towards Austria. The editors of the official correspondence of the German Foreign Ministry reproached Britain for its readiness, together with Russia, to support Serbia's demands for territorial compensation,⁴⁴⁹ although they could see from diplomatic correspondence that Britain agreed to that largely to allay the prevailing excitement and settle the whole matter in such a way as to leave as little explosive material as possible in store for the future. Even Berlin could not insist that Serbian national interests were not affected by the proclamation of the annexation. Instead of agreeing without reservation with Vienna and arbitrarily ordering the small powers simply to keep quiet, British diplomacy held that it would be better to meet the wishes of the small powers to some extent and, in doing so, demonstrate goodwill towards them.⁴⁵⁰ Considering the mat-

449 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI 2, p. 394.

450 German diplomacy did not at first take Serbia's alarm seriously. Prince Bülow wrote on 27 October 1908 to Baron Marschall in Constantinople that Serbia's declaration that the new state of affairs was intolerable was simply a "bluff", that Serbia "in fact never even dreamt of war." "Montenegro's threats, like those of Serbia, are not to be taken seriously." See *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, p. 433.

ter today, in historical perspective and with the necessary objectivity, who can deny that the policy pursued by British diplomacy in the annexation question was more statesmanlike and loftier from a moral standpoint?

Austria-Hungary and Germany pursued a policy of prestige in a matter in which the former had clearly violated an international treaty. Their policy at that time seems to have been even more distasteful on account of the fact that, although military supremacy was on their side and they were aware of that, both Austria-Hungary and Germany tried to draw into the struggle as many others as possible and to extend an eventual war to several fronts. This feature of the Annexation Crisis, which has not so far been sufficiently taken into account, can be established on the grounds of the official documents produced by the Vienna and Berlin governments.

In case of a conflict between the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the two Serb states, the Vienna government was prepared to bring into war the neighbouring tribes from the Turkish territory, although the strength of the Austro-Hungarian army was almost twenty times that of Serbia. From confidential telegrams that Baron Aehrenthal sent to the Austro-Hungarian Consuls in Salonica and Scutari on 21 October 1908, we learn that the Vienna government had started to make preparations for an action of the Albanian tribes against Montenegro. The Austrian Consul Kral was asked to answer directly: "Could you exert influence from Macedonia on the Albanians as suggested above in a swift and reliable manner? In this sense, the distribution of arms and munitions is envisaged, as well as the use of the necessary funds." The Consul would distribute money, "while armaments would be dealt with through the agency of trustworthy persons in Scutari".⁴⁵¹ After having cooperated for so many years in the alleged settlement of the internal turmoil in Turkey, Austria-Hungary would have no qualms about instigating revolutionary activities in the Turkish territory to serve its momentary interests. Consul Kral had the reputation of a man experienced in such matters and as such he was asked by Vienna to say how much money was needed for this purpose and which Albanian tribes could be counted on. His experience had clearly been gained at the time of the reform campaign in Macedonia; this information indirectly but plainly confirm the complaints made by Serbian officials about his activities in Bitolj, where he had been in contact with the revolutionary elements and encouraged strife and the outbreak of *chetnik* activities instead of attempting to settle matters. That the Vienna government was serious about these preparations can best be seen from the fact that they entrusted the conduct of the whole matter to their Minister in Athens, Baron Macchio, who

451 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, I, p. 277.

arrived in Vienna for this purpose, where he came into contact with the Chief of the General Staff and immediately set to work. In this connection, Baron Ferenc Nopcsa was sent to continue his bribing of the northern Albanian feudal chiefs, for which purpose funds were placed at his disposal, and the Scutari Consul was informed of his mission on 8 January 1909 and instructed to work in agreement with him.⁴⁵² The Austrian Military Representative in Constantinople negotiated with the Albanian leaders there and reported to Vienna on 6 March 1909 that 100,000 Albanians were ready to spring to arms within 24 hours in the case of a Serbo-Montenegrin move in the direction of the Sanjak.⁴⁵³ In addition, the Military Commander in Zara, General M. Varešanin, was also working among the Albanians and preparing arms and ammunition for them.⁴⁵⁴

At the same time, the Berlin government advised Vienna on several occasions to carry out a regrouping of forces in the Balkans. In a letter he sent to the German Ambassador in Vienna on 30 November 1906, Prince Bülow suggested to Vienna that “they should win Bulgaria over to their side in case of conflict with Serbia”,⁴⁵⁵ while in another letter sent to Tschirschky, dated 12 December and subsequently approved by Emperor Wilhelm II, and in a conversation with the Austro-Hungarian Minister on 16 December 1908, he recommended that Austria-Hungary satisfy Turkey and attract to its side Romania, Greece and Bulgaria. In Bülow’s words, Romania would be offered the prospect of receiving a piece of Serbia, and Bulgaria even “a belt made of Serbian skin.” The latter country seemed to him particularly necessary because of Russia, as German diplomacy considered that Russia would be placed in a very awkward position, if Bulgaria were to be strengthened at Serbia’s expense. Russia could then no longer say that the small Slav states in the Balkans were oppressed and that, in defending Serbia, she was defending her Slav brethren. On the other hand, if she helped the Serbs she would lose the Bulgarians, and if she helped the Bulgarians she would lose the Serbs.⁴⁵⁶ Austria-Hungarian diplomacy took this advice, which, for that matter, was in agreement with its own views. Its representatives in Sofia, acting on the instructions from Vienna, attempted to negotiate along these lines (e.g. the Military Attaché, Hranilović, with the Bulgarian War Minister, General Nikolaev), but they met with the markedly reserved attitude. To join Austria-Hungary against Serbia for the sake of

452 Ibid., p. 720.

453 Ibid., II, p. 40.

454 Auffenberg, *Aus Österreichs Hohe und Niedergang*, p. 111.

455 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, pp. 513, 516-8; *Denkwürdigkeiten*, II, pp. 398-9.

456 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, I, pp. 608-9.

Austro-Hungarian interests would, the Bulgarians said, lay them open to condemnation of all the Slavs. "That would be an irreparable moral damage."⁴⁵⁷ Bulgaria only agreed to have the Danubian Monarchy protect her rear from Serbia and Romania in case of war with Turkey. However, Vienna's answer on 25 January 1909 gave Sofia food for serious reflection. Aehrenthal promised the Bulgarians to keep Serbia in check, even by means of military pressure if necessary, but he demanded certain territorial compensation for Romania for the sake of the balance of power in the Balkans, to which Bucharest attached special importance in case of Bulgaria's success.⁴⁵⁸ Even apart from this unpleasant prospect, the Bulgarian diplomats started to change their attitude. Having attained their objective in regard to Austria-Hungary and without the prospect of obtaining any other concrete advantage from that quarter, without exposing themselves to grave dangers, they turned in the other direction. They were just as heartily welcomed there. Russia even made possible Bulgarian financial arrangement with Turkey without any great sacrifice on Sofia's part by simply setting off Bulgaria's debt to Turkey against Turkey's unpaid war debt to Russia. When on 15 January 1909 the Bulgarian government ordered the mobilization of their eight divisions in view of the danger of a conflict with Turkey, they at the same time made offer to Belgrade, through their Minister, for the conclusion of a political-economic alliance, primarily for the purpose of securing themselves on that side in case of war and, in the second place, of ingratiating themselves with Russian diplomacy. Milovanović made a somewhat evasive reply because of the difficulties in which Serbia was placed, but assured the Bulgarian representative that in an agreement with Bulgaria Serbia "does not cease to see the only real guarantee for the future".⁴⁵⁹ Consequently, German and Austrian diplomacy did not achieve the desired results in Sofia, but that fact in no way diminishes the significance of the perils which they prepared for the peace of Europe.

When on 25 December 1908, in the *Duma*, Izvolsky formulated the Russian view as to the need for a Balkan Alliance, including Turkey, to defend the interests of the Balkans, his speech made a stronger impression in Berlin than in Vienna, although Prince Bülow later attempted to weaken that impression. "If Russia indeed succeeds in forming such a Balkan alliance, Austria-Hungary's position, and consequently our own, will certainly be very difficult and serious."

457 Ibid., pp. 634-5. Cf. the interesting report of the British Minister in Sofia of 4 November, *British Documents*, V, p. 482.

458 Ibid., p. 796.

459 Spalajković Milojeviću, Beograd, 17. 2. 1909, Pov. Br. 316, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. III, sv. 4, pp. 285-286.

Prince Bülow wrote to Tshirschky in this strain after the first reading. Such an alliance, he interpreted it, would only be directed against Austria-Hungary under the existing conditions. It was therefore necessary, he advised Vienna, to take steps as soon as possible to win Bulgaria over for the cause of the Danubian Monarchy. The German Ambassador in Constantinople found, however, that such an alliance, “with or without Turkey was a utopia” and that, even if it were formed, “its continued existence was out of the question.” Bülow was also more reserved later, saying that Izvolsky’s plan for a Balkan alliance was only one of his “fanfaronna” and that an alliance of all the small Balkan states under the leadership of Turkey “was a thing which only a morbid fancy could assume capable of realization”.⁴⁶⁰ Advising Vienna to win over the Bulgarians, Bülow made the following suggestions to his diplomatic colleague on 8 January 1909: “It will not be difficult for the Prince to explain to his Bulgarians that the worst way to realise their Macedonian ambitions would be to conclude an alliance such as Izvolsky talks so much about; that Austria-Hungary and ourselves do not stand between Bulgaria and Macedonia, but that Turkophile Britain and France, and Russia which has now joined them, take hold of Turkish Macedonia, and that, especially in case of a conflict, they can only hope for territorial gains in the direction of Serbia or Turkey, if they are sided with Austria-Hungary.”⁴⁶¹ Offers of this kind were indeed repeated in Sofia, and Pirot and the surrounding area were promised to Bulgaria in the event of an Austro-Serbian war. Moreover, Aehrenthal requested the German Minister in Sofia, Baron Romberg, to reassure the Bulgarian statesmen wherever he could about Austria’s plans in direction of Salonica. “The best proof to the contrary lies in the fact that he offers the Bulgarians the border area around Niš and that, in doing so, Austria-Hungary wants to block its way to Salonica forever.”⁴⁶²

Austro-Hungarian and German diplomacy accused Serbia of aspiring to obtain either all or a part of the Yugoslav territory under the Dual Monarchy and of thus threatening the integrity of the Monarchy. But did not Vienna and Berlin do the same in making these offers to Bulgaria? Did not their offers, although made conditionally, in the event of war, create desires which were later fed and kept up in time of peace? Moreover, Vienna and Berlin did this not only with regard to Serbia, but also with regard to Turkey, with which they were negotiating at the same time and which they constantly assured of their goodwill and friendship. Austria-Hungary encouraged and exploited in her Balkan policy those appetites which it most violently condemned in

460 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, pp. 521-6.

461 *Ibid.*, p. 527.

462 *Ibid.*, p. 558.

others and on account of which it threatened war, and methods which aroused its protests when used by any other Power. It had at one time made similar offers to the Serbs at Turkey's expense. We are perfectly prepared to acknowledge that such methods were the legacy of the old diplomacy, against which only those who never made use of them had the right to protest. But in this case one fact is worth noting. Serbia publicly demanded territorial compensation from Austria-Hungary and hoped to obtain it with its consent. None of the Great Powers offered her, either publicly or secretly, any portion of Austro-Hungarian territory, and the friendly Powers offered her no prospect of obtaining such compensation except at a European conference, and with the consent of Austria-Hungary. In the course of the crisis which arose out of that question and which developed publically for the most part, Austria-Hungary and Germany made concrete offers in secret negotiations to a third state to cede part of Serbian territory with the evident intention of paying that third party with the Serbian territory in question. All Balkan questions in the nineteenth century were largely poisoned by such secret diplomatic offers and transactions and consequently could not be settled in a normal way.

The "Balkan" policy of the individual Balkan states was trained in that school of European diplomacy and it is no wonder that it practiced the same methods. Such tortuous methods can indeed be easier to understand in the case of the small and undeveloped states, when even the Great Powers, even so powerful state as Germany, made use of them.

2

Fearing European complications in the event of a Serbo-Austrian war, the British and French governments tried on several occasions to draw Germany in and, together with that country, proffer their good offices in Vienna for the settlement of the Austro-Serbian dispute and the Russo-Austrian estrangement. It looked at one time as if the greatest danger was over. Russia declared that she had no thought of going, and would not go, to war on account of Bosnia and Herzegovina; the Austrian representatives gave assurances to the foreign governments, for example to the British government on 16 November 1908,⁴⁶³ that their country would not attack Serbia unless it were attacked by her; the Great Powers received Serbia's most definite promise that nothing would be undertaken on her side. But the situation began to grow worse after the New Year 1909. Rumours became more frequent in Vienna that Austria could not remain silent in the face of the Serbian provocation; it was no longer

⁴⁶³ *British Documents*, V, p. 499.

emphasized that the Danubian Monarchy would not take action unless hostilities were commenced by the Serbs. The spring was approaching, and Austria wanted to have a free hand. The crisis had lasted long and her patience was wearing out; more importantly, on 18 January Austria reached an agreement with the Turks in principle and was, in spite of her earlier promises, at once prepared to put pressure on Serbia in order to force her to recognise the newly created situation. From that time onwards, the British and French governments also became more active. The two governments made a concrete proposal for mediation to Germany, at the suggestion of the Russian Cabinet, on 18 February 1909. They declared that peace was seriously threatened, because despite her need and desire for peace Russia could not remain an indifferent onlooker if a conflict broke out. The Serbian government, waiting for the settlement of their claims, had lately taken no offensive measures nor done anything that might be considered provocative. It was necessary, the British and French diplomats said, to find out what exactly Austria-Hungary deemed provocative on the part of Serbia, so that steps could immediately be taken in Belgrade to suppress it and remove any cause of war. To bring about a general appeasement, these Powers further desired that Austria-Hungary inform them to what extent it would be willing to meet Serbia and Montenegro. But the German government was not willing to cooperate. Their view was that it was Belgrade, and not Vienna, that threatened the peace. Serbia and Montenegro suffered no damage and therefore had no right to compensation. The Berlin government did not want to give Vienna undesired advice, which might be interpreted as a kind of pressure. Insofar as it was necessary to mediate, it should be done in Belgrade and not in Vienna.⁴⁶⁴

Vienna certainly did not want mediation. It was not to Austria's interest that the Serbian question be turned into a European one through the intervention and mediation of the Great Powers. Vienna made it very plain to the representatives of the Great Powers that any, even the most friendly, mediation would be ill-received.⁴⁶⁵ It was pointed out that Austria was willing to negotiate with Serbia, as well as with Turkey, directly, "face to face". Belgrade, however, was always weary of this. In direct negotiations, the Vienna government might perhaps be more forthcoming at that time, but only in the case of certain economic questions. But Serbia wanted to maintain the European character of the dispute and not to render useless, by agreeing to direct negotiations, all that had been hitherto done on the assumption that the question of Bosnia and Herzegovina could only be settled by means of an agreement

464 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, pp. 600-2.

465 *British Documents*, V, p. 613.

between all the European Great Powers at a European conference. Besides, the negotiations with Austria-Hungary on bilateral basis evoked unpleasant memories. Therefore, such negotiations were avoided. If under moral pressure Austria-Hungary were willing to make more economic concessions on this occasion, who could guarantee that it would not withdraw them on another occasion? It would make them alone and it could withdraw them alone. The Russian government was also opposed to separate negotiations out of fear for Serbia and pointed out in Paris, where Austria's wishes were given more consideration, that negotiations between Serbia and Austria-Hungary alone would in fact mean "surrendering Serbia to the tender mercies of an Austria armed to the teeth".⁴⁶⁶

In the meantime, Sir Edward Grey said to the German Ambassador in London: "If nothing is done anywhere and matters are allowed to drift, the force of circumstances will bring about a war between Austria and Serbia."⁴⁶⁷ Aware of Vienna's views, the German Chancellor was against any mediation and advised the other Powers to urge Serbia to consent to direct negotiations with Austria-Hungary. But such negotiations, it was further pointed out, could only start if Serbia offered guarantees that she would abandon her provocative attitude, i.e. if she dropped her claims to territorial compensation and disarmed.

In connection with a report from the German Ambassador in Vienna dated 24 February 1909, Emperor Wilhelm II provided in his accompanying note the following explanation for the question of the responsibility for a possible war: "In view of the gravity of the situation, it is necessary that we should immediately get into touch with Paris and demand of France that she, together with us, exert pressure on Russia to force her to adopt a definite standpoint as regards Serbia (to join in exerting pressure on Belgrade). It must be explained to France that if Russia went against Austria, that would mean for us at once a *casus foederis*, i.e. mobilization. France will be asked to make a clear and binding declaration that in such an event she will not enter into war against us. Either at the beginning of the war or later. A declaration of neutrality is not sufficient. If France fails to make such a declaration, we shall consider it a *casus belli* and inform the Reichstag and the world that France, in spite of our appeal to adopt together with us the only possible means for the maintenance of the peace of Europe, has refused to do so and therefore wanted a war."⁴⁶⁸ This line of argument, however extraordinary its logic, is of great importance, because

466 Count Benckendorff, *Diplomatischen Schriftwechsel*, I, p. 45.

467 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, p. 601.

468 *Ibid.*, pp. 623-4.

it reappeared in the same sequence in the discussion of the responsibility for the World War. We must therefore dwell upon it a little longer especially as the Chief of the German General Staff was in agreement with it.

Germany, which supported Austria-Hungary for reasons of its own throughout the crisis, was quite alone in this. The crisis had been precipitated by Austria-Hungary through its violation of an international treaty. Although they were at their heart convinced of this and had expressed such opinion on several occasions in private, the German authorities nevertheless stood by the Danubian Monarchy and publicly approved of its attitude. When in the interests of peace a conference was demanded to settle the questions raised on account of the recent changes in the Balkans, when Russia, appealing to her old connections with Berlin, urged friendly intervention in Vienna, when Britain, France and Italy proposed to mediate in Vienna and Belgrade with a view to improving their relations, Berlin consistently and stubbornly refused, leaving Vienna a free hand. The Berlin government particularly insisted that Vienna must be assured of the strength of the alliance and of Germany's "*Nibelungentreue*-like fidelity". They therefore refused to take part in any action that would be disagreeable to Vienna and might damage its prestige. They expressly declared, as we have seen, that they would do nothing that Vienna might interpret as a pressure. France, Russia's ally, was meanwhile asked not to take such a view of its relations with an ally, but to agree to exert pressure – the actual word "*pression*" was used – on Russia, regardless of the fact that such pressure would be detrimental to Russia's prestige. The pressure on Serbia, it followed from this view of the attitude towards Russia, would be even more direct. In both cases, both in St. Petersburg and in Belgrade, it would be directed to forcing the respective governments to accept the Austro-German standpoint. An Austrian war against Serbia, according to Vienna's and Berlin's conceptions, would be no disturbance of European peace, but an expression of the righteous anger and exhausted patience, although the majority of the European Powers believed that Serbia's protests were not unfounded, and although Russia declared that such a war would undoubtedly arouse alarm in the interested Slav circles in her midst. If Russia were to attack Austria-Hungary on account of this war for the prevention of which she did all that she could, Germany as an ally of the Dual Monarchy would rise against Russia, and if France, as an ally of Russia, failed to promise that it would not go to war with Germany, i.e. if it declared that it would not fulfill its duties as Russia's ally, it meant then then France wanted war! War was not desired by Austria-Hungary, who was about to start it, but by France, if it were obliged to carry out its duty as an ally! Berlin considered that the only way to maintain peace was to put pressure on Russia and thereby on France – they wanted to see no other way, although there were obviously other

and far more direct ones. This kind of logic in the discussion of such complex and delicate questions, when the destiny and peace of Europe were at stake, clearly shows how exclusively and with prejudice Berlin and Vienna discussed these matters and that they thought of their own attitude and the prospects of victory rather than of the consequences that might follow from such proceedings. Words of this kind stemmed from the consciousness of the present military supremacy rather than from political foresight.

Prince Bülów did not accept the Emperor's suggestion that the issue of France's attitude should immediately be forced in Paris, for he felt not so much that it would not be good to do so, but rather that it was superfluous at the time when France, which desired to avoid war at almost all costs, was itself urging St. Petersburg to give way.

On the occasion of King Edward's visit to Berlin in February 1909, Sir Charles Hardinge offered to mediate between Austria-Hungary and Serbia. The Russian Chargé d'Affaires in London, Poklevski-Koziell, reported to his government on 24 February that: "In spite of their warm desire to help Serbia, they are here quite clear that the efforts of the Powers must be directed chiefly to saving Serbia from ruin and that it will be impossible without war to obtain from Austria any other than economic concessions." Hardinge thought, seeing the mood in Berlin and listening to the German messages, that the Russian government should certainly inform Belgrade that Serbia could count neither on territorial concessions nor on the full autonomy of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This step, it was thought, would have a good effect in Vienna, as it was believed there that Russia and perhaps certain other Powers "were encouraging Serbia's unrealizable demands".⁴⁶⁹ London considered that an uncompromising demand for territorial compensation for Serbia "must inevitably lead to war." Britain itself did not want to influence Serbia in this direction without Russia's agreement so as not to appear disloyal to her.

In St. Petersburg, this standpoint had been formulated even earlier. As early as 15 January, Izvolsky told the Serbian Minister that Serbian public opinion and the Serbian press made impossible, unrealizable claims"; on 29 January, he advised the Serbian government to abstain from sending to the Powers certain memorandum in which Serbia's wishes and claims were put forward somewhat crudely, and refused to add Russia's comment on such a document, lest it should be interpreted that Russia was in agreement with it. In fact, he considered that Serbia's demands could not be accepted by Austria and that they only aggravated the situation. While in his telegram of 4 February Milovanović reported that Serbia did not believe "that the bellicose element

469 Benckendorff, *Diplomatischen Schriftwechsel*, I, p. 42.

in Austria-Hungary was serious", St. Petersburg estimated the situation much more accurately and not without pessimism. It was well-known there that Austria-Hungary, for reasons of its own, might suddenly decide to strike and that, indeed, it had been seriously considering such a step of late. As Russia was in no position to think of war, it would be necessary to give way. But how? Izvolsky wanted to save Russia and himself from evident defeat and therefore wanted his proposal for a European conference to be maintained at least as a matter of form, and he found that the only way to make Austria agree to it was to urge Serbia to renounce the demands which she had drafted in agreement with him. Even this alternative meant, to some extent, a failure for Russian diplomacy, although not so obvious and direct one. Vienna and Berlin, however, were not prepared to spare Izvolsky of the unpleasantness of either alternative, and the question therefore became increasingly dangerous.

In London, meanwhile, Grey and the French Ambassador, Cambon, earnestly endeavoured to influence Vienna through Berlin to show some readiness to make concessions. To put pressure on Belgrade without Austria's showing her willingness to grant Serbia certain benefits seemed impossible to Grey on account of Russia, where such a procedure would be very unpopular.⁴⁷⁰ He wanted to mediate in a friendly way, together with other Powers, in Vienna and Belgrade. "The Austrian view that Serbia should first give guarantees and then wait for concessions from Austria's magnanimity would lead, he feared, to no practical solution and would not remove the danger of a conflict." Thus he spoke to the German Ambassador on 14 February. The Russian Ambassador recommended, as a procedure which would be more agreeable to the Vienna government, that Austria, indirectly, through Berlin, should inform the British and French governments of a kind of guarantee she demanded from Serbia. "Austria's hesitation", he said, "and her refusal of any kind of real mediation is a diplomatic trial of strength which will lead in all probability to war, which may not be limited to Serbia".⁴⁷¹ The French government, seeing the stubbornness of Berlin, adopted the German view as regards their attitude towards Austria and proposed on 25 February that Britain, France, Russia and Germany inform Belgrade that Serbia could count on no support in the matter of territorial compensation, that she must demobilize her troops and irregulars, which had been called up, and avoid any form of provocation. That done, she would state her "reasonable wishes" in regard to economic privileges and the Powers would communicate those wishes to Vienna.⁴⁷²

470 *British Documents*, V, p. 627.

471 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, pp. 625-6.

472 *Ibid.*, pp. 628-9.

As soon as negotiations with Turkey had been finally concluded – the last protocol was signed on 26 February 1909 – Aehrenthal decided to settle Austria's relations with Serbia too, meaning either to force her to capitulate or to undertake a punitive expedition against her. As an excuse, he construed the following charges, which he communicated to his Ambassadors to the Great Powers on 25 February. Having made an arrangement with Turkey, the Dual Monarchy “has settled the formal changes” caused by the annexation. Submitting the protocol of the agreement with Turkey to the Powers, Aehrenthal created a “new situation”, which would enable the cabinets to bring Serbia to reason. Serbia did not want to recognize the annexation, which had now been recognized by Turkey, but protested against it “on the grounds of some fantastic national rights” and demanded for herself territorial concessions. But these demands of Serbia were directed against the integrity of the Monarchy and “therefore implied an incorrect and unfriendly attitude on the part of the Kingdom”.⁴⁷³ Austrian diplomacy here again adopted a legal standpoint, which was both wrong and perfidious. The agreement with Turkey did not yet represent the final settlement of the annexation question; the sanction of the Great Powers was necessary for the state of affairs thus created to be legally recognized. Austria-Hungary's right of ownership was still contestable, for though it was recognized by Turkey, it was still based on the arbitrary seizure. Furthermore, Serbia did not put forward these demands at present, but had urged them immediately at the beginning of the dispute, and she was entitled to expect, on the strength of the assurances from the Great Powers, that her interests would be taken into consideration and that the satisfaction of her demands was essential to the settlement of the whole question. The “new situation” was in fact the old one, but with one new factor, which was more favourable to Austria-Hungary from the point of view of policy, but not from that of international law. The Austro-Turkish negotiations, it was thought, would benefit Serbia. These negotiations showed, Hardinge said to the Serbian representative “that Austria has begun to take into account not only the interests of others, but also the public opinion of Europe”.⁴⁷⁴

473 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, I, p. 879.

474 Grujić Milovanoviću, London, 19. 1. 1909, *Pov. Br. 7*, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. III, sv. 4, pp. 149-150. The news of the Austro-Turkish agreement, which had been concluded on the financial basis, made some Serbian statesmen and Prince Nicholas of Montenegro hope that matters between Serbia and Montenegro, on the one side, and Turkey, on the other, might be settled on a similar basis. Prince Nicholas even made suggestions along these lines to the Russian Chargé d'Affaires in mid-January 1909. But the reply from St. Petersburg was very reserved; to the Serbian Minister it seemed as if Russia in general “did not want to interfere with these matters.” In Turkey,

The negative attitude of the Austrian government was further aggravated by Germany. On 27 February, a member of the German government drew up and sent to Paris a draft note to be handed to Serbia.⁴⁷⁵ In this note, Serbia's attention was drawn to the "new situation" created as a result of the Austro-Turkish agreement, and she was asked to declare that she relinquished "all territorial aspirations beyond the borders of the Kingdom" and "that she would abstain from any activities which might disturb the peace of the neighbouring Monarchy, for which Serbia would be held fully responsible." Serbia would be satisfied with such economic privileges as Austria-Hungary might be prepared to grant her on the basis of a direct agreement. The French government was willing to accept this draft as the basis for an agreement, omitting the reference to Serbia's responsibility for the peace of Austria and to a direct agreement between Serbia and Austria-Hungary. The Russian government was more energetic. They considered that this text was largely the work of Vienna and that it could not be accepted. Izvolsky insisted that Austria thereby hoped to present her agreement with Turkey as the final settlement of the annexation question, and he could not agree to that. In his opinion, the Austro-Turkish protocol would have international significance only after having been sanctioned by a conference. He was also unwilling to accept the article about Serbia's renunciation of all her territorial aspirations. "No country, however small or weak, could make such a general declaration."⁴⁷⁶ It did indeed look as if the idea of Serbia's making so general and categorical a declaration might have emanated from Austria. Vienna had long maintained that the development of Serbia could not be permitted; in the present instance, the point of

there was not the slightest inclination to settle the crisis in this way. On the contrary, earnest endeavours were made to ensure that the arrangement between Turkey and Austria contain a provision, whereby the Danubian Monarchy would guarantee Turkey's hold on the Sanjak not only with diplomatic, but also with military support. If the question of the Sanjak were raised at the conference, declared the Turkish Foreign Minister on 10 March, the Turkish delegates would immediately leave the conference. That Austria-Hungary would unconditionally and vigorously oppose such a settlement could be counted on with certainty. Although it had given up the Sanjak, it did not still want to relinquish its influence there. In the negotiations with Turkey, Austria-Hungary demanded with great insistence that the Uvac-Mitrovica railway be constructed without fail, and to this end it was prepared, and certainly not for sentimental reasons, to give the Turks financial and technical assistance. See *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, pp. 27, 75. Baron Giesl, the Austrian Military Attaché in Constantinople, told the Turks that Austria would not tolerate any definite occupation of the Sanjak by Serbia and Montenegro, and that she had not evacuated it in order to hand it over to them. See *Zwei Jahrzehnte*, p. 197.

475 This note does not appear in the German official collection.

476 Benckendorff, *Diplomatischen Schriftwechsel*, I, pp. 50-51; *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, p. 634; *British Documents*, V, p. 645.

the whole declaration would be to tie Serbia's hands with regard also to her penetration in the direction of Old Serbia. In the negotiations with the Porte, in February 1909, Austria-Hungary had several times emphasized that she wanted the Sanjak of Novi Pazar to remain Turkish and she had suggested to the Porte the exchange of secret declarations "in which their mutual interest in the maintenance of the *status quo* in the Sanjak would be expressed".⁴⁷⁷ But this time it was not Vienna that had requested Berlin to propose the above declaration. On the contrary, Aehrenthal had asserted on 20 and 24 February that he would at present ask Serbia only to recognize the Turko-Austrian protocol and to declare "that she would pursue a more correct and conciliatory policy towards Austria-Hungary." In his opinion, the German Ambassador said explicitly, "nothing more should be asked of Serbia." On his part, Aehrenthal was prepared to give Serbia in direct negotiations a better commercial treaty and a connection between the Serbian and the Bosnian railways. Only if Serbia refused to agree to this, he would present her with an ultimatum.⁴⁷⁸ This meant, therefore, that the harsher draft was actually the work of Berlin. Austria's milder draft was wiser from a diplomatic point of view. The Vienna government thereby wanted to get rid of Serbia's protests in direct negotiation with her and by Serbia's recognition of the annexation, as they had done with Turkey, keeping the Great Powers out of it – Germany took them into account in sending this note.

The British and French governments nevertheless endeavoured, in spite of the contrary attitude of Vienna and Berlin, to keep the Serbo-Austrian discussions public and dependent on the collaboration of the Great Powers. On 27 February, London again proposed that Austria inform the Powers as to the economic concessions she was willing to make to the Serbs, so that the Powers might put this before Serbia, but Aehrenthal refused for two reasons: 1) because he did not want any foreign intervention in this matter, which, in his view, concerned Serbia and Austria-Hungary alone; and 2) because it would tie the hands of Austria and might very easily lead Serbia to make more extensive demands. On 28 February, Bülow informed St. Petersburg that he agreed with Austria's view as any other settlement would mean "the humiliation of Austria, to which we would under no circumstances be a party".⁴⁷⁹

In view of the unexpected resistance with which Austria-Hungary's proceeding in the matter of the annexation met, the Serbian question, although otherwise an awkward one, was for the time being welcomed by Viennese

477 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, p. 2.

478 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, pp. 613-4, 623.

479 *Ibid.*, p. 638.

diplomacy as a means of influencing other Powers. Vienna could do nothing directly in the case of Britain, where criticism of its action was very severe, nor could it do anything against Russia, except appeal to the old agreements in which the recognition of the annexation was mentioned. But since Russia had intervened in favour of the Serbs and London had shown certain sympathy for Serbia's alarm, Vienna came to think that the pressure on Serbia was, in fact, an indirect pressure on these two Powers. Vienna was fully aware that Russia, in spite of her unwillingness to go to war on account of Bosnia, could not in the end remain completely indifferent to the fate of Serbia, if Austria-Hungary threatened the latter with total destruction. The official reports and communications of the Austrian representatives drew attention to the activities of the Slavophile circles and to Russian public opinion, which showed an interest in the cause of Serbia and might eventually influence the government or the Court and draw them into an adventurous undertaking. Charykov told Count Berhtold sincerely of his fear of some such complications. "The first shot will easily be fired, but when and where will the last one echo?" Others were still more frank. In his letter of 17 (30) December 1908 to Franz Joseph, Nicholas II expressed his concern for the future. "It is indeed no business of mine", he wrote, "to judge whether the policy of your Foreign Minister has profited your Empire in proportion to the disturbance which it has aroused. But I wonder whether this policy will stop at the disturbance it has created already, or whether perhaps we are on the verge of complications which may be still more dangerous for the general peace." The Russian Emperor frankly drew attention of the old Austro-Hungarian monarch to the fact that military measures against the Serbian states would arouse "great perturbation not only in the Balkan Peninsula, but also in Russia and You will understand the extremely difficult position in which I should be placed. May Heaven preserve us from any such eventuality, for it would mean the end of all friendly relations between Russia and Austria-Hungary and might lead Europe into a general war."⁴⁸⁰ No clearer warning could have been given, combined with more sincere concern for the maintenance of European peace. As, however, both Vienna and Berlin knew that Russia was not prepared for war and that she did not want it, as this was openly stressed on every occasion by all the Russian officials, including Izvolsky, revealing their weakness themselves, the idea of putting diplomatic pressure on Russia was easily conceived of. To threaten Serbia meant indirectly threatening Russia; to save Serbia, since she could not undertake a war on her behalf, Russia would be obliged to make various concessions, and in the end

480 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, I, p. 680. Cf. the similar letter from Emperor Nicholas II to Emperor Wilhelm II of 15 (28) December 1908. See *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, pp. 387-8.

the most important of all – to recognize the annexation without any sanction whatsoever. Threatening Russia meant, in view of her alliance with France, threatening at the same time the peace of Europe.

Further pressure along these lines was thought of in the case of Britain. In the instructions dispatched on 30 November 1908 to the Austrian Ambassador in London, Count Mensdorff, Aehrenthal suggested the following form of threat: "I am beginning to believe that it will not be necessary to punish Serbia, on condition that Britain puts a stop, and that very soon, to its present practice of irresponsibly inciting her to hatred of us."⁴⁸¹ Aehrenthal made a similar statement on 11 December to the new British Ambassador in Vienna, Fairfax Cartwright.⁴⁸² Aehrenthal was strengthened in this "belief" after 14 December, when Grey sent message, through the British Ambassador in Vienna, that he did not consider that all the questions connected with the annexation should be settled by the agreement with Turkey and that he had promised the Russian government diplomatic support in the removal of the difficulties with Serbia and Montenegro.⁴⁸³

With the settlement of the Turko-Austrian dispute, these threatening warnings became increasingly open, and from the second half of February 1909 St. Petersburg came to believe in the possibility of an imminent Austrian attack on Serbia. Izvolsky expressed his fears on several occasions to the German Ambassador and asked that Germany use its influence to conciliate Austria. Count Pourtalès, the German Ambassador, at first reassured the Russian authorities, insisting that it was not Austria but rather Serbia's provocative behaviour that endangered peace. But in a conversation with Izvolsky on 24 February, he allowed for the possibility of war; Austria must in the long run "lose her patience and do something to secure peace on her borders".⁴⁸⁴ Prince Bülow spoke along similar lines to the British statesmen during King Edward's visit to Berlin, and Grey informed St. Petersburg of that on 14 February.⁴⁸⁵

⁴⁸¹ *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, pp. 538, 605.

⁴⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 626. *British Documents*, V, p. 529. In St. Petersburg, fears had been entertained since the beginning of November 1908 that because of their hesitation to recognize the annexation the Vienna Cabinet might attack Serbia, in order to force indirectly Russia and the Powers friendly to Serbia to give way. The British Minister in Belgrade, Whitehead, warned the Serbian Foreign Ministry on 1 November of the imminent danger of an Austrian surprise attack on Belgrade, and advised Serbia, as did the Russian government, to do all in her power to leave Austria no pretext for such an action. That the Austrian General Staff intended to carry out a surprise attack on Belgrade has been admitted by the Austrian authorities. Cf. the journal *Die Kriegsschuldfrage*, I, 1923, p. 132.

⁴⁸³ *British Documents*, V, p. 530.

⁴⁸⁴ *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, p. 635.

⁴⁸⁵ *British Documents*, V, p. 597.

However, when on 26 February the French Ambassador in Berlin, Cambon, expressed his fear that Vienna was perhaps desirous of settling matters with Russia by war, the German representative, Kiderlen-Waechter, refrained from answer, obviously in order to increase Cambon's fears. Prince Bülow expressly approved this conduct.⁴⁸⁶ Two days later, Schoen warned the same Ambassador that the failure of pressure on Serbia would increase the danger of war "to an incalculable extent".⁴⁸⁷ These threats created a grave impression in French diplomatic circles which spared no effort to avert the danger, for it was feared lest the Serbo-Austrian dispute should develop into a world war, since all the more important statesmen in Russia, led by Stolypin and Izvolsky, expressed the fear that an Austrian attack on Serbia might, in spite of their government's wish to the contrary, call for Russian intervention.⁴⁸⁸ On 26 February, the Russian government received a message from France that the danger of an armed conflict was to be avoided at all costs "in a question which did not immediately concern Russia's vital interests."

Serbia was advised by the friendly Powers on several occasions in the course of the Annexation Crisis to give up any idea of a military conflict with Austria-Hungary. All were more or less direct in their declarations: in the event of a conflict, Serbia would remain alone to bear the blow of an angry Austria's overwhelming forces and would suffer for years to come. The Italian Minister in Bucharest, Incisa, made an accurate and suggestive remark to Ristić, the Serbian Minister: "Europe will never allow Austria to swallow you. You would not even have the satisfaction, which I can understand in your case, of being completely annihilated, but would come out of the war humiliated and weakened. Wait, but get ready. Do not deprive Serbdom of its lead, for it needs Serbia".⁴⁸⁹

On 18 February 1909, the King of Italy himself told the Serbian Minister, Dr. M. Vujić, that tact and patience were necessary, "for though justice is on our side in this untoward situation, the general political state of Europe is such today as to render Serbia and Montenegro, if they undertake any armed action, exposed to the danger of being left to themselves." In the course of this conversation, the "King again specially mentioned that in the interests of our very existence and of our hopes for the future, we must today continue to be patient and to wait for more favourable circumstances, just as Italy had

486 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, p. 630.

487 *Ibid.*, p. 639.

488 See the statements made by Izvolsky on 15 February and Stolypin on 17 February 1909. See *British Documents*, V, pp. 600, 603.

489 Ristić Milovanoviću, Bukurešt, 30. 11. 1908, Pov. Br. 351, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. III, sv. 3, pp. 653-657.

to do".⁴⁹⁰ Similar recommendations were also made in other quarters. Both the King and the government of Romania recommended that Serbia give way. "Even if Serbia did not suffer territorially", I. Brătianu wrote on 24 February, "she would come out of the struggle considerably weakened, and that would affect the already unfavourable balance of power between the Balkan states."

It was only at the end of February that the real danger of the situation was realized in Belgrade.⁴⁹¹ The Serbian Minister in Vienna, Dj. Simić, reported on 21 February the information that he and the Russian Military Attaché obtained regarding the Austrian preparations for an attack at the beginning of March. Even those who did not believe that the attack was so imminent realized nevertheless that the situation was becoming critical and the Austrian military intervention increasingly probable. Tittoni, too, expressly said as much to Vujić on 25 February. Russia was not in a position to defend her point of view in the last resort, for she had previously declared that she was not prepared to go all lengths in this matter, while Austria-Hungary and Germany were quite prepared to do so. The British and French governments had declared on several occasions that they would support Serbia's demands insofar as Russia stood by them and insofar as they did not lead to any danger of war. But war was now in sight. Both the Austrian and German messages no longer left any doubt of that. News reached Belgrade that on 24 February Austria-Hungary had ordered the mobilization of five Army Corps and that it intended to declare war between 7 and 15 March. On the same day, the Romanian Premier, I. Brătianu, went to the Serbian Legation to state in a friendly way that he had received "alarming news as regards Serbia from Austria-Hungary and that the situation was very grave." Similar news coming from various sources after 20 February made an impression on Serbian politicians, and on 24 February a coalition government was formed of representatives of all parties, except the Social Democrats, for the purpose of assuming the responsibility, as a coalition, for Serbia's subsequent actions and of making it possible, if necessary, to give major concessions. This government replied to the various friendly communications in a circular letter of 25 (12) February 1909, in which they declared that they "fully maintained their standpoint that the satisfaction of Serbia's vital needs and interests be sought by peaceful means, and that they will therefore wait for

490 Vujić Milovanoviću, Rim, 19. 2. 1909, Pov. Br. 10, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. III, sv. 4, pp. 301-303.

491 Definite negotiations between the German and Austrian general staffs about a war and military preparations on a larger scale started in January 1909. Cf. Hötendorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, I, pp. 379 ff. Germany was prepared to enter into the war as soon as Russia attempted to protect Serbia against Austria by mobilizing her army. Cf. H. Kanner, *Der Schlüssel zur Kriegsschuldfrage*, München 1906.

the authoritative decision of the Great Powers, meanwhile carefully refraining from any act that might lead to an armed conflict between Serbia and Austria-Hungary.” On the following day, the Prime Minister of the new government, S. Novaković, informed the German Minister, Prince Ratibor, that Serbia would abide by the decision of the Great Powers, even if it was unfavourable and that the new government had authority in the eyes of the country to accept the responsibility for such a decision, if only no humiliation were required of it, but that it was impossible for it to communicate directly with Austria.

Seeing that Germany would not join the other Powers in mediating in Vienna, Izvolsky decided to avoid the action of the Great Powers in Belgrade too. He did not want pressure to be put on Serbia alone, so that she was thus presented, in accordance with Vienna’s wishes, as something of a country whose behaviour was a menace to peace. He was, according to the British Ambassador Nicolson,⁴⁹² particularly painfully impressed with the attitude of France, which had accepted the proposal from Berlin. Izvolsky undertook on behalf of Russia to draw attention of the Serbian government to the danger of the situation and to advise them to withdraw their demand for territorial compensation. On 28 February, he telegraphed to the Russian Minister in Belgrade that Serbia must give up her claims. “All efforts to win over the Powers to support the (Serbian) demands in that direction will be of no avail and Serbia can only retain the sympathies of the Powers by ceasing to insist on claims which must lead to an armed conflict with Austria.” Izvolsky asked the Serbian government clearly to inform the Powers of their withdrawal, with the statement “that in all the questions pending they rely on the decision of the Powers.” The said questions were those of economic nature. A similar message was dispatched to Cetinje.⁴⁹³ The same day, undoubtedly to make this withdrawal easier for Serbia, Izvolsky informed Belgrade that “the annexation will not be formally sanctioned”.⁴⁹⁴ To the Serbian Minister he said that he “has done everything that one man can do, has exhausted all the resources of diplomacy and remained isolated;” nevertheless, Russia would not give way to Austria-Hungary. The Bosnian-Herzegovinian question would remain a European one even after the Turko-Austrian agreement, and without a conference Article 25 of the Treaty of Berlin could not cease to hold good. He would continue to defend Serbia’s unwillingness to negotiate directly with Austria-Hungary about the economic concessions, for “they could only lead in the end to economic dependence, especially now that Austria-Hungary has

492 Nicolson, *Die Verschwörung der Diplomaten*, p. 312.

493 Benckendorff, *Diplomatischen Schriftwechsel*, I, pp. 46-7.

494 *Ibid.*, p. 48.

concentrated its troops in the direction of Serbia".⁴⁹⁵ This undoubtedly made the decision of the Serbian government considerably easier. "We are clinging desperately", Milovanović informed St. Petersburg "to that hope, in which we see our salvation for the future, as the recognition of the annexation after such a refusal of the claims of Serbia and Montenegro would have grave and fatal consequences for Serbia's relations both internal and external, and would raise a crisis among all the Serbdom." To show Serbia that they did not entirely abandon her, the Russian government insisted that Serbia not be forced into direct negotiations with Vienna. Izvolsky even told the Austrian Ambassador, Count Berchtold, on 1 March that he saw "in the possible direct negotiations between two Powers both prepared for war – *gèant et souris* – a formidable menace to peace".⁴⁹⁶ Sir Edward Grey, too, considered the Austrian standpoint dangerous and inconsistent. On 2 March, he told the Austrian Ambassador that he was surprised at Aehrenthal's attitude, especially after Russia's conciliatory advice to Belgrade. He pointed out that Aehrenthal himself, while he barred any discussion of territorial advantages for Serbia, had previously agreed in his note of 14 November 1908 that a conference should deal with "economic privileges".⁴⁹⁷ The same day, Izvolsky repeated the same to the German Ambassador.⁴⁹⁸ Aehrenthal defended himself against these observations by declaring that the Powers for their part had expressed the wish that before the conference an agreement should be reached "between the Powers directly interested" and he now counted Serbia among these, thereby abandoning his previous standpoint that the annexation did not concern her at all.⁴⁹⁹

In the meantime, Prince Bülow announced on 1 March on behalf of Germany that they "unconditionally remain" supportive of the Austrian standpoint. "We could not ask Austria to negotiate with Russia as Serbia's mandatory, as Mr. Izvolsky appears to be contemplating; still less would Austria want to agree to the other Powers interfering with her negotiations with Serbia. Austria and Serbia are independent states. They should therefore negotiate independently between themselves, the more so as it is a question of voluntary concessions on the part of Austria to Serbia."⁵⁰⁰ This argument, too, had its weak points.

495 Popović Ministarstvu inostranih dela, Petrograd, 28. 2. 1909, Pov. Br. 510, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. III, sv. 4, pp. 364-365.

496 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, p. 10.

497 Ibid., p. 13; *British Documents*, V, pp. 648, 650, 653.

498 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, p. 643.

499 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, p. 20.

500 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, p. 643; *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, p. 16. Aehrenthal spoke in a similar way to the British Ambassador in Vienna on 6 March. See *British Documents*, V, p. 661.

Economic privileges which would be of any real benefit to Serbia, such as an outlet to the sea and the Adriatic railway, were not questions between Austria and Serbia alone, but rather general questions, the discussion of which could only rightly take place at a conference of the European Powers.⁵⁰¹ Moreover, in a conversation with the German Ambassador on 3 March, Sir Edward Grey correctly pointed out that, under the terms of the Hague Convention, it was established that an offer of mediation in the interests of peace on the part of one of the Powers could not be considered an offence, and he did not see how Austria could refuse such mediation, if Serbia asked for it.⁵⁰² The dispute between Serbia and Austria presented a menace to the general peace, British statesmen said, and it was thus the duty of Powers to mediate in order to remove it. On 4 March, however, the German Foreign Ministry, shortly and, from the legal point of view, incorrectly, replied to Sir Edward Goschen that this dispute was practically a European question, but not politically, or at least that Austria-Hungary did not want it to be considered a political question.⁵⁰³

Seeing the way of thinking adopted by Vienna and Berlin, the Russian Minister again officially advised the Serbian government on 2 March to keep completely quiet and to give up all territorial claims. Russia's step was this time supported by the representatives of Britain, France and Italy. Germany did not want to associate itself with it, lest it should look as if it were following "à la remorque de la Russie" and because it did not know what weight Izvolsky would attach to his procedure and what he would finally promise the Serbs;⁵⁰⁴ in fact, Germany did not want to appear as a mediator who would make it easier for Serbia to withdraw in a different way than that desired by Austria-Hungary. For the mediation of the Great Powers undoubtedly gave the whole question a European character. On 3 March, the Serbian government made the following statement to the Russian Minister: As Serbia's legal position towards Austria-Hungary remained normal even after the proclamation of the annexation, and as Serbia had no intention of provoking a war with the neighbouring Monarchy, it was natural that she did not want to modify her attitude of a correct neighbour. From Austria-Hungary she demanded no concessions whatever, either territorial, political or economic. Serbia would

501 It is noteworthy that the Romanian Premier, I. Brătianu, recommended Serbia to see to it that the economic privileges "are not gained through a bilateral agreement between us and Austria-Hungary, but through some other agreement of an international character, and as comprehensive as possible." Ristić Milovanoviću, Bukurešt, 3. 3. 1909, Pov. Br. 15, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. III, sv. 4, pp. 381-385.

502 *British Documents*, V, p. 653.

503 *Ibid.*, p. 654.

504 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, p. 641.

not interfere with the Bosnian-Herzegovinian question insofar as it was an internal Austro-Hungarian and Austro-Turkish question; she raised her voice insofar as and as long as this question was of a European character. In future, Serbia would adopt in this question an attitude consonant with the decisions of the Great Powers; if they accepted the Austro-Turkish agreement as final in the matter of the annexation as well, or if they now found it unnecessary to consider and settle this question, Serbia would follow their example; if they decided to settle the questions involved in the recognition of the annexation and the wording of the new text of Article 25 of the Treaty of Berlin, Serbia would submit her views to them, as forming a competent tribunal, and would place herself unconditionally in their hands. Serbia would suspend the process of arming which was of a defensive character, if Austria-Hungary restored normal military conditions on the Serbian border, or if the Powers guaranteed Serbia against an Austro-Hungarian attack. S. Novaković also communicated the gist of this answer of the Serbian government to the German Minister. He told him on that occasion that Serbia had done what she could, but that she must protect "her dignity and her national feelings." With his impulsive cynicism, Emperor Wilhelm II wrote in the margin beside the underlined phrase about Serbia's dignity and national feelings that "they do not exist".⁵⁰⁵

Milovanović submitted the reply of the Serbian government to Izvolsky for approval before dispatching it in writing to other Great Powers. "We cannot and dare not", he reported to St. Petersburg, "either directly or indirectly renounce our national aspirations, or make such declarations as might be held to mean that we have ceased to guard our independence. The statement we are making contains our engagement not only to keep the peace, but also to remain on correct terms with Austria-Hungary and to respect in every detail all the existing and future international treaties." The Montenegrin government, however, was less amenable than the Serbian one. They informed Belgrade on 4 March that "the demand for the autonomy of Bosnia and Herzegovina ought never in any circumstances be dropped." To the Italian Minister Prince Nicholas said: "*Nous marcherons pourtant*";⁵⁰⁶ in their reply of 8 March to St. Petersburg, the Montenegrin government stated that they did not recognize the legality of the annexation and wanted to have a free hand even in regard to the decision of the Great Powers.

Izvolsky was in the main satisfied with Serbia's answer, but proposed a number of modifications, as he believed that certain phrases might cause irritation in Vienna, as for instance the sentence referring to the way in which the

505 Ibid., p. 644.

506 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, p. 33.

annexation was considered. He particularly approved of the passage in which it was stated that nothing was demanded from Austria-Hungary, and he suggested that this answer be submitted to all the Great Powers, including Austria. It was better to do it on one's own initiative than to do it later when Austria demanded it in threatening terms. He considered that the question of armaments should not be specially mentioned, as nobody, not even Austria-Hungary, demanded it at present. Sir Edward Grey mainly agreed with him, but found the reference to armaments in the Serbian statement inconvenient.⁵⁰⁷ In communicating all this to the Serbian Minister on 4 March, Izvolsky again emphasized "that Russia would not recognize the annexation, that he would never put his signature to it, and that he has had that in mind from the first"; he repeated this in a telegram to the Russian Minister in Belgrade on 8 March.⁵⁰⁸

Before Belgrade could be informed of Russia's acceptance, Baron Aehrenthal hastened, as he himself told the German Ambassador, to steal the march on it. He wanted "if possible, to make the direct route to Vienna easier for the Serbs", in other words to avoid foreign mediation.⁵⁰⁹ On 5 March, he sent the instructions to Count Forgách with a note to be handed to Serbia. In that note, Austria informed the Serbian government that, in view of Serbia's attitude of late, she could not submit to her parliament for ratification the commercial treaty concluded between the two countries. Therefore, as the existing treaty would expire on 31 March, there would be no treaty between Serbia and Austria-Hungary after that date. In making this communication, the Vienna government expressed the hope that Serbia would take the advice of the Powers and modify her attitude in regard to Bosnia and Herzegovina and express a desire to maintain correct neighbourly relations. If Serbia made some such statement, the Austrian government would be prepared to start immediately negotiations about commercial questions. The Minister was instructed to state that this was an act of complaisance on their part and a sort of invitation to negotiate. He was supposed to "make it clear that this step was not to be taken as a *mise en demeure*, that the Serbian government had plenty of time to think the matter over, and that no immediate answer was required." If Milovanović mentioned the answer given to the Powers in the course of the conversation, the Minister should declare that he was not acquainted with the text of the Serbian answer and ask why, if an answer had already been given to the other

507 *British Documents*, V., p. 661.

508 Popović Ministarstvu inostranih dela, Petrograd, 4. 3. 1909, Pov. Br. 540, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. III, sv. 4, p. 387.

509 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, p. 646.

Great Powers, it was not given to Austria as well.⁵¹⁰ To the German Ambassador Aehrenthal interpreted his step as an indubitable evidence of a conciliatory spirit; by demanding that Serbia should repeat to Austria-Hungary what had already been said to the other Great Powers, he said, he thought of making the position of Serbian statesmen easier, not demanding a separate declaration to Vienna. Austria would wait until the end of March for Serbia finally to declare herself for peace "to the Powers or to myself"; if she failed to do so, she would be delivered an ultimatum.⁵¹¹

Aehrenthal demonstrated indeed, as compared with the military hotheads, some patience, although no particularly conciliatory spirit. Above all, it was soon to appear that he would not be satisfied with Serbia's repeating to Austria merely what she had already said to the other Powers. He demanded much more from Serbia; he demanded a direct statement containing a clear recognition of the annexation. Aehrenthal would not understand that it was very difficult for Serbia to make such a statement. It was Austria that provoked the crisis; according to the Serbian public opinion, she was something of a usurper. Public opinion influenced the government, who themselves could not help feeling that Austria had no right to demand an explanation from others, but that she should herself answer for her deeds. Serbia's recognition, after the agreement with Turkey, would almost enable Austria to treat the question of the annexation as closed. Austria pretended to be magnanimous in her behaviour, when in fact Serbia's recognition of the annexation would allow her to be rid very lightly, and at the cost of a few commercial concessions, of the responsibility for a great sin against the peace and security of Europe. By leaving her claims in the hands of the Great Powers, Serbia had in fact left the decision in the hands of Europe. Europe might, in trying to escape a greater evil, accept the act of annexation as it was carried out; Serbia might in that case be dissatisfied, but she would be faced with a point of view which she would have to accept. If, however, she were herself to make the requested declaration without waiting for the decision of the Great Powers, Serbia feared that she might thereby prejudice that decision. How could the Powers later intervene on her behalf, if she herself, by accepting the Austrian point of view, undid all her previous work? Serbia consequently maintained her standpoint that the whole question should retain its European character. Even if this led to Austria's delivering her an ultimatum, Milovanović said to the British Minister on 2 March, Serbia

510 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, pp. 30-1.

511 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, pp. 646-7.

would not answer it directly, but would hand it over to the Powers and inform Austria that she had done so.⁵¹²

Economic concessions, as we have seen, meant nothing to Serbia. All the talk as to whether Serbia should address herself directly or indirectly to Austria for compensation became therefore irrelevant as soon as it was clear that there would be no territorial compensation and that in the face of the Austro-German block the Great Powers could not obtain anything of political value for Serbia. The Serbs then considered that it was almost better that they should get nothing. Austria-Hungary and Germany might have the victory now, as they were militarily prepared and did not shrink from war, but the impression would remain of their uncompromising spirit and of the threatening attitude they had adopted towards a small state which had appealed to the conscience of Europe.

On 7 March, Izvolsky suggested the Serbian government to add to their answer to Austria a sentence in which they expressed the willingness to discuss directly with the Danubian Monarchy all matters concerning their respective countries. He obviously hoped to mollify Vienna with this further concession and, with this object in view, he informed the Austrian Ambassador of this on 9 March. As a concrete subject for negotiations, he proposed the discussion of a new commercial treaty.⁵¹³

However, Vienna intended not to be satisfied with a Serbian answer, which had been worked out jointly by Belgrade and St. Petersburg. In his instructions to his Minister in Belgrade on 8 March, Aehrenthal stated that Austria-Hungary would not be satisfied, if Serbia retained in her note the wording that spoke of her attitude in regard to Bosnia and Herzegovina as conditional and dependent on the decision of a third party. Austria-Hungary wanted from Serbia a direct and unconditional answer;⁵¹⁴ it clearly wanted to force Serbia into recognizing an accomplished fact, although to do so was contrary to the logic of the situation itself. If Serbia's protest had no foundation, as the Vienna government had so far asserted, why was she now asked to recognize the new situation before it was recognized by others who were internationally more competent to do so? The Serbs clearly felt that the recognition was demanded from them in order either 1) to silence European public opinion thereby, or 2) if it were refused, to force Russia to recognize it by threatening Serbia. The conciliatory spirit shown was therefore only apparent; it should be exploited as a diplomatic means to make a show of tolerance. On 8 March, Aehrenthal informed

⁵¹² *British Documents*, V, p. 649.

⁵¹³ Benckendorff, *Diplomatischen Schriftwechsel*, I, p. 62.

⁵¹⁴ *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, pp. 57, 68.

St. Petersburg that they ought "to render a service" to Serbia by declaring in Belgrade that the annexation question, after the Austro-Turkish agreement, "is no longer a matter of practical discussion, and therefore might be considered effectively settled". If Russia failed to do this, Aehrenthal would communicate to Belgrade, Paris and London the entire correspondence which had passed between him and Izvolsky in the matter of the annexation.⁵¹⁵

Serbia's answer was meanwhile dispatched to the Powers on 10 March. It began by stating that Serbia had acted in accordance with the friendly advice of the Russian government. Of the original text, the entire introductory passage referring to the maintenance of correct neighbourly relations was retained, and the suggestion as to the continuation of relations in the sphere of material interests of the two countries was accepted. Considering the Bosnian-Herzegovinian question a European one, about which the signatories to the Treaty of Berlin should decide, Serbia referred the matter to them, and asked of Austria-Hungary no compensation of any kind whatever. This statement, in fact, represented an indubitable deference on Serbia's part; it was only desired that the manner of her retreat be as honourable as possible. It was impossible to go any further, Milovanović informed St. Petersburg, "out of consideration for the attitude of the parliament and of the public opinion, and because this statement must not be presented as a complete abandonment of Serbia's former standpoint, and also because of the mistrust and dissatisfaction caused by Austria-Hungary's hasty action in the matter of the negotiations for a commercial treaty." Count Forgách considered that the note represented a substantial victory for Austria-Hungary and that it really meant the retreat of Serbia. But seeing the attitude of Vienna, he pointed out in his dispatches that the note, "according to our disposition" (*nach unserem Belieben*) and the aims of policy which Austria intended to pursue towards Serbia, might be interpreted either favourably or unfavourably, either as a retreat of Serbia and an assurance of her peaceable intentions, or as insufficient and full of excuses. This best shows how far the attitude of the Danubian Monarchy towards Serbia was conditioned by purely political and essentially one-sided and selfish considerations. In any case, in a conversation with S. Novaković, Forgách immediately stressed the idea and message of his Minister: that his country could not accept Serbia's appeal to the Powers, but that Serbia must herself declare clearly and openly with regard to the annexation that, in view of the Turko-Austrian agreement, "the accomplished fact is a matter which is closed and which Serbia is not in a position to discuss." Novaković replied that this

⁵¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 61-2.

had already been done to some extent in the declaration given and that Vienna ought to be satisfied with that.⁵¹⁶

When Serbia's reply was delivered, Vienna at first complained because Serbia had sent to Austria-Hungary the same note as that sent to the other Great Powers and had not replied directly to the Austro-Hungarian note of 5 March. Analyzing the answer, Aehrenthal then found that it could not satisfy him because Serbia had referred the decision as to the annexation to the Powers and had not herself declared that with the Turkish-Austrian agreement the question was definitely "closed". In this way, he said, Serbia in fact did not modify but rather maintained her original attitude.⁵¹⁷ The attitude of the German government did much to strengthen Aehrenthal in his negative reading of Serbia's reply. Baron Schoen declared to the Austrian Ambassador on 11 March that he considered the Serbian reply insufficient, because it made no mention of Serbia's disarmament except in connection with that of Austria. Serbia's appeal to the Great Powers and "Serbia's impudence in deciding what is the business of the Powers and what they should discuss" indicated her and Russia's intention to bring up again the question of the convocation of a conference and the discussion there of questions which had no connection with the Treaty of Berlin. At the same time Schoen proposed that Vienna should as soon as possible come to an agreement with Turkey about mutual support against Serbia.⁵¹⁸

In the meantime, Izvolsky made an attempt on 11 March to exert a conciliatory influence on the Austrian Ambassador. How could Austria ask Russia in the matter of the Turkish-Austrian protocol to recommend Serbia to recognize it, when neither she herself nor the other Great Powers had as yet made clear their attitude towards it? He had been saying for months that the question of the annexation was of a European character; how could he be asked to be the interpreter of a different conception in Belgrade? That very day he informed London that he considered that even after the Turko-Austrian agreement the annexation question should be brought before a conference and discussed together with other matters which had previously been decided upon. On 15 March, he gave an official reply along these lines to the Austrian government. Failing to reassure Izvolsky and to induce him to accept his government's view, Count Berchtold, acting upon Aehrenthal's instructions, threatened the publication of documents about the annexation. Obviously surprised and indignant, Izvolsky asked that this demand and threat be given him in writing.

⁵¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 70-1.

⁵¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 79-80.

⁵¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 82-3; *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, p. 630.

At the same time, following a curious line of thought, and almost washing his hands of Serbia, he informed the Austrian Ambassador that Russia would keep quiet even if Austria undertook a "military excursion" to Belgrade.⁵¹⁹ Immediately afterwards he appealed to Berlin to intervene in Vienna, this time in the question of the publication of the documents rather than because of Serbia.

Of the two alternative interpretations outlined by Count Forgách, the Vienna government certainly intended to adopt the less favourable one, although the Serbian reply everywhere left the impression that Serbia was really giving way. Grey himself declared that Serbia could not be asked to recognize the annexation before the signatory Powers had done so, and that "if Austria were still dissatisfied with Serbia, it could only mean that she simply did not want to be satisfied".⁵²⁰ At the same time, Grey contested the Austrian conception that the material side of the violation of the Treaty of Berlin was finally settled by Turkey's agreements with Austria and Bulgaria and that all that now remained for the signatory Powers was to arrange a formal sanction. He maintained, on the contrary, the opinion that it was a European question, and that these agreements were only a welcome factor which would facilitate the settlement.⁵²¹ On 12 March, he said to the Austrian Ambassador that Austria herself could surely not assert that she alone, along with Turkey, was competent to modify the provisions of the Treaty of Berlin without the consent of the other Powers.⁵²²

Milovanović also explained to Count Forgách on 12 March the reasons which had dictated such a reply on the part of Serbia and which Vienna must admit if international practice and principles were to be maintained. How could Serbia, he asked, take a position in regard to the Austro-Turkish protocol when it had not been communicated to her from any official quarter? Austria did not want to communicate it officially to Belgrade, as in so doing she would clearly recognize that the Bosnian-Herzegovinian question concerned Serbia, but nevertheless she expected Serbia to make clear her attitude towards it officially and in a binding manner. To Milovanović's perfectly justifiable remark, Forgách replied that Serbia had been in a position to learn all about the protocol from the documents which the Turkish government had submitted to its parliament.⁵²³ She could have indeed found out about it in this, as well

⁵¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 86-7.

⁵²⁰ Benckendorff, *Diplomatischen Schriftwechsel*, I, p. 66; *British Documents*, V, p. 671.

⁵²¹ Ibid., pp. 66-7; *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, p. 93.

⁵²² *British Documents*, V, p. 675.

⁵²³ *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, p. 90.

as in other indirect, ways but official statements of such magnitude as that demanded by Austria-Hungary are never in international practice demanded on the strength of second – or even third-hand information. Austria-Hungary wanted a direct declaration from Serbia about something as to which it had given her no information: this fact, together with all the other proceedings in the matter of the annexation, shows clearly that the legal conceptions of the Vienna government were based on a foundation which bore no relation whatever to the law of nations or any other law. Grey therefore proposed to the Russian government on 13 March that the Serbian government vigorously refuse her recognition of the annexation, inasmuch as it was demanded of her.⁵²⁴ Tittoni also said to the Austrian Ambassador in Rome that he did not see how Serbia could recognize the annexation before the signatories to the Treaty of Berlin had done so, and that it seemed to him that there was no sense in the Powers giving such advice to Belgrade.⁵²⁵ Milovanović clearly pointed out in a circular to the Great Powers on 17 March the real object of this Austrian demand: it was an attempt on her part to obtain from Serbia a declaration that she recognized the annexation, without formulating the question as such or communicating the Austro-Turkish protocol, “so that it might appear that Serbia has voluntarily adopted that attitude.”

On Serbia's hesitation to give an answer such as Vienna required, Aehrenthal started to threaten with the “stronger pressure” in his message to Belgrade on 13 March. The reason he now gave for this was that Serbia had begun to arm her oldest reservists which guarded the border.⁵²⁶ We know, however, from a report of General Kagenack, the German Military Attaché in Vienna, that the Austrian General Staff had already issued instructions and orders for the dispatch of fresh troops to the Serbian border on 3 March, and that the Serbs, after having learnt of this (they appeared, the report said, to have “*davon Wind bekommen*”), started their own defensive measures after 8 March.⁵²⁷ Aehrenthal must have been in possession of the same information as the German Military Attaché, but he tried “diplomatically” to present Serbia's defensive measures caused by Austrian military preparations as further provocation! At the same time, according to Kagenack's report, the Austro – Hungarian press was given “the strictest orders” not to publish a word about the Austro-Hungarian military preparations. At a meeting of the Cabinet in Vienna on 13 March, it was decided to send fresh troops to the southern border. The Cabinet counted on a war as

524 *British Documents*, V, pp. 677-8.

525 Benckendorff, *Diplomatischen Schriftwechsel*, I, p. 68.

526 *Öst.-Ung.Aussenpolitik*, II, p. 95.

527 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, pp. 657-8.

an imminent possibility. According to Baron Hötendorf, Austria prepared for the use against Serbia and Montenegro an army and reserves amounting to 1,041,000 men.⁵²⁸

Trying not to give any direct cause for war, the Serbian government addressed to the Vienna government on 14 March their reply to the Austrian note of 5 March. It referred to their circular of 10 March, in which the Serbian government had explained their attitude in regard to the Bosnian-Herzegovinian question and pointed out again that they wanted correct neighbourly relations with the Danubian Monarchy, although on a reciprocal basis. Belgrade wanted to have the proposed commercial treaty, which had already been accepted by the Serbian National Assembly, submitted for approval to the Austrian and Hungarian parliaments, so as to avoid the rupture of commercial relations on 31 March, or to start, if necessary, fresh negotiations, or make a provisional arrangement until the end of the year. Having learnt of the contents of this note, Forgách informed Vienna that it was "almost of the most impertinent reply Serbia could have given" and that it would force the Monarchy to adopt severe measures,⁵²⁹ because Serbia did not definitely recognize the Turko-Austrian agreement as a practical closure of the annexation question and because Serbia did not explicitly renounce all her aspirations in the future. "Serbia would in this way avoid a conflict for the present only to reappear, militarily better prepared, as our enemy or as an ally of one of the Great Powers, acting under its orders." Forgách explained the situation as follows: the circular of 10 March was "so cleverly put together as to make it difficult for us to proceed with our applying pressure in order to achieve a complete success." Serbia's new reply, however, made it possible for them "to push Serbia against the wall." Austria, he said, had informed Serbia that she could not conclude the commercial treaty or enter into further negotiations until Serbia had modified her attitude, and now Serbia replied that she maintained her original standpoint in regard to Bosnia, and that Austria-Hungary should try to push the commercial treaty, which had already been accepted in Serbia, through its parliaments. "Such a reply is given by a small neighbour to a Great Power!"⁵³⁰ As a reply to such an attitude on the part of Serbia, Forgách proposed swift and vigorous measures.

In London, Paris and Rome, it was considered that the tone of Serbia's reply was very unsuitable, that it was, to some extent, strained, and that it did not in

528 Hötendorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit 1906-8*, I, p. 160.

529 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, pp. 100, 102.

530 *Ibid.*, pp. 102-3.

the least contribute to making the situation easier.⁵³¹ Izvolsky was also dissatisfied, because he had not been consulted before the answer was dispatched. Charykov alone found the answer “not bad”. Hardinge gave concrete form to these criticisms: the first part of Serbia’s answer should have been more definite, and should not have consisted merely of a reference to the circular note. The answer itself was given in an “irritating” tone. The negotiations for a commercial treaty should have been agreed to in substance, “and Austria-Hungary so deprived of any fundamental reason for dissatisfaction”.⁵³² The Serbian reply was indeed self-conscious and undoubtedly, to some extent, stiff and obstinate, but it was consistent with the spirit of the entire policy which Serbia had hitherto pursued. The Vienna government would not have been satisfied with any answer in which Serbia did not recognize the annexation – for the demand for a declaration about the modification of her attitude meant nothing else – and Serbia could agree to anything but that. In St. Petersburg, it was therefore believed that the crisis reached “its culmination point” and that Austria-Hungary would present Belgrade with an ultimatum. It was therefore recommended, in St. Petersburg and elsewhere, that Serbia’s new answer should be drafted in agreement with Forgách, as Novaković and Milovanović had previously promised, and that the Powers should be informed if Forgách’s demands proved impossible of acceptance. To the majority of the Serbian government, however, Forgách’s cooperation in such a matter seemed like a lowering of their dignity and savoured of the direct negotiations with Austria, which was just what they tried to avoid. They therefore gave the said answer and refused to give any other.

Russia’s anxiety was greatly increased by the attitude of Germany, which did not only stand by Austria throughout, but also strengthened her in her resistance. In a conversation with the Russian Ambassador on 14 March, Prince Bülow went further than Aehrenthal. While the latter had asked Russia to recognize the Turko-Austrian agreement as the practical conclusion of the annexation question, the formal recognition of the annexation being possible later, Prince Bülow now declared that Russia ought to recognize the annexation and thereby influence Belgrade. If Izvolsky agreed to that, Germany would leave matters to take their course unhindered; in other words, it would leave Austria to settle the scores with Serbia.⁵³³ That Power was indeed getting pre-

531 *British Documents*, V, p. 680.

532 Tyrell, Grey’s private secretary, was more severe in talking to the German Ambassador about Serbia’s note. See *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, p. 678. Cf. Rome’s statements in *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, p. 126.

533 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, p. 101; *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, p. 669.

pared to do so, as the German Ambassador plainly told his British colleague on the same date.⁵³⁴ As early as 15 March, the Austrian Ambassador conveyed to the German government a message from Aehrenthal which was to be submitted to Emperor Wilhelm II: Austria-Hungary counted with the possibility of a Montenegrin surprise attack and with Serbia's mobilization, and serious military measures were thus taken.⁵³⁵ On the same day, Emperor Wilhelm II told the Austrian Ambassador that Germany was ready for any emergency and that it was "Germany's interest" to help Austria-Hungary, "which is now more than ever threatened by the Slav peril".⁵³⁶ The Serbian Minister in Berlin reported to Belgrade on 15 March that the competent circles expected a war to break out "in the immediate future, perhaps in a day or two" and that it would be merely local, as "neither Britain nor Russia would dare to stop Austria-Hungary by force of arms out of fear that the peace of Europe would be disturbed".⁵³⁷

The German Ambassador in St. Petersburg, Count Pourtalès, drew attention of his government to the awkward tactics which had been adopted of late in regard to Russia. Aehrenthal's threat of publishing the documents relating to the annexation had created a very bad impression in St. Petersburg and embittered the relations between Russia and Austria. Bülow's statement would aggravate them further. Bülow sent a message to Pourtalès on 14 March that he thought of finding a form of settlement which would not humiliate Russia. It would consist of this: the Vienna government, in notifying the agreement with Turkey, would ask for the revision of Article 25 of the Treaty of Berlin, and Russia and the other Powers, but Russia first, would recognize the annexation.⁵³⁸ But even this form, bound up with the threat which had also been repeated to the Russian Ambassador in Berlin, was just as humiliating, and, despite its pretence of consideration, was nevertheless a sort of pressure. When on 15 March Count Pourtalès carried out his instructions, Izvolsky replied that the sanction of the annexation as proposed appeared to him to have the following consequences: 1) Austria-Hungary would thereby attain all that it wanted (Emperor Wilhelm II's comment written in the margin of Pourtalès's report was: "Quite so."); 2) it would not be willing later even to discuss other points to be raised at the conference; and 3) it would behave as it pleased in regard to Serbia.⁵³⁹ The conference would meet, Count Pourtalès pointed out, only if there were

534 *British Documents*, V, pp. 678-9.

535 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, pp. 662-3.

536 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, p. 114.

537 Telegram Bogićevića Ministarstvu inostranih dela, Berlin, 15. 3. 1909, Pov. Br. 772, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. III, sv. 4, p. 449.

538 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, pp. 669-670.

539 *Ibid.*, p. 673.

to be no discussion about the annexation, and the Russian view would “prevail” insofar as the declaration of all the signatory Powers would be sought to sanction the annexation. The Bosnian question, in Austrian opinion, no longer existed after the Austro-Turkish agreement, and the situation would be cleared up only when “Russia has recognized that without hesitation and left no doubt in the mind of Belgrade as to her attitude in this matter”. So long as Serbia appealed to the authority of the Great Powers, there remained the suspicion that she counted on the help of one or more of them for the realization of her territorial claims. In other words, in bringing pressure to bear upon Serbia, Austria and Germany were in fact putting pressure on the Powers with a view to settling the annexation question. In their policy, as Milovanović remarked, Serbia was in fact given the unenviable role of a hostage. Thus Austria-Hungary and Germany themselves contributed most to making the Serbian question a truly European one and to making those Powers on which pressure was being put, and Russia above all, feel that there undoubtedly was a connection between their own interests and prestige, on the one hand, and the political fate of Serbia on the other. Count Berchtold definitely said to Izvolsky: “At the bottom of all the difficulties in the international situation, which for the last five months have been causing a disagreeable tension, there lies the uncertain attitude of Russia in regard to the annexation question.”⁵⁴⁰ In other words, as soon as that was settled, i.e. when Russia recognized the annexation, Austria would be able to modify her present attitude, as she would have got what she wanted. Aehrenthal, indeed, said as much to the British Ambassador, when discussing with him the answer of the Serbian government.⁵⁴¹ In reply to Pourtalès, who, just like Bülow, had again recommended to Russia the idea of an Alliance of the three Emperors, Izvolsky said with considerable bitterness: “The present crisis will pass, *mais l’avenir est long*. A dispute between Russia and Austria can only be avoided by means of an agreement relating to the maintenance of the balance of power in the Balkans. The policy of such an agreement was mine, and it was not I, but Baron Aehrenthal, who dropped it. I am always ready to come back to it. But if Austria-Hungary were now to annihilate Serbia, such a policy could not possibly be permanent. Baron Aehrenthal wants to disturb the balance of power in the Balkans to the benefit of Austria, he wants to exploit Russia’s weakness in order to pursue the Austrian policy of expansion.”

⁵⁴⁰ *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, p. 133.

⁵⁴¹ Benckendorff, *Diplomatischen Schriftwechsel*, I, p. 79; *British Documents*, V, p. 714; *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, p. 697.

On 15 March, the situation grew rapidly worse. Baron Tschirschky argued to the British Ambassador that the best way to avoid a world war was for the Powers to leave Austria-Hungary and Serbia alone, while the British Ambassador was of opinion that Aehrenthal should resort to no severer measures until the Powers had exhausted all means to maintain peace.⁵⁴² The Serbian answer served Austrian diplomacy as a further means of pressure. On the night of 16 March, Prince Bülow warned the British Ambassador that the situation was very grave and that it could only be improved if Serbia at once asked Vienna to open negotiations for a commercial treaty and disarmed herself immediately and unconditionally.⁵⁴³ At this critical moment, the British and Italian cabinets considered that the convocation of a conference should be proceeded with as soon as possible. Tittoni particularly insisted on a conference with a limited programme, for the purpose of sanctioning the Turko-Austrian and Turko-Bulgarian agreements and waiving Article 29 of the Treaty of Berlin in favour of Montenegro. The question of compensation for Serbia was to be omitted, as, according to Tittoni, Serbia had herself renounced the idea of political compensation. Italy obviously wanted to preserve in principle the view that these questions were of a European character, and at the same time, by means of this convocation, to avert the danger of a Serbo-Austrian conflict in the hope that the conference would tie Austria's hands. On 18 March 1909, Tittoni said to the Serbian Minister, while advising him to maintain an attitude of "complete conciliatoriness and reserve", that "the moment has now come when the convocation of a conference is inevitable, if it was sincerely desired to maintain the peace of Europe." He said that he would "most urgently insist that the conference should meet as soon as possible and replace the violated Treaty of Berlin with the new stipulations of the European areopagus, which will certainly have to take into account the justifiable interests of Serbia and Montenegro". To these recommendations, Aehrenthal replied on 16 March that he wanted first to await the result of Germany's mediation in St. Petersburg.⁵⁴⁴ He personally was, to some extent at least, willing to accept Tittoni's suggestion of a conference with a limited programme, so as to have the whole matter settled once for all, particularly as Tittoni's proposal took account, to a large extent, of Austria's attitude; but Berlin did everything to have the idea of a conference, even as a mere formality, abandoned altogether. Germany's fear of a repetition of the Algéciras affair could be seen on several occasions. On 16 March, Kiderlen-Waechter delivered a written statement to the Austrian

542 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, pp. 673-6.

543 *Ibid.*, p. 686.

544 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, p. 119.

Ambassador in which he described Tittoni's proposal as "inopportune". This naturally had its effect upon Aehrenthal.⁵⁴⁵ As early as 17 March, he spoke to the Turkish Ambassador against the conference and strengthened Turkey in its mistrust of Serbia, recommending that Turkey too should draw attention of the Powers to the menace to peace presented by Serbia and demand the recognition of the annexation.⁵⁴⁶ The German Ambassador in Constantinople also spoke against the conference.⁵⁴⁷

Seeing the danger which was threatening the peace of Europe, Sir Edward Grey drafted an answer on 16 March, which he intended to suggest to the Serbian government to be sent to Austria. He first submitted this answer to the Vienna government for their observations. Its contents were as follows: Serbia would give a guarantee that she would undertake nothing which might directly or indirectly create difficulties in the Austrian territory, that she would observe all her obligations as a friendly neighbourly state, while maintaining her independence and integrity, that she would avail herself of Austria's offer to enter into direct negotiations for the conclusion of a commercial treaty; and it might perhaps be added that it was no business of her to introduce modifications in the Treaty of Berlin, but that she was prepared to accept whatever the Powers signatory to that Treaty might decide.⁵⁴⁸ If the Vienna government agreed to this answer and received a declaration from the Serbian government to the effect that Serbia would reduce her army to the strength it had prior to the Annexation Crisis, the British Ambassador thought of asking Aehrenthal to promise that he would not attack Serbia later. Britain would undertake to do all in its power to induce Serbia to make such a declaration. The French Ambassador in London was in full agreement with Grey's move.

The Serbian Ministers in the meantime addressed to the Great Powers a written memorandum on the Serbian view of the situation. Austria was dissatisfied because Serbia had not explained her attitude with regard to the Constantinople protocol directly to her, and, according to the information at the disposal of the Serbian government, she was again going to demand an answer on that point and then present an ultimatum, demanding Serbia's disarmament. The Serbian government insisted that they could not make the required declaration with regard to the Bosnian question and that they could not disarm at the request of Austria alone. Serbia's disarmament could only be demanded by all the Great Powers collectively. That would, in Serbia's opinion,

545 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, pp. 754-5, 759-60, 762.

546 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, p. 124.

547 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, p. 756.

548 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, p. 125; *British Documents*, V, p. 690.

imply at the same time some sort of a guarantee to Serbia that she would not be attacked. Serbia left it to the Powers to decide about her case and they could therefore decide what attitude she was to adopt with regard to the settlement of the Bosnian question. "In no event could Serbia be forced into making declarations to Austria-Hungary which would mean the surrender of her national rights and aspirations. In the event of an Austro-Hungarian ultimatum, the Royal Government would appeal for the intervention of the Powers. If Austria attacked Serbia, we should defend ourselves most determinedly and to the bitter end." Milovanović wrote on 17 March in a circular letter addressed to the Legations in St. Petersburg, London and Paris that "Serbia, which has submitted her case without reserve to the Powers, can accept from the Powers even decisions unfavourable to herself, but she cannot herself renounce her national aspirations or lower herself to becoming Austria-Hungary's supporter in her efforts to settle favourably [to Austria-Hungary] the Bosnian question as soon as possible." Should the Powers fail to intervene, Serbia, being the weaker, would have to continue her military preparations, since Austria was concentrating troops on her borders. "Serbia will therefore be obliged either to mobilise completely or to demobilise completely if the Powers call upon her to do so, for that would mean that they also guarantee that we shall not be attacked." The Serbian Minister in Berlin, M. Bogićević, asked on that occasion whether it would be desirable for Serbia to appeal to individual Powers, requesting them to formulate their views on the Bosnian question, so that on the receipt of their answers the National Assembly might decide the question of disarmament. Schoen, the Secretary of State, replied to Bogićević's question that such a step would be useful, as it would immediately acquaint Serbia with the real position. But Austria should, of course, be included among the Powers consulted. A decision about disarmament would be "very wise, only it must be regretted that it was not made long ago".⁵⁴⁹ However, Schoen immediately let Vienna know that Serbia's answer was "thoroughly impertinent",⁵⁵⁰ obviously only because it was not unconditionally submissive. Generally speaking, Berlin was constantly unfriendly in its attitude to Serbia. When the War Cabinet decided at Tsarskoe Selo that Russia could not and would not enter into war because of Bosnia, and that she would remain neutral even in the event of an Austrian attack on Serbia, Emperor Wilhelm II made the following note on a telegram which arrived from St. Petersburg on 17 March: "There! This is something definite. Now forward and march!"⁵⁵¹ Immediately afterwards, to

549 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXI, pp. 680-1.

550 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, p. 129.

551 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, p. 683.

encourage Emperor Franz Joseph, Bülow telegraphed to him a message from the German Emperor to the effect that he “would faithfully stand by him, however things might develop”.⁵⁵²

At the same time, on 19 March, Aehrenthal explained to the German Ambassador what Austria thought of doing with Serbia in case of victory. Her previous intention of partitioning her with Bulgaria and Romania was abandoned, for that, he said, would cause much excitement in Europe, while the annexation of Serbia to Austria would be a mistake in view of Austria-Hungary’s internal policy. He therefore thought of imposing on Serbia a war indemnity of 500 millions and of retaining Belgrade as a security. The war indemnity would be paid in as small installments as possible “so as to keep Serbia as long as possible under Austrian pressure.” The question of the dynasty would also come up. “It is all the same to me who will rule in Serbia”, Baron Aehrenthal said, “for I hope a Croatian King will one day oust the Belgrade ruler.” Serbia might perhaps, he further remarked, be turned into a republic.⁵⁵³ In a private conversation he also discussed a customs union with Serbia, into which the Danubian Monarchy would force the little Kingdom.⁵⁵⁴

Encourged by Germany’s messages, Aehrenthal declared to the British Ambassador on 18 March that the only way to preserve peace was for the Powers to recognize the Austro-Turkish agreement, i.e. the annexation, as soon as possible, “without the loss of time”.⁵⁵⁵ To the British draft note which Serbia would address to Austria, Aehrenthal did not reply before 19 March. He was not at all satisfied with it, as it did not contain what Austria expressly asked for. Aehrenthal demanded: 1) that Serbia should declare that she had suffered no violation of her rights through the action taken in Bosnia and Herzegovina; that the Turko-Austrian agreement was a practical settlement of the new situation; that she abandoned her attitude of protest and undertook to modify her policy towards Austria-Hungary and to live on good neighbourly terms with it; 2) that Serbia should reduce her army to the size it was in the spring of 1908, dismiss the volunteers and armed bands and prevent the formation of new detachments on the borders of Austria-Hungary and Turkey; and 3) that the extraordinary measures containing a threat to Austria should be withdrawn.⁵⁵⁶ Grey considered this reply humiliating for Serbia and indirectly for the Powers friendly to her. They could not ask Serbia to recognize the new situation, as

552 Ibid., p. 687.

553 Ibid., pp. 690-1.

554 Baernreither, *Fragmente eines politischen Tagebuches*, p. 106.

555 *British Documents*, V, pp. 703-4.

556 Ibid., pp. 707-8.

they had not done so themselves. His own proposal would have been accepted both by Serbia and the Powers and the whole matter could have been settled within forty-eight hours. He informed Vienna and Berlin that he would try to find a new wording, and if that should fail he would be obliged to withdraw and let the matters take their course.⁵⁵⁷ The British Prime Minister Asquith had warned the Austrian Ambassador the day before that a war on this account "might almost be called a crime" and that public opinion in Europe would turn against Austria.⁵⁵⁸

On 19 March, Grey proposed, with the consent of France and Russia, that the Ambassadors of those three Powers and of Italy should inform Aehrenthal that they would bring their influence to bear upon Serbia to demobilize completely, if Austria, on the other hand, declared to them that she would not attack Serbia, if the latter demobilised and fulfilled her promises.⁵⁵⁹ The previous day Aehrenthal had promised the British Ambassador that he would not attack Serbia until Britain had used its influence in Belgrade. There were many in Austrian circles who wanted to avoid any such delay. Among these was Count Forgách, who had telegraphed to Vienna that Serbia should not be allowed to make her withdrawal in this way under the pressure of the friendly Powers, but only under direct pressure from Austria-Hungary, and that it was in the Monarchy's interest not to spare her this humiliation. He expressly demanded a "sharp, humiliating declaration (*diemütigende Erklärung*)." "We should take back our half-unsheathed sword only when Serbia emphatically and clearly recognises the failure of her policy and renounces her aspirations."⁵⁶⁰

During this time, Berlin opted for a decisive step. Kiderlen-Waechter drafted vigorous instructions which were telegraphed in the name of Bülow to St. Petersburg on 21 March. The Privy Councillor Holstein, who had influenced Kiderlen-Waechter,⁵⁶¹ was himself surprised at his "impudence" (the expression is his) in exposing Izvolsky to such humiliation. Kiderlen-Waechter himself told Take Ionescu, the well-known Romanian politician, that he knew Russia was not prepared for war and wanted "to take full advantage of that knowledge."⁵⁶² To the Austrian Ambassador Kiderlen-Waechter declared that he would "push [Izvolsky] against the wall"⁵⁶³ and recorded in his diary

557 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, pp. 164, 170-1; *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, p. 701.

558 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, p. 163.

559 *Ibid.*, p. 106.

560 *Ibid.*, pp. 139, 148, 159.

561 H. Rogge, *Friedrich v. Holstein Lebensbekenntnis*, Berlin 1932, p. 336.

562 T. Ionescu, *Souvenirs*, Paris 1919, p. 49.

563 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, p. 155.

that he had “at last succeeded in talking to Izvolsky clearly”.⁵⁶⁴ According to these instructions, Pourtalès was going to inform Izvolsky that Germany would propose to Vienna to ask for consent for abolishing Article 25 of the Berlin Treaty, but that before doing so it must know “definitely” that Russia would give a favourable and unhesitating reply to the Austrian note. Pourtalès was going to declare to Izvolsky that Germany “expected a definite answer, yes or no”; “any evasive, equivocal or indefinite answer would have to be taken as a refusal.” In that case, Germany would withdraw and allow the matters to take their course unchecked, and all the responsibility would fall on Izvolsky. If the conversation touched on Serbia, Pourtalès would declare that Izvolsky himself had called the Serbian answer insufficient and had refused to be responsible for it. He would also draw his attention to the “inopportune talk” of the Serbian memorandum. The events “were forcing a decision” in view of “the attitude of the Serbs, which becomes increasingly provocative.” “We will have to consider the introduction of the conference question into this concrete matter an attempt to delay things and therefore a refusal of our proposal.”⁵⁶⁵ Consistent in opposing the summoning of a conference, even if everything were fixed for it, Germany now laid particular stress on depriving Izvolsky, who saw in a conference the only honourable way out for Russia, of this only means of retreating from the situation. Berlin wanted a speedy and inconsiderate decision.

The same day Aehrenthal stated to the British Ambassador that the Powers must promise him to recognize the annexation in accordance with the above mentioned Berlin formula; in fact, he accepted and interpreted in that sense a suggestion unofficially made to him by the British representative.⁵⁶⁶ Aehrenthal explained his demand as follows: since Serbia referred the Bosnian

⁵⁶⁴ E. Jackh, *Kiderlen-Waechter*, II, Berlin und Leipzig, 1925, p. 26; cf. p. 29. O. Hammann's attempt to explain and defend Kiderlen-Waechter is based on the insufficient knowledge of the facts. See his *Bilder aus der letzten Kaiserzeit*, Berlin 1922, pp. 79-82. Cf. Nicolson, *Die Verschwörung der Diplomaten*, p. 324.

⁵⁶⁵ *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, pp. 693-5. Poincaré mentions the fact, which is not confirmed by other sources, that the German Ambassador declared on that occasion that in the event of an Austrian action in the south, Germany would be forced to resort to certain military measures, in order to protect its ally's northern border. See *Les origines de la guerre*, Paris 1921, p. 114.

⁵⁶⁶ Cf. *British Documents*, V, p. 764, where Sir Charles Hardinge states that he is not certain if the British Ambassador really did this. Sir Edward Grey, on the other hand, informed the Austrian Ambassador that the British Ambassador in Vienna had not been authorized and that he had not informed his government of such a proposal. See *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, pp. 218-9. Grey also communicated this to St. Petersburg. See *British Documents*, V, pp. 768-9. Sir F. Cartwright, when called upon to give an explanation, admitted to his government that he had done this on his own initiative. *Ibid.*, pp. 769-70. H. W. Stead says that in August 1909 King Edward VII wished to recall Cartwright from Vienna, but did not do

question to the Great Powers, he must know what that decision would be in order to be able to adapt his own attitude to it. If the Powers recognized the annexation, all would be well, but if they failed to do so, he would then be able to use force, at least against Serbia. It was impossible to bound up the Serbian question with the European situation in a more obvious manner; the pressure and its real object were thenceforward clear to all. At the same time, Aehrenthal repeated the demand that the Serbian answer should be addressed to Vienna directly, and not through the agency of the Powers.⁵⁶⁷ On 22 March, with the approval of the Emperor, he submitted the written draft of a note which Serbia and the Great Powers would address to Austria. The former would declare, in addition to the text already established, that she would abide by the decision of the Powers in the matter of Article 25 of the Treaty of Berlin, while the Powers for their part would declare that, after the Turko-Austrian agreement, Article 25 of that Treaty ceased to be valid.⁵⁶⁸ London was willing in principle to accept even such an agreement, but demanded that the text of the Serbian reply be couched in milder terms, and that Austria also undertake to renounce Article 29 of the Berlin Treaty in favour of Montenegro.⁵⁶⁹ But when on 23 March the milder British draft answer reached Vienna, Aehrenthal rejected it and demanded the acceptance either of his original answer or his latest draft; he would not allow for a third alternative, but rather declared unequivocally that Austria would achieve the satisfaction of her demands in another fashion. In this attitude Aehrenthal had lately been supported by Tittoni, who thought that Serbia would now accept any formula for a declaration that the Powers might propose to her and considered that Britain's attitude was "unclear, almost incomprehensible".⁵⁷⁰

The situation thus became extremely tense. Austria was prepared for war; the German Minister in Belgrade had already received instructions to undertake the protection of the Austro-Hungarian subjects. Izvolsky rightly felt that Germany's move was simply something of a "diplomatic" ultimatum: either Russia must recognise the annexation or Austria would attack Serbia. As early as 23 March, he informed London and Paris: "In view of the great danger which an Austro-Serbian conflict would mean both for us and for the general peace, and in order to save Serbia, we have no alternative but to accept Germany's

so when it was pointed out to him that his recall might aggravate relations with Austria. See *Mes souvenirs*, I, p. 304.

567 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, p. 697; *British Documents*, V, pp. 714, 717.

568 *British Documents*, V, pp. 718-9; *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, pp. 162-3.

569 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, pp. 164, 171; for the British proposal, see *British Documents*, V, pp. 719-20. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 722.

570 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, p. 172.

proposal.”⁵⁷¹ In agreement with the Emperor, he decided to give way on 24 March, and after consulting the Cabinet, he informed Count Pourtalès that Russia would give her unconditional consent to the abolition of Article 25 of the Berlin Treaty, if the Vienna government addressed themselves to the Powers to that effect. At the same time, the Russian Minister requested from Germany to use its influence with Vienna to be more conciliatory in its negotiations with Serbia.⁵⁷²

Bülow has claimed that in this affair he intervened at the request of Izvolsky himself and that his move was purely a friendly service in the interests of the maintenance of peace. To prove this, he has said, he was even then prepared to publish the whole correspondence relating to this question, but refrained from doing so when he saw that Izvolsky wanted to make certain modifications in the documents. His desire was “that no ill-feeling should be left between Russia and ourselves as a result of the Bosnian entanglement.”⁵⁷³ These statements of Bülow do not conform to the above mentioned declarations of Kiderlen-Waechter. Seeing the bad impression created by Germany’s demarche, the Chancellor tried as early as the spring of 1909 to interpret it as a service, and made a particular point of suppressing the “legend” of a German ultimatum.⁵⁷⁴ This he did publicly. In private, he viewed the step taken as a pressure, and even put it in writing. During the World War, as long as he hoped for the success of the German arms, Bülow even wrote of this affair with certain self-satisfaction. In the Annexation Crisis, he said, “the German sword was thrown into the balance of Europe’s decision, directly for the sake of our Austro-Hungarian ally and indirectly for the maintenance of peace of Europe, but above all and before all for the sake of German prestige and Germany’s position in the world.”⁵⁷⁵ This statement differs in a marked degree from the above mentioned assertions and annuls them. Bülow clearly approved Kiderlen-Waechter’s action and was fully conscious of its significance. After all, even if it was conceived of in a purely friendly spirit, the manner and the moment of Germany’s intervention completely spoiled the good impression. Russia was indeed pushed against the wall and forced to disavow publicly and unconditionally the entire policy which she had pursued so far. She yielded to a threat, regardless of whether that threat was direct or indirect, whether

571 Benckendorff, *Diplomatischen Schriftwechsel*, I, pp. 80-1.

572 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, p. 172.

573 *Denkwürdigkeiten*, II, p. 402.

574 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, p. 788.

575 *Deutsche Politik*, Berlin 1916, p. 60. On Bülow’s policy at that time, cf. the thorough criticism of A. Frankenfeld, *Österreichs Spiel mit dem Kriege*, Dresden 1918, which is entirely devoted to the Annexation Crisis.

spoken loudly or softly. After all, when a sword is thrown into the balance, it is not difficult to guess what the threat actually meant. Izvolsky clearly felt, and complained to his French ally on the same day, that such a solution of the crisis, accompanied by such a pressure was a humiliation for Russia, and that it was bound to damage her prestige in the Balkans and elsewhere.⁵⁷⁶ The British Ambassador rightly called it a capitulation.⁵⁷⁷ Hardinge told the Serbian Charge d'Affaires that Izvolsky's declaration, made without agreement with France and Britain, was a "real surprise".

Considering such an attitude humiliating, the British government categorically refused to give their consent to a similar declaration. Moreover, Grey declared to the German Ambassador that "consideration of the question of recognition of the annexation depends on the previous peaceful settlement of the Serbo-Austro-Hungarian question", as well as on other matters connected with the decisions of the Berlin Congress, such as for instance Article 29, which concerned Montenegro. The German Ambassador tried to make Grey waver by remarking that Britain threatened the peace with such an attitude, but Grey replied that the opposite might rather be the case. "If the annexation were sanctioned today, Baron Aehrenthal might embark on a war with Serbia the day after tomorrow." Grey was willing to help any peaceful settlement, but he was not going to give way under pressure, which "consists in Baron Aehrenthal's seeking the sanction of the annexation by threatening an ultimatum to Serbia".⁵⁷⁸ The French government declared, in a somewhat milder tone, that they would follow Russia's example, but that they also first demanded in the interests of general peace that the Viennese negotiations about Serbia's reply be brought to a successful conclusion and that the note with the request for recognition of the annexation be sent after the demarche of the Powers in Belgrade.⁵⁷⁹ The Italian government, too, declared that they could not give their consent before the question of Article 29 of the Treaty of Berlin had been settled.⁵⁸⁰

576 *British Documents*, V, p. 729. Cf. the opinion of S. Sazonov, *Les annèes fatales*, Paris 1927, pp. 17-20.

577 *Ibid.*, p. 736.

578 Telegram Grujića Ministarstvu inostranih dela, London, 26. 3. 1909, Pov. Br. 760, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. III, sv. 4, pp. 556; *British Documents*, V, pp. 739-41; *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, pp. 707-6; *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, p. 197.

579 Benckendorff, *Diplomatischen Schriftwechsel*, I, p. 84; *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, p. 193; *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, p. 710.

580 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, p. 190; *British Documents*, V, p. 739.

The Berlin government, which had taken the settlement of the crisis into their own hands, reproached Vienna for certain compliance, and was especially jealous about the negotiations between Britain and Austria in Vienna. With this in view, Aehrenthal started to excuse himself, and promised as early as 24 March that he would soon break off the negotiations. The next day he indeed prepared a telegram for London, with the message that any further negotiations would be useless, on the grounds that the British government was negotiating at the same time with Belgrade about the proposed text of a reply. In addition, the Austrian Ambassador was instructed to state that his government had again assumed full liberty of action in regard to Serbia; British intervention would therefore be set aside and Vienna would return to its determination to force Serbia into obedience. This telegram was not sent as the British Ambassador appeared the same day with further modifications in the proposed text.⁵⁸¹ In negotiations with him on 26 March, Aehrenthal gave way to some extent, but he also declared that these were his last concessions, and if Britain did not adopt them, he would present his demands to Serbia on 29 March.⁵⁸² This smacked of an ultimatum; the fixing of a date for the answer, together with the threat in case the proposed conditions were not accepted, could have no other meaning, whatever form it might take. The German Ambassador in Vienna reported to his government that it was “no secret” that Aehrenthal and the most influential departmental chief in the Foreign Ministry, Count Esterházy, were now in favour of war, and even wanted it “for reasons of internal and foreign policy”.⁵⁸³ In informing the Berlin government of the negotiations with Britain and in excusing himself for not having been able to “break them off completely”, as he thought Berlin wanted, Aehrenthal wrote the same day that he heartily hoped that either Britain or Serbia would spoil this mediating attempt. “What is the use of smoothing over the present differences between Austria-Hungary and Serbia by means of the basically valueless statements on the part of Serbia? Austria will not thereby be permanently assured of peace on her south-eastern border, but in a few years will again have to march in.” Emperor Wilhelm II, who approved of this view, noted on the report: “Well, let it march in!”⁵⁸⁴

⁵⁸¹ *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, pp. 175-6, 188-9.

⁵⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 194-5; *British Documents*, V, pp. 744-5.

⁵⁸³ *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, p. 773.

⁵⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, XXVI, p. 712. This and other similar notes of Emperor Wilhelm II in the official documents show how insincere were the alleged well-meaning assurances that he addressed to the Russian Emperor in their private correspondence during the crisis. Cf. *Correspondance entre Guillaume II et Nicolas II*, pp. 230-51.

On 18 March, Izvolsky informed Belgrade through the Serbian Minister in St. Petersburg that Serbia was making a mistake in not giving way. The new Austrian demands would certainly be heavier. "I think", he said, "that no formula can bind you in the face of a catastrophe because the settlement of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian question does not depend on you and it will have no influence on the decision of the Powers, which have taken up a point of view they will not go back upon." The Italian and even the German Ambassador thought that Serbia, faced with the danger of war, would at last have to accept any reply that the Powers might dictate to her to hand to Austria-Hungary. They therefore made no attempt at all to couch that reply in milder and more acceptable terms for the Serbs. Grey alone persisted in the opinion that humiliation at all costs should not be asked of Serbia,⁵⁸⁵ and he continued to work in Vienna to soften the determination there to impose as difficult a reply for Serbia as possible. Had it not been for British mediation, or at least British hesitation to recognize the annexation as long as Austria's relations with Serbia remained unsettled, the Vienna government might have put whatever pressure on Belgrade it pleased. Britain's attitude indeed maintained peace on this occasion. Germany also boasted that it had the same object in view in taking its step in St. Petersburg. We do not doubt it. But whilst Germany's intervention really humiliated Russia and meant that Serbia must fall on her knees in repentance or meet a heavy punishment, the London Cabinet sought for an agreement that would spare as far as possible everyone's susceptibilities.

On receiving the news of Russia's surrender, Milovanović immediately asked St. Petersburg "whether Serbia has been at least spared inconvenient statements at that price." Izvolsky replied that there was no condition to the effect that "Serbia should be spared painful declarations", but rather that the point was to make the negotiations easier. He later left everything to British diplomacy, agreeing on his part in advance to any agreement that might be reached between Vienna and London. He did indeed approach Berlin with the request that its influence be brought to bear on the Viennese circles, lest they should dictate "too harsh terms" to Serbia, but this request fell on deaf ears. In London, Izvolsky was reproached for having informed Vienna of his passive part in these negotiations, instead of having used his influence, together with Britain, in order to obtain the best possible terms for the Serbian note. Even the Serbian government approached Berlin on 26 March with a request for mediation, so that Austria should not ask from them such declarations "as might settle the matter at the moment, but not for the future, and would leave

585 Cf. *British Documents*, V, pp. 719, 729-30.

behind in Serbia a feeling of intense resentment against Austria-Hungary".⁵⁸⁶ But both Russian and Serbian step were in vain; the Berlin government was even less concerned than the Viennese to spare Serbia's susceptibilities.

In the interests of peace, Grey accepted on 28 March the last draft note with Aehrenthal's concessions, although he was not satisfied with it.⁵⁸⁷ The British Ambassador was authorized to declare in Vienna that Britain would recognize the annexation, if Austria accepted the agreed Serbian declaration, and if, of course, the Vienna government specifically requested it. He issued a written statement to this effect.⁵⁸⁸ The British government gave way at last at the express desire of the Russian government, which found this to be the only way of preventing an Austrian attack on Serbia.⁵⁸⁹ Germany appears not to have been satisfied with this outcome of the crisis. Prince Bülow did not initially agree to cooperate with other Powers in making a demarche in Belgrade, when it was necessary to hand the agreed answer and persuade the Serbian government to accept it. He refused because: 1) he did not expect that it would meet with "complete success", as no guarantee was required from Serbia as to her attitude in the future; 2) German diplomacy had not collaborated in the drafting of the reply; and 3) this would be something of an British success insofar as the annexation had not been first recognized and action then taken, as Germany had proposed, but the agreement on Serbia's reply had preceded both the action and the recognition. "We must show that we still consider the situation serious, that we are not to be frightened and that we are determined, just as we were at the height of the crisis which has now passed, to stand by Austria-Hungary to the utmost."⁵⁹⁰ Judging by this, there was no absolute desire to maintain peace and to reach a real settlement in Germany's attitude, but rather, even after their undoubted success in St. Petersburg, to pursue a policy of prestige and to appear as an absolute victor. In this concrete question, Emperor Wilhelm II proved wiser than Bülow and felt the awkwardness of Germany's situation in the eyes of Europe, if it turned out that Germany was against a step to which even Austria-Hungary had agreed, although he personally did not favour the Austro-British understanding.

Serbia now found herself in a position in which she was forced to agree to anything, not only because Russia had given way and because other Powers

⁵⁸⁶ *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, pp. 713-5; Benckendorff, *Diplomatischen Schriftwechsel*, I, p. 86.

⁵⁸⁷ *British Documents*, V, pp. 746-7. Baron Musulin has described the nervous expectancy with which the British reply was awaited in the Viennese Foreign Ministry on 28 March. See A. Musulin, *Das Haus am Ballplatz*, München 1924, p. 168.

⁵⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 750; *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, pp. 212-3.

⁵⁸⁹ *British Documents*, V, p. 756.

⁵⁹⁰ *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, pp. 716-7; *British Documents*, V, p. 765.

would abandon her in the end, but also because if she refused or in the slightest degree modified her reply as compared with the Anglo-Austrian agreement, it would somehow appear as if Serbia were to be blamed for the outbreak of war in Europe. She could do nothing in isolation. Serbia had previously at least had on her side a good deal of sympathy in Europe; she would now be exposed, in addition to physical and political failure, to moral failure as well. To lose her moral capital would be a very grave and fatal matter. With that backing, the Serbian question, which had been put before Europe with much difficulty, would no doubt remain one of those to which the attention would be paid again in the future; without it, Serbia would be considered an immoderate and unreasonable element bent on the immediate realisation of her every aim, even at the cost of bloodshed and a general conflict.

"After Russia's capitulation", Tittoni said to Vujić in Rome on 26 March, "there can be no further question of Serbia's being humiliated;⁵⁹¹ she should therefore adapt herself to the situation and accept the mediatory action of the friendly Powers. On 27 March, Charykov called the situation "desperate" and expected an Austrian attack with certainty. However, Izvolsky announced that "he is working to arrange for Serbia not to have to declare that she recognises the Austro-Turkish protocol, while she could accept any other formula." At the same time, and following upon the statement he had already made in Berlin, he said to the Serbian Minister that "the abolition of Article 25 of the Treaty of Berlin does not mean the recognition of the annexation, for nothing is substituted for it but the Austro-Hungarian-Turkish protocol, which is not binding on the Powers".⁵⁹² The French Ambassador in London said to Grujić: "Russia's proceeding has aggravated the situation and it is indispensable that we should declare all that is to be demanded." In order to spare as far as possible the susceptibilities of Serbia and to make it at the last moment as easy as possible for her to make the difficult declaration which had been agreed upon and which could not be modified, Sir Edward Grey proposed to Vienna that Austria give the Powers an assurance of her pacific intentions in regard to her small neighbour. Vienna gave this assurance, not knowing, however, that it was to be officially communicated to Serbia with a view to reassuring her. In addition, with the same object in view, Grey himself advised Belgrade that the Serbian Minister in Vienna should first show Serbia's reply to the British Minister and

591 Telegram Vujića Ministarstvu inostranih dela, Rim, 27. 3. 1909, Pov. Br. 772, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. III, sv. 4, p. 565.

592 Telegram Popovića Ministarstvu inostranih dela, Petrograd, 27. 3. 1909, Pov. Br. 818, in: *Ibid.*, p. 565. Cf. Charykov's statements to Pourtalès in May 1909 that run along the same lines. See *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, pp. 791, 799.

then to Aehrenthal, and that the Serbian government should also communicate copies of the reply to the British, Russian, French and Italian Ministers.⁵⁹³ He thus responded to Serbia's wish that the entire question should maintain its European character.

The action of the Great Powers was taken in Belgrade in the morning of 30 March. Britain, Russia, France and Italy handed the Serbian government the draft reply which was to be given to Austria without changing a single letter in the text agreed upon in Vienna between the British and Austrian governments, and together with it an aide-mémoire in which they communicated the declaration received from Austria to the effect that she would not attack Serbia. This memorandum read that the representatives of the four Powers were "authorized to inform the Minister of Foreign Affairs that in the course of his negotiations with the ambassadors, the Imperial and Royal Minister of Foreign Affairs has constantly expressed his wish to exert no pressure upon the Serbian government, if the latter took the advice of the Powers, and that he has never intended to hinder the free development, security and integrity of Serbia." This assurance was included in the text with the obvious intention of more effectually influencing Belgrade and of giving Serbia's withdrawal an air of honourable proceeding. Having been informed of this memorandum, Aehrenthal later expressed to the German Ambassador his "deep dissatisfaction" with the action of the Powers. He had not authorized them to do this, and still less to do so in writing. This was stated, in a milder form, in a semi-official communiqué in the *Fremdenblatt* on 1 April.⁵⁹⁴

Acting at the wish of his Austrian colleague, the German Minister⁵⁹⁵ took part in the demarche, although he had not collaborated in the drafting of the document. It was later known that Germany's participation had also been requested by Izvolsky. London had not considered Germany's collaboration necessary as throughout the affair that country had not behaved as a neutral Power, but rather as an avowed partisan of the Austrian cause.

In the afternoon of 30 March, the Serbian government accepted the proposed reply without any modification. They gave way in conformity with the unanimous advice and warning of the Great Powers and in view of the obvious

593 *British Documents*, V, p. 756. For the British government's unfavourable opinion of Izvolsky's attitude, cf. *ibid.*, pp. 763-4; *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, pp. 728-30.

594 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, p. 726.

595 Count Forgách has said that on 29 March the German Minister thought of doing so "on his own responsibility" when he saw that the Russian Minister was postponing the presentation of the memorandum as he waited for him, and that it was not before 30 March that he asked for his consent and authorization to work in agreement with him. See *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, pp. 215, 220.

danger of being attacked by a Power almost twenty times stronger than themselves and of remaining completely isolated. This retreat was made when, as the common saying, goes, the knife was held to Serbia's throat. This important declaration made by the Serbian government, of which every word had been weighed during the negotiations between Vienna and London, read in the French original as follows:

Se référant à la note antérieure du Gouvernement Serbe au Gouvernement Austro-Hongrois et de façon à dissiper tout malentendu qui pourrait en être le résultat, le Ministre de Serbie a reçu l'ordre de fournir les explications suivantes au Ministère Impérial et Royal des Affaires Étrangères: La Serbie reconnaît qu'elle n'a pas été atteinte dans ses droits par le fait accompli créé en Bosnie-Herzégovine et qu'elle se conformera par conséquent à telle décision que les Puissances prendront par rapport à l'article XXV du Traité de Berlin. Se rendant aux conseils des Grandes Puissances la Serbie s'engage dès à présent à abandonner l'attitude de protestation et d'opposition qu'elle a observée à l'égard de l'annexion depuis l'automne dernier et s'engage en outre à changer le cours de sa politique actuelle envers l'Autriche-Hongrie, pour vivre désormais avec cette dernière sur le pied d'un bon voisinage. Conformément à ces déclarations et confiante dans les intentions pacifiques de l'Autriche-Hongrie la Serbie ramènera son armée à l'état du printemps de 1908, en ce qui concerne son organisation, sa dislocation et son effectif. Elle désarmera et licenciera ses volontaires et ses bandes, et elle empêchera la formation des nouvelles unités irrégulières sur son territoire.

After this, the annexation was recognized by means of an exchange of notes: on 7 April, Germany recognized the annulment of Article 25 of the Treaty of Berlin, Italy did the same on 11 April, Britain on 17 and Russia and France on 19 April. The recognition was preceded by the settlement of the dispute with Montenegro.

Although the two Serb states, Serbia and Montenegro, acted with solidarity in relation to Austria-Hungary in the annexation question, Viennese diplomacy did not treat the two countries the same when it took an energetic attitude. On 20 February 1909, Aehrenthal explained his plan to Prince Bülow as follows: "I intend first to approach Serbia alone, and not to mention Montenegro, for by doing so I hope to strengthen the Prince in his inclination not to identify himself completely with Serbia."⁵⁹⁶ For that reason, throughout the March crisis, Austria addressed to Montenegro no such threats and warnings as those

⁵⁹⁶ Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik, I, p. 855.

to Serbia, although Montenegro took every opportunity to declare that it was entirely with Serbia, and although the declarations of the Montenegrin Prince were sometimes more determined than those of the representatives of the Serbian government. The negotiations for the annulment of Article 29 were conducted with the Vienna government by the Italian Cabinet, which undertook at the same time to act as a mediator in Cetinje.⁵⁹⁷ Not even at the end of the crisis did Vienna ask from Montenegro a declaration of the sort which Serbia had given, nor were any objections raised on account of the fact that Tittoni had refused, whether purposely or as a result of misunderstanding, to introduce certain of Austria's points into the text of the Montenegrin reply and that he had indeed recommended to the Montenegrin Government the draft of a reply from Cetinje, which he had not previously settled in detail with Vienna; it was even agreed that the original document of the reply should be addressed to the Italian government and only a copy of it, with an accompanying letter and statement, communicated to the Austrian representative. Austria agreed to renounce her rights under Article 29 of the Berlin Treaty and Montenegro undertook that Bar should remain a commercial port and that no military fortifications should be built there. Montenegro's reply was given on 6 April and the Austrian statement accepting it arrived the next day. Aehrenthal explained this readiness to meet Montenegro by his consideration for Italy,⁵⁹⁸ but in fact, after forcing Serbia to give way, he would have been more or less indifferent to the attitude of Montenegro had it not been for Article 29, the annulment of which was demanded by Italy, France and Britain as a condition of their acceptance of the annexation, so that Aehrenthal himself was fully aware from the first that Austria had to give way on this point. In a report to the Emperor on 7 April, explaining his concessions, Aehrenthal showed much more consideration for Montenegro than he had earlier showed for Serbia. "The unlikelihood of obtaining a more correct statement from the Montenegrin government by diplomatic means and the consideration that Montenegro enjoys a certain amount of sympathy in many quarters and that a harsher attitude on our part towards the Principality might easily create further difficulties for us with Britain make it inadvisable to insist further on our point of view."⁵⁹⁹

597 This was disapproved of in St. Petersburg and Izvolsky tried to prevent it somehow by bringing in other Powers as mediators, but he did not obtain the consent of the British government for this step. See *British Documents*, V, pp. 775-6.

598 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, I, p. 855.

599 *Ibid.*, II, p. 269.

Sir Charles Hardinge was perfectly right when he said on 30 March, at the end of the crisis, that it would leave a permanent trace in the history of Europe and in the relations between the Great Powers.⁶⁰⁰ It was a sort of crisis that is not over when it has been settled, but of which the very settlement brings out new elements of further division and conflict. The result of the crisis was as follows:

1) Russia was humiliated both in her own eyes and in the eyes of Europe, and especially in the eyes of the Balkan nations. To suppose that she would endure this humiliation without a trace of ill-will and that she would continue to cooperate with Austria-Hungary and Germany with unruffled feelings would have been too naive. Count Pourtalès reported to his government on 1 April about the deep resentment in St. Peterburg. It was emphasised, he said, "that Germany has inflicted upon Russia a wound which the latter Power will never forget, that Germany has encouraged Austria in the policy she had been pursuing in recent years, with a view to humiliating Russia, which was weakened by war and revolution".⁶⁰¹ Satisfied with the issue of the crisis, Aehrenthal's friend and official historian, H. Friedjung, prefaced an article on the relations between Russia and Austria-Hungary in 1908 with the following words: "the suppression of Russia from the Balkan Peninsula is one of the great results of the 19th century".⁶⁰² In this way, he clearly indicated the deeper meaning of the whole crisis and its conclusion, and showed that Russia's latest defeat was seen to be another element in a policy directly aimed against that Power.

2) Serbia was forced to make a statement which was opposed to the true opinion and feelings of the Serbian people, and she came out from the crisis disappointed and embittered. Her national problem, now presented in a full light, became more profound and intense after the Annexation Crisis. The prolonged discussion of all its aspects opened the eyes of the masses and aroused general interest in national questions. The German Minister in Belgrade, Reichenau, was quite right when he reported to his government on 22 June 1909 that the difficulties created by the annexation in the relations between Austria-Hungary and Serbia were not at an end, but had rather just begun.⁶⁰³

3) Austria-Hungary's proceeding in respect of an international treaty and Germany's behaviour as a whole and in regard to Russia in particular made Europe suspicious of those two Powers and of their methods of work, and contributed considerably to the strengthening of the links between the Powers

600 *British Documents*, V, pp. 763-4.

601 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, pp. 735-6.

602 Heinrich Friedjung, *Historische Aufsätze*, Stuttgart und Berlin 1919, p. 176.

603 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, p. 832.

of the Triple Entente. The division of the Powers made apparent on this occasion remained constant until the World War, and the results of this crisis were felt in European policy as a permanent element of mistrust and suspicion. Instead of a spirit of conciliation, of respect for treaties and of real goodwill in facing and eliminating the causes of mistrust by loyal collaboration and by improving unsound relations, the Central European Powers, Germany and Austria-Hungary, pursued on this occasion a policy of force and prestige, and did not even recoil before the spectre of war. The German Crown Prince said to the Austrian Minister in Bucharest: "A war would not really be such a bad thing in the long run!"⁶⁰⁴ The Austrian Ambassador in Constantinople, Marquis Pallavicini, considered it necessary, in order to exert as much influence as possible in Romania, to warn the Romanian Premier "of the formidable physical and moral strength of Austria-Hungary and Germany united".⁶⁰⁵ In order to proclaim and emphasise their victory still further, the official circles in Vienna and Berlin organized various manifestations immediately after the conclusion of the crisis. The arrival of Emperor Wilhelm II in Vienna on 14 May was deliberately turned into an imperial triumph. Austria and Germany, being militarily better prepared, won the victory in 1909 in pursuit of their policy of force, but the events of the following years clearly showed that they had not eliminated the causes of mistrust and the germs of a future conflict. "The Teutonic triumph was complete. But that was the victory won at a perilous price", W. Churchill wrote rightly.⁶⁰⁶

This was realized, but too late, by many of the Austro-Hungarian politicians themselves who were then in the most responsible positions. The Hungarian Minister of Home Affairs, Count J. Andrassy, wrote later that the annexation had been a fundamental mistake and that in it lay one of the causes of the war. "We have committed a formally clear violation of the right", he wrote, and embittered Russia politically without weakening her, while a real loss was incurred in giving up the Sanjak, paying the Turks an indemnity and losing control of Bar.⁶⁰⁷ "The cardinal mistake in Austro-Hungarian policy and the beginning of all the evil" was, in the words of Pallavicini, the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador in Constantinople, the annexation carried out in such a fashion.⁶⁰⁸

604 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, p. 306.

605 *Ibid.*, p. 344.

606 *La crise mondiale*, Paris 1924, p. 43.

607 *Diplomatie und Weltkrieg*, 1920, pp. 45-6.

608 J. Pomiankowski, *Der Zusammenbruch der Ottomanischen Reisches*, Wien 1928, 43.

In 1909, Austria might even have crushed Serbia, but the Serbian question would not have been settled on that occasion, nor would Europe and the European conscience have been set at rest. Serbia had groaned under forcible Turkish rule for over three and a half centuries, and she had been able, under more difficult circumstances and with fewer friends, to restore her state. The Serbs had succeeded in maintaining themselves with a strong national consciousness at a time when they had been far fewer in numbers and culturally weaker, and they would therefore no doubt have overcome even such a defeat as this; force would not have broken them. That much is certain. But whether Austria would have gained morally by her aggressive policy and whether she would have been really strengthened by such a victory is another question to which I doubt whether it is possible to give a positive answer. After all, the opinion was very much divided on the subject in Austria herself. Even Aehrenthal wavered for a long time, but in the end he saw and felt that the settlement of the Serbian question by force would provoke further complications rather than eliminate them. The military circles were in favour of war in their conviction that an enemy should be crushed before he became strong; a shattered Serbia would present no further danger for many years. How wrong they were in their estimates would be seen shortly from the attitude of Russia and Italy, which the Annexation Crisis and Austria's policy brought into closer touch, and their political understanding at Racconigi. It was the attitude of the Powers that interceded on behalf of Serbia rather than the attitude of Serbia herself that presented military or political danger to Austria. That the attitude of these Powers, after the defeat of Serbia, would have been modified in favour of the Viennese policy, can be hardly believed by anyone familiar with the general situation at that time and the sharp differences, especially in their Eastern policy, between the Powers, particularly between St. Petersburg, Rome and Vienna.

Rudolf Sieghart, a wise Austrian higher official, the head of the *Präsidialkanzlei* in the Prime Minister's Office, rightly said that with the proclaimed annexation Austria-Hungary had brought up the Yugoslav question at the time when it had not been ripe for settlement.⁶⁰⁹ It only harmed itself. The trialist combinations cherished by Franz Ferdinand's entourage could not be realised during the lifetime of the old Emperor Franz Joseph, who knew very well that carrying them into effect would provoke the most bitter resistance on the part of the Hungarians and perhaps a civil war. The Hungarians would come to terms with Russia, Count Széchenyi said to the Romanian politician Take Ionescu, rather than allow Hungary to be deprived of "its unique Hungarian

609 *Die letzten Jahrzehnte einer Grossmacht*, Berlin 1932, p. 134.

character”.⁶¹⁰ Even at the end of 1918, faced with the obvious defeat, the Hungarians did not agree to have the Yugoslav question settled in a trialist sense. However, time was passing by; the question once started began to grow and extend and events did not wait for the aged Emperor or for the decisions of his heir. “We lost Lombardy because the center of gravity of the Italian ideal fell outside Austria. We shall lose Bosnia and Herzegovina too and compromise the whole Yugoslav question, if we do not succeed in establishing in Austria the center of gravity of the Yugoslav world.” Such were the very true words of J. M. Baernreither as early as the autumn of 1908.⁶¹¹ The annexation opened the Serbian and Yugoslav question; and it did that unskillfully, clumsily and in a manner bound to provoke opposition and activity among the Serbs, the largest tribe of the Yugoslav people. It was thought and said in Vienna that the annexation was the first stage in Austria’s settlement of that question.⁶¹² But it was forgotten that the settlement of these problems depended on other factors besides Viennese diplomatic and military circles and that the development of events might take a course which they did not expect. In case of many actions which are not well prepared in advance and not carried out quickly enough, it is known how they will begin, but not how they will end. That was the case with the annexation envisaged as the beginning of the settlement of the Yugoslav question. Austria was not clear in her mind as to when, how and to which extent she would settle the Yugoslav questions within her own borders, and she raised the issue outside those borders at the same time. Austria made a decision to carry out the annexation with haste, creating much comotion and nervousness, and immediately afterwards started to view the whole matter in the long run. With her violation of treaties, inconsistency and maladroitness, Austria generated suspicions on all sides and the activities of those factors which could not be reconciled with Austrian plans for the future.

C. Dumba, once Austrian Minister in Belgrade, has examined in his memoirs the question of how the Danubian Monarchy could have avoided conflict with Serbia. As the fundamental mistakes which led to the tense situation, he has mentioned: 1) that the annexation should have been carried out immediately, instead of the mere occupation; 2) that Austria pursued “far too liberal a policy

610 T. Ionescu, *Souvenirs*, pp. 116-7.

611 Baernreither, *Fragmente eines politischen Tagebuches*, p. 89.

612 Baron Giesel says in his work, *Zwei Jahrzehnte in Nahen Orient*, p. 189, that those who state that the motives of the annexation arose solely from the Young Turk revolution “are mistaken”; “the annexation was”, he says explicitly, “only the beginning of Aehrenthal’s programme: paving the way for a trialism by recognizing the autonomy of the southern provinces of the Danubian Monarchy.”

in the matter of nationalities, which greatly inflamed the self-consciousness and stimulated the bellicose tendencies of the Slav and other non-German nationalities"; 3) that Austria did not create a Yugoslavia, when she allowed the rise and development of the Yugoslav national ideal, or did not at least pursued a more favourable policy towards the Serbs in Bosnia. Since this was not the case, there were many reasons for the rise and development of Austrophobia in Serbia and among the Serbs. "In the eyes of the Serbs, we were the national enemy, who prevented their expansion towards the west and who would not assist them in realizing their national plans in the south, in case of the demise of European Turkey."⁶¹³ After the conclusion of the Annexation Crisis, this conviction gained ground not only among the Serbs, but also among many people abroad. The crisis was over, but the old differences remained and were even intensified by another and exceptionally severe clash and by a blatant humiliation imposed almost at the point of sword. Instead of easing the situation, the solution of the Annexation Crisis only aggravated it; in their hearts, the opponents grew more bitter than they had been before. The German author, A. Frankenfeld, is quite right when he points out that in the course of this crisis the possibility of a world war was entertained as a realistic idea.⁶¹⁴ Throughout the crisis and its settlement, might won the victory over right and conscience, and the mistrust that took hold of the souls of the people poisoned the whole atmosphere.

The admirers of Aehrenthal's policy have pointed out that his action caused "a marked increase in self-confidence in the Monarchy".⁶¹⁵ Undoubtedly, Austro-Hungarian diplomacy at that time and later took an attitude of greater determination and readiness to resort to extreme measures, but it is very questionable whether the "self-confidence" was justified. The energy of the Danubian Monarchy was not so much an expression of its own strength as of its reliance on the might of the German bayonets; the events in the following years, 1912-1913 would prove that better than anything else. Therefore, the attitude of Serbia towards Austria-Hungary became dependent on the relations between the groups of the Great Powers and on the attitude of Germany towards Russia and the powers friendly to that country. The Serbian question increasingly became a European one, and Berlin's stance became the most reliable barometer of Austrian energy. All this made the issue of Serbo-Austrian relations much more complex and opened up increasingly wide perspectives.

613 *Dreibund und Entente-Politik*, pp. 236-242.

614 Frankenfeld, *Österreichs Spiel mit dem Kriege*, p. 124.

615 B. Molden, *Alois graf Aehrenthal*, Stuttgart und Berlin 1917, p. 110.

PART II

*From the Annexation Crisis to the
End of the Balkan Wars
(1909-1913)*

The Settlement of the Annexation Crisis

1

After the Annexation Crisis, many Austro-Hungarian statesmen began to ask themselves how they should adjust their future attitude towards Serbia. Their previous attitude had obviously not been the right one. It had led to distrust, to economic differences and, finally, almost to a danger of war. That mistakes had no doubt been made in the treatment of Serbia was sometimes readily admitted even in Vienna. Would things now change, after so serious a crisis, and a moral be drawn from this experience?

The Austrian Minister in Belgrade, Count Forgách, who was certainly one of those most competent to express an opinion on the matter, recorded his reflections as early as 3 April 1909. "There would be two sure ways for us to develop good political relations with Serbia. One would be openly to aid her aspirations to the Sanjak, Macedonia, and a connection with the Adriatic through Turkish territory; the other would be really to do something for the furtherance of her economic interests, to turn her exports of livestock back again towards Vienna and Steinbruck, to bind the country to us economically, to include it eventually in our customs system, and thus to swallow it politically as well. The first way would be, in my humble opinion, a great mistake for which we should later have to pay dearly; the other is being closed to us by internal political circumstances and agrarian tendencies." What then was to be done? The only conclusion at which Forgách arrived was to act towards Serbia with due calm and in a conciliatory spirit, and to wait and see what attitude she would adopt after her experience in the last crisis.¹ Aehrenthal replied to Forgách's letter on 15 April, entirely approving his point of view. He thought that the whole crisis would not be "without benefits for our relations with Serbia", where Russia's hypnotic influence would no doubt "be shaken" and the suppression of the Greater Serbian idea would have certain effect. Aehrenthal considered the first of Forgách's two alternatives for the renewal of good relations with Serbia "a great mistake", but he agreed that "full attention" should be paid to the second one. "If we were, after destroying the political hopes of the Sava Kingdom, to render impossible her economic existence as well, our proceedings would no doubt give occasion for profound mistrust in the Balkan

¹ *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, p. 239.

Peninsula and Europe would condemn them as an oppression and exploitation of small states; moreover, there would be a danger that such a step on the part of the Monarchy might influence Bulgaria and Turkey and perhaps even Romania to give serious consideration to the idea of a Balkan alliance, which so far has been merely chimerical." Aehrenthal therefore considered it "of the greatest and most far-reaching importance for our entire Balkan policy and our position in the Balkans generally" that a *modus vivendi* with Serbia should be found in the economic sphere. "I therefore consider it my duty to bring all my influence to bear with the Imperial and Royal Government and with the Royal Hungarian Government in order to make this way possible." Austria-Hungary's relations with Serbia, he pointed out, were "only a part of the Yugoslav problem, which must be solved in connection and in accordance with the internal policy towards the Yugoslav population to be pursued in the two states of the Monarchy and in the annexed provinces".²

But it was impossible to do much in Serbia at that time as regards economic questions. The country was financially sound, and viewed economic questions as being closely connected with politics and not to be dealt with separately. In political matters, however, there was no real confidence between Serbia and Austria-Hungary. The principal question of economic policy was, for example, that of Serbia's outlet to the sea, and that question was at the same time an important item in Austria's further policy in Old Serbia and the Balkans generally. Everything depended on whether Austria-Hungary would remain an enemy of Serbia all along the line, and in respect of all the questions with which she was faced, or whether it would be satisfied with merely keeping Serbia's hands off its own possessions. In Serbia, there were people who sincerely desired an agreement to be reached on this basis. In Austria, however, the question was always considered in its entirety. Serbia as an independent state presented a danger and an obstacle in Austria's path, especially when she leaned towards Russia in her policy. The strengthening of Serbia meant increasing both the danger and the obstacle. Between that standpoint and that of Serbia there could be no reconciliation. Serbia could emancipate herself from Russia, if she were given a guarantee by Austria not only that the latter would not be against her, but also that she would aid her in certain direction; but Austria-Hungary, on the other hand, would neither give such a guarantee nor enter into any concrete negotiations until Serbia had proved that her policy was changed, and even then Austrian assistance would be doubtful. When on 20 October 1909 Milovanović spoke in Berlin with the competent persons in the Foreign Ministry about the future relations between Serbia

2 Ibid., pp. 280-281.

and Austria-Hungary, he said openly that a policy of real confidence called for two guarantees: 1) "that Austria-Hungary will not make a step further into the Balkans" and 2) "that in case of possible complications and modification of the *status quo* it will not be against us." To this, Schoen replied that in giving up the Sanjak Austria had given sufficient proof as regards the first guarantee, while the realization of the second one depended on establishing mutual confidence between Vienna and Belgrade.³

After the conclusion of the Annexation Crisis, it was likely that any real confidence would be difficult to establish for many years, but it was at least necessary to try and remove those incidents which directly caused bad blood. In the first place, from the political point of view, there were two purely political trials which perpetuated the spirit of excitement and the atmosphere of the Annexation Crisis. These were the high treason trial in Zagreb, in the course of which the public prosecutor, some of the judges and some of the witnesses spoke in an indecent manner against Serbia and even against her Court, and the legal action taken by the Serbo-Croat Coalition against Professor Friedjung. The Serbian government drew Vienna's attention to the harmful effect of the Zagreb trial upon the development of a good neighbourly atmosphere, but Vienna replied that the authorities there were not in a legal position to influence the judicial proceedings in the autonomous courts of law in Croatia. On 19 April 1909, Count Forgách reminded his Minister that before the proceedings began he had already expressed his fear "that the evidence was legally and politically insufficient and that it would compromise us (i.e. Austria-Hungary)" and that the trial created a very bad impression in Serbia. It was also viewed with dissatisfaction in Austria. In the Austrian parliament, after the speech of Masaryk and a few other members, who drew attention to the unsoundness of the indictment and the illegal and tendentious attitude of the court, the suit was condemned on 18 May 1909 with 167 votes against 132, although the Prime Minister, Count Bienerth-Schmerling, declared that any decision taken in this matter would be embarrassing, as it concerned a legal and judicial proceeding in "another state".⁴ Afterwards, on 29 September 1909, a resolution was passed by the Croatian members in the Dalmatian Diet, condemning the prosecution of the Serbs in Croatia and Slavonia and the Zagreb high treason trial. Following upon the news of the sentence of the court, on 5 October, the Dalmatian Diet interrupted its proceedings on that day as a

3 Telegram Milovanovića Ministarstvu inostranih dela, Berlin, 21. 10. 1909, br. 2443, in: M. Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije 1903-1914*, knj. III, sv. 5/2, Beograd 2014, p. 851.

4 *Stenographisches Protokoll, Haus des Abgeordneten, XIX Session, 21 Sitzung.*

sign or protest. On 18 October, the Croat and Slovene members of the Istrian Diet joined the protest. Whether by chance or intentionally, the sentence was passed on the very day when the Emperor signed the decree relating to the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and this amplified its effect. Seeing that the entire proceedings had been groundless and that the sentence was poorly supported by the evidence, Aehrenthal himself called it a “nonsense” (*Unsinn*) in a conversation with Dr. J. M. Baernreither.⁵ Aehrenthal nevertheless found it politic to say to the Serbian Minister on 2 August that the unpleasantness of the Zagreb trial should be taken in Serbia as a consequence of her attitude towards the Danubian Monarchy and as a warning “not to resort again to similar methods”.⁶ In other words, he defended the trial in spite of everything. He said not a word of condemnation of the enormity of the indictment and the sentence or of the manner in which the whole affair had been conducted, but seized on the material side of so meager an incrimination as a means of showing Serbia the need for greater loyalty and caution. In his instructions to the Austrian Minister in Belgrade, Aehrenthal insisted that the suit had been necessary in order to expose the real situation, and that Serbia, which now protested, had forgotten, to some extent, her promises as regards a correct neighbourly attitude. Aehrenthal laid particular stress on the fact that the Serbian press, in speaking about the trial, had appealed to general European public, when it was a question which concerned only Serbia and the Monarchy.⁷ The Zagreb trial, which had been set in motion in order to justify the annexation, was continued even after that, without much consideration either for the Serbian government or for the Serbian Court. Was Serbia, which could not in fact be proved guilty at all, supposed to allow such a thing to go on without protesting? Serbia's appeal to European public opinion would not have alarmed Viennese circles, if Serbia had been really guilty and if it had been possible to prove her guilt in a court of law. In trying to prevent the matter being taken up by neutral European public opinion, Vienna was rather motivated by its lack of conviction in the loyalty of its own proceedings.

The case of the Friedjung trial was a similar one.⁸ In the first place, it should be pointed out that the graphologists called in to examine the documents used by Friedjung, which were supplied by the Foreign Ministry, had pronounced them to be unreliable even before the opening of the case in Vienna. In the

⁵ Baernreither, *Fragmente eines politischen Tagebuches*, p. 129.

⁶ *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, p. 424.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Cf. Seton-Watson, *Die Sudslavische Frage in Habsburger Reiche*, p. 242 et. seq.; Lončarević, *Kaiserliche Katastrophen-Politik*, pp. 369-84.

course of October 1909, a lively correspondence on the subject took place between the Ballplatz and the Austrian Legation in Belgrade. When one reads these documents today, one is surprised to see how it was possible that it never occurred to anybody in the Ministry to enquire into the reliability of documents on the basis of which such gross accusations were made, if it were not too evident, in view of all that had been done in Vienna and throughout the Danubian Monarchy for the preparation and justification of the annexation, that a conscientious investigation into the accusations brought against Serbia and a definite confirmation of their truth was neither the object nor in the interests of Austria's policy. His conscience being uneasy, Forgách proposed on 11-12 November that the action should be in some way avoided or held up, or that Friedjung should be sacrificed, since anything was better than to expose the Monarchy to such great a scandal. He even wrote that the "genuineness of the documents and signatures was relatively quite a secondary matter", adding that for the sake of caution only translations and not photographic reproductions of the supposed original documents should be produced in the court. "Confidential and secret documents, obtained through the agency of government officials, do not get revealed during a political trial, regardless of whether they are genuine or false."⁹ Aehrenthal even thought of influencing the Coalition through the Hungarian government in order to make them withdraw their indictment, and he also attempted in other ways to induce it to do so.¹⁰ In a telegram sent on 12 December 1909, he even recommended the Minister in Belgrade, should occasion arise, to resort to deliberate falsehood and to deny that the Legation had ever had any dealings with the forger.¹¹ Seeing the awkward situation in which he had involved Friedjung personally, he tried to get rid of him, too, and informed Baernreither that he did not wish to know anything about the matter and that the proceedings did not concern him at all.¹² But that was only an expression of irritation at the difficulties in which he was involved. He was fully aware that he could not easily get out of this situation and he therefore resorted to every possible means of stifling and hushing up all reference to the case or to that against the forger Vasić in Belgrade, even threatening to recall the Austrian representative if the Serbian court allowed the defendant's statements about the Minister to be cited in the course of the trial. It was now found, as opposed to what Aehrenthal had argued in the case of the statements made during the Zagreb trial not only against the Serbian

9 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, p. 527.

10 *Ibid.*, pp. 539-40, 554-5.

11 *Ibid.*, p. 598.

12 Baernreither, *Fragmente eines politischen Tagebuches*, p. 140.

government, but also against the Serbian Court, that such statements would be “prejudicial to the position and dignity of the Imperial and Royal representative in Belgrade”.¹³

The Friedjung trial was concluded on 22 December 1909 on his declaring that he had lost confidence in the evidential value of certain documents he had used to prove the suspicious financial relations between the Serbian government and the Serbo-Croat Coalition. Seeing the nature of his material, which was obviously invented and forged, all the persons mentioned as the principal agents of the moral and material Greater Serbian propaganda appeared voluntarily before the Court as witnesses. In so doing, they were prepared to pass from the witness-box to the dock, if it were impossible to prove to the court that their statements were reliable. These included not just Dr. Boža Marković, president of the *Slovenski jug*, but also the departmental head of the Serbian Foreign Ministry, Dr. Miroslav Spalajković, who was referred to in the press of the Monarchy as one of the principal culprits.¹⁴ Their evidence in court convinced both the jury and the judges, and even Friedjung himself, that the public charges brought against the Serbo-Croat Coalition and the Serbian government had been based on doubtful and even forged material.¹⁵ Friedjung, who on that occasion had shown himself to be a historian whose love of truth was questionable, admitted his error only after being cornered with indubitable evidence, although he had known the graphologist expert opinion on the documents even before the trial.¹⁶

Aehrenthal himself, even after the trial, would not tell the entire truth, but tried in every way to minimize its importance. Dr. Baernreither, a former Austrian Minister and a member of the Delegations, openly asserts that Aehrenthal's intention in allowing the publication of Friedjung's article was “to justify the Monarchy's belligerent attitude in the eyes of the world, and, as he himself put it, to give an account of the motives for such an attitude”.¹⁷ Friedjung made a similar statement in one of his protests to the Foreign Ministry, reminding Aehrenthal of his own declaration that the illegal relations supposedly

13 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, III, p. 78.

14 Cf. the statements made by Dr. M. Spalajković and Dr. B. Marković in the *Politika*, nos. 7859, 1930.

15 Similar material was nevertheless used even after the war by some Austrian writers as if it were very reliable. Cf. Hötzendorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, I, pp. 181-3, which publishes the forged instructions purporting to be sent from the Serbian Ministry to the Minister in Vienna. Cf. *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, p. 596; Baernreither, *Fragments eines politischen Tagebuches*, p. 142.

16 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, pp. 515-6.

17 Baernreither, *Fragmente eines politischen Tagebuches*, p. 136. Cf. H. Kanner, *Kaiserliche Katastrophen-Politik*, pp. 63-4.

proved by these documents to exist between the Serbian government and the Yugoslav politicians were one of the reasons for the annexation.¹⁸ Now that the material on the strength of which he was prepared to make such fatal decisions was proved to be forged and suppositious, Aehrenthal stated in a circular letter addressed to all the Legations abroad on 10 January 1910, that the results of the trial were of importance “only in the sphere of internal politics” and that the success achieved in foreign policy was not thereby diminished. With similar reasoning, he went on to state that these results had not shaken the premises on the basis of which the annexation had been carried out and which had been put forward as a partial explanation of it in the eyes of Europe. This point of view only becomes comprehensible when it is realized that the reference to Greater Serbian propaganda was rather an excuse and pretence, and that the real reasons for the annexation were independent of this and based on other considerations and other conditions. To be true, Aehrenthal also said in his defense that the attitude of Serbia during the Annexation Crisis had shown sufficiently clearly that Serbia had aspirations to Bosnia and Herzegovina and that the Danubian Monarchy was therefore right in trying to remove that danger. Anyone who could draw different conclusions from the course of the Friedjung trial, he wrote, deliberately attempted to pervert the truth.¹⁹ This was, however, quite different from what had been said before, and Aehrenthal was only trying to confuse issues in this way. In Austria-Hungary, it was asserted that Serbia was stirring up Bosnia and Herzegovina through the Greater Serbian propaganda, that she was working for revolution there, and that the signs of that revolution were already apparent. The high treason case and Friedjung’s trial were intended to prove this, so that it might be asserted on the strength of them that Austria-Hungary had been forced to defend itself. The evidence produced in both cases showed that the accusations were quite unfounded and thus the whole chain of arguments intended as a moral justification of the proclamation of the annexation and of the attitude of the Danubian Monarchy during the crisis, crumbled. That Serbia had aspirations in respect of Bosnia and Herzegovina, no one denied; she herself openly admitted that. From that point of view, the annexation changed nothing; Serbia’s aspirations still remained. The Italians also had aspirations in the Southern Tyrol and Trieste on the basis of the right of nationality, although these areas had formed an integral part of the Austrian state for hundreds of years, but this did not prevent Austrian statesmen from entering into alliance with them – such aspirations in themselves then, although they might not be agreeable to those at whose expense

18 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, III, p. 48.

19 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, p. 643.

they would have to be realized, were not a sufficient reason for extreme hostility. Minister Burian championed such a view in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and consequently there was never a trial in those provinces similar to the Zagreb or Friedjung ones, although Bosnia and Herzegovina were the principal object of all the discussion and activity. But for that reason, as we have seen before, Burian was attacked not only by the military and clerical circles, but even by the Crown Prince Franz Ferdinand.²⁰

When speaking in the Austrian Delegations in the autumn of 1910, Masaryk sharply criticized the activities of the Foreign Ministry and disclosed the participation of the Austrian staff of the Legation in Belgrade in the whole affair, Aehrenthal attempted to ignore his accusations and to hush the matter up by simply denying it. On 15 (2) November, he declared to the Serbian Minister in Vienna "that Masaryk's campaign has again excited certain Serbian circles, and this might have an adverse effect on the final restoration of good relations between Austria-Hungary and Serbia".²¹ The Zagreb trial, as we have seen, was necessary, in Aehrenthal's opinion, to disclose the actual state of affairs and it was therefore continued even after the conclusion of the Annexation Crisis, regardless of the fact that it had an adverse effect on Serbia. Now that the actual state of affairs was indeed disclosed through the exposure of the forged documents, Aehrenthal suddenly became worried about the impression this campaign would make in Belgrade, and feared that Masaryk of all people, an avowed friend of the Yugoslavs and a champion of truth, was disturbing the good relations between Vienna and Belgrade by his unsparing criticism. He wished to shelter from Masaryk's exposures behind declarations of the Serbian government, which were naturally very reserved. At Aehrenthal's request, they issued an official communiqué in which they declared among other things that, in the absence of any evidence to the contrary, they believed Forgách's statements to the effect that Aehrenthal and he had taken no personal part in the preparation of the forgeries and had not maintained any relations with Vasić. But Aehrenthal was dissatisfied with the Serbian reservations, and on 6 December issued a new statement in which he insisted that Pašić and Milovanović had assured Forgách that the Belgrade authorities did not believe Vasić's "absurd slanders" to the effect that the Austrian Minister or some of his subordinates had ordered the forgery of the documents or forged them themselves. On 6-7 December, through Forgách and the Serbian Minister in Vienna,

20 Chlumecky, *Österreichische Rundschau*, XII, p. 326.

21 Telegram poslanstva Kraljevine Srbije u Beču Ministarstvu inostranih dela, Beč, 15. 11. 1910, br. 1604, in: Lj. Aleksić-Pejković and K. Džambazovski, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije 1903-1914*, knj. IV, sv. 2/2, Beograd 2015, p. 803.

he requested from the Serbian government that his statement should not be subjected to different interpretations or weakened by any subsequent statements on their part, although it did not demonstrably correspond to the truth. Dj. Simić thus reported the message: "He would be forced to consider any such attempt as a disavowal of the statement you (Milovanović) and Pašić made to the Austro-Hungarian Minister, and thence to draw conclusions which might be of a very serious nature. Aehrenthal told me in confidence that in such an eventuality Forgách would be given a prolonged leave of absence and the post of Austro-Hungarian Minister in Belgrade would not be filled for a considerable time." Unruffled by the open threat, Milovanović at once replied that in his conversations with Forgách he had told him the limits to which the Serbian government could go in their official statement. Neither he nor Pašić had made any statements to Forgách, "but in conversations entered into on the latter's initiative and in answer to these assurances expressed confidence in the correctness of his behaviour and the hope that the accusations against him would be successfully refuted. As regards his subordinates in the Legation, no mention was made even in the nature of a conversation such as this".²² Without going further with the correction of the Aehrenthal's statements on account of his delicate position, but careful to safeguard himself and the Serbian government from any incorrect allegations, Milovanović declared through the official organ of the government in connection with the latest statement from Vienna, "that the Serbian government have said in their communiqué all they considered they had to say and that they have nothing else to add to or detract from that." In other words, they made indirect reservations as regards the interpretation and assertion suggested by Aehrenthal for the sake of Forgách's and his own benefit. This of course created a very bad impression in the Ballplatz, and on 10 December Aehrenthal wrote angrily to Belgrade "that in future the attitude of Austria-Hungary towards Serbia would depend on the extent to which the latter's assurances corresponded with the reality." In his message to Forgách, he emphasized that the Serbian attitude in this matter had shaken him in his belief in the Serbian government's true desire for the maintenance of good relations.²³ In his view, Serbia should have "swallowed" without protest the false accusations directed against her and her compatriots and specially prepared and used to compromise her, and should have suppressed and blurred the truth for the benefit of those who had worked against her. On 12 December, Aehrenthal ordered Forgách to limit his relations with Milovanović to strictly

22 Forgách endeavoured to present matters more favourably for himself and his Legation, but he, too, admitted Milovanović's moderation. See *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, III, pp. 85-7.

23 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, III, p. 103.

official intercourse.²⁴ But seeing that the Serbian government did not publicly exploit the established facts to the extent that had been expected in Vienna, and fully aware that the whole affair, if it came to the notice of the European diplomatic world, would largely go against the interests of Viennese diplomacy and the Legation in Belgrade in case of further tension, Aehrenthal directed Forgách a fortnight later “gradually to modify his reserved attitude”.²⁵ It only remained to break off relations with Spalajković, who had greatly contributed, through his indirect relations with T. Masaryk, to the revelation of the whole affair and who had refused to cover up Forgách and his work in Belgrade with his statements.

After the failure of the Friedjung trial, it was necessary to wind up the Zagreb high treason trial as well. On 31 December 1909, the Court of Appeal released from custody all the Serbs under sentence with the exception of Adam and Valerijan Pribičević, and on 2 April 1910 annulled the sentence, again on the grounds that the evidence on which it was based was neither sufficient nor reliable. *Ban* Rauch, the principal representative of the policy of sheer oppression, had been forced to retire earlier, and Dr. Nikola Tomašić was appointed in his place on 7 February 1910.

The settlement of these cases undoubtedly closed two of the most unpleasant incidents in Serbo-Austrian relations at the end of 1909 and in 1910. All other points at issue, even in connection with the commercial treaty, consisted of less inflammable and injurious elements, for they had never acquired such purely political and accusatory character.

Among other clashes after the Annexation Crisis, there were certain disputes on the western border. The border between Serbia and Bosnia on the Drina had not been established after the Congress of Berlin, and after the annexation, in the summer of 1909, the Austrian authorities began to appropriate certain pieces of land there. On 21 June, a dispute arose concerning the possession of the river-island of Saraševo, the Bosnian government having given orders for its occupation. The Serbian government dispatched a protest to Vienna against this, and demanded on 16 (3) July that the decision on this matter should be referred to a mixed commission or to an arbitration tribunal, and that the *status quo ante* should be restored. On 25 July, although insisting that it should be considered an administrative and not a political question, Aehrenthal agreed to the matter being referred to a mixed commission, but postponed the withdrawal of troops from the occupied island. A little later, on 11 August, after two earlier attempts, Austrian troops also occupied the island of Zelenica, without

²⁴ Ibid., pp. 107-103.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 125.

informing the Serbian government or making any complaint as to a possible infringement of the border. The Serbian government lodged a new protest and informed St. Petersburg of the incident, "as the increasing frequency of such proceedings is a source of irritation among the people and is very trying to the dignity of the Royal Government".²⁶ At the meeting between Aehrenthal and Milovanović on 29 August, the latter categorically stated that "Serbia cannot accept under the present circumstances the regulation of the border on the Drina, which would result in the slightest territorial loss". According to Milovanović's report, Aehrenthal replied "that we can be peaceful in that respect, since according to their previous studies Serbia would stand to receive more and better pieces of land than to cede through the establishment of the border line on the basis of the river flow from 1878, and therefore the Serbian state territory would be increased rather than diminished".²⁷ A special commission that consisted of Serbian and Austrian members started its work from 1 September onwards, but it could not make any headway. At the suggestion of military circles, the Bosnian authorities made further difficulties by temporary occupation of some small river islands. Barona Hötzen Dorf has claimed that he was against Aehrenthal's concessions to the Serbs in that matter and that he even made a protest, believing that the prestige of the Monarchy was harmed and the self-confidence of the Serbs boosted. If the Serbs could not be made to submit to the Austrian decision peacefully, he proposed then that 'forceful recognition of the indubitable right should not be shrunk from'. As for military occupation, he told Aehrenthal: "I can state from a purely military point of view that there is no inconvenience in using some garrisons of the 11th mountain brigade from one occasion to another, in a sudden manner, because of border disputes, as such raids seem suitable to interrupt the stagnating peace, to provide new impulses to military spirit and even to facilitate preparations for alarming and mobilization."²⁸ Hötzen Dorf advanced these "legal" considerations in time of peace, on 8 July 1911, just when the passions had been, at least to some extent, allayed, regardless of the effect that such military surprise attacks might have on the state of mind of Serbia. As a result of his attitude,

26 Generalizing somewhat irresponsibly, General Auffenberg, who was in command of the 15th Regiment in Sarajevo, writes that from 1909 to 1911 "there were border incidents almost every month, in which without exception our Serbian, Montenegrin and sometimes even our Turkish neighbours played a provocative and even aggressive part." See *Aus Österreichs Ungarns Teilnahme am Weltkriege*, Berlin und Wien 1920, p. 81.

27 Aehrenthal's report about this conversation is not so specific on this matter. See *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, 454-5.

28 Hötzen Dorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, II, pp. 232-233, 260-262.

which was known to and supported by the military authorities, the border commission barely succeeded to settle a few private legal disputes.

The other dispute concerned commercial and economic relations. As Austria-Hungary had delayed introducing to the parliament the commercial treaty concluded with Serbia in 1908 and the old treaty expired on 31 March 1909, the two countries again found themselves in an unregulated situation, which had a markedly adverse effect on Serbian exports. Since her parliament had accepted the commercial treaty with Austria-Hungary, Serbia regarded her interests as harmed by this delay on Austria's part, and therefore, on 15 (2) April 1909, renounced her existing conventions with Austria-Hungary – the navigation convention of 22 February 1882, the consular convention of 6 May 1881, that relating to bequests and the administration of personal estates of 6 May 1881, and that relating to legal assistance and extradition of 6 May 1881. Vienna was surprised at this cancellation, but understood what it meant and made no special issue of it. But Austria did not still hasten the negotiations for the commercial treaty, partly for political reasons, and partly on account of the resistance of the Austrian and Hungarian Agrarians. The new treaty was not concluded, after protracted negotiations, before 27 (14) July 1910. The above mentioned conventions were then extended until 31 December 1910, it being understood that further negotiations were soon to be started with a view to their eventual revision. That was immediately done, and the negotiations were concluded and the new conventions signed by 30 March 1911. As far as formal matters were concerned, normal and correct neighbourly relations were thus restored between Serbia and Austria-Hungary, but the mutual distrust continued and its various manifestations could not be hidden despite of goodwill on some occasions to avoid them.

This was particularly visible in the spring of 1911 when King Peter was supposed to visit the Austrian Emperor in Budapest on 7 May. The Hungarian press seized the opportunity to attack both Serbia and the Serbian Court in an indecent manner, whilst the Serbian press replied with considerable bitterness, criticizing also the Serbian government for having arranged the visit of the Serbian King to the Austrian Court after all that had occurred. The Serbian public opinion was particularly dissatisfied because not only Aehrenthal, but also Forgách, who had been much compromised in the forged documents affair during the Friedjung trial, was going to be with the King on that occasion.²⁹ In view of this, at King Peter's wish, the visit had to be postponed; in fact, the idea was completely abandoned, for it was seen that feelings on both sides were still

29 For further particulars about this visit, see Lončarević, *Kaiserliche Katastrophen-Politik*, pp. 390-400.

too inflammable. On 16 May, Forgách left Belgrade, greatly embittered both by his personal failure and by the general atmosphere which he left behind him.

Meanwhile, Vienna kept a vigilant eye on everything that Serbia was doing and planning, and it endeavoured to frustrate and paralyze anything that might increase Serbia's strength whether by her making new connections, concluding new alliances, or acquiring new material resources. As early as 16 June 1909, two months after the end of the crisis, Aehrenthal wrote a special letter to his Ambassador in Paris, urging him to prevent the conclusion of a Serbian loan. Acting in accordance with these instructions, the Ambassador immediately attempted to exert his influence in that direction, both in the financial world and with the French government.³⁰ In accordance with Aehrenthal's instructions of 30 October 1909 to his Ambassador in London, the British government was to be informed that their steps in Belgrade would be vigilantly watched, and that they could reassure Vienna as to their friendly intentions not just by exerting a conciliatory influence on Belgrade, but also by dispelling among the Serbs their "foolish illusions as to the future".³¹ In Turkey, Vienna cautiously but incessantly worked against the Serbian plan for the Adriatic railway. Aehrenthal himself told Rifat Pasha, the Turkish Foreign Minister, that it was better for Turkey to work for other connections instead of that railway, such as, for instance, the linking of "the heart of the country with Albania" or the connecting of the Mitrovica railway and Bosnian railways.³² That Austria would also try in Sofia to make a Serbo-Bulgarian rapprochement impossible was only to be expected, as a rapprochement between Serbia and Bulgaria would no doubt mean the elimination of a powerful means of stirring up dissension which Austro-Hungarian diplomacy had previously taken copious advantage of in its Balkan policy. During a personal interview with King Ferdinand on 22 December 1909, Aehrenthal spoke of the future for comprehensible reasons as follows: should the time come for Turkish rule in Europe to be broken up, he would "wish conversations about the future course of Balkan affairs to be begun not in Belgrade, but in Sofia".³³ Count Berchtold went as far as telling the Queen of Bulgaria in St. Petersburg on 20 February 1910 that he was surprised that King Ferdinand, "with all his large measure of self-respect, should decide to take steps which were bound to bring him into immediate contact

30 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, pp. 363-365. Cf. pp. 416-417.

31 *Ibid.*, p. 509.

32 *Ibid.*, p. 886.

33 *Ibid.*, p. 623.

with such a throne”, thereby referring to his visits to the Serbian Court.³⁴ The marriage of Princess Helena, King Peter’s daughter, to the Russian Grand Duke Ioann Konstantinovich in 1911 also gave rise to unfriendly feelings on the part of Austro-Hungarian diplomats both on account of the obvious success of the Serbian Royal House and of the strengthening of Serbo-Russian relations.

Serbian statesmen tried in vain to come to some closer and sincere understanding with Vienna on political matters.

When he met Aehrenthal personally on 29 August 1909, Milovanović raised the question of the Sanjak of Novi Pazar. He in fact asked Aehrenthal frankly what Austria-Hungary’s attitude would be if Serbia “perhaps in the far-distant future” attempted to extend her possessions in that direction and under what conditions the Danubian Monarchy could agree to it. Aehrenthal would not give a positive answer to that question, but only reminded Milovanović of the “bitter experience” of Greece in the Cretan question. Milovanović brought up the same question again a few weeks later, on 19 November, in a conversation with Dr. Baernreither. It was obviously impossible to reform Turkey even under the Young Turk regime, and its collapse must come sooner or later. What would Austria’s attitude be then towards Turkey and Serbia? If Austria showed consideration for Serbia in this matter, a political and economic understanding would follow without any difficulties and that all along the line. The Serbs would feel that Austria was no obstacle to their development and that would influence all the Serbs favourably, not only in Serbia proper, but also in Bosnia and the rest of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Baernreither immediately relayed this conversation with Milovanović to Aehrenthal, but the result was the same as on the occasion of Aehrenthal’s own conversation with the Serbian Foreign Minister. Aehrenthal did not want to commit himself as regards the future, or to enter into that question in any greater detail.³⁵ Baernreither thinks that this was the case because Berlin then set great store by an alliance with Turkey and Aehrenthal accordingly did not have a free hand in the matter.³⁶ In fact, Aehrenthal did not want to make Serbia any promises which might strengthen her, or which might encourage her to develop national aspirations in any direction whatever. In the above mentioned interview with King Ferdinand, his allusions were obviously made in a different tone. It was not consideration for Turkey, but his intended attitude of reserve towards Serbia which held him back. “Since the opportunity was not seized last year to annex Serbia”, Conrad von Hötzendorf wrote in 1910, “it must be – until that has happened – the

34 Ibid., p. 717.

35 Baernreither, *Fragmente eines politischen Tagebuches*, pp. 126-9.

36 Ibid., p. 131.

permanent aim of the Monarchy to prevent Serbia from growing so strong as to become a state that would have its say in the Balkans.”³⁷ That was the fundamental belief not only of Hötendorf, but also of all the other leading personalities in the Danubian Monarchy.

This can best be seen from Austria's attitude at the time of the Albanian uprising, which broke out unexpectedly in the spring of 1909 against the Young Turk rule. In his instructions to Marquis Pallavicini in Constantinople on 28 April 1910, the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister explained why he wanted some compromise to settle the whole dispute. “The complete defeat and disarmament of the Albanians might bring that culturally backward element, which owes its present position entirely and exclusively to the strength of its fist, into political and economic dependence not only on the Turks, but above all on the civilized Serbian inhabitants of the country. This would bring about the transformation of north-eastern Albania into a real “Old Serbia”, and the Pan-Slav plans, which are directed as much against the Monarchy as against Turkey, would make a major step toward their realization with the help of the Young Turks, which would make the building of the Danubian-Adriatic railway look as a small detail.”³⁸ The German government was in complete agreement with these views of Aehrenthal, and the representatives of both Powers spoke to that effect in Constantinople.³⁹

The Albanian insurrection naturally aroused much excitement among the Balkan states, especially as the situation was ominous on account of the acuteness of the Cretan question. On 19 April 1910, Crown Prince Danilo of Montenegro called on the Austrian Minister at Cetinje and confided to him that the events of exceptional importance were in the offing. According to him, Serbia and Bulgaria were preparing to invade Turkey in order to protect their compatriots in case of serious crisis. The Prince said that they had appealed to Montenegro to collaborate with them.⁴⁰ This rumour was not true, at least insofar as it concerned Serbia, but it immediately spread. Aehrenthal passed it at once to Constantinople and Berlin, and Berlin, following Austria's example, forwarded it again to Constantinople.⁴¹ It was, of course, immediately seized upon by the Austrian and German press, which insisted that the Young Turks should make every attempt, in view of the considerable danger, to come to an agreement with the Albanians, as Austria-Hungary had constantly urged.

37 Hötendorf, *Aus meiner Dienatzeit*, I, p. 261.

38 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, pp. 844-5.

39 *Ibid.*, pp. 860-1.

40 *Ibid.*, pp. 823-4.

41 *Ibid.*, pp. 832, 840, 846-7.

Throughout 1910, however, the Serbian government was not clear as to who was supporting the Albanians in their resistance to the Young Turks and for what reason. The Albanians, pursued by the Turkish troops, fled to Montenegro and were met with a cordial reception. The Serbian government feared that Viennese circles, for their own ends, might be supporting both the Albanian uprising and the concentration of the Albanians in Montenegro. In instructions to the Ministers in St. Petersburg and Rome on 5 December (22 November) 1910, Milovanović spoke of the need to obtain information. He feared, just like other members of the government, lest the insurrection should serve Viennese diplomacy as an excuse for some action in Turkey, interpreting Vienna's interest in the Albanians as dictated by the need to strengthen its own influence rather than by any desire to pacify and satisfy them. On the other hand, reports had been received from Sofia that Bulgarian influence was behind the Albanian resistance, which in turn was connected with Vienna. The Serbian representative in Sofia, Dr. M. Dj. Milojević, reported on 30 (17) April that this information was accurate, and this was later confirmed by Simić.⁴² Vienna – which was on this occasion unjustly suspected – at first believed that some Italian action in connection with Montenegro was at work,⁴³ but it was later also informed that Bulgaria “has had a finger” in the uprising.⁴⁴ In fact, the insurrection was a spontaneous move on the part of the Albanians themselves, of which Bulgaria and Montenegro afterwards tried to take advantage. Serbia was decidedly opposed to it. She emphatically denied all reports that she was preparing for military action, for Belgrade at that time still counted on friendship with Turkey, and the revolutionary activities presented no small danger to peace in the Balkans and offered a possible excuse for foreign intervention. On 14 April 1910, Milovanović emphatically refused the requests of the Albanians in the Šalja and Lab districts for arms and ammunition from Serbia.

The Albanian question again became one of the major questions standing in the way of an understanding between Serbia and Austria-Hungary. The Serbian government, unlike the Viennese, sincerely wanted to see Turkey, once it had decided to adopt energetic measures towards the Albanians, bring them to order and break their self-will and disrespect for law. This, in the first place, would have meant the salvation of the Serbian element in Old Serbia. In the

42 Milojević Milovanoviću, Sofija, 30. 4. 1910, Pov. Br. 176, in: Lj. Aleksić-Pejković and K. Džambazovski, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije 1903-1914*, knj. IV, sv. 1/1, Beograd 2012, p. 685; Simić Milovanoviću, Sofija, 30. 5. 1910, Pov. Br. 204, in: Lj. Aleksić-Pejković and K. Džambazovski, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. IV, sv. 1/2, pp. 902-906.

43 Giesl, *Zwei Jahrzehnte*, p. 223.

44 Hötendorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, II, p. 27; cf. p. 159.

second place, it was also wiser from a political point of view. In a conversation with the Bulgarian Foreign Minister, Paprikov, on 14 (1) May 1910, Svetislav Simić endeavoured to convince him that it was in the general interests of the Balkan states to leave the Turks carry out the pacification of the Albanian population unchecked. "It is already damaging to us if the Turks, in view of the raising of the Cretan question, or for fear of Bulgaria's attitude in some eventual entanglement, allow the old anarchy to continue in Old Serbia, but the damage may become general if this anarchy – as it is almost certain – lead in its further development to a conflagration in the Balkans at a moment when the Balkan peoples, divided by dissensions, are unable to offer a united resistance to the enemies of Balkan independence." Serbia would in that case have to decide whether to defend Turkish integrity with Turkey, or herself to take advantage of the general upheaval. In the latter case, she would in all probability have Austria-Hungary against her and would in that way incur the enmity of both that power and Turkey.⁴⁵ It was accordingly quite comprehensible that Serbia should desire the Albanian insurrection to be settled as soon and as firmly as possible.

Austria remained thoroughly mistrustful of Serbia, chiefly for two reasons. The first was that to support Serbian aspirations in the south might very soon, if they were realized, encourage Serbian appetites in the west. The other reason was that in the last crisis Serbia had become something of a Russia's protégé and, in Vienna's opinion, a Russian pawn on the chessboard of Balkan policy. Vienna was especially mistrustful of the preparations for the conclusion of a Balkan alliance, such as had been urged by Izvolsky in the course of the Annexation Crisis and had long been desired by Belgrade. Austria saw in these activities a move directed principally against herself, and she endeavoured by all means to frustrate it. With this object in view, she had three ways before her, two direct and one indirect. The first was to use her powerful influence in Sofia to prevent any agreement between Serbia and Bulgaria, which were the two principal supporters of the Balkan alliance. The second was to oppose the alliance of the Slav states in the Balkans, which would remain under Russian influence, by creating another alliance between Turkey and Romania and perhaps Greece, which would be inclined towards Vienna and Berlin. The third, indirect way, was for Austria to come to an agreement with Russia. Austro-Hungarian diplomacy worked in all these three directions, but without any real success.

45 Simić Milovanoviću, Sofija, 16. 5. 1910, Pov. Br. 193, in: Lj. Aleksić-Pejković and K. Džambazovski, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije 1903-1914*, knj. IV, sv. 1/2, Beograd 2012, pp. 832-834.

1) Austria's relations with Russia remained very strained after the Annexation Crisis, and for some time there could be no thought of any closer cooperation. In his dispatch of 29 May 1909, the German Military Attaché in St. Petersburg, Paul von Hintze, who had a frequent contact with Emperor Nicholas II, wrote that the latter was very bitter against Austria. "His Majesty the Emperor still feels far too keenly and far too deeply Russia's humiliation at the hands of Austria, and her having had to withdraw when faced with a war with that Power, not to be indignant with any man who talks to him of reconciliation or even of collaboration with her."⁴⁶ Germany assumed, to some extent, the role of a mediator, but at first its endeavours met with no success. Russia might easily have come to an agreement with Germany on many points, but Austrian interests formed the largest obstacle between them. Germany looked forward, in its own interests, to Austria's becoming as strong as possible. Russia had nothing against that in principle, but she was decidedly opposed to any eventual Austrian expansion in the Balkans. When Count Pourtalès explained to Izvolsky why a renewal of collaboration between the three Emperors was desirable, Izvolsky replied plainly on 2 June 1909 that he would be favourable to it, but on the condition that Germany saw to it "that Austria did nothing further towards a revision in her own interests of the *status quo* in the Balkan Peninsula." Emperor Wilhelm II commented on this: "We should never dream of it!" Hintze wrote from St. Petersburg that the entire tendency of Russian policy was to make use of Germany so that it might prevent Austria, during Russia's weakness, from entertaining any active policy.⁴⁷ Why would otherwise Russia need this understanding and collaboration? If Austria intended to take advantage of Russia's weakness, her collaboration, together with that of Germany, would be more than suspect and would obviously be detrimental to Russia. The agreement, of which Pourtalès had spoken with the approval of his government, could be reached only if Russia were given a guarantee that she would not be tricked. If Berlin would not hear of such a guarantee and had never even dreamt of such a thing, it is quite understandable that Russian diplomacy should look for other ways and means of realizing its objectives.

Berlin and Vienna often insisted in various conversations on this subject that Austria had no further plans of conquest in the Balkans and that she had given proof of this by abandoning the Sanjak. However, Austria counted on the possibility of territorial expansion in the Balkans after 1908 as much as before. When in the spring of 1909 the Italian government proposed a new agreement to Vienna on Balkan affairs, one of the provisions to be included

⁴⁶ *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, p. 808.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 808, 813, 815.

among the points of the agreement was that Austria should recognize in principle Italy's right to compensation in case Austria expanded into the Sanjak or beyond the borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Had Austria contemplated no further expansion, she would simply have rejected such a proposition as pointless, especially as she could see that Italy sounded out her intentions and wanted to ensure of a share in any eventual spoils. However, Aehrenthal accepted the proposition on 25 June 1909, especially mentioning the possibility of the Danubian Monarchy being "forced" in case of Turkey's collapse "to occupy a part of the present possessions of that Empire".⁴⁸ This was said, it is true, diplomatically, but very plainly. That Austria's consent and statement made a strong impression in Italy can be proved beyond doubt. They unequivocally strengthened the belief that Austria entertained the hope of a future expansion in the Balkans. The German Ambassador in Rome, Jagow, reported on 25 October 1909 that this conviction was "an axiom of public opinion" there.⁴⁹ The existence of this conviction was confirmed by Tittoni himself.⁵⁰ The new German Chancellor, Bethmann Hollweg, thought it necessary, therefore, after this statement, to reassure Italian statesmen of Austria's pacific intentions.⁵¹ But these assurances considerably weakened the position of certain circles in Austria and especially that of Conrad von Hötzendorf. In a memorandum submitted to the Foreign Ministry on 2 July of the same year, the latter asserted that "the closest natural development directs the Monarchy towards the Balkans and towards supremacy in the Adriatic Sea." In order that Austria might exert her influence in the Balkans, she would have to annex Serbia and Montenegro or at least to bind Montenegro more closely to herself. The occupation of Serbia was necessary to Austria not only for the extension of her possessions, which was a military necessity "for a powerful influence in all Balkan questions, but also because it was not advisable to allow a sovereign Yugoslav state of the size of Serbia to exist alongside the Monarchy's Yugoslav territory as a permanent center of attraction."⁵² Hötzendorf already expressed these ideas immediately after the Annexation Crisis in a memorandum submitted to the Emperor on 3 April, in which he said "that the annexation of Serbia to the Monarchy was a necessity for the latter, as it was only in that way that the final solution of the now extremely urgent Yugoslav question might be expected."⁵³ In replying to Hötzendorf's memorandum, on 15 August,

48 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, pp. 378, 384-5, 579-80; *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVII, p. 330.

49 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVII, p. 466.

50 *Ibid.*, p. 414.

51 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, pp. 796-8.

52 *Ibid.*, pp. 387-92.

53 Hötzendorf, *Aust meiner Dienstzeit*, I, p. 167.

Aehrenthal first pointed out that any Austrian attack on Serbia would at that time have aroused Russia and Italy, and could have only led to catastrophic results. "It is not indeed to be denied", he wrote, "that under certain circumstances we may one day think or be forced to think of the annexation of a part of Serbia, for we cannot allow that small country to create a center of attraction on our border." To achieve this, he said, depended in the first place on the Monarchy itself, i.e. on the direction in which Yugoslavism with its aspirations might gravitate, which meant on the policy pursued in Zagreb and Sarajevo.⁵⁴ But this answer made no impression on Hötzendorf, who stuck to his opinion. In a further memorandum addressed to the Crown Prince Franz Ferdinand on 15 December 1909, he expounded the view that Austria could not cede Niš to Bulgaria, as she herself "had an eye" on it, and that the union of Serbia with the Monarchy was an undoubted necessity.⁵⁵ Of these inclinations on the part of Austria, both diplomatic and military, Berlin was well informed, and in his document of 5 August 1909, Schoen accordingly noted, with an obvious reservation, that Austria had publicly abandoned her expansionist tendencies and that she was sincere in this "at least for the present" (*zurzeit wenigsten*).⁵⁶ In another document dated 18 February 1910, however, Schoen explained clearly why Germany, just like Austria, could not support the view that the development of the Balkan states should be encouraged on the basis of the principle of nationality. His reasons were the following: 1) they (i.e. Germany and Austria) "have nothing to expect" from the Balkan states, Serbia, Bulgaria and Montenegro; 2) "such a process could only be carried out at the expense of Turkey and would therefore be contrary to Austria-Hungary's plans for the future." If the dismemberment of Turkey had to take place at all, "it may be presumed that Austria-Hungary will not allow the afore-mentioned Balkan states alone to inherit Turkey's possessions, but will return to her former plans *au delà de Mitrowitz*, although it now declares *urbi et orbi* that she has given up for good her penetration in the direction of Salonika".⁵⁷

As St. Petersburg became convinced during the Annexation Crisis and these negotiations that the Berlin government stood behind Vienna, Russia decided to attempt to form an equally powerful coalition for the purpose of thwarting the policy of the Danubian Monarchy. Her collaboration with Britain, nevertheless, did not save her from defeat in her annexation policy; however important they might be in themselves, Balkan questions were of subsidiary and

54 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, p. 440.

55 Hötzendorf, *Aus meiner Deinstzeit*, I, p. 203.

56 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVII, p. 332.

57 *Ibid.*, p. 467.

secondary importance to both Britain and France. It was therefore necessary to enter into collaboration with some other state whose interest in the Balkans was much more direct and whose mistrust of Austria was equally lively. That state was Italy. After protracted negotiations, a meeting between the Russian Emperor and the King of Italy took place in Racconigi in the autumn of 1909, on 25 October. This meeting was in itself a political event of the first importance, but the fact that the Emperor, being angry with Austria, chose to travel to and from Italy by a circuitous route, in order not to have to set a foot on the Austrian territory gave it an exceptional significance from the beginning. Vienna at once suspected from this that the negotiations in Racconigi would be conducted in a spirit not favourable to the Danubian Monarchy and that they might perhaps end in an arrangement directed against it and its aspirations. Izvolsky informed the Russian Ambassador in Berlin, on 4 November, that the Italo-Russian agreement on Balkan questions was in the main conservative, with a view to preserving the existing order and constructive only insofar as it provided for the normal and pacific development of the Balkan states; it would only be directed against a third Power if any such Power acted against these two fundamental principles.⁵⁸ On the same day, Izvolsky informed Belgrade, Cetinje and Sofia that the Racconigi agreement secured them against any external attack and that henceforward they might concentrate all their forces on the pacific development of their national life. The principle of “the Balkans for the Balkan peoples” was consecrated in Racconigi, and it now depended on those peoples themselves and on their maturity and understanding of the necessity for closer mutual cooperation and understanding what their future fate would be; Russia’s policy and that of the Powers adhering to the Racconigi agreement would view “with the greatest satisfaction” any attempt at a rapprochement between the Balkan states.⁵⁹ Tittoni told Milovanović immediately after the meeting that the guiding principle of the agreement was “not to allow any foreign occupation, but to modify the *status quo*, if it becomes impossible, by the emancipation of the Balkan peoples and in favour of the Balkan states”.⁶⁰ Charykov told the Serbian Minister in Constantinople that the meeting at Racconigi had “definitely laid it down that Russia and the Powers friendly to her would guarantee Serbia’s integrity”.⁶¹

58 Benckendorff, *Diplomatischen Schriftwechsel*, I, pp. 151-4.

59 Ibid., pp. 154-6.

60 Milovanović Ministarstvu inostranih dela, Rim, 3. 11. 1909, Pov. Br. 2510, in: M. Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije 1903-1914*, knj. III, sv. 5/2, Beograd 2014, p. 896.

61 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, dispatch from Constantinople, 18 October 1909, conf. no. 467.

That the meeting in Racconigi and its conclusions would be very unfavourably viewed in Vienna was to be expected from the first. As early as 15 August 1909, Aehrenthal wrote to the head of the Austrian General Staff that he considered it his duty "to prevent any understanding of a concrete nature between Rome and St. Petersburg".⁶² The Russo-Italian agreement to the effect that, if it proved impossible to preserve Turkey, the free development of the Balkan states on the basis of the principle of nationality would be allowed, struck at the very root of Austria's plans, which we have just discussed. Aehrenthal did not much hide his dissatisfaction. When the Italian Ambassador offered certain explanations in Berlin with regard to this matter, Schoen told him that Vienna's dissatisfaction was comprehensible, as such an agreement "meant more or less that Russia and Italy were patronizing a Balkan alliance".⁶³ To the German Ambassador in Vienna Aehrenthal said that the Racconigi agreement provided, in fact, for the partition of Turkey between the Balkan states. He particularly blamed Tittoni, because he had confirmed the principle of non-interference in Balkan questions in the event of any change in negotiations with him, while in his negotiations with Russia he had agreed to support the development of the Balkan states.⁶⁴ In fact, both Russia and Italy wished to see the Balkans remain in the hands of the Balkan peoples and any further expansion of Austria prevented. Austria-Hungary had no just cause for annoyance with the Racconigi agreement, if it indeed had no thought of further expansion, that it to say of taking advantage of any change in the situation of Turkey; its annoyance, therefore, in the light of this explanation, gave many reasons for a different conclusion. The German Emperor, too, was dissatisfied with the Racconigi agreement and considered that after it an Austro-Turkish military convention, which he heartily advocated, would be "a justifiable security measure".⁶⁵ He also recommended that Romania should be drawn into this alliance.⁶⁶

Fearing that he might remain isolated in his Balkan policy, Aehrenthal began to grow noticeably more complaisant after the Racconigi meeting. Seizing eagerly upon Izvolsky's remark made on 12 January 1911 after a personal incident between the latter and the Austrian Ambassador, Count Berchtold, to the effect that more friendly contact between Vienna and St. Petersburg was the necessary preliminary to a stable Eastern policy,⁶⁷ Aehrenthal sent more

62 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, p. 441.

63 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVII, p. 165.

64 *Ibid.*, pp. 416-8.

65 *Ibid.*, p. 241.

66 *Ibid.*, p. 423.

67 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, p. 654.

conciliatory messages to St. Petersburg as early as 28 January. The general principles of a new Russo-Austrian agreement were to be established in the spirit of the 1897 agreement and might now be concretely expressed in the following three points: 1) the maintenance of the existing order in Turkey as long as that was possible; 2) mutual disinterestedness in case that order could not be maintained, and 3) a policy of non-intervention.⁶⁸ Izvolsky replied to this message on 9 February with the declaration that the Russian government no longer wanted to return to the character of the 1897 agreement, but would like all the interested Powers to participate in a new agreement. In other words, he no longer wanted an exclusively Austro-Russian agreement in regard to Balkan questions. Moreover, Russia also wished the fundamental points of this agreement to be communicated to all the Powers in order to bind Austria by them and prevent her from springing any further surprises upon the world.⁶⁹ In the spirit of the agreement concluded in Racconigi, Izvolsky proposed as the basis for further negotiations and collaboration with Vienna and the other Powers: 1) the maintenance of the existing order in the Balkans; 2) a consideration of the new Turkish regime promising equality for all subjects; and 3) the independence, consolidation and pacific development of the small Balkan states.⁷⁰ On this basis, however, no agreement was arrived at. It was prevented by mutual distrust. Aehrenthal, in fact, did not want the collaboration of all the Powers in such an agreement, and Izvolsky, on the other hand, could not enter into a unilateral agreement between Vienna and St. Petersburg, for he was already pledged to Italy and did not believe in the sincerity of Vienna's offer.⁷¹ Aehrenthal feared that, as he said himself, if the Russian proposals were published as accepted, Izvolsky might boast before Europe "that he has again bound us to the *status quo* in the Balkans." And he did not want to be bound to that principle. It is sufficient to compare his three points with those of Izvolsky to see at once where the difference lay and where his hesitation originated. All that remained after this was to come to a concrete agreement from one case to another.⁷² Normal diplomatic relations were thereupon restored between Russia and Austria-Hungary on 1 March 1910.

68 Ibid., pp. 669-79, 693.

69 Cf. *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVII, p. 499.

70 Ibid., pp. 698-9, 701-3.

71 Cf. the similar opinion of the Ambassador in Paris, Nelidov, who proposed on 3 February, in view of the "traditional treachery of the statesmen of the Habsburg Monarchy", that the agreement should be given an international character. See Benckendorff, *Diplomatischen Schriftwechsel*, I, p. 233.

72 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, p. 707.

Relations were resumed, but they did not become much more sincere. Personal relations between Aehrenthal and Izvolsky were almost impossible, and mutual distrust and ill-will constantly led to new conflicts. But together with such personal disagreements, there were others of a more fundamental character. In Vienna, Russian diplomacy was blamed because the Kings of Serbia and Bulgaria were received at the Russian Court one after the other in the spring of 1910 (the former from 23 February to 3 March, the latter from 22 to 26 March). Aehrenthal declared diplomatically to the Russian representative that he was “not a supporter of the traveling of Balkan rulers”,⁷³ and in fact he jealously interpreted these visits as a sign of rapprochement between Serbia and Bulgaria, on one hand, and Russia, on the other, and of the strengthening of Russia’s influence at the expense of that of Austria.

Germany, too, felt it necessary after the Racconigi meeting to reassure Russia in regard to Austria-Hungary’s aspirations in the Balkans. Berlin saw that its proceedings at the time of the Annexation Crisis had not had the effect of attracting Russia, but had worked in quite the opposite way. Moreover, the Russo-Austrian direct negotiations and certain statements of Aehrenthal had aroused suspicions in Berlin and even, in some respects, a feeling of uneasiness. But the Germans nevertheless made no attempt to reach a closer understanding with Russia as long as Izvolsky remained in office. At the meeting between the Emperors Wilhelm II and Nicholas II at Potsdam, on 4-5 November 1910, the German Chancellor, Bethmann-Hollweg, assured Sazonov that Austria had no plans of conquest in the Balkans and that Germany was under no obligation whatever to help her if she attempted any such activity.⁷⁴ On the admission of Bethmann-Hollweg, this made an excellent impression on the Russian Minister and considerably facilitated further negotiations, but on the other hand, it increased Russia’s suspicions in regard to the German policy. In the spring of 1910, Germany suddenly found that her interests in Persia were threatened, and it created considerable difficulties for Russian and British policy in that country. The sale of German warships to Turkey, which defended itself by saying that it needed them in view of a possible conflict with Greece, appears to have been to Russia’s detriment in the Black Sea. The Pan-Islamic movement, which Germany deliberately supported, also directly threatened other Russian interests. Sazonov drew the German Emperor’s attention to this, emphasizing that his patronage of the movement, or to put it ironically, the

73 Benckendorff, *Diplomatischen Schriftwechsel*, I, p. 254.

74 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVII, p. 384. Sazonov has noted that Bethmann-Hollweg told him on that occasion that in its own interest Germany would not help Austria in such an enterprise. See *Krasnii arhiv*, III, 1923, p. 3.

second Caliphate in Berlin, greatly encouraged the agitation. The Emperor attempted to reassure the Russian Minister in this respect.⁷⁵ The outcome of these conversations was supposed to be, according to Germany's wishes, a kind of written agreement whereby Germany would declare, after having obtained assurances from Austria that she was not thinking of any policy of expansion, that it was under no obligation and had no intention to assist such a policy, even if the Danubian Monarchy resorted to it. The Russian government would declare, for their part, that they were under no obligation and had no intention to assist any hostile policy of Britain against Germany. In the Balkans, both Powers would work for the maintenance of the existing order, and should conflicts arise, both Powers would endeavour to keep them localized. Neither of the Powers would assist an aggressive policy on the part of Turkey or of the Balkan states. In agreement with Emperor Nicholas II, Sazonov rejected this proposal⁷⁶ out of consideration for Britain, but he did so in such way as to give little offence in Berlin. Thus in the spring of 1911, due to the endeavours on both sides, certain relaxation of the former strain was felt; the mistrust did not disappear, but all responsible quarters endeavoured to give as little public expression to it as possible. It should be noted, however, that Vienna was not pleased with the Russo-German rapprochement (one of the Austro-Hungarian diplomats at the Ballplatz spoke of "the Potsdam phantom"), and that Berlin, in the words of an Austro-Hungarian diplomat, was beginning to be afraid of Austria's policy towards Serbia.⁷⁷

2) Russia's original idea was that a Balkan alliance should be formed with Turkey at its head and with the principal object of safeguarding the Balkans for the Balkan peoples. The new Russian Ambassador in Constantinople, the former Deputy Foreign Minister, Charykov, said on 29 (16) November 1909 to the Serbian Minister in Constantinople "that Russia would be decidedly opposed to any alliance of the Slav Balkan states which might be directed against Turkey".⁷⁸ The Serbian Minister, Dr. J. Nenadović, thought as much himself, and two days earlier had uttered almost the same words to the German Ambassador.⁷⁹ The Turkish Minister in Sofia, Asim Bey, said to his Serbian colleague in the

75 *Krasnii arhiv*, III, p. 2. Cf. *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVII, pp. 812-7, 846-9, 866-7.

76 *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10; *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVII, pp. 858-60, 868-74, 879; M. de Taube, *La politique russe d'avant-guerre*, p. 254.

77 J. von Szilassy, *Die Untergang der Donau-Monarchie*, Berlin 1921, p. 202; *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, III, p. 576.

78 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from Constantinople, 17 November 1909, str. conf. no. 495.

79 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVII, p. 165.

autumn of that year: "If an agreement is not with us as well, it is against us."⁸⁰ It accordingly seemed very probable that the Turks, too, would agree to such an alliance, if not from conviction as to its necessity, at least out of caution and in order to be able, to some extent, to control it. In Serbia, too, even after her unfortunate experience with Turkey in the autumn of 1908, there was an inclination to include Turkey in a Balkan alliance. Milovanović declared to the Turkish Finance Minister, Cevad Bey, in Belgrade on 26 (13) December 1909 that Serbia set great store by friendship with Turkey "and that she would have nothing to do with any grouping of the Balkan states against Turkey or without Turkey." At the same time, he told him that "counsels from Russia strongly urge both Serbia and Bulgaria to retain Turkey's friendship and to undertake nothing without Turkey." In order to show his friendly intentions towards Turkey, Milovanović visited the Turkish capital at the beginning of March 1910 and a month later, on 4 April, King Peter himself arrived in Constantinople, a few days after King Ferdinand's visit. Their visits were of the greatest significance and meant in fact something of an invitation to collaborate.

However, Turkey remained very reserved. The Serbian Minister reported from Constantinople on 16 (3) March 1910 that the Turks even "looked skeptically on the conclusion of any real agreement in the Balkans".⁸¹ Turkey doubted the sincere intentions of the Balkan states, particularly Bulgaria, and therefore let it be understood by its declarations and actions that it was not to be counted on. There was much, no doubt, to justify its reserve. Firstly, Constantinople knew very well how great were the age-old differences between the ruling Moslems and the subject Christian peoples, and that the formation of the free Christian states of Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria in the nineteenth century had intensified those differences and aroused new hopes among the subject peoples and new fears among the rulers.

The Young Turk regime had not been able to change the nature of the Turks and could not therefore radically improve the situation in the Balkans. On the contrary, it had only made it worse. Their method of Ottomanization of the Turkish Empire, whereby they had intended to impose upon the subject Christians a new cohesive force in order to maintain Turkey's hold over them was carried out by drastic means and therefore estranged all the Christian peoples and forced them to look for assistance to each other. This forcible

80 Simić Pašiću, Sofija, 18. 11. 1909, Pov. Br. 405, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. III, sv. 5/2, pp. 935-939.

81 Nenadović Milovanoviću, Carigrad, 3. 3. 1910, Pov. Br. 44, in: Aleksić-Pejković and Džambazovski, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. IV, sv. 1/1, pp. 436-438.

Ottomanization also led to revolt both in Europe and Asia, even of those Moslems who were not Turks. Secondly, neither Bulgaria nor Greece could realize their national aspirations except at the expense of Turkey, within the borders of which lived a large part of their co-nationals. Seeing the methods of the Young Turk regime towards the latter, neither Bulgaria nor Greece could remain indifferent and pursue a policy which would directly support a regime so unfavourable to their compatriots and at the same time deprive themselves of any prospects for the future. Lastly, the third and the most important point: the Young Turks themselves were by no means sincere in their policy, and from the summer of 1909 onwards had started more openly to seek for support of the Central European Powers, Germany and Austria. In May 1909, the Young Turk government asked that General von der Goltz should be sent to reorganize their army, and the German Emperor, after having agreed, wrote that von der Goltz's task would be "to help the Turks militarily, politically and economically, to win them over and to bind them to us".⁸² In July 1910, Germany sold two warships to Turkey, although it knew that the latter Power had asked for them in view of a possible war with Greece. In November 1909, the Turks went as far as offering a military alliance to Austria. The German Emperor welcomed this idea and suggested it to the Austrian Crown Prince Franz Ferdinand.⁸³ The Turkish emissary, Osman Nizami Pasha, who was Ambassador in Berlin, later spoke to Aehrenthal not so much about military convention as about an entente to be concluded between Turkey, Austria and Romania.⁸⁴ Why Turkey chose Austria, in particular, is not difficult to guess; the latter Power was an outspoken opponent of the Balkan alliance and as such was Turkey's principal supporter in preventing an agreement between Serbia and Bulgaria and the other Balkan states. That an understanding with the Turks would after this be delayed and in the long run completely abandoned was perfectly clear to anyone familiar with the Balkan entanglements. Moreover, the Turks themselves were openly turning against the alliance. As early as 28 December 1908, the Young Turk newspaper *Şura-yı Ümmet* (People's Council) wrote: "Is not an alliance of the Balkan states an instrument which would serve the interests of the Balkan Slavs rather than those of the Turkish Empire?" On 24 November 1909, Marquis Pallavicini reported a conversation he had had with the Grand Vizier, Hilmi Pasha, who had said: "We have no reason whatever to mistrust Austria-Hungary ... Austria-Hungary entertains a desire for expansion in one respect only, and that is in view of its commercial interests in Turkey, and by

82 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVII, p. 278.

83 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*. II, p. 542.

84 *Ibid.*, pp. 563-5.

no means in a territorial sense. It is different with our small neighbours, who definitely wish to extend their territories at the expense of Turkey. It would therefore be unpractical even to think of Turkey's ever binding itself to those states."⁸⁵ When in the course of 1910, relations with Greece grew still more strained on account of the Cretan question (the Cretans had proclaimed their union with Greece on 8 October 1908; in July 1909, the international police force had been withdrawn from the island, and replaced by guardian warships of the Great Powers, Russia, Britain, France and Italy. The withdrawal of the troops encouraged the Cretans to demand and work still more energetically for a union with Greece. On 9 January 1910, Venizelos came from Crete to Athens to negotiate the entry of the Cretans into the Greek parliament, and shortly afterwards he himself became Prime Minister of Greece). Mahmud Şevket Pasha told the Austrian Ambassador in Constantinople that he was building-up the military equipment of the Turkish army, since in the event of a war with Greece Turkey must count on having all the Balkan states against her.⁸⁶

The Serbian government at first adopted Russia's view of a Balkan alliance. Fearing Austrian penetration, it viewed Turkey as a natural ally and a power most interested in maintaining the existing order in the Balkans. Turkey was necessary, because since the tariff war Serbia had sent a major part of her exports through Salonika, and because during the crisis of 1908-9 she had been able to import war materials through that port – their transit through Austrian territory being prohibited. If Turkey were to close the port of Salonika to Serbian imports and exports, especially the former, as Austria expressly desired in the case of war materials, Serbia would be almost choked and left at the mercy of Bulgaria alone, which at that time was in very close relations with Austria. The Serbs, moreover, hoped to obtain permission from the Turks to build the Adriatic railway. But the Turks showed little consideration for Serbia, believing that she needed them more than they needed her. Although they trusted Serbia more than Bulgaria, seeing that she was less aggressive, they were nevertheless suspicious of her. They knew very well that higher national interests and Christian solidarity would win the day with her too, if any serious conflict arose between the Porte and any of the Christian states.⁸⁷ They therefore did not want to pursue a policy of more intimate relations even with Serbia. On the occasion of King Peter's and Milovanović's visits to Constantinople no more was achieved than to ensure certain favourable conditions for a commercial

85 Ibid., p. 565. Cf. also p. 583.

86 Ibid., p. 668.

87 Milovanović said as much to Aehrenthal himself at the beginning of February 1910; See *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, p. 695.

treaty and to obtain Turkey's consent in principle to a readjustment of the border at certain points. But in the most important matter of all for Serbia, that of the building of the Adriatic railway, it was impossible to make any concrete progress; Turkey proved in this respect consistently stubborn and thoroughly unreliable.

Serbia raised that question with renewed vigour immediately after the conclusion of the Annexation Crisis and the final victory of the Young Turk regime in Constantinople. As we have seen, the consent of all the Great Powers to this had already been obtained and, to certain extent, formally and apparently at least, that of Austria-Hungary as well. After the Annexation Crisis, there was a general feeling that Serbia should be met in this matter and that she should thus be given some kind of compensation. A syndicate which had been formed, the *Jonction Salonique-Constantinople* started therefore, with the aid of French, Italian and Russian diplomacy, to work energetically at the Porte to obtain permission to trace the entire line from Mrdare to San Giovanni. On 3 September 1909, this permission was granted. At first Serbia did not appear as a country requesting the line and the connection of her own railways with it. The Company worked as if on its own account, giving the railway a Turkish character. The Porte of course knew this perfectly well, but it was compliant out of consideration for the Powers, which demanded a settlement. In particular, the new Russian Ambassador in Constantinople, Charykov, exerted his influence in favour of this plan. He considered the question of the railway, as J. Nenadović, the Serbian Minister in Constantinople put it, "his own work". In a conversation with the Serbian Minister, which took place on 28 October 1909, he said that "the Porte has already changed its former opinion on that question, and no longer considered the Adriatic railway as a purely political matter. The trend of events of late has thrown light on the strategic importance of that railway in Turkish territory as a primary necessity." The Porte even showed its intention to participate in the costs of building the line up to an amount of 20%.⁸⁸ At the meeting in Racconigi, Izvolsky and Tittoni spoke about the Adriatic railway, and according to what Izvolsky told the Serbian Minister in St. Petersburg, "they agreed to do all that was necessary for its speedy realization." Izvolsky personally assured Rifat Pasha, the Turkish Foreign Minister, that the railway would be as much of an advantage to Turkey as to Serbia.⁸⁹ On 27 October 1909, two engineers, Vronski and Bernard, already left Constantinople for Salonica and Old Serbia to study the line. They

88 Nenadović Pašiću, Carigrad, 29. 10. 1909, Pov. Br. 466, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. III, sv. 5/2, pp. 881-882.

89 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, telegram from St. Petersburg, 10 October 1909.

were joined in Salonica by a Turkish General Staff officer. The Russian engineer Borotov, who had formerly surveyed that part of the country, returned from Constantinople to Russia, without taking part in this work.

The Turkish authorities placed various difficulties in their way due to the influence of the Austrophile Young Turks, under the pretence of misunderstanding, but in fact in order to hinder their work as much as possible. After an attack on the engineers, perhaps staged, near Peć on 17 (4) December both engineers abandoned the work and returned to Constantinople. In the early days of March 1910, Milovanović raised the subject while he was in Constantinople, but met with little success. It was the same during King Peter's visit. The Young Turks showed themselves very reserved in the negotiations, and put forward financial difficulties as the principal reason for this. They announced that, being convinced of the usefulness of the line, they had decided to build it entirely at their own expense, and that they could not allow it to be given an international character and to come under foreign control in any form whatever. They accordingly excluded even the mediation of the Great Powers. The railway must be Turkish alone, and a connection with Serbia would be effected as soon as the matter was properly set in motion. There is direct evidence that all this was a mere excuse. From one of Aehrenthal's dispatches, dated 10 June 1910, we learn that in a conversation with him Rifat Pasha said that he was indeed discussing the Adriatic railway with Serbia, but that he would enter into no engagement; speaking in that way, he met with complete understanding on the part of the Austrian Minister, who even offered some new suggestions in the matter.⁹⁰ In his dispatch of 25 January 1911, the Austrian Ambassador in Constantinople, Pallavicini, made it sufficiently clear what those suggestions were. The work on the Adriatic railway was to be postponed and hindered as long as possible, so that the Turks should not have to give way to the Serbs on that point.⁹¹ It was accordingly suggested to the Porte, together with other excuses, that since, in order to obtain a loan, Turkey was already forced to make concessions to the French government and French capital, which were urging the railway on behalf of Serbia, it should not be built from Mrdare to Prizren and San Giovanni, but from Prizren to Debar and then to San Giovanni. Instead of Serbian exports reaching the sea by the shortest way, this roundabout route was intended to make it more difficult for them, and to render all Serbia's endeavours to obtain the Adriatic railway dependent on many conditions and almost illusory. In the meantime, other unofficial Austrians and Germans, such

90 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, pp. 885-6.

91 *Ibid.*, III, p. 160. "We must try", Aehrenthal wrote on 14 February 1911, "to postpone the matter." *Ibid.*, p. 179.

as Gwinner, the influential director of the German Bank, openly worked and spoke against the railway.⁹² The influence of both these elements was constantly felt to the detriment of the Serbs. The railway question dragged on from day to day, and when an agreement was finally signed on 29 July 1911 between the Porte and the *Jonction Salonique-Constantinople* Railway Company on the basis of the line through Debar, it did not remove all the difficulties. On the contrary, the Austro-German Eastern Railways Company at once protested, alleging without much legal foundation that the concession had been made at the detriment of their acquired rights and interests. Behind the railway companies stood their respective governments. The Porte knew this in advance, and used the grant of the concession to play off one side against the other, delaying the decision endlessly. It is quite comprehensible that, after this, Serbia's relations towards Turkey started to cool considerably, while the feeling gained ground that Serbia should come closer to the Greek and Bulgarian standpoints in her policy. When in mid-April 1912 the engineers finally arrived in Priština to begin projecting the line, the situation was fundamentally changed. The insurrection in Albania gave little hope that the work would proceed successfully (it was indeed abandoned a month later, on 19 May), and Serbia had already entered into an alliance with Bulgaria.

As we have seen, Dr. Milovan Milovanović had constantly advocated an agreement with the Bulgarians from 1904 onwards. Without one, indeed, it was known in advance, no application of the principle of "the Balkans for the Balkan peoples" was possible. When the Annexation Crisis was over, Milovanović hastened to recognize Bulgaria's independence, immediately after Russia, thereby showing the Bulgarians that he had not been opposed to their proclamation as such, but only because of its connection with the annexation. He then started to work sincerely for an agreement between Belgrade and Sofia. In his note made on 30 (17) September 1909 on Simić's report from Sofia, he wrote: "We are not Bulgaria's opponents, but only wish to bring Bulgarian policy back into the framework of Balkan interests in general, which require the establishment of a Turco-Serbo-Bulgarian union against predatory tendencies from outside." Such had indeed been the general trend of his policy. When in April 1909 a new revolution broke out in Turkey, Milovanović approached Russia, France, Italy and Britain on 14 (1) April, asking for their mediation and requesting them to bring their influence to bear upon Bulgaria, so that she might enter into some closer understanding with Serbia. "We are

92 Vesnić Pašiću, Pariz, 20. 5. 1911, Pov. Br. 150, in: Lj. Aleksić-Pejković and K. Džambazovski, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije 1903-914*, knj. IV, sv. 3/2, Beograd 2009, pp. 907-908; Vesnić Milovanoviću, Pariz, 11. 7. 1911, Pov. Br. 251, in: *Ibid.*, pp. 1247-1248.

greatly concerned as to the attitude Austria-Hungary will adopt if the situation complicates further and it becomes necessary for us to protect our national interests. A Serbo-Bulgarian union would be our first and most indispensable guarantee against fresh Austro-Hungarian surprises." At the same time, he approached Sofia too, where the Russian Minister entertained similar fears of a possible Austrian intervention and had advised the Bulgarian government to be coldblooded. While Russia and her diplomacy had earlier approved and constantly urged any action contributing to a Serbo-Bulgarian understanding, Britain too had been in favour of it in principle, although it showed considerable reserve, and Sir Edward Grey informed the Serbian Minister in London that they considered a Serbo-Bulgarian union necessary, but that it should be achieved through the spontaneous realization of their interests on the part of both the Serbs and Bulgarians themselves.⁹³ In Russia, too, it was desired that a Serbo – Bulgarian understanding should be reached through mutual comprehension. These negotiations should be conducted warily, Izvolsky wrote to the Russian Minister in Sofia on 18 April, and Russian diplomacy should not play "too active" a part in them. It was better to let the conviction gain ground, as it was a case in Bulgaria, that Austria's subjection of Serbia would present a grave danger for Bulgaria too.⁹⁴ Izvolsky's idea as to the basis on which an understanding between the Serbs and Bulgarians should be reached was largely against Serbian interests. In his instructions of 20 March 1909 to the Russian Minister in Sofia, he wrote that Bulgaria should be given the San Stefano borders for the most part, if the break-up of Turkey took place one day, while Serbia should be given those areas which would lead her to the Adriatic.⁹⁵

93 Grujić Milovanoviću, London, 16. 4. 1909, Pov. Br. 94, in: M. Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije 1903-1914*, knj. III, sv. 5/1, Beograd 2014, pp. 215-217. At the end of November 1909, Sir Charles Hardinge told Dr. S. Grujić that "work for an understanding between Serbia and Bulgaria – and Montenegro too, he said – is undoubtedly necessary and useful; but, he added, it presents at the same time a great danger. The danger lies in that the conclusion of a formal treaty of alliance or of a military convention might raise doubts in Turkey and cause it to incline towards Austria-Hungary. He therefore said – not in the form of advice but as his own opinion – that it would be better not to proceed with the conclusion of a formal treaty, which would not be necessary, if a firm conviction of the community of their interests and of the necessity for cooperation existed on both sides. In this respect, our relations with Bulgaria ought to be like those between Britain and France, which are founded, not on any formal agreement, but on the right conception of their mutual interests." Hardinge repeated the same to the Bulgarian Chargé d'Affaires. See Grujić Milovanoviću, London, 29. 11. 1909, Pov. Br. 198, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. III, sv. 5/2, pp. 992-993.

94 Benckendorff, *Diplomatischen Schriftwechsel*, I, pp. 102-3.

95 *Krasnii arhiv*, VIII, 1925, pp. 9-10.

On the Serbian side, much was done with a view to reaching an agreement. Milovanović made it the principal point in his policy. In a letter to the Serbian Minister in Sofia Simić, on 3 December (20 November) 1909, he said: "We should in fact have to build our future on an understanding with the Bulgarians." This policy was successful. In proclaiming Bulgaria an independent Kingdom, the King of Bulgaria had for the time being reaped all the benefits from the connection with Austria, and now he was gradually approaching Russia and the Western Powers in order to have further gains with their help. Moreover, he felt personally affronted because at the time of the Annexation Crisis Aehrenthal had refused to receive him in Vienna and because the Austrian Emperor had conferred the Order of the Golden Fleece upon the Crown Prince of Romania in 1909, but had refused to grant his own long-felt wish to have the order conferred on him. With this in view, he modified his attitude towards Serbia, in part to come closer to Russia and in part to spite Vienna. On 26 (13) October 1909, he came to Serbia, to Kopaonik, on the pretext of a botanical expedition. On that occasion, he met the Serbian Crown Prince Alexander, and soon afterwards, when passing through Belgrade on 25 November, he met King Peter. The new cordial relations between Belgrade and Sofia were from that time evident to all.

The Russian idea of a Balkan alliance which should also include Turkey was interpreted everywhere, especially in Vienna and Berlin, as being deliberately directed against Austria-Hungary. This interpretation was in some ways correct, if not entirely. The object of such an alliance was to safeguard Balkan territory for the Balkan peoples. It would be directed against Austria-Hungary only if that Power aspired to penetrate further into the Balkans or to exert direct pressure on any of the Balkan states. This was probably clear to Vienna, and its dissatisfaction was initially aroused less on account of the idea of a Balkan alliance as such, which it believed to be impracticable, than because Austria saw it as the prevalence of the Russian influence in the Balkans and a move of Izvolsky against Aehrenthal's policy. A Balkan alliance under the circumstances, Vienna believed, would undoubtedly be under Russian control.

Apart from this, Vienna was deeply convinced that an understanding between Serbia and Bulgaria could only be to Austria's detriment. She had earlier exploited Serbo-Bulgarian antagonism in Macedonia and elsewhere with considerable success, and the basis of her political tactics consisted in Bulgaria's keeping Serbia in check. J. M. Baernreither has said that it was a commonplace of Aehrenthal's policy "in all the conversations" which he had with him.⁹⁶ It is therefore comprehensible that Viennese diplomacy did everything

96 Baernreither, *Fragmente eines politischen Tagebuches*, p. 82.

possible to frustrate such an understanding, while trying to camouflage this attitude under a mask of indifference and of skepticism, partly genuine and partly assumed, as to the success of the undertaking.

In many writings on the subject of responsibility for the war, the words of Emperor Nicholas II to Pašić, or some other such statements, are often repeated to the effect that it was necessary to prepare for the future, for the conflict with Austria must sooner or later be settled by force of arms. It has been attempted to conclude from these words that Russia was consciously preparing a war. Being unable to make war in 1908, she was preparing to go to war a year or two later when she was prepared. "She would not entirely give up the idea of war", Count Max Montgelas wrote, "but only wanted to postpone it until a later and more favourable time."⁹⁷ We cannot here attach such positive significance to these and similar statements. For one thing, they were principally intended to console Serbia. In 1908, Russia, together with Serbia, had come out badly mainly because she was not militarily prepared; her opponents had known and taken advantage of that fact. The above warning was given to prevent something like that to happen again in the future, and Austria's attitude towards Serbia gave only too much cause both to the Emperor and others to believe that the conflict between them must sooner or later be decided by force. Moreover, the same thing was said by Austrian generals and politicians headed by Conrad von Hötzendorf, and by many other Austrian and German statesmen. To such statements, furthermore, we attribute no particular importance because a war psychology was gradually forming throughout Europe during the period from the Morocco crisis up to the World War, which saw the only way out of the entanglement in a war that would change men and relations. Hundreds of remarks were made to that effect. Was not the saying "If you wish for peace, prepare for war" on the lips of many statesmen? In the third place, if such utterances are to be sought out and stressed, we must in fairness quote not only one side but also the other. For example, we may refer to the statements made by Emperor Wilhelm II to the Austrian Court Secretary, Baron von Frankenstein, on 23 November 1909 in Donaueschingen. The Emperor mused that if a Slav Balkan Alliance was formed under Russian protection, a racial struggle between it, on the one hand, and Germany and Austria-Hungary, on the other, would be very probable. He even said "that such a racial struggle would certainly come" and that "in five or six years". He accordingly urged with much emphasis the necessity for Austria to conclude a military convention with Turkey.⁹⁸

97 *Leitfaden zur Kriegsschuldfrage*, Berlin und Leipzig 1923, p. 21.

98 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, pp. 557-8.

3) In opposition to the Serbo-Bulgarian rapprochement, Austrian diplomacy had a combination for a Bulgaro-Romanian understanding which would isolate Serbia in the Balkans and also present an obstacle to Russian influence. In submitting these ideas to Baron Hötendorf, as a head of the General Staff, on 15 August 1909, Aehrenthal emphasized that Austria wanted to keep her powder dry in case of a disturbance in Turkey and that she held view that no new situation in the Balkans could be formed without her participation. "In that new formation, we shall have to take care that Bulgaria be enlarged as much as possible, but in such a way as to preserve the rivalry between that state and Serbia." Austria would also support an understanding between the Bulgarians and Albanians, again primarily at Serbia's expense. "In a greater Bulgaria and an autonomous Albania we shall have agents which will, in their own vital interests, keep in check the ambitions of the Serbian states in the south." Serbia would then have to bow her head; Austria would try to attract her first by economic and then by military means.⁹⁹ This plan was carried out systematically, and the official Austrian collection on foreign policy includes a number of documents about that action.

All the fair words and messages spoken in Vienna about the need for good neighbourly relations mean nothing in the face of these schemes, which show Austria's real attitude of deep and uncompromising hostility. Austria defended her actions by claiming that she was forced to adopt this energetic attitude against Serbia, because the latter was threatening her territory with her agitation. But as we can see, Austria was constantly and inflexibly opposed to Serbia even there where her territory was not involved. That was the case in the autumn of 1903 when Goluchowski developed his plans for the future of the Balkans, as well as in the summer of 1909 when Aehrenthal had the same fundamental idea: to prevent the development of Serbia on all sides and to assist any element in the Balkans which might be used against her. With such a policy, which the Serbs felt acutely, Austria could only expect the hostility of the entire Serbian nation. There could be no reconciliation except a temporary and superficial one, because every political event revealed the irreconcilable differences. The Austro-Hungarian diplomat, Baron J. Sillassy, has said that Aehrenthal admitted to him on one occasion that he had made a mistake in his annexation policy.¹⁰⁰ This acknowledgement no doubt referred rather to

99 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, pp. 442-443; Hötendorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, I, pp. 245-54. Cf. Aehrenthal's instructions to the Austro-Hungarian Minister in Sofia of 23 June 1911 in *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, III, p. 263.

100 *Der Untergang der Donau-Monarchie*, Berlin 1921, p. 39. The Russian Ambassador in Vienna, Giers, was accordingly looking through Austrian spectacles when – in his report of 15 February 1911 – he accused Serbia of making nothing but mischief against Austria

the manner of its execution than to its spirit; the latter, as we can see, remained unchanged, at least with regard to Serbia and the Serbs in general.

That Austria should try to hide her intentions from Serbian public opinion is quite understandable, but it is rather strange that she sometimes hid them, to some extent, even from herself. On 14 September, a month after the writing of that memorandum, in which Aehrenthal's intentions regarding the Balkan policy were set forth so clearly and unequivocally, a Cabinet meeting was held in Vienna at which Aehrenthal said, explaining Austria's relations with the Great Powers, that Russia wanted "by means of constant accusations to create the impression that we are pursuing an imperialistic policy and that we wish to annex Serbia and Montenegro." But while he thus denied what he had himself suggested on two or three occasions in the course of 1909, he at the same time, at this very Cabinet meeting, gave the lie to his own words, for in speaking of Turkey he said that Austria would be friendly to that Power "as long as her vitality lasts, otherwise she will pursue a policy of non-intervention as long as possible and keep her powder dry in order to be able to carry out her economic policy."¹⁰¹ The economic policy of the Danubian Monarchy in the Balkans was, however, in the closest connection with its general policy and often only served as a pretext for it. After all, if its powder had to be kept dry to carry it out, it was obvious in advance what part it was intended to play.

2

In connection with these plans, there was an obvious tendency in some Austro-Hungarian ruling circles to change considerably the existing regime in the Yugoslav lands of their territory and to introduce a more lenient and considerate policy. This was intended to show that the Yugoslavs might find the full satisfaction for their aspirations within the framework of the Danubian Monarchy and that it was unnecessary for them to look across the border. Some optimists were even convinced that under such a regime the Yugoslav lands in the Monarchy might become a center of attraction for the Yugoslavs in Serbia and Montenegro. Baron Musulin, Aehrenthal's associate at the Ballplatz, has said that Aehrenthal himself believed that "the process of revising the internal policy in the Yugoslav provinces of the Monarchy might spare [it] the necessity of an armed expedition against Serbia and thereby the probability of a conflict

with the news she was spreading. See Benckendorff, *Diplomatischen Schriftwechsel*, I, p. 44.

101 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, II, pp. 464-5.

with Russia, and that the political, cultural and economic force of attraction of the united Yugoslav provinces of the Monarchy might render possible the peaceable regulation of the Monarchy's relations with the neighbouring Serbian Kingdom".¹⁰²

More definite moves in this direction were made in the course of 1910. On 17 February 1910, the constitution granted to Bosnia and Herzegovina was proclaimed. It was rather reactionary, the provincial government not being responsible to the people and with a General at the head of the administration, without any competence in military matters, while the legislation remained under the control of the joint Austro-Hungarian governments and their Delegations, in which Bosnia and Herzegovina were not represented even after the proclamation of their constitution. But even such a constitution was better than the purely absolutist regime that preceded it. The notorious head of the administration, Kosta Hörmann, was removed and replaced by Baron K. Pitner, who was reputed to be a man of modern views and a friend of the Serbs. The posts of Deputy Governor and of the four members of the Bosnian government remained in the hands of foreigners; not one native was fortunate enough to be appointed by the ruling circles of the Monarchy to such a post.

Baron Hötendorf has frankly admitted that all this, the limited constitutional regime and the retaining of foreigners in office, was done because there was no trust in the loyalty of the Serb majority. He therefore insisted even after the proclamation of the constitution that the competence of the military Governor should be extended in those lands at the expense of the civil authorities. He was also decidedly opposed to military and railways matters being left to the decision of the Diet, and he succeeded in their being in most cases eliminated. He also succeeded in retaining the post and telegraph services in the hands of the military authorities, although that savoured too much of a continuation of the military occupation. He protested vigorously even when a section of the criminal jurisdiction was transferred from the military to the civil courts.¹⁰³ Thus, because of all these limitations, of military interference, and of Hungarian jealousy and fear lest the settlement of the Bosnian question should imply the settlement of the Yugoslav question as a whole, and because of Austria's mistrust of the population in those lands, the Bosnian-Herzegovinian question remained, even after the annexation, an

¹⁰² Musulin, *Das Haus am Ballplatz*, p. 171.

¹⁰³ Hötendorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, II, pp. 43-8.

“open wound”, as it was described by no other than Burian, the supreme head of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian administration for many years.¹⁰⁴

The Bosnian Diet gave open expression to its dissatisfaction at the exclusion of military matters from its competence, while at the same time the financial contribution of Bosnia and Herzegovina towards the maintenance of the army amounted in 1912 to 7,167,708 crowns. In a memorandum dated 26 December 1911, the Diet Committee protested against Bosnia and Herzegovina being made responsible for the unprofitable strategic railways to the Turkish and Serbian borders, which had been built in the interests of the Austrian and Hungarian policy, and against the inevitable annual deficit on these lines being met entirely out of the resources of the two provinces. In a speech delivered on 3 October 1912 in the Delegations, the joint Finance Minister and Minister for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Biliński, discussed the new railway programme drawn up for those provinces. He then spoke without hesitation of the partition between Austria and Hungary of spheres of interest in the Bosnian-Herzegovinian territory, suggesting that western Bosnia with the valleys of the Una and Vrbas were Austria's and the eastern and northern parts Hungary's domain.¹⁰⁵ Bosnia was obviously, even after the annexation, considered a kind of exploitation ground and she was in fact treated as such.

After the annexation, when it was no longer necessary to explain it as the result of Greater Serbian propaganda originating in Serbia, the official circles in Bosnia and Herzegovina recognized the fact that the national consciousness of the Serb element in those provinces was very strong and politically quite mature. In an official memorandum from Sarajevo, in March 1910, it was said that “the radical Serbs still have before their eyes a vision of a Greater Serbia or to put it more precisely, they entertained the hope that the present international position of Bosnia and Herzegovina was not yet final, expecting as a result of some major European conflict and with Serbia's help a change of political situation in their sense, and as a consequence their long-desired union with Serbia.” Although the Serbs, especially in the Diet, showed certain opportunist tendencies and some signs of yielding, the official reporter said: “It is very doubtful whether the Serbs have definitely renounced the ideals to which they were aspiring, that is to say, that they have given up their Greater Serbian ambitions.” The head of the General Staff stated in this connection that the Serbs of Bosnia and Herzegovina “gravitated nationally and religiously towards Serbia”, but he added, in the spirit which had animated all his activities

104 *Drei Jahre aus der Zeit meines Amtesübung im Kriege*, Berlin 1923, p. 226. Cf. Seton Watson's booklet, *The Role of Bosnia in International Politics*, Oxford 1932.

105 Dr. Kneisser, *Parlamentarische Chronik*, Vienna 1912, p. 750.

so far, although in somewhat milder terms, that these feelings were at least "inspired" from Serbia.¹⁰⁶

In order to give special sanction to the act of annexation and to show consideration for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Emperor Franz Joseph himself visited Sarajevo and Mostar in late May and early June 1910, with a large suite, the three joint Ministers and the Austrian and Hungarian Prime Ministers. The authorities were anxious that the Emperor should receive a very hearty welcome from the people, so they tried to give as little cause for dissatisfaction as possible beforehand. They were particularly desirous that the Serbs should take an active part in the reception, so as to cover up the annexation in the eyes of the public and, on the other hand, to show Serbia that the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina had accepted the situation. The reception of the Emperor was officially festive, but it was by no means cordial on the part of the Serbs. Only respect was shown to the aged Monarch, who was very careful on that occasion not to wound any susceptibilities.

The annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina made a deep and unfavourable impression on the Serb population, which was impossible to wipe out by means of such small signs of attention that served the interests of the Monarchy and the Court rather than those of the people. The dissatisfaction of the people can best be judged by the fact that the Orthodox Christian and Moslem voters did not elect to the Bosnian Diet a single member of the organizations favourable to the government, but only supporters of their own national organizations, which had led the struggle against the annexation. The Moslems later slackened in their resistance, partly because of the example of the Young Turk leaders in Constantinople and partly for fear lest the agrarian question should be arbitrarily settled at the expense of their landowners. Consequently, the opposition of the Orthodox Christians assumed even greater proportions. Although they formed the largest group in the Diet, the authorities appointed a Moslem as its first chairman at the order of the Emperor. The number of appointed (*Versebauch*) members was so arranged as to give the Orthodox, who were twice as numerous as the Roman Catholic, only five seats, while the Catholics obtained seven; it was intended to create by artificial means a majority in case of emergency. The authorities then used every available means to

106 Ibid., pp. 40-1. The reports of Major A. Heyrowsky on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1910-11 are so full of inaccuracies and ignorance and so intentionally misleading that it is useless even to take them into consideration. They are published in his book, *Neue Wege zu Klärung des Kriegsschuld*, Berlin 1932. Such, for example, is his report that in the summer of 1911 Prince George of Serbia rode through Sarajevo, the entire group having previously, and quite publicly, made a tour of the Sarajevo fortifications. See Ibid., pp. 22-3. The story does not contain a word of truth.

have the release of peasants from the bondage of serfdom voted in the Diet as an optional and not an obligatory measure, thereby leaving the Christian peasants in an unsettled and subjugated situation. This provoked a crisis and in 1910 led to minor agrarian uprisings in the Sava valley. The younger men, in particular, were growing increasingly radical and demanding the emancipation of peasants from feudal bonds, unrestrained civil liberties and national self-determination. Among the youth, great dissatisfaction was felt at such a conclusion of the Annexation Crisis and at the lack of resolution shown by the responsible statesmen and politicians. In Bosnia, many voices were raised against the Serb participation in the Bosnian Diet when its competence had been so restricted; the younger elements were in favour of a lively struggle for full freedom. They were, to some extent, influenced by the example of the Romanian revolt of 1907 and particularly by the two Turkish revolutions of 1908 and 1909, as well as by the actions of the then very active Russian terrorists. As early as 1910, the idea emerged in the minds of a number of young students that it was time for warnings in the form of attentats and terrorist actions in the lands under the Austro-Hungarian rule.

On the day when the Bosnian Diet was opened, 15 June 1910, as a sign of protest, a young student from Nevesinje in Herzegovina, Bogdan Žerajić, made an attempt on the life of the provincial Governor, General M. Varešanin, killing himself immediately afterwards. The Governor escaped uninjured, and the secret of the young man who had fired the shot was buried with him. The subsequent investigation did not reveal any of his possible accomplices or any others connected with the deed. One of Žerajić's intimates, himself a revolutionary from Herzegovina, Vladimir Gaćinović, described his friend as a convinced national revolutionary. "Both men and women students ought to remember the high apostolic mission of the Russian, French, Spanish and Italian young men and women who went to the gallows uttering the cry of liberty and appealing to their country and people." "Remember the examples set in Italy, Russia and France! Remember Orsini, the Heaven-sent, silent, almost classic hero, who spoke at last on the day when he was executed in Paris for making an attempt on the life of Napoleon III, because he would not further the union of Italy. Remember the sacred deaths of A. Zhelyabov and Sophia Perovskaya, who died like characters in fairytale and legends in the damp and unhealthy atmosphere of Russia. Remember those innumerable small and unknown heroes who fell in the streets of Paris for the ideas of liberty and humanity." Such were his words and messages. He purposely made his attempt on the day of the opening of the Bosnian Diet as an expression of the indignation felt at this act by himself and others who thought the same. In his opinion, "the Serb demonstration on the occasion of the annexation remained

a mere demonstration, a formality, a phrase, a word, the weak maneuver of a retreating army",¹⁰⁷ while he demanded action and struggle in his national and revolutionary enthusiasm.

Such conceptions began to make their appearance even in the wider circles of the youth of those days. In the *Zora*, the newspaper of the Serb student society of that name which had its headquarters in Vienna, Veljko Milićević, then a student in Paris and already a reputed novelist, wrote against parliamentarism and the policy of compromise: "When the people demand a *modus vivendi*, an agreement with their rulers, when they pursue a policy of compromise or opportunism, of conscious or unconscious renunciation, of roundabout ways which either lead to nothing (unless they lead to the ruin of the idea) or are *circuli viciosi* (*sic*) in which an idea may revolve for decades and get no further, although it is thought to be progressing, then the idea of national liberation is compromised, abused, forgotten, until one day it is finally choked in an atmosphere which it cannot endure. It is a strange and proud fact that foreigners can never crush the liberty of a people if it warms their hearts and lives within them. It is also another strange, by no means proud, but rather bitter fact that a people can strangle their own liberty if they enter the embrace of a foreigner. In that embrace, the idea of liberation will always be smothered."¹⁰⁸

The tendencies which were beginning to gain ground in Austria at that time not only among the Serbian, i.e. the Yugoslav, youth but also among others, have been clearly explained by E. Beneš, the present Czechoslovak Foreign Minister. When he went to Paris in 1905 to continue his studies, he left his country, he says, as "a man consciously discontented with Vienna and Budapest and a Czech who felt nationally; on his return, as a European educated politically and philosophically in Paris and London, he felt just as elementary, if not even more elementary, hatred for the Habsburg state." After 1909, he became even more radical. "In my heart a conscious and consistent democrat, I increasingly became a convinced radical and revolutionary."¹⁰⁹

Against these currents, Austria-Hungary had two means of defending itself: to suppress the elements of revolution or to help the constructive tendencies among its Slav subjects. Not long before, the Yugoslavs and the Slav subjects of the Danubian Monarchy in general had shed their blood for the maintenance of the Habsburg dynasty and its rights, in the deep conviction that Austria was necessary to them as a cohesive force and at the same time to counterbalance the German danger. Burian, the Austro-Hungarian Joint Minister of Finance

107 *Spomenica V. Gaćinovića*, Sarajevo 1921, pp. 46-48.

108 *Zora*, 1911, pp. 148-9.

109 *Der Aufstand der Nationen*, Berlin 1928, p. 5.

and Foreign Minister during the World War, himself admits that of the two alternatives – to suppress or to satisfy national aspirations – the Danubian Monarchy took “always some middle path that did not satisfy anyone”.¹¹⁰ Basically, it always preferred the method of force. The elements of revolution were prosecuted, but along with them the positive elements of national movement, which sought with the best wishes the full equality with the Germans and Hungarians, the true constitutionalism and the full respect for their national feelings and interests. This was best reflected in the regime imposed in Croatia and Slavonia, which naturally must have echoed in other Yugoslav lands.

On 7 February 1910, with the nomination of the new *Ban* in Croatia, Dr. Nikola Tomašić, an attempt was made to abandon the methods of Rauch's regime, in which the Frankists and anti-Serb elements had played the principal role, and to effect reconciliation with the Serbo-Croat Coalition. The first steps in this direction had certain degree of success and it looked as if the situation was going to improve and normal political life begin. But this wiser political course did not continue long. In Hungary, in 1910, after the dissolution and fall of their coalition, the power was vested in the hands of the former *Ban* of Croatia, Count Khuen-Héderváry, in the capacity of Prime Minister. While holding back the Hungarians whose opposition was still very strong and whose demands for a national bank and concessions in the Army were maintained with much persistence, he wanted to satisfy their patriotic tendencies in another direction, at the expense of the non-Hungarian nationalities in Hungary and at the expense of the Croats and Serbs in Croatia and Slavonia. Even the sacred right of the Croatian delegates to use their own language in the joint Hungarian parliament was violated and restricted. In protest, the Croatian and Serbian delegates, the members of the Coalition, left their seats in the parliament and started their struggle against Khuen-Héderváry's government. When naturally a struggle subsequently developed against *Ban* Tomašić as well, as one of Khuen-Héderváry's supporters, the Hungarian government arose in his defense with a new political doctrine, which was contrary to the law of the Croatian-Hungarian Compromise. On 27 October 1911, Count I. Tisza, speaking for the majority, declared that the Croatian Diet was not a parliament and that the *Ban* was not responsible to the Croatian Diet, but to the Hungarian Prime Minister. The above mentioned Minister, Burian, himself admits rather too euphemistically that “the cult and vigorous development of a state of predominantly Hungarian character indeed somewhat lost countenance”, and that throughout the country “there was not a single parliamentary party willing or courageous enough” to seek a real understanding with

110 *Drei Jahre*, p. 210.

the nationalities, especially with the Croats and Serbs. Moreover, *Ban* Tomašić made several attempts from perfectly obvious motives to separate the Croats from the Serbs and, once divided, to exploit them. He particularly struck at the Serbo-Croat Coalition, which was willing at first to collaborate with him, until he failed to carry out certain obligations which he had undertaken with regard to the Coalition in the matter of the change of the regime and of certain individuals. The forced elections which the *Ban* carried through at the end of that year did not, however, give him the desired majority: out of 88 seats, the government won only 21. Tomašić consequently had to resign on 19 January 1912, and Slavko Cuvaj, a notorious reactionary and a former collaborator of Rauch, a man who had no support whatever among the parliamentary parties, was appointed a new *Ban*. The first step of the new *Ban* was to dissolve the recently elected parliament, which had not even begun to work. This act followed by the persecution of the leaders of the opposition, the suppression of the freedom of the press and by his whole system of ruthless oppression, aroused protests and demonstrations not only in Croatia and Slavonia, but also in Dalmatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. "The wretched conditions in Croatia", Seton-Watson wrote accurately, "have poisoned not only all public life, but have even drawn the school children into the political turmoil."¹¹¹ On 26 March, Baron Chlumecky wrote that Austria's eyes should be opened to Cuvaj's policy, "which seems to be on the verge of shipwreck".¹¹² But those eyes were not opened. On the contrary, realizing that new elections would turn out even worse for Cuvaj than for Tomašić, the Emperor suspended the constitution in Croatia and Slavonia on 3 April at the suggestion of Khuen-Héderváry and nominated Cuvaj as a commissar. Soon afterwards, on 19 April 1912, 150 Croatian students came to Belgrade to demonstrate their dissatisfaction with the regime in their homeland, and to indicate the direction in which they were now looking. This demonstrative trip of the Zagreb students to Belgrade gave rise to great dissatisfaction in Vienna. The Austro-Hungarian Minister in Belgrade, Ugron, in agreement with the competent quarters in Vienna, considered that the "least" that could have been expected from the Serbian government was to remain passive on that occasion. "It is no excuse in our eyes", he wrote to Vienna on 22 April with some naiveté and certain posture of authority, "that the Serbian government wanted to consider the general state of feelings" and therefore permitted a sympathetic reception followed by manifestations. Ugron was still more alarmed at the thought that the Serbian "Court wants to increase its popularity at our expense". Such were the characteristic views not only

111 Seton-Watson, *Die Sudslavische Frage in Habsburger Reiche*, p. 400.

112 Chlumecky, *Österreichische Rundschau*, XII, p. 202.

of Austro-Hungarian diplomacy, but also of the greater part of the Austrian governing circles. They did not want to study the causes which had brought about these and similar demonstrations and manifestations, which were no doubt detrimental to Austria-Hungary and alienated people from Vienna and Budapest. But they saw in this understandable sympathy felt for the other side nothing but a bid for popularity at their expense. Even that would have been more than understandable. The better part of statesmanship consists in availing oneself of other people's experience and other people's mistakes. With the ideals of the Yugoslav movement on the one hand, demanding more direct expression for the feelings of the people, there was on the other hand this barren policy of the Vienna authorities, which simply precipitated a settlement of the Yugoslav question contrary to Vienna's wishes and intentions.

In the struggle against the Serbo-Croat Coalition, not even the autonomy of the Serbian church was left unscathed, and this too was abolished on 11 July 1912 by the Imperial decree. The introduction of a commissariat and the abolition of religious autonomy aroused violent protests on all sides, even in the competent quarters in Austria. The Austrian parliament rose openly in defense of Croatia's right to constitution. But this was of no avail. The Court seized upon this settlement at the request of the Hungarian government and abided by its decision in spite of the obvious dissatisfaction among all the Slavs and even among the friends of the Danubian Monarchy. "Every form of oppression", the King of Romania said to the Austro-Hungarian Minister on 23 June 1911, "tending to denationalize the Romanians in Hungary has the effect of making them look across the border, and not only across the Romanian border, but further still across the Russian border; moreover, it has violent repercussions in Romania herself."¹¹³ "The policy of the Hungarians in Croatia calls for concern lest the Croatians should be gradually won over for the Serbian state idea",¹¹⁴ Baron Chlumecky wrote.

The indignation soon turned into action. On 8 June 1912 in Zagreb, a young Croatian student from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Luka Jukić, made the first attempt on the life of the *Ban*. The latter escaped injury, but his companion, the *Ban's* counselor, Hrvojić, and a policeman were fatally wounded. At the trial, on 14 August, when the sentence was passed on Jukić and his friends, the condemned man started singing the Croatian national anthem and hailed a new Yugoslavia. Public opinion was on Jukić's side and his deed, although objectionable from every point of view, was spoken of as heroic. The pressure to which the authorities subjected young men in the secondary schools and

¹¹³ *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, III, p. 259.

¹¹⁴ Chlumecky, *Österreichische Rundschau*, XII, p. 202.

university provoked in them a reaction and a readiness for other exploits. The young revolutionaries, of whom there were but a handful at first, started to gain ground and soon played an increasingly important part among young people generally and attracted ever more followers.

On 4 July 1912, Accurti, the public prosecutor in Zagreb, drew up a fairly full report on the youth movement for the Commissar Cuvaj. The organization of the Yugoslav progressive youth, which was established in all the Yugoslav lands, as well as in Prague, he reported, was working under the cover of cultural rapprochement of the Yugoslavs for purely political ends. Its character was becoming increasingly revolutionary. The principal aim of the activity of these young men was the creation of a Yugoslav Republic which would include Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia and the Kingdom of Serbia. The Slovenes would join them. This programme would be carried out by peaceful means or by force. In the latter case, the heads of states would be assassinated and a general uprising would take place, on the supposition, of course, that the people had already been won over to these ideas. Revolutionary organizations with such a programme existed, according to Accurti, in Zagreb, Zadar, Sarajevo, Zemun, Sofia and Belgrade. The principal centers were in Belgrade and Split, with another one in Prague. These young people were in a state of ferment; the idea of murdering the governors in Dalmatia and Bohemia was heard from among their ranks, together with reproaches to their friends for their hesitation. Accurti considered that the demonstrative march of the Zagreb students to Serbia had increased their excitement. "The whole behaviour of the Serbs gave our young men the impression that both civil and military circles in Serbia were actively contemplating the idea of forming a Yugoslav state in which Serbia should play the part of Piedmont." Jukić, who made an attempt on Cuvaj's life, admitted, according to Accurti, that he had been given a bomb and a revolver by a major in Serbia, which he brought to Zagreb. The whole programme, concluded the report, "is quite harmless from the political point of view and is essentially an irresponsible youthful fantasy", but "such no doubt serious matter that our young men, organized in this way, should be taken advantage of by certain persons and urged to commit deeds of the most brutal nature must not be left unheeded".¹¹⁵

On 10 July 1912, on the basis of this report, Cuvaj reviewed the situation in the south of the Monarchy to Count Berchtold. The revolutionary organization, he said, consisted mainly of secondary school and university students and had the form of "a fantasy of the immature people" and was, moreover, "the product of incitement" He therefore proposed to adopt the following

115 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, IV, pp. 269-73.

measures to suppress it: 1) to limit the numbers of boys admitted to the secondary schools; 2) to limit the enlistment at the Zagreb University to students from Croatia and Slavonia and especially to forbid the entry of Dalmatians, "who exercise a bad influence on the otherwise good Croatian youth"; 3) to prevent students with scholarships from going to Prague for their studies; 4) to prohibit all such school organizations and newspapers that were subversive to authority; 5) to prohibit secondary school boys from joining the *Sokol* societies; 6) to limit the admission of school boys to the theatre; 7) to exercise a strict control over the schoolboys reading list. Heinold, the Austrian Minister who took part in this conference, refused to introduce these measures in the Austrian half of the state and consequently they were not applied with such severity in Croatia either. Heinold considered that these measures would only increase the already great dissatisfaction of the Yugoslav politicians with the situation in Croatia and Slavonia and that one of the first measures to improve matters should be the return to constitutional life in those provinces.

Both the *Ban's* and Accurti's accounts agree that the aim of the student organization was the creation of a Yugoslav republic. This fact in itself is sufficient to show that the responsible official circles in Serbia could have had no connection whatever with such a movement. The Austrian reports particularly emphasize the fact that on the reception of the Zagreb students Serbian patriots and officers endeavoured to arouse the enthusiasm of the students for the King of Serbia, i.e. for the future King of Yugoslavia. That fact naturally excludes the possibility of their cooperating in republican plans. If any individual person in Serbia took part in such activities, it could only have been privately and not without a great responsibility in regard to the existing order in their own country, and more particularly in regard to the King and the dynasty.

The young men's revolutionary movement did not originate in Belgrade, but in Prague and Vienna. In Prague, a great number of young Yugoslavs from all provinces had been for some time gathering around the chair of Professor Tomáš Masaryk, who exercised a powerful influence on them. The first generations of men, who initiated a new and more practical policy of genuine democracy in Croatia and who helped to create and maintain the Serbo-Croat Coalition, came from that school. Prague was from that time onwards a center of attraction for Yugoslav students, who became increasingly radical in their ideas. When in 1907 two professors of the Zagreb University were dismissed as a punishment for having signed the manifesto of the opposition Serbo-Croat Coalition, the majority of the Zagreb students demonstratively left Zagreb and went to the University of Prague. During the Annexation Crisis, a number of Serbian and Croatian students there, all from Austria-Hungary, with the exception of one Montenegrin, planned a revolutionary organization, the object

of which was to incite a revolt in the army.¹¹⁶ From Prague, the Yugoslav or “progressive” youth, as they called themselves at first, began systematically to organize not only their own colleagues at the University, but also boys from the secondary schools. From 1910 onwards, the newspaper *Zora* was published in Vienna, the organ of the academic society of the same name, which openly preached the necessity for the organized activities of the younger generation and in which, for example, a young historian from Herzegovina, Vasilj Popović, published a comprehensive study on the history of the Italian struggle for national unification. In the following year, the headquarters of the newspaper were transferred to Prague. The oppressive regime in almost all the Yugoslav provinces of Austria-Hungary, especially in Bosnia and Croatia, offered many analogies with the Italian case and considerably contributed to the spread of the movement. The youth meetings were held more frequently and began to adopt a more radical attitude. In 1911, a very belligerent meeting was held in Split, a town which was becoming one of the main centers. The young people were growing active both in the country itself and abroad, where they particularly addressed memoranda describing the bitter oppression of the foreign regime and asking for moral support from well-known persons who could influence European public opinion. In the country, they made use of the press. In 1911, the revolutionary Vladimir Čerina founded his own newspaper, the *Val*, in Zagreb. This paper, too, just like *Zora*, was soon to be transferred to Prague, and in early 1914 the two papers amalgamated under the name of *Yugoslavia*. The leaders of the Serbo-Croat youth, Čerina and Oskar Tartaglia, made a public statement at the congress of youth in Fiume on 1 September 1912 to the effect that “a loyal Croatian national policy is identical with the Serbian national policy, which exhibits strength, readiness to fight, the will to uphold the national dignity and hope in the complete salvation of our people”.¹¹⁷

When the attempt was made on Cuvaj's life, the young people in Prague sent a letter to the Commissar, bearing 270 authentic signatures and declaring that the signatories were entirely in sympathy with the man who had fired a shot and demanding that the Commissar resign his post, “for in its uncompromising struggle against the Commissar and his superiors a youth movement will settle scores both with them and him”.¹¹⁸ These young men went from one place to another, collecting contributions for Jukić's destitute mother and explaining the action of their comrade. These activities, however we may disapprove of the methods employed, had a marked effect on the people. Jukić's

116 N. Bartulović, *Od revolucionarne omladine do Orjune*, Split 1925, p. 10.

117 *Splitski Pokret*, 1933, no. 6.

118 Bartulović, *Od revolucionarne omladine do Orjune*, pp. 20-21.

action was the outcome of profound indignation and, as such, paved the way for the most daring attempts. All this was going on before the Austrian authorities, who were, as we have seen, fairly well informed about everything. But to their detriment they underestimated the importance of this movement and remained in a state of expectancy. Because of their internal difficulties, they did not have the courage to uproot it by force, and still less the foresight to revise their own policy towards the Yugoslavs, wrongly supposing that all this was only “schoolboys stuff”.

The Balkan Alliance and the War with Turkey. Austria-Hungary's Attitude

I

Preparatory work for a Balkan alliance began more intensively in the course of 1911. In Greece, on 18 October 1910, the post of Prime Minister was taken by E. Venizelos, a Cretan and an energetic man whose avowed programme was to effect the union of his native province with the Kingdom of Greece. The German Minister in Athens, Baron Wangenheim, said of him in his dispatch of 31 May 1911 that, in his view, Greece could expect no great success in its national policy from the support of the Great Powers, which had their own interests, but that it must rely on its own strength and collaboration with the other states in the Balkans.¹¹⁹ Venizelos soon let it be seen that he would indeed work along those lines. An example had already been set him by the statesmen from Serbia and Bulgaria and, to a large extent, by Turkey. The latter country wanted in particular to draw Romania into its combination against the Balkan states, and, aided in that by Austrian diplomacy, spared no effort during the summer of 1910 to bring about an alliance with Romania. In September of that year, it was publicly rumoured that such an alliance had actually been concluded, and the Turkish statesmen deliberately did not deny this, so as to allow the report to make the strongest possible impression in the Balkans. The rumour indeed influenced Russian diplomacy urgently to recommend the Bulgarian government to work for a rapprochement with Serbia. The Bulgarian Government of A. Malinov had hitherto not shown much willingness to enter into any closer negotiations, nor had the personal interviews of King Ferdinand with the King of Serbia and the Crown Prince Alexander resulted in or shown anything but his perfidious amiability. After all these interviews, in December 1911, King Ferdinand found it necessary in his conversations with Aehrenthal in Vienna, to express to him, of all men, his mistrust of Serbia.¹²⁰

However, a combination of circumstances led Bulgaria to look differently on the need for an alliance. The Young Turk rule had turned out to be definitely opposed to the nationalities. Its leaders thought that the main difficulties in the

¹¹⁹ *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVII, p. 152.

¹²⁰ *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, III, p. 696.

Turkish Empire were due to the propaganda of various national groups within it, not only amongst the Christians, but also amongst the Mohammedans themselves (the Albanians, Arabs). The Young Turks, therefore, did their utmost to set aside or settle national questions by the following means: 1) the development of the idea of the Ottoman state instead of that of national unity; 2) the settlement of Moslems – “muhacirs” – in the Christian villages; 3) the abolition of all privileges which the Christian churches and schools had so far enjoyed, and 4) the general disarmament, which was first to be carried out among the Christians. These measures were put into effect from 1910 onwards with a ruthlessness which provoked a reaction on all sides. Even the Powers friendly to Turkey, such as Austria-Hungary and Germany, spoke of “the extreme chauvinism and fanaticism of the Young Turks”¹²¹ and recognized that there were “many faults” in their actions.¹²² These steps provoked a reaction which was no longer easy to subdue and which was aggravated in the course of 1911 by the clash between Turkey and Bulgaria in the matter of customs duties and by disorders in Turkey itself. The Albanian revolt, which had begun in 1910, assumed in 1911 major proportions and almost resulted in the likelihood of a conflict with Montenegro, which had received the fugitives and given asylum to the rebels. The Albanian disorders had a natural echo throughout Old Serbia and Macedonia, and once more brought up the question of the Turkish rule in Europe.

But above all, the entire Eastern question was raised by Italy's action against Turkey. On 28 September 1911, Italy informed Turkey in the form of an ultimatum that it intended to carry out a military occupation of Tripoli and requested the Porte not to set any obstacles in its way. After twenty-four hours, as Turkey had been unable to consent to this, Italy's declaration of war followed. In spite of the efforts of all the Great Powers, led by Russia and Austria-Hungary, to confine the war to Tripoli, so that it should not spread to the Balkan Peninsula, this proved impossible. In the first place, such a declaration of war must have affected in the nature of things the entire population of the Balkans, both Turkish and Christian, and aroused a bellicose mood which was encouraged by the *chetnik* activities and the Albanian uprisings. Secondly, this declaration of war had a moral effect. War had been declared on Turkey by a Great Power, one of those which had so far preached the doctrine of the *status quo*; the peace of the Turkish Empire was now disturbed by the guardians of the existing order. Moreover, the peace was broken, it should be further pointed out, from sheer imperialistic interests, and the Great Powers had accepted it, being

¹²¹ *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, p. 100.

¹²² *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, III, p. 199.

bound by previous treaties with Italy in which they had recognized its special rights in that territory. The Balkan peoples, however, had more direct and more pressing interests in Turkey. The Turkish territory was, in fact, their own. The Turks had taken it from them long before in the hour of their disorganization and weakness. In this appropriated territory, there still lived a numerous Christian population, all of them compatriots of the peoples of the free Balkan states, Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece. It appeared quite natural and just to the Balkan peoples now that the break-up of the Turkish Empire had begun, for them to form a group as the natural heirs. The idea of an agreement between the Balkan peoples developed spontaneously. Apart from the above considerations, it was especially dictated by fear. A great Power had now come forward as the first partaker in the partition of the Turkish territory; tomorrow another might appear. The affair had begun in North Africa, but it might easily have extended to Europe, i.e. to the Balkans. As early as 2 October, the Romanian Prime Minister, Carp, said to the Austrian Minister: "Two start off the dance, but many are in it at the end."¹²³

To be true, Russia and Austria-Hungary immediately declared that they wanted at all costs that the conflict not be extended to the Balkans and that the existing order be maintained there. On 29 September, Aehrenthal let Rome know that Austria-Hungary would make no difficulties for its ally in Tripoli – he in fact wanted to see Italy engaged as much as possible in that part of the world so as to weaken its interest in Balkan questions, but he declared at the same time that it was in Austria-Hungary's interests that the *status quo* should be maintained in the Balkans and laid stress on the necessity that Italy, in carrying out its military operations, "should avoid anything that might result in extending the conflict to the Balkans".¹²⁴ But this was easier to propose than to effect. A warlike mood was much more difficult to localize than military operations. Turkey's indignation at Italy's action found violent expression in the Turkish press, in the attitude of all responsible quarters in Turkey, and in the mood of the people. A markedly anti-Christian psychosis emerged. In particular, great dissatisfaction was felt in the army, which was forced to remain inactive owing to the helplessness of the Turkish fleet and felt that it was losing prestige. Italy, too, was unwilling to confine its action to Tripoli. It issued a declaration to the effect that it would respect the existing order in the Balkans and give no cause for disturbances there, but as early as 29 September its fleet attacked a Turkish ship near Preveza. This made Aehrenthal address an open warning to Rome on 1 October. The action of the Italian fleet on the coast of Albania wounded

¹²³ Ibid., p. 381.

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 370.

Austria's susceptibility in that region, which was a matter of dispute with Italy, and aroused her attention and activity. "The repetition of such an action on the Albanian coast in the vicinity of the Adriatic Sea might have grave consequences", read a passage from the Austrian memorandum.¹²⁵ Aehrenthal said clearly to the German Minister that Austria-Hungary "could not permit" further hostility in the Adriatic.¹²⁶ Italy gave way, but only for a short period of time. The difficulties which the Italian army encountered in Africa far exceeded all expectations. In its desire to induce the Porte to abandon Tripoli and cease supporting the resistance there, Italy decided, despite its declarations and the above mentioned warnings, to direct certain actions against Turkey's possessions in Europe. Of this Rome informed its allies and Russia on 7 November. When the mediation of the Great Powers for the conclusion of peace between Italy and Turkey proved unsuccessful, the Italian fleet bombarded some fortifications in Beirut on 24 February 1912, and on 18 April attempted the bombardment of the Dardanelles and of the island of Samos immediately afterwards. On 4 May, Rhodes was occupied and then a whole series of other islands, the so-called Dodecanese. On 19 July, eight Italian torpedo-boats penetrated into the Dardanelles, but were routed back with heavy losses. Thus the war directly involved certain parts of the Balkan Peninsula and the Eastern section of the Mediterranean Basin, and it naturally aroused still greater anxiety throughout the Turkish Empire, which was already riddled with many crises and revolts. As early as the end of 1911, Lj. Nešić, a Serbian diplomatic official in Priština, wrote that the situation in those parts was unbearable. "Serious men, both Serbs and Moslems, declare that such anarchy has not been known here in living memory, and that it is worse now than it ever was under the old régime."¹²⁷ After that things became even worse.

The Turkish Foreign Minister, Asim Bey, complained to the Austrian Ambassador on 5 December 1911 that certain Italian diplomatic officials were in touch with the Macedonian revolutionary organizations in Sofia, and that they were supplying them with money to start new activities in Macedonia.¹²⁸ Similar reports from reliable sources were also heard in regard to Albania.¹²⁹ Even the Bulgarian Minister in Constantinople, Sarafov, spoke similarly to his

125 Ibid., p. 378.

126 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXX, p. 81. Cf. Bornhak, *Die Kriegsschuld. Deutschlands Weltpolitik*, p. 497.

127 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from Priština, 30 December 1911, conf. no. 1133.

128 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, III, pp. 631-2.

129 Ibid., p. 637; *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, p. 17.

Austrian colleague.¹³⁰ We cannot definitely establish how much truth there was in these accusations, but there is no doubt that any difficulties in European Turkey would facilitate the task of Italian diplomacy and put pressure on Turkey to yield. In any case, Italy's activity in Tripoli alone, followed by the operations of her fleet first at Prevesa and then in the Dardanelles, must have had its effect and caused further turmoil in the Balkans, especially as the occupation of the Turkish islands, twelve in number, with the predominantly Greek population, inevitably raised the question of Crete and the Greco-Turkish conflict and all the other points at issue. In attempting to justify the action of their fleet, the Italian press spoke openly of that action as the beginning of the liberation of the Greeks and Christians in general from the Turkish yoke.

Another Great Power, from another group, which wanted to take advantage of the Turkish entanglement, was Russia. At the end of 1911, she again raised the question of the free passage of her warships through the Dardanelles, coupled with the obligation on her part to guarantee Turkey's possession of Constantinople and its hinterland and to restrain the Balkan states from any action. A proposal to that effect was made to Turkey on 23 October. Turkey immediately approached Britain and offered it a defensive alliance, and when the latter refused the offer¹³¹ informed Germany and Austria of Russia's proposals.¹³² On 9-10 December, the responsible Russian politicians, led by the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, issued official declarations to the effect that "the Russian government have no intention of bringing up that question at present",¹³³ thus disavowing the proposals of Charykov, the Russian Ambassador in Constantinople, who had handled the matter with insufficient adroitness and circumspection. In fact, the Russian authorities only issued their declarations when they realized that their demarche had not been favourably received even in the friendly capitals, and still less in Vienna and Constantinople; until then the proposal had been supported by the full authority of the Russian Foreign Ministry, the affairs of which had not been conducted by the Minister, Sazonov, who was ill at the time, but rather by his deputy, Neratov.¹³⁴ The Russian proposal, although withdrawn later, made a profound impression in the Balkans. The Balkan states saw that certain Great Powers, while constantly advocating the *status quo* for others, tried nevertheless

130 Ibid., p. 804. Cf. Russian and French reports, *Krasnii arhiv*, IX, 1925, p. 10.

131 Nicolson, *Die Verschwörung der Diplomaten*, p. 374; Benckendorff, *Diplomatischen Schriftwechsel*, I, pp. 182-7.

132 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, III, pp. 601-2.

133 Ibid., pp. 663, 665; *Die Grosse Politik*, III, pp. 233-4.

134 Cf. E. A. Adamova, *Konstantinopol i prolivi*, Moscow 1925, pp. 14-16; *Der diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, 4 vols, Berlin 1925, II, pp. 20-2.

to obtain advantages for themselves at the expense of the existing order. The annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the occupation of Tripoli, the free passage of Russian warships through the Dardanelles, the struggle for railway concessions in Asia Minor – all this was obvious evidence that the Turkish question was being opened and that by those who were vigilantly keeping the small Balkan states out of it. That this was bound to produce a reaction in those states was more than certain and justifiable.

Austria was also getting prepared to take advantage of these Balkan complications. The head of the Military Office of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, Colonel Carl von Bardolff, wrote to Baron Chlumecky on 25 March 1912: “The road into Albania leads more or less through Bosnia and Herzegovina, and just as directly into Montenegro, whose inclusion in Austria’s economic orbit should no longer be delayed. Never have our chances for a decisive action on a large scale in the Balkans been as favourable as they are now that the Italian counter-mine has been practically buried and that the Russians need our sympathy and our goodwill in the matter of the Dardanelles.”¹³⁵ This message, with something of a soldier’s abruptness but very definite, was not in disharmony with Aehrenthal’s policy as might perhaps be concluded from some of his diplomatic statements in which he unconditionally demanded the maintenance of the *status quo*. He also attempted, according to his own statements, to draw Montenegro into closer relations with the Danubian Monarchy; he and other “competent persons in the Monarchy” were thinking of a customs union with Montenegro in the course of the next three or four years, and intimated as much in Cetinje to King Nicholas and particularly to the Crown Prince Danilo, in whom Vienna had more confidence.¹³⁶ It was with this end in view that a loan of 3,500,000 crowns was granted to Montenegro in Vienna in late November 1911. King Ferdinand assured Dr. Danev in early 1911 that Aehrenthal had said, in order to win over Bulgaria, that Austria “in principle and under certain conditions would have nothing against Bulgaria’s extending her borders in the direction of Macedonia”.¹³⁷ Clearly, “certain conditions” could only be in the interest of Austria’s policy not only at the moment but also, and still more, in the future. Count Berchtold, Aehrenthal’s successor at the Ballplatz, noted on 22 May 1912, after a conversation with the Italian Ambassador, that Austria’s reservations in her negotiations with Italy concerning the extension of the Italian theatre of war to the Balkan Peninsula should be understood from the following point of view: “Should it prove impossible to maintain peace in

135 Chlumecky, *Österreichische Rundschau*, XII, p. 290.

136 *Öst.-Ung Aussenpolitik*, III, pp. 534-5.

137 *Krasnii arhiv*, IX, p. 121; Benckendorff, *Diplomatischen Schriftwechsel*, I, p. 260.

the Balkans and should we be forced to interfere, we ought to be able to do so without any agreement with Italy."¹³⁸ The German Ambassador in Constantinople, Baron Marschall, said to his Serbian colleague at the end of 1911 that if Turkey refused to listen to advice and failed to pacify the Albanians with concessions so that they revolted again, "Austria-Hungary will be forced to intervene, for it is particularly interested on account of the Catholic Albanians and could not remain indifferent this time".¹³⁹ On 30 January 1912, the German Ambassador in Rome, Jagow, talked to the same effect to the Serbian Charge d'Affaires.¹⁴⁰ The French Consul in Budapest, Fontenay, reported on two occasions, on 22 February and 27 July 1912, that Austria contemplated the dismemberment of Turkey and considered Albania the first stage of that.¹⁴¹ To Serbia's alarm, Austria-Hungary began to reinforce its troops in Bosnia in the early spring of 1912, and the Chief of the General Staff appeared on the Serbian border in May with several senior officers and carefully studied the whole line from Bijeljina to Uvce. The expansionist policy of the Danubian Monarchy, as can be clearly seen from all this, had not come to an end with the annexation; on the contrary, Austria just whetted her appetites. That the statements made to the Serbian Ministers by Germany's representatives were not empty threats designed to keep Serbia quiet may readily be concluded from Berchtold's above-quoted note. But even if they were no more than threatening warnings, they could only, in view of the persons who issued them and their connections, cause anxiety and extreme mistrust.¹⁴²

What Austria was afraid of, and what made her wish to uphold Turkey's integrity as long as possible, was the probability that the Turkish possessions might pass to the Balkan states, and among others, of course, to Serbia. In

138 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, IV, p. 175.

139 Nenadović Milovanoviću, Carigrad, 16. 1. 1912, pp. 3, in: M. Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije* 1903-1914, knj. V, sv. 1, Beograd, 1984, pp. 159-161.

140 Dimitrijević Milovanoviću, Rim, 31. 1. 1912, Pov. Br. 4, in: *Ibid.*, p. 212.

141 R. Poincaré, *Le lendemain d'Agadir. (Au service de la France, I)*, Paris 1926, pp. 267-8; cf. E. Bouregeois et G. Pagès, *Les origines de la Grande Guerre*, Paris 1922, p. 349.

142 Kiderlen-Waechter tried, in fact, to soothe the Serbian Minister on 12 February by saying that in his conversation with the Austro-Hungarian Crown Prince he had become convinced that the Danubian Monarchy had no plans of conquest in the Balkans, but was only taking preventive measures "so as to be perfectly ready in case complications arose in the Balkans, but they would in no case cause any such complications." See Bogičević Milovanoviću, Berlin, 12. 2. 1912, Pov. Br. 3048, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. V, sv. 1, pp. 245-246. The German Minister in Athens, Baron Wangenheim, went further in his prognostications. At the beginning of June, he said to a colleague that "Austria would seize the lands down to Salonika, if it came to any further seizure and partition of the Turkish provinces." Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from Athens, 2 June 1912, confidential and personal.

certain circles in Austria, the maintenance and strengthening of Turkey was wanted for many reasons, but largely for strategic reasons. Should the Danubian Monarchy have to fight either Russia or Italy, it would be to its advantage if Turkey, as a possible ally, could keep in check the Serbian army, i.e. if it could free a certain number of Austro-Hungarian divisions which would otherwise be tied to the Balkan territory. For that reason, together with those already mentioned, Austria's policy envisaged the settlement of the Turkish question in Europe primarily from the point of view of Austria's relations with Serbia. Therefore, Vienna was growing increasingly convinced that if it proved impossible to maintain Turkey as a bulwark against Serbia's possible expansion and aggrandizement, the Albanians should be used in the west and the Bulgarians in the east. Inasmuch as it was becoming more obvious at the Ballplatz that Turkey was doomed and that a closer friendship with Bulgaria could not be preserved if her aspirations were not somehow satisfied at the expense of Turkey, the Bulgarian and Albanian questions assumed more importance. According to the Viennese plans, Greater Bulgaria would be supported against Serbia and at the same time a Greater Albania would be created to embrace, in addition to the Scutari and Janina vilayets, the most of the vilayets of Kosovo and Bitolj. A Greater Albania would have to thank the Danubian Monarchy for her existence, so the Monarchy's influence there, at least at first, would probably be the most powerful. With Montenegro bound to Vienna by strong material and other ties, and an Austrophile Albania stretching almost down to Salonica, Austria-Hungary would have indirectly realized its long-cherished desire in two ways – it would have acquired its outlet to the Aegean and blocked Serbia's path.

"The Turco-Italian war", Dr. M. Milovanović wrote to all the Serbian Ministers on 1 October 1911, "makes it possible that the Balkan question may enter again and immediately this autumn into a more acute crisis than that of the summer. Although Austria-Hungary declares that it will devote all its attention to localizing the war and to preventing it from extending to the Balkan Peninsula, we have nevertheless reason to fear that by provoking and encouraging disturbances among the Albanians it may create for itself a pretext for an armed intervention and occupation. It is not improbable that Austria-Hungary will try, as it did last summer, to gain a jumping off ground for its undertakings. It is therefore necessary to bring all our influence to bear in Montenegro against this. Serbia herself will most carefully refrain from anything that might lead to disorder and give rise to a new Balkan crisis. But if disorder nevertheless breaks out and if either Austria-Hungary or other Balkan states in agreement with or independently of Austria-Hungary attempt to exploit the situation and thus precipitate a Balkan crisis, Serbia too must take an active part in

its settlement. In particular, Serbia could not keep quiet if Austria-Hungary entered the Sanjak or Bulgaria entered into war with Turkey, even if her very existence were thereby called into question." During King Peter's visit to Paris in November 1911, Milovanović explained to Izvolsky, then Russian Ambassador, the Serbian point of view as regards the situation in the Balkans. That point of view was, in the first place, exactly the same as that set forth in the above-quoted circular. Serbia certainly wanted peace in the Balkans and did not intend to take advantage of the present entanglement. But Serbia was much suspicious of Austria's plans, which became more clearly defined. Dissatisfied with the policy of Serbo-Bulgarian rapprochement, Austria-Hungary wanted to prevent it and to create an autonomous anti-Slav Greater Albania. A Greater Albania would naturally be placed under the protection of Austria and serve her interests. The conviction that Austria-Hungary was working for Albanian autonomy, about which, indeed, the Austrian press was freely writing, was also held by other than Serbian statesmen. The danger from Austria-Hungary and her Albanian plans opened the eyes of some Bulgarians, too, and they consequently became better disposed towards the idea of a Balkan alliance.¹⁴³

Fearing that the Albanian uprising might provide an excuse for Austrian intervention in some form, the Serbian government looked with suspicion not only on Albanian liaisons with Austria-Hungary, but also on their connections with Montenegro, which assured the Albanians of an asylum in case of failure and thus encouraged them to persevere in their resistance. When in the course of 1911 the Albanian chiefs approached Serbia too and requested her support, the Serbian government replied that in case of a disaster they might take refuge in the Serbian territory, but that they could not be allowed to prepare further action against Turkey from there. To the Montenegrin government, which was anxious that Serbia and Montenegro embrace the revolt and exploit it before anyone else did so, Belgrade recommended abandoning such policy. It was not in the interests of Serbdom that the revolt should escalate, or that such a situation should arise in the Balkans as might serve some foreign Power, and particularly the neighbouring Monarchy, as a pretext for establishing order. Milovanović even took some steps in St. Petersburg and Rome to induce those Powers to bring their influence to bear on Montenegro in the same sense. For that reason, Serbia accepted with reserve the Montenegrin government's offer in February 1911 of an alliance between Serbia and Montenegro, with the immediate object of taking a more active part in the Albanian movement, in order to be able to exercise influence at Cetinje rather than because she was in agreement with the said proposals. In the course of 1911, and especially after Italy's

143 *Krasnii arhiv*, IX, 1925, pp. 8-9; *Der diplomatische Schriftwechsel Isvolskis*, I, pp. 183-4.

declaration of war, Serbia received most alarming reports about the intentions of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Austria-Hungary was reported to have brought fresh troops into Bosnia in order to send them, if necessary, to Turkey; in Salonica, the Russian and British Consuls received reports about relations between Austrian agents and the Macedonian revolutionaries and the endeavours of the former to collect signatures in Macedonia for an appeal to Vienna to establish order in those parts; the Russian Ambassador in Constantinople himself averred that the murders which occurred in Macedonia at that time were instigated by Viennese agents.¹⁴⁴ When the Serbian Minister in Sofia, Dr. M. Spalajković, spoke of these relations to Geshov, the latter did not deny their existence; he even said for a certain *comitadji* leader that “there is undoubted evidence”.¹⁴⁵ In late 1911, the Catholic *comitadjis* organized by the priest Petar Arandjel of Zlokućani were especially active – the Catholic Church and its priests were not just under the protection of Austria-Hungary, but also in close relations with its consulates. All this made Serbia extremely cautious in her policy; on the one hand, she endeavoured not to give occasion for any step on the part of Vienna; on the other hand, she tried to secure for herself the territory of Old Serbia against Austria’s appropriation either directly, as was often feared although it looked improbable, or by the creation of an Austrophile Greater Albania. Now that Bulgaria was also suspicious of Austria’s plans as regards Albanian autonomy, the decision matured to form at last closer bonds between the Christian states in the Balkans.

Immediately after Italy’s declaration of war, more lively diplomatic activities were set in motion to form a Balkan alliance with a view to all eventualities. Russian diplomacy had long advocated this with the intention that the alliance be purely defensive from the military point of view, and that from the political point of view it should bring the Balkan states together in collaboration, in case of necessity and in view of all possible developments, so that events should not find them disunited. The Serbian government was not only willing to negotiate, but also used its influence with the friendly Powers, urging them to recommend the negotiations, especially in Sofia, where the declaration of

¹⁴⁴ Nenadović Milovanoviću, Carigrad, 7. 12. 1911, Pov. Br. 360, in: Lj. Aleksić-Pejković and K. Džambazovski, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije 1903-1914*, knj. IV, sv. 4/2, Beograd 2009, pp. 1296-1297. That relations existed between the Bulgarian *comitadjis* and Austria was believed in Paris, too. Vesnić Milovanoviću, Pariz, 7. 12. 1911, Pov. Br. 481, in: Ibid., pp. 1295-1296. Cf. Poincaré, *Au service de la France*, I, p. 268.

¹⁴⁵ Spalajković Milovanoviću, Sofija, 8. 12. 1911, Pov. Br. 578, in: Aleksić-Pejković and Džambazovski, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. IV, sv. 4/2, pp. 1306-1307.

war, and especially Italy's action in Preveza, had caused great excitement and strengthened the inclination to negotiate. From 29 March 1911 onwards, the Russophile coalition of the Geshov and Danev parties had been in power in Bulgaria, and this group had broader views as regards national policy and was more open to friendly Russian advice.

When in connection with the Italian war, rumours began to circulate about the possibility of an Austrian action in the Sanjak, Dr. Danev told the Serbian Chargé d'Affaires, Dr. M. Dj. Milojević, on 30 September 1911 that extreme caution was necessary. If Austria-Hungary intended to go down into the Sanjak again, it would not stop at that, but would rather, he believed, go further. In that event, he said, it would find the Serbs and Bulgarians "united in self-defense".¹⁴⁶ Such an attitude was already the beginning of an alliance. The conditions for it were present in respect of both Turkey and Austria-Hungary. Indeed, negotiations started soon afterwards, in early October 1911, on the arrival of the Bulgarian Minister, D. Rizov, in Belgrade. At a meeting between Geshov and Milovanović on 11 of the same month,¹⁴⁷ the principal points of an alliance were laid down and the negotiations were brought to a successful conclusion at the beginning of March. The Serbo-Bulgarian treaty of alliance was signed on 13 March (29 February) 1912. The Bulgaro-Greek alliance was concluded soon afterwards on 29 (16) May. On 2 July (19 June), the Serbo-Bulgarian military convention was signed. The alliance between Serbia and Montenegro was concluded on 27 (14) September.

The purpose of the Serbo-Bulgarian treaty was that the two states should mutually guarantee the "independence and inviolability of their national territories" and that by means of full military cooperation in case of an attack by one or more Powers. Article 2 of the treaty contained the following provision: "Both contracting parties agree to assisting each other with their entire forces in case of any Great Power annexing, occupying, or taking by force of arms, even only provisionally, any part of the Balkan territory which now lies under Turkish rule, if one of them should consider it contrary to its vital interests and a *casus belli*." In Article 1 of the secret annex to this treaty, the provision was made for a joint action against Turkey, if the situation in that country became such as to imperil the national and state interests of one or both countries, or if

146 Milojević Milovanoviću, Sofija, 30. 9. 1911, Pov. Br. 430, in: Lj. Aleksić-Pejković and K. Džambazovski, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije 1903-1914*, knj. IV, sv. 4/1, Beograd 2009, pp. 848-849.

147 J. E. Guèshoff, *The Balkan League*, London 1915, pp. 13-17. The meeting took place in a railway carriage, and the negotiations were conducted on the way from Belgrade to Lapovo. This method was adopted in order to attract as little attention as possible.

indeed the question arose of the territorial break-up of the Turkish Empire. In Article 2, Bulgaria recognized Serbia's claim to the territory north and west of the Šar mountain, while Serbia recognized Bulgaria's claim to the territory east of the Rhodope mountains and the Struma river. As for the territory between these areas, it was provided, in the last resort, if no agreement were reached, that the Russian Emperor should arbitrate, his decision being binding on both contracting parties. The Russian government was to be informed in advance if the Balkan states decided to resort to military action against Turkey. It was only natural, after this, that the Imperial government was given all information about the alliance, in the conclusion of which its diplomacy had indeed played a prominent part; but the allies wanted their treaty to remain secret.

In the military convention between Serbia and Bulgaria, the detailed provision was made for military collaboration between the two countries. According to Article 3, this applied to Austria-Hungary only under the circumstances mentioned in the above-quoted Article 2 of the treaty, or in the event of Austria-Hungary's attacking Serbia directly. Neither the treaty nor the convention contained any provision of an offensive character in respect of the Danubian Monarchy. The same was true of the Serbo-Montenegrin treaty. Article 3 of the military convention ran as follows: "If Austria-Hungary attacks Serbia, Bulgaria binds herself to declare war on Austria immediately and to send to Serbia an army which will not be smaller than 200,000 men, and which will, together with the Serbian army, operate defensively or offensively against Austria-Hungary. Bulgaria is under the same obligation to Serbia, should Austria-Hungary, on whatever pretext, and with or without the consent of Turkey, send its army into the Sanjak of Novi Pazar and should Serbia be forced to declare war on it, or to send her army into the Sanjak for the protection of her interests and thus provoke an armed conflict with Austria-Hungary." As regards Turkey, the treaty of alliance might have been considered hostile from the first, but as regards Austria-Hungary this was not the case, and there was only the possibility of its being directed against that country, if it crossed its acquired borders. "Austria will have to look differently on the Balkan question when she realizes that behind the Serbian army stand 400,000 Bulgarian troops", the Chief of the Bulgarian General Staff, General Fichev said to the Serbian Military Attachè, Major Danilo Kalafatović on 13 February 1912.

Geshov explained to Spalajković in August 1912 that he was working very actively to induce Italy to cooperate with the Balkan states. He did so for many reasons, among which the following was the most important: if it contemplated an act of aggression, Austria-Hungary would think twice before turning against its own ally, and even if it did so, it would no doubt paralyze the strength of the Triple Alliance. The Balkan states united with Italy would be

in a position to withstand the Austrian forces, especially because the military reforms in Austria were not carried out completely.¹⁴⁸ But these endeavours of Bulgarian diplomacy were in vain; Italy was already sufficiently involved in difficulties in the Tripoli campaign and did not want to create further troubles for itself. We cannot affirm, for we have not sufficient proof, that Rome perhaps wanted to see, to some extent, more vigorous action on the part of the Balkan states, but it is more than certain that these activities were welcome to Italy as exercising certain pressure on Turkey and rendering her more amenable.

Germany soon received very reliable information about the conclusion of this alliance. As early as 15 April 1912, Kiderlen-Waechter wrote about it to King Carol of Romania.¹⁴⁹ However, Austria remained completely uninformed. Her Minister in Sofia, Tarnowski, stated as late as 3 July that a true alliance, comprising an agreement about Macedonia, was quite improbable, and that the Serbo-Bulgarian negotiations had only had the character of an oral agreement concerning the maintenance of the *status quo*.¹⁵⁰ When Berchtold reminded him that there was some positive intelligence about the Bulgaro-Greek alliance, Tarnowski declared even that to be hardly probable and stood by the official denials, which he repeated as late as 16 August.¹⁵¹ Somewhat more reliable news about the alliance reached Berchtold later, no doubt from some other source; he communicated the news for the first time, as an established fact, to the Ministerial Council at a meeting held on 14 September.¹⁵²

In informing Izvolsky about the conclusion of this alliance, Sazonov wrote to him on 30 March that the alliance had been concluded "with our (Russia's) will" and that its object was mutual defense and the protection of common interests in the event of a change in the existing order in the Balkans or of an attack by a third Power on one of the signatories. Sazonov considered that with this alliance, in which she had been given a decisive say, Russia had obtained a means "to resist the spread of any Great Power's influence in the Balkans".¹⁵³ The Austrian side insisted all the time that this alliance was directed against the Danubian Monarchy; this point of view also found powerful supporters in Germany.¹⁵⁴ In Austria, there was indeed reason to complain that Russian diplomacy had intended by this move to limit Austria's influence in the Balkans,

148 Spalajković Jovanoviću, Sofija, 10. 8. 1912, Pov. Br. 350, in: M. Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije 1903-1914*, knj. V, sv. 2, Beograd 1985, pp., 265-267.

149 Jackh, *Kiderlen-Waechter*, II, p. 186.

150 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, IV, pp. 246-8.

151 *Ibid.*, pp. 252, 351-2.

152 *Ibid.*, p. 428.

153 *Der diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, II, pp. 76-7.

154 Gooss, *Die Vorgeschichte des Weltkrieges*, p. 100.

as Sazonov's message gave sufficient ground for this; if the tendency of the alliance were thus understood, Vienna's view might be justifiable, but even then with the limitations imposed by the text itself. The intention was to restrain the spread of Austrian influence, for it was believed that it meant the whetting of Austria's appetites and a basis for further demands. The treaty contained not a word against the existing possessions of Austria-Hungary.

During the visit of the French Prime Minister, Poincaré, to St. Petersburg in the middle of August 1912, an explanation took place between him and Sazonov as to the nature of this alliance. Poincaré feared that the alliance was aggressive rather than defensive in character, considering it to be in fact "a war alliance", and he saw in it a "grave danger", for complications in the Balkans were possible at any moment. Sazonov reassured him, emphasizing the fact that Russia had warned Serbia and Bulgaria that she only recognized the alliance thus concluded as a defensive one, "the object of which was to guarantee the independence and freedom of both countries against attack by Austria-Hungary" and that the Russian government was by no means willing to assist them in any plans of aggression.¹⁵⁵ In this respect, he told the whole truth and, as we shall see later, worked consistently along the lines of these assurances.

Before the conclusion of the military convention with Serbia, King Ferdinand had visited Vienna in order to take stock of the situation and to try perhaps to conclude a separate agreement of some kind with the Austro-Hungarian government. During his stay in Vienna on 1-3 June 1912, he came into touch with Count Berchtold. According to Berchtold's account, the King offered Austria a division of the spheres of interest in the Balkans. He spoke very fervently on behalf of the Albanians and suggested that Vienna should save that "people of three million." This would not be to the detriment of Bulgaria, as she "had nothing to seek for in Albania." Of Serbia and Serbian interests, the King of Bulgaria said nothing. It was Berchtold who pointed out the difficulties of carrying out the proposal and perhaps influenced King Ferdinand, with his reserve, to return to the tenets of Geshov's policy.¹⁵⁶ It is not excluded, however, that this step on the part of the King of Bulgaria was a maneuver to sound out Austria's true intentions, especially given the obligations which Bulgaria was undertaking towards Serbia. Berchtold explained that under the existing circumstances he did not find it opportune to enter into negotiations on that matter lest premature discussion should stimulate tendencies which might

155 *Der diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, II, p. 223; R. Poincaré, *Les Balkans en feu 1912, (Au service de la France, II)*, Paris 1926, pp. 115-6. Nicolson took the same view of the alliance as Sazonov. See Benckendorff, *Diplomatischen Schriftwechsel*, I, p. 454.

156 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, IV, p. 195.

militate against the existing order. He changed his mind later, and on 17 August sent different messages to Sofia. Austria-Hungary could not keep in check a historical process "with its own body" and should Turkey's last hour strike he would like to have the basis of an agreement with Bulgaria. Bulgaria had no co-nationals in the Danubian Monarchy, he said, and her aims in Macedonia were not in conflict with Austrian interests. Between her and Austria-Hungary a parallel action was possible. This was to be urged upon King Ferdinand and the leading persons in Bulgaria and all was to be done to prevent them from taking a direction "in which our interests would intersect".¹⁵⁷ It is not difficult to see at whose detriment the parallel Bulgaro-Austrian action in Old Serbia and Macedonia would be carried out, just as there is no doubt as to the meaning of the passage that referred to a conflict of Bulgaro-Austrian interests. Bulgaria could come into conflict with Austria-Hungary only if she sided with Serbia, i.e. if she helped Serbia to defend herself against further Austrian penetration and adopted the principle that Austria-Hungary had no place in the Balkan Peninsula.

On 8 August 1912, Count Berchtold instructed the Austrian Ambassador in St. Petersburg to communicate certain messages to Sazonov. These concerned the Albanian and Serbian question. Serbia and Montenegro, Berchtold asserted, were supporting the Albanian uprising which had again broken out on a large scale in the spring of 1912, embracing not only the Catholic but also Moslem Albanian tribes. After certain Albanian beys had come to Belgrade, Serbia gave them, it was said in Vienna, money and arms. Belgrade particularly lavished gifts and honours on the sons of Isa Boletini. "The Belgrade government should be the very last to play the part of agitator in this way", Berchtold wrote, "for they never miss an opportunity of slandering our policy, which aims exclusively at the maintenance of peace in the Balkans, and of ascribing to us – without being able to produce a shred of evidence – just such machinations among the Albanians as are now actually being carried out by Belgrade." In sending these messages, Berchtold added, for the Ambassador's private information, that he did so for two reasons: 1) to enter into contact with Russia over a Balkan question, and 2) to preempt Serbia and Montenegro, which might cast suspicion on Austria's policy.¹⁵⁸ In fact, Serbia had begun as early as late 1911 to get into touch with certain Albanian chieftains. She believed that with such connections she would be able to exercise certain influence to put an end to Albanian hostile attitude towards the Serbian element and that some basis for a joint action might be found. Vienna viewed these connections with much

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., pp. 329-331.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 325-326.

jealousy, although they were practically without any tangible results. The differences between the Serbs and Moslem Albanians from Kosovo and Metohija were far too ancient and for too deeply rooted, and it was not an easy matter to compose them. Viennese diplomacy saw in these Serbian endeavours a desire on the part of Serbia to win over certain number of Austria's clients and to extend her own influence. The Danubian Monarchy had long reckoned with Serbo-Albanian differences in many questions of further political action, and an eventual agreement would have meant the ruin of many of its schemes. For that reason, Vienna urged diplomatic action in Constantinople to induce the Porte to satisfy the Albanians as soon as possible and to grant them a series of privileges, some of which (such as the right to carry arms) would undoubtedly be to the detriment of their Christian fellow-citizens. In fact, this action for the granting of privileges to Albanians only or in the first place, as the Vienna government suggested, was sufficient to provoke mistrust and to sow the seeds of further discord. This mistrust was increased by the news that the Danubian Monarchy would guarantee the privileges which the Porte might grant to the Albanians and thus appear as something of a recognized protector.¹⁵⁹

The war with Italy and Austria's intervention influenced the Porte to modify, to a large extent, its attitude towards the Albanians. From the autumn of 1911, after the conclusion of the Young Turk Congress in Salonica, the authorities gave way to them in all matters. On 21 November, the Turkish Foreign Minister addressed a request to the Austrian Ambassador that his country should also influence the Catholic clergy in Albania to come to terms with the Turks and refuse to allow any relations between the Malissors and Montenegro.¹⁶⁰ The Minister of the Interior Affairs, Hacı Adil Bey, spent February and March 1912 among the Albanians in order to pacify them by all possible means. He found that they were on the whole rather faithful supporters of the Turkish rule and that it was unfair to designate them as rebels. After this visit, Mahmud Şevket Pasha decided to distribute 38,000 rifles to the Albanians of the Priştina, Peć and Djakovica area.¹⁶¹ In May, the Turkish government prepared a project for agrarian reform in favour of the Albanians, who were to obtain possession of all the state-owned lands in the vilayets of Janjina, Scutari and Bitolj. But even this was not enough to pacify the Albanians. Two years of revolt and strife had aroused the atavistic fighting instincts of these highlanders, and their hatred for the Young Turks had been incited by many who had suffered loss through

159 Jovanović Ministarstvu inostranih dela, Carigrad, 29. 7. 1912, Pov. Br. 568, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. V, sv. 2, pp. 166-168.

160 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, III, p. 572.

161 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, p. 20.

the destruction of villages and the ruin of strongholds. A new outbreak was provoked in particular by the rigged elections for the Turkish parliament, in which the Young Turks seized the places of the Albanian leaders. The revolt spread like wildfire and created a state of real anarchy in the already disturbed country. Even the suite of Adil Bey was twice attacked by the rebels, and the Minister himself was forced to supplement his military guard with representatives of the Albanian clans to see him safely through to Scutari.

In the summer of 1912, the rebellion spread to the army. In Bitolj, on 22 June, the officers and soldiers revolted because of their dissatisfaction with the Young Turk regime. They were unwilling to fight against the Albanians and to suppress them by force of arms. The rebels were soon joined by a group of officers and men from the garrisons in Prilep, Resna, Ohrid and Debar, and then by a number of gendarmes and their officers. Among these were a fair number of actual Albanians. In Djakovica, the rebels fraternized with the army, and the officers declared that they would not fight against them. In Ferizović, on 6 July, two battalions refused to march against the Albanians. Being unable for many reasons to punish the offenders and to reestablish the shaken discipline, the War Minister, Mahmud Şevket Pasha, resigned on 10 July, and the whole Cabinet followed the suit seven days later. A week later, Ahmed Muhtar Pasha formed the government, but despite Muhtar's personal authority it was unable to settle the crisis. On 22 July, the officer commanding the gendarmerie in Priština even opened the prisons and distributed arms to the prisoners, and then went over with them to the outlaw, Isa Boletini. There followed "the complete capitulation of the civil and military authorities to the rebels".¹⁶² The Mutasarrif of Prizren barely escaped with his life, and the army was practically scattered. The Albanians believed that the fall of the government was due to them and demanded some kind of reward from the new government. Autonomy was considered the lowest price for their activities. The Minister of the Interior Affairs in the new government, Ferid Pasha, was an Albanian and as such he tried to do all in his power for his compatriots. The army was ordered to take no active steps against them. A day after Ferid took office, the German Charge d'Affaires in Constantinople, Mutius, reported that a form of autonomy for the Albanians was under consideration. "If not in name, the development of events will in fact in the long run bring at least some sort of Albanian autonomy"; the privileges in this sense were already being considered and granted. Among other things, a form of Albanian armed forces

162 Milojević Jovanoviću, Priština, 22. 7. 1912, Pov. Br. 1014, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. V, sv. 1, pp. 999-1000.

was under consideration, including of course the right to bear arms as its first condition,¹⁶³ and then perhaps the establishment of a future autonomous Albania with wide borders. Mutius clearly saw and pointed out the difficulties of such a plan and foretold further disturbances in connection with it.

The most obvious proof of the government's giving way to the Albanians all along the line, after the dissolution of the newly-elected parliament, was the permission given to the Albanians, armed to the teeth, to enter all the towns of the Kosovo Vilayet and manifest their reconciliation to the authorities, or in other words, their victory. On 23 July, they entered Priština and Novi Pazar, and after that Sjenica and other places in the Sanjak of Novi Pazar, and between 12 and 17 August some 15,000 Albanians gathered in Skoplje, thinking of going all the way to Salonica. The capitulation of the authorities to the rebels brought about a state of complete anarchy, in which the worst sufferers were the Christians.

Out of consideration for the Albanians, the Porte was unwilling even to ratify the protocol relating to the delimitation of the Turco – Montenegrin border, although a Turkish commission had collaborated in its drafting. Asim Bey, the Turkish Foreign Minister, declared to the German Charge d'Affaires on 10 July 1912 that the ratification would cause an uprising throughout Albania and that he preferred war to such an eventuality.¹⁶⁴ Even Austrian intervention, urging Turkey to yield at least partially, was unsuccessful.¹⁶⁵ It is no wonder, therefore, that there were frequent conflicts and much bloodshed on the Montenegro-Turkish border (e.g. at Mojkovac and Berane), particularly in August. King Nicholas of Montenegro – he assumed the royal title in 1910 – took occasion of these conflicts to address a special note to the Great Powers, appealing for their mediation, and at the same time to ask for the support and aid of his Balkan allies in the event of a war. The failure of the Great Powers and Turkey to answer the Montenegrin note was later, on 8 October, seized upon by Montenegro as a pretext for declaring war.

On 13 August, the Austrian government addressed a note to the Great Powers explaining that Turkey's concessions to the Albanians and the granting of autonomy, "although not in fact so great as it was thought", had caused unrest among the Christian nationalities in Turkey and the Vienna government was concerned lest peace could not be maintained. Vienna considered that the intention of the Porte to grant privileges to the Albanians was laudable and that the Balkan Christians should even welcome "this first step towards

¹⁶³ *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, p. 39.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

administrative decentralization", which would later benefit them too. Instead of that, the Balkan Christian states saw in this favouritism of the Albanians a threat to the interests of their compatriots. The Vienna government therefore proposed that the Porte should first be advised to carry out the reorganization of their internal policy, and that representations should then be made to the Christian states that such a policy on Turkey's part suited the interests of their compatriots and that they should refrain from any action which might disturb the peace in the Balkans and hinder the process of decentralization. Sazonov agreed to the proposal that the Porte should be advised as above, but he considered that any steps taken in the Balkan capitals would be unsuccessful if the governments concerned were merely advised to wait quietly without being offered more favourable prospects for their compatriots.¹⁶⁶ The Turkish Ambassador was, however, recommended in the Russian Foreign Ministry that Turkey should grant privileges to other nationalities without discrimination. Russia's view was also communicated to the Austrian Ambassador on 18 August, and the French government also made similar proposals.

Austria took this step, according to the written report which Berchtold submitted to the Emperor, with the intention of helping the reform of Turkey and the maintenance of peace, of manifesting the unanimity of the Great Powers as regards the maintenance of the *status quo* in the Balkans and preventing a possible separate agreement between the Entente Powers, and, lastly, of dispelling mistrust of Austria's Balkan policy "and at the same time taking the leading part in the Eastern policy".¹⁶⁷ But this move of Austria, with its undisguised sympathy for the preservation of Albanian "prerogatives", as they were termed in Vienna, and with its inclination to start the work of decentralization by granting privileges to the Albanians and not at the same time to all the other peoples in Turkey, was seen, however, not as Austria's disinterestedness but, on the contrary, her desire that Turkey should meet the claims of the Albanians exclusively, which would serve Austria's interests and contribute to the increase of her prestige.

The Austrian proposal, therefore, gave rise to doubt and alarm on all sides. Why was Austria taking the initiative? Was this not the first step towards intervention, at first moral and later military? Was not Austria intending to obtain as many concessions for the Albanians as possible, together with their autonomy and delimitation of the borders to which they were expected to spread? Such were the questions asked not only in certain capitals of the Great Powers and

166 *Der diplomatische Schriftwechsel Isvolskis*, II, pp. 210, 228-9; *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, IV, pp. 350, 357-8.

167 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, IV, p. 340.

of the Balkan states, but also in Constantinople. "Count Berchtold's proposal for the decentralization of the Turkish provinces in the Balkans", Pašić wrote in one of his memoranda, "has had a very great effect. It has aroused all the nationalities in the Balkans and filled their minds with anxiety, for since the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina no people believes in the sincere desire of Austria-Hungary to further the creation of conditions for a lasting peace and the cultural and economic development of those peoples on the basis of a just distribution of various nationalities – the Serbs in the Sanjak of Novi Pazar and the Vilayet of Kosovo, i.e. in Old Serbia, in particular, cannot look upon the proposal for decentralization with confidence, knowing as they do that Austria-Hungary even opposed Russia's proposal that the limited reforms provided for in the Mürtzsteg Treaty be extended to the Vilayet of Kosovo." Germany also informed Vienna of the doubts and fears which the proposal had given rise to, and the Austrian diplomatic representatives abroad did not disguise the facts in their dispatches.¹⁶⁸ All this made Count Berchtold send a circular note to all the Ministers in the Balkan Christian states on 22 August, explaining his action and trying to minimize its significance and present it as merely an encouragement of the new Turkish Cabinet, which had abandoned the rigid centralizing policy of the Young Turk regime.

In fact, the Vienna government had not the least desire that all the nationalities in Turkey be treated alike, so these messages and explanations were insincere. On 23 August, the departmental chief of the Foreign Ministry, Count Macchio, informed Berchtold, who was then in Bucharest, of the point of view of the Russian and French governments and gave it as his opinion that it was owing to Russia's wish "to place Serbia to the fore". We cannot see on what grounds he could have come to such a conclusion, when equal treatment for all was explicitly sought; but, on the other hand, this remark indicated a desire to cast the odium upon Serbia as the country through which Austria's aims were obstructed. That Vienna did not intend to demand equal rights for all the national elements was clear from the reply which Baron Macchio proposed to be addressed to the Powers, and which was drafted as follows: in that which was undertaken in Turkey due regard was paid to the concessions which the Porte had made on its own initiative, and to get into details as to what particular reforms should be granted and to whom would mean a return to the policy of mediation. Concessions to other nationalities were not so much held up by the resistance of Turkey, as by their dangerous susceptibilities.¹⁶⁹ The proposal was obviously, on Vienna's own admission, insincere. The Russian and French

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. 369, 376.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 372.

proposal did not ask of the Porte to get into details in the matter of these concessions, but to grant in principle to all the Christian nationalities what it had granted to the Albanians. This was entirely in agreement with the principles of justice and equality of rights. The Balkan Christians, who jointly demanded that their wishes and demands in this respect be satisfied, would themselves have been responsible if they had abused the privileges granted them and had compromised themselves by their attitude. But during these months, it was Austrian diplomacy that attempted with its advice and proposals to stir up jealousy and, by supporting Bulgaria's claims, to suppress and frustrate those of Serbia and to create an atmosphere of mutual distrust and friction. Tarnowski, the Austrian Minister in Sofia, wrote on 26 August that Russia was pursuing "the unfriendly [to Austria] objectives, i.e. encouraging an agreement between the Balkan peoples".¹⁷⁰ Berchtold himself, in order to frustrate such an entente and bring about a rupture, informed King Ferdinand on 29 August that "there was no unbridgeable difference between the aspirations of Bulgaria and the Albanian interests".¹⁷¹

Austria's move was not successful. Even the German Ambassador in Constantinople saw in it some ulterior Austrian plans, and the Romanian Minister concurred in this opinion.¹⁷² In Turkey, the Porte was frightened rather than encouraged by the proposal. It immediately started to deny any intention of pursuing a policy of decentralization, seeing in it the origins of national autonomies and further complications. In addition, the proposal placed the Turkish government in a very difficult position. If they accepted the Austrian proposal, it would look as if they were acting under foreign pressure, and if they did not, they might lose Vienna's support. After all, it was well-known in Constantinople that there were intimate relations between certain Austrian agents and some of the Albanian chiefs, and this increased their suspicions of Austria's proposal. "The Porte found out about the Austrian proposal", the German Ambassador in Constantinople wrote, "almost at the same time as the fact that priests engaged in Austrian Catholic propaganda in Albania had been found amongst the wounded Albanians on the battlefields."¹⁷³ The leading persons in Berlin, including the Emperor, believed that Berchtold's initiative was not very promising; Kiderlen-Waechter even thought that the Austrian Minister wanted to appear more important and that he had taken this action to meet

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 378.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., p. 386.

¹⁷² Ibid., pp. 376-7.

¹⁷³ *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, p. 101.

the reproach that he was doing nothing to control the course of events.¹⁷⁴ It is, therefore, comprehensible that the alarm felt in the Balkan capitals as a result of this step must have been still greater. Berchtold was, nevertheless, satisfied with it, although he saw what a reception it had met with and was forced to assuage and explain it. He was mostly satisfied because Austria-Hungary had given it to be understood that in the settlement of the Turkish question it considered its interests and concerns paramount. To the outer world, he insisted that his main success was that he had brought the Powers into direct contact to discuss these questions and that it was declared on all sides that such contact was very necessary.

Austria-Hungary nevertheless endeavoured to obtain from the Porte any kind of privileges for the Albanians. As early as 2 October, Berchtold sent instructions to the Austrian Ambassador in Constantinople to the effect that in view of the attitude of the Catholic circles in the Monarchy, and in order to separate the Malissors from Montenegro, the Porte would be requested “seriously and resolutely” to satisfy the Malissors: 1) by releasing them from military duty with the return of their former privileges or by making Malessia a sort of military border, and 2) by freeing them from taxation for at least ten years. In this connection, the action of the Turkish army against them would have to cease. The Austrian Consul in Scutari, together with the bishops, would then use his influence to induce them to settle down and abandon their collaboration with Montenegro. Marquis Pallavicini carried out these instructions on the following day and obtained the full consent of the Porte to these suggestions. As the price of the concessions, the Turks begged Austria to take active steps in Belgrade to restrain Serbia at least from embarking upon hostile activities against them.¹⁷⁵ While the Porte was thus giving way to Austria in order to avert the danger of war with the Balkan allies, its officials in Scutari, with the Vali at their head, were angry with the Danubian Monarchy and came into conflict with its Consul, considering that it was in fact his influence that had such marked and prejudicial effect on the Malissors’ attitude towards Turkey.¹⁷⁶ The last proposal of the Austrian government to the Porte shows clearly that the Catholic Bishopric in Albania was indeed at their disposal and that it had not been very active in soothing disorders; and the British Consul in Salonika said to his Serbian colleague “that he has indisputable proof that the Bishops of Alessio, Scutari and Clementi have taken part in the movement and that

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., XXX, p. 50.

¹⁷⁵ *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, IV, pp. 534-5.

¹⁷⁶ Nenadović Pašiću, Carigrad, 22. 9. 1912, Pov. Br. 729, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. V, sv. 2, pp. 658-660.

the Bishop of Scutari, in particular, has greatly compromised himself in that respect".¹⁷⁷

Provoked by Austria's action, the governments of Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece appealed to St. Petersburg that Russia should take the initiative to ensure that the Christian population of Turkey be guaranteed the same rights as those granted to the Albanians. The Russian government accepted this proposal and, on 18 August, instructed their Ambassador in Constantinople to work in that sense: 1) that the privileges granted to the Albanians should be reduced as much as possible, or 2) that similar privileges should be granted to other nationalities. In informing the friendly Cabinets in London and Paris of this, the Russian government did not consider that it acted contrary to Austria's action.¹⁷⁸ Russia's mediation in favour of the Balkan states provoked, however, both jealousy and mistrust on the part of the Vienna government. They could not openly oppose such a proposal, which expressed a wish the justifiability of which could not be doubted, but they now found that the susceptibilities of the Porte and its internal difficulties should be taken into account. Vienna urged that it was not advisable to raise all the questions at once – the concessions granted to the Albanians might be for the time being the first stage of work to be done. The Balkan states were not satisfied with such an outlook and demanded more resolutely that the matter should be brought to its conclusion now that the question of concessions had been raised, and that by Austria's own initiative. The longer the negotiations were protracted the greater their demands became, assuming more definite and absolute a form. Instead of mere concessions, the whole question of reform was gradually raised in such way as to involve the participation of the representatives of the Balkan states in deciding on and controlling the execution of the reforms.

The danger of war, which had been contemplated since the Italian campaign, became imminent with the order for the mobilization of ten Turkish European divisions issued on 24 September and the announcement of maneuvers on the Bulgarian border in the Adrianople area. According to the statement of its Foreign Minister, Noradunkyan Efendi, Turkey intended to intimidate the Christian states and prevent their demanding the autonomous privileges for their compatriots.¹⁷⁹ As the joint appeal of the Balkan states to the Great Powers to keep in check Turkey's military measures had come to nothing owing to the counsels of Powers in both camps, the Triple Alliance

177 Balugdžić Pašiču, Solun, 23. 9. 1912, Pov. Br. 510, in: Ibid., pp. 668-673.

178 *Der diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, II, p. 227; R. Poincaré, *Au service de la France*, II, p. 171.

179 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, IV, p. 479.

and the Triple Entente, and also to their hesitation to take energetic action in Constantinople, the Balkan allies mobilized on 30 September to counter the Turks. Conscious of their national mission and firmly bound together, these states wanted to settle at last the nationalities question in Turkey in a manner that would end all the difficulties which prevented the free development of their compatriots. In reply to their mobilization, Turkey ordered general mobilization on 2 October and appealed to Romania in vain to join the common struggle. It was under the impression of the completed mobilization that European Cabinets took more serious measures to prevent war. On 8 October, after the protracted consultation, the Balkan states were warned in the name of the Great Powers that their military action, regardless of the outcome, would not affect the territorial situation in the Balkans. At the same time, the Powers declared they were "taking into their own hands" the matter of reforms in Turkey and that the introduction of reforms would by no means affect the inviolability of the Turkish territory.¹⁸⁰

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The conclusion of the alliance undoubtedly encouraged a bellicose mood in all the capitals of the Balkan Christian states, especially in Sofia and Cetinje. In Belgrade, however, there was considerable reserve, largely because it was not clear how Austria-Hungary would look upon an active policy of the Balkan states, especially Serbia. In that respect, Vienna had long been unresponsive to all feelers, apparently adopting the view that any positive statement might encourage the war spirit, while a negative one might create ill feeling against Austria in Athens and Sofia, the confidence of which it cherished. French diplomacy, considering that the situation looked very dangerous, spared no effort to assuage matters, lest the Balkan conflict should result in more serious complications. Russia would not remain indifferent to the fate of Bulgaria, if the latter engaged herself in a war with Turkey, whether she was vanquished or victorious. The case of Serbia was still more serious. Poincaré told Izvolsky that he had information to the effect that Austria-Hungary would not enter the Sanjak to begin with, but would, when events permitted, turn on Belgrade. Such intervention on the part of Austria would bring in Russia and very possibly cause a general conflagration. Sazonov informed Poincaré in the course of their conversations on this matter that Austria's entry into action might force Russia to

180 The French proposal along these lines had indeed been formulated on 2 September, but it was not carried into effect until two weeks later. See Poincaré, *Au service de la France*, II, p. 213 ff.

abandon the policy of non-intervention.¹⁸¹ Poincaré therefore proposed, as the only way of preventing this, that the general European policy should not be abandoned if it came to war in the Balkans, that the war should be localized, and the intervention of any single Power deprecated in principle. He furthermore accepted Berchtold's proposal that the Powers should keep in constant touch, in order to limit primarily the freedom of action of the proposal-maker, and at the same time to bind Russia by this measure and thus avert the danger to France and the peace of the world in general.¹⁸² This attitude on the part of France gave rise to another proposal, namely that Russia and Austria-Hungary should be appointed the mandatory Powers of Europe for the settlement of the Balkan conflict, in the spirit of the policy pursued in 1902-3, when those Powers were recognized as the most interested in the development

181 *Der diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, II, p. 297. Russia was otherwise opposed to any military action on the part of the Balkan allies against Turkey. A statement made by the Russian Minister in Sofia, Neklyudov on 29 August 1912 did not only have the character of a warning, but almost of a threat, despite the friendly tone in which it was expressed. See *Krasnii arhiv*, XV, 1926, p. 20. In Belgrade, on 19 September, the Russian Minister, Hartwig, depicted in the darkest shades all the possibilities of a war. Turkey was militarily prepared and might smash Bulgaria. Austria would "without any hesitation enter Serbian territory and seize Belgrade." Turkey might alienate Greece from the Allies by making her certain concessions. The Russian government therefore urged Serbia to inform Bulgaria that under such circumstances she could not support her, especially without the approval of the Russian government. Similar advice was sent by the Imperial government the following day through the Serbian Minister in St. Petersburg, with the additional reminder that the whole situation depended on the attitude of Serbia. On the back of this document Pašić wrote: "It does not depend on our will whether or not affairs in the Balkans assume a form which threatens the existence of the Serbs. Will the agitation and rebellions for the cause of 'Greater Albania', which threaten the life of the Serbian population in Kosovo, be supported?" See Tadić Ministarstvu inostranih dela, Petrograd, 20. 9. 1912, Pov. Br. 2167, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. V, sv. 2, p. 641. The Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Neratov, said again to the Serbian Minister on 22 September that Russia did not approve of war. "She does not want to repeat her mistake of 1877, and be weakened when it comes to the settlement of the question, although it would be a serious matter for her if Austria attacked Serbia, for it would be also a blow to her." The same day, the British Minister appeared in the Belgrade Foreign Ministry with a similar message. A war with Turkey would "certainly result in an attack on Serbia by Austria, and would thereby throw Serbia back twenty years." Similar messages came from London on 30 September from Sazonov, who was in London at the time. "Russia needs peace for the next ten years for her economic, financial and military revival." Russia could enter into war "only if her own interests were at stake." See Grujić Pašiću, London, 30. 9. 1912, strogo Pov. Br. 187, in: *Ibid.*, pp. 760-761. Similar advice was addressed to Sofia as well. On 3 October, Sazonov and Poincaré jointly called all three Balkan Ministers in Paris to speak to them against war. See Poincaré, *Au service de la France*, II, pp. 232-3.

182 Poincaré, *Au service de la France*, II, p. 199; *Der diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, II, pp. 249-52, 299.

of Balkans affairs. This time Russia and Austria-Hungary would also appear as representatives of the two groups of Powers, the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente. This proposal was accepted, but due to the already strained situation in the Balkans and the impossibility for Russia and Austria-Hungary, in view of their mutual distrust, to come to an immediate agreement as regards all eventualities, it came too late to check the exceptionally rapid course of events. Austria wanted to prevent war in order to save Turkey, but she was not, in fact, opposed to Bulgaria's being somewhat strengthened. Vienna firmly believed that Turkey would defeat Serbia¹⁸³ and the prospect of a war with such a result was by no means displeasing to Austria-Hungary. On the other hand, Russia feared war not only because she could not be certain that the Allies would win, but still more because she feared that Austria-Hungary would intervene alone. The Russian Ambassador in Vienna stated this plainly on 1 October.¹⁸⁴ In first case, it was necessary to keep in check Turkey, in the second to keep in check Austria; neither could be done without difficulty. The negotiations as to both the form the intervention would take and its objects proceeded thus very slowly, with frequent digressions, although it was definitely known in Vienna from statements made by the King of Montenegro to the Austrian Minister that war might break out in a few days.¹⁸⁵ The Powers nevertheless took steps in the Balkan capitals on 8 October to stop the war, but Montenegro had already declared war on Turkey on that same day.

The proposal that Montenegro should be the one to declare war was made by the Bulgarian government for special reasons. The Allies wanted to see the effect of the declaration on the Great Powers, and particularly on Austria-Hungary. If the war was taken as something that could not be averted, the other allies could then enter the struggle; but if the Powers put a stop to the war immediately, the allies would know where they stood. Of all the Balkan states, Montenegro was exposed to the least danger, as Russia and Italy would immediately intervene on its behalf, while Austria-Hungary had more consideration for it than for Serbia. Out of consideration for Austria, the Montenegrins directed their main forces on Scutari and Tuzi, and not into the Sanjak of Novi Pazar. Meanwhile, Serbia wavered and was prepared to remain passive at times. On 3 September (21 August), Pašić told the Bulgarian Minister, Toshev, that in case of danger from an Austrian attack, Serbia would mobilize, but that she would take no action against the Turks to be free to defend her

183 Auffenberg, *Aus Österreichs Höhe und Hiedergang*, p. 20; H. Friedjung, *Das Zietalter des Imperialismus*, III, p. 214.

184 *Sbornik diplomaticheskikh dokumentov*, St. Petersburg 1914, p. 9.

185 Giesl, *Zwei Jahrzehnte*, pp. 229-30.

own borders. Serbia would take action, as an ally, only if Romania attacked Bulgaria. In reply, Toshev expressed the opinion that Bulgaria, in the event of an Austrian attack on Serbia, would "join forces" with Serbia, i.e. interrupt the war with Turkey. On that same day, the Bulgarian Minister stated definitely "that Bulgaria has decided to take action and she will do so even if Serbia will not".¹⁸⁶ After these conversations, the final text of an agreement between Serbia and Bulgaria envisaging a fast-approaching action was drawn up on 15 (2) September. The last paragraph contained the following undertaking: "In the event of an attack by Austria-Hungary and Romania individually or jointly on Serbia and Bulgaria, the two allied states will unite to defend themselves." On 24 September, on the eve of their entry into the war, the Bulgarian Minister, Toshev, submitted a proposal from his government to the effect that after presenting an ultimatum all the allied states should attack Turkey, if it refused their demands, and even if Austria mobilized at the same time. The Serbian government replied that if it became certain that Austria-Hungary or Romania was going to attack the Allies, an attempt should be made to avoid war with Turkey.¹⁸⁷ Thereupon, after Turkey's refusal to enter into any direct negotiations with the Balkan states, Geshov definitely announced to the Serbian Minister on 2 October that he intended to inform the representatives of Russia, Britain and France that Bulgaria would go to war, even if alone. "The Triple Entente has to choose today between us and Turkey, and if we are attacked by Austria we shall leave Turkey and all turn against Austria." Pašić sent a message in reply to the effect that such declarations should not be made without a mutual agreement. "Friendly Powers should not be threatened, but rather convinced with adequate reasons that it is to their interest not to force us to look for help elsewhere. We should urge them, if they cannot assist us in our action, to see to it that the war is localized."

Since the beginning of the Italo-Turkish War, Russia had urgently advised both Sofia and Belgrade not to embark upon a war with Turkey, as it might lead to the undesired intervention of Austria, especially against Serbia.¹⁸⁸ Having admitted in Belgrade that she was not sufficiently prepared, Russia wanted to spare herself further humiliation before the Danubian Monarchy, and, in view of Austria's plans in the Balkans and her relations with Serbia, the danger of a conflict might easily arise. Throughout 1912, Russia repeatedly

186 Zabeleška Nikole Pašića o razgovoru sa bugarskim poslanikom A. Toševom, Beograd, 3. 9. 1912, in: Vojvodić, ed. *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. V, sv. 2, pp. 496-498.

187 Zabeleška predsednika Ministarskog saveta i ministra inostranih dela Kraljevine Srbije Nikole Pašića, Beograd, 24.9.1912, Pov. Br. 3626, in: *Ibid.*, p. 676.

188 *Krasnii arhiv*, VIII, 1925, pp. 19, 32.

and emphatically urged the cause of peace in Sofia and Cetinje, where the bellicose elements gained ground for many reasons. Russian intervention in this respect was especially marked during the summer, when a series of attentats carried out by revolutionaries and the massacres of Christians (e.g. in Kočane and Berani) took place, as well as Montenegro-Turkish border incidents. At the same time, Sazonov drew attention of the Turkish Ambassador to the danger and advised that the Porte should proceed with reforms as soon as possible. His anxiety and his desire to prevent a conflict or at least to localize it were evident to all the foreign representatives in St. Petersburg. He was particularly anxious to prevent Vienna from resorting to any individual action and, both for the sake of the Balkan states and for the maintenance of peace, to keep all the Powers united in harmonious collaboration. A localized war in the Balkans did not present a danger to Europe, but the participation of any of the Great Powers in it would undoubtedly lead to European complications and even to a European war. Russia's suggestion that the war should be localized was therefore immediately accepted by Germany, and all France's endeavours had tended in that direction since the crisis had emerged.

It is very interesting and characteristic that the German Emperor himself was opposed to restraining the Balkan states from entering into war. His attitude, however, was quite different from that of the Viennese circles. If the moment had come for war to break out, then let it be. It was better now, he reasoned, when Russia and France, being unprepared, did not want it than later. After all, the Balkan states had natural needs and aspirations to growth and expansion; what right had the Powers to check them? Just as Prussia had not suffered any external interference in 1864, 1866 and 1870, in her "right and proper development", there should be no interference with the Balkan states now. They would have to show what they were worth in a war. "If they are beaten, they will be cast down, and will lie low and keep the peace for long enough, and the territorial question will be dropped." The Powers ought only to localize the war. "The Eastern question must be settled by blood and sword. But at a time that suits us. And that is now!" Of Turkey, he said, he wanted to hear no more, and he ordered his government on 2 October to refrain from influencing the Balkan states in any way.¹⁸⁹ This expression of the Emperor's opinion came at the same time when Vienna received a word from Britain that popular feeling would be extremely agitated in Russia, if Austria-Hungary decided to take any action against Serbia. The two things had a marked effect on the decisions of the Vienna government. Emperor Wilhelm II's opinion was not entirely personal, for it was in fact in harmony with the spirit of the negotiations carried

189 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, pp. 148, 150; cf. the Emperor's notes, *ibid.*, pp. 164-6.

out in Potsdam and confirmed in 1912 at the next meeting of the two emperors in Baltisch-Port (Paldiski).¹⁹⁰ Berlin did not want this time to defend Vienna's policy from Russia with such determination as at the time of the Annexation Crisis; at certain moments it was inferred that Germany did not agree with every move on the part of Vienna, these being sometimes made without previous agreement with the German government.¹⁹¹ Kiderlen-Waechter made the following note: "We must do all we can to prevent the leadership in policy passing from Berlin to Vienna, as Aehrenthal unfortunately succeeded in bringing about in the case of Bülow. That might cost us dearly some day!"¹⁹² Moreover, Germany now endeavoured to improve its relations with Britain and to appear, together with Britain, as a pacifying factor. The Bulgarian government learned of this attitude on the part of German politicians, and Dr. Danev informed Pašić of it during their meeting on 22 September. On 2 October, Kiderlen-Waechter told the Serbian Charge d'Affaires, M. Bogićević, that it was useless to try to stop the course of events after mobilization. The main concern of the Powers was to localize the war. He believed that even Austria "could not resist this demand of the Powers, especially if the Balkan states had already let it be seen that they only wanted reforms for their compatriots. If the war was successful, it would be easy to retain the conquered territories on various pretexts."¹⁹³

190 At the meeting of Emperors Nicholas II and Wilhelm II at Baltisch-Port (Paldiski) in July 1912, Sazonov asked the German Chancellor outright whether Germany would continue in future to restrain Austria, if the latter evinced an inclination to take active steps in the Balkans. Bethmann-Hollweg immediately replied in the affirmative and "without excuse", emphasizing that he continued to abide by the promises he had made in Potsdam. For his part, the German Chancellor wanted Russia to have an assuaging effect on the small Balkan states, especially Bulgaria. See *Der diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, II, pp. 178-9.

191 Kiderlen-Waechter, who at the time of the Annexation Crisis had adopted so firm an attitude towards Russia, began gradually to realize how far German policy was identified with Austrian policy. After the binding declarations made in Potsdam, he attempted to free the hands of the Berlin government in its Eastern policy as regards Austria-Hungary. "According to our treaties and understandings with Austria-Hungary", he wrote on 2 September 1912, "we are not bound to assist Austria-Hungary in her Eastern plans, much less in her adventures." He wanted Germany's attitude towards Austria-Hungary to be determined as occasion arose. If Austria continued to spring surprises, without a previous understanding with Berlin, it might happen one day that the German Government would be obliged to dissociate itself from its ally. "We will not play the part of an Austrian satellite in the East." The German Ambassador in Constantinople, Baron Wangenheim, held the same opinion. Cf. *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, pp. 82-4, 97.

192 Jackh, *Kiderlen-Waechter*, II, p. 189.

193 Bogićević Pašiću, Berlin, 3. 10. 1912, Pov. Br. 2073, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. V, sv. 2, pp. 792-794.

The policy of Russia and Germany, which since the beginning of the crisis had been joined by France and Britain, aimed from the first at the localization of the war. In accordance with the spirit and well-known principles of her Balkan policy, Austria was opposed to any explicit declaration as regards the localization of the war and found herself in an awkward position when she saw that even Germany was working for that and would welcome it. Count Berchtold informed Berlin on 27 September that Austria could not allow Serbia to get in her way on her southern border by obtaining the Sanjak. But this message did not have the desired effect in Berlin. What did Austria want with the Sanjak now, when she had abandoned it four years ago of her own accord? Were further conflicts and perhaps a European crisis to be provoked for the sake of it? Berlin's attitude made it impossible for Austria to use the Sanjak question as an excuse for intervention, and this was a source of considerable annoyance to Vienna. In a memorandum drawn up by the departmental chief of the Viennese Foreign Ministry, Count Szapáry, on 7 October 1912, it was expressly stated that by making the proposal for localization of the war "our ally has attempted, at a time when it looked as if the historic moment for which the Monarchy has been preparing militarily and diplomatically for decades had at last arrived, to limit our freedom of movement by means of a general European action and so deprive us of the advantages of the natural priority which has been ours in the Balkan Peninsula.... For us, this means that the alliance is discredited in respect of its principal object."¹⁹⁴ Berchtold did not hide the fact that he agreed to this collaboration with the other Powers only because he had not succeeded in preventing it and in order not to remain isolated. To make the decision easier for the Austrian government, the responsible people in St. Petersburg, Berlin and Paris advised Belgrade not to allow the Serbian army to enter the Sanjak of Novi Pazar at the start of military operations, or to enter it as late as possible.

Austria's intentions in her Balkan policy throughout this crisis were explained by Count Berchtold to the German Chancellor, Bethmann Hollweg, at their meeting at Buchlau (Buchlov) on 7-8 September 1912. Austria's "chief" interest was that in Turkey everything should stay the same, "but if in spite of our wishes the break-up of Turkey takes place, we should not remain totally inactive, especially in the Albanian matter." Speaking of Serbia, Berchtold said that the most favourable relations with her as far as the Danubian Monarchy was concerned were those which had prevailed at the time of King Milan, i.e. when the Serbian government was in the hands of the anti-Russian element

194 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, IV, pp. 569-72.

and when Serbia was bound to Austria-Hungary by the Secret Convention. "It would certainly be *de la bonne politique* for us to live on as friendly terms as possible with Serbia so that that country might be brought into a position of dependence on us. But in view of the present state of opinion in Serbia, where there is absolutely no Austrophile party, it seems to me that such a policy will be impracticable for some time to come." With regard to the Balkan states involved in the Turkish question, his intended policy was as follows: to prevent an armed conflict by all diplomatic means, lest the balance of power in the Balkans should be changed. If a conflict nevertheless arose, the interested states should be warned that the violation of the existing order did not suit the plans of the Powers. Austria-Hungary would in that event increase the troops on its border to show the Balkan states "that territorial changes could not be made without our consent." The German Chancellor listened to these statements, but did not express any opinion on them, and Berchtold was left with the impression that he had not yet come to any definite conclusion as to the settlement of the question; the Chancellor's reserve nevertheless impressed him.¹⁹⁵

At the same time, the German Ambassador in Constantinople, Baron Wangenheim passed an extremely unfavourable judgment on Austria's Eastern policy in his dispatch of 8 September. He quoted a statement made by the Austrian Military Attaché, who said clearly and curtly that "Turkey is nothing to us; Albania is everything" and in this connection, he summarized Austria's aspirations as follows: Austria had tried to take advantage of the Italo-Turkish war in order to strengthen her position in Albania. She wanted to prevent other Balkan Christian states from demanding and obtaining for their compatriots the same treatment as the Albanians were to receive. "It would appear then that Austria only wishes the *status quo* in the Turkish Empire to be maintained where her own immediate interests are not at stake."¹⁹⁶ Although this judgment is not quite correct, it is nevertheless very characteristic. When Austria's most intimate ally could look upon her plans in this light, it is no wonder that others looked upon and interpreted them with still less confidence.

Seeing the formation of a Balkan bloc and the determination of the Powers to localize the war in the Balkans, Austria-Hungary made a last minute attempt to break up the unity of the Balkan states. The Greek Foreign Minister told the Serbian Minister on 14 October that "through Kâmil Pasha and Austria-Hungary" and "through the agency of a confidential person" Turkey was proposing to Greece to leave the Alliance and promising concessions in

195 Ibid., pp. 415-8.

196 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, p. 102.

the Cretan Question.¹⁹⁷ Even Emperor Franz Joseph personally reproached the King of Greece “because Greece has joined the Slav states”.¹⁹⁸

In the joint Austro-Hungarian Ministerial Council, at a meeting held as early as 8-9 July 1912, Count Berchtold had set forth the difficulties of the political situation in the Balkans. The Italian occupation of certain number of islands would no doubt lead to the strengthening of the Pan-Hellenic movement, while the renewal of attacks on the Dardanelles might serve as the signal for a general uprising in the Balkans. The mutinies in the Turkish army might also encourage activities in the Balkan states. If a conflagration were to take place, he explained, Austria-Hungary would have to increase its army on the borders “so as to be able to appear as a powerful factor and to prevent any settlement involving the spheres of economic expansion nearest to it being made without its being consulted”. He spoke openly then of the possibility of the Danubian Monarchy resorting to arms as an *ultima ratio* to protect its “vital interests”.¹⁹⁹ At another Council Meeting on 14 September, he informed his colleagues of the conclusion of the Balkan Alliance and of the possibility of a joint action by the Balkan states. In such an event, he explained, in a much calmer manner after his interview with the German Chancellor, Austria-Hungary would endeavour to avert as far as possible any conflict “in which it would have nothing to gain”; if that proved impossible, it would also try to localize it. There were two ways of preventing war: 1) to inform the Balkan states, if warnings proved unsuccessful, that they would be held responsible for their action and that Austria-Hungary would allow no modification whatever of the existing order without its consent; or 2) “a more drastic and therefore perhaps more effective alternative, but one which carried with it also a greater risk”, and that was to inform Belgrade that Austria would not allow the Serbs to cross the Turkish border and that she would in that case reserve for herself freedom of decision. In the discussion that followed, Auffenberg, the Minister of War, put forward the already well-known view of the military experts, that a successful action by the Austrian army in the Balkans could only be carried out through Serbia, along the Morava Valley. But he advised that any action which might give rise to a great conflagration should be avoided, for the army was not sufficiently prepared. Count Stürgkh, the Austrian Prime Minister, was of the opinion that the alternative of threatening Serbia involved a “grave danger” which might lead to war, and he therefore did not want to express an immediate opinion on the

197 Bošković Ministarstvu inostranih dela, Atina, 14. 10. 1912, Pov. Br. 2156, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. V, sv. 2, pp. 886-887.

198 Spalajković Pašiću, Sofija, 14. 10. 1912, Pov. Br. 3802, in: Ibid., pp. 890-893.

199 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, IV, pp. 255-6.

matter.²⁰⁰ However, no one asked – at least as far as can be ascertained from the minutes of the proceedings – why the above threat should be addressed to Belgrade alone, and not also to the capitals of the other Balkan states, especially to Sofia. It was considered quite natural, it seems, that threats should be addressed only to Serbia.

On the very eve of the war, on 29 September, Berchtold told the German Charge d'Affaires, Prince Stolberg, that in the event of a Balkan war Austria could not allow the expansion of Serbia towards the west, as that would “bar the way” for Austria-Hungary itself, and the Danubian Monarchy had in Albania “traditional rights and duties which it could not abandon”.²⁰¹ Six days later, he repeated these views to the same person, adding a further remark. The possible merger of Serbia and Montenegro in the Sanjak of Novi Pazar would mean the formation of a Greater Serbian state which would present “a grave danger” to the Austro-Hungarian Yugoslav provinces, for it would exert “a fatal attraction” over them.²⁰² The German representative had the impression that Austria might in that case decide on undesirable measures, i.e. on war. The same ideas were developed in a memorandum prepared for the Emperor by the Chief of the Austrian General Staff, General Schemua, on 28 September. He explicitly stated: “Our political object can only be the unconditional prevention of the development of these (‘Yugoslav neighbouring’) states, their entrance into our sphere of influence, if only through customs and commercial alliances and military conventions, and the occupation of Kosovo Plain in case of the break-up of Turkey, in order permanently to separate the two Balkan states, Serbia and Montenegro, which enclose the Yugoslav territory of the Monarchy and to open up for ourselves the way to Albania, which undoubtedly falls within our sphere.” He desired a free Albania within Austria’s sphere of interest both to counterbalance Montenegro and because of Italy. Austria-Hungary must not passively watch the development of events in the Balkans, but must show from the start that she insisted on its interests being respected. If it remained passive and the situation changed without its participation, the Danubian Monarchy would be exposed to the following disagreeable consequences: 1) the loss of its position as a Great Power; 2) a diminished ability to form alliances, and 3) a constant threat to its Yugoslav territories from the aggrandized Balkan states. Schemua demanded even then the Emperor’s consent to the reinforcement of the army in Bosnia, Herzegovina and Dalmatia, so that Austria-Hungary should

200 Ibid., pp. 428–9.

201 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, p. 111.

202 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, IV, p. 479; *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, p. 122.

be prepared to meet the coming events.²⁰³ The same opinion was held, as we learn from the reports of the German Military Attaché, among Schemua's colleagues in the General Staff,²⁰⁴ and probably among others in the Army. The chief of the military intelligence, Colonel Urbański, spoke to him openly not only of the possibility of an attack on Serbia, but also of the details of it.

Berchtold prepared an answer to Schemua's memorandum on 2 October. In it, he specially underlined the difficulties and the mistrust which Austria-Hungary would have to face, if it were immediately to take up a hostile attitude towards the Balkan states or to decide on military intervention. "We must not have any illusions as to the fact that our action in the case of the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina served not only as the prime incentive to the alliance of the Balkan states, but inevitably aroused against the Monarchy the suspicions of the chancelleries of all the Great Powers and thus created a link of agreement between them which did not exist before in their attitude towards our Eastern policy." The attitude of Russia and Italy might be particularly dangerous, for they had long looked with suspicion on the moves of Viennese diplomacy. To any such policy of direct action, Berchtold, influenced by suggestions from Berlin, preferred for the present to wait and put forward his demands at an opportune moment. Otherwise Austria-Hungary's action might provoke a response of "those Powers that want to stop our penetration into the Balkans." To take any action whatever at the very beginning of the war seemed unwise to the Minister, as the development of the war could not be foreseen. "In this connection, I believe, for instance, that I may point out that an inroad by the Moslem Albanians into the areas inhabited by the Serbs would fully serve our interests, as would the aggrandizement of Bulgaria at the expense of Serbia's hopes." For the present, if Austria stood in the way of success of the Balkan states, she would have them all against her, while in the course of war clashes of interests might arise between the Allies as would turn one or the other into a natural ally of the Danubian Monarchy. The Minister agreed to the reinforcement of the garrisons in Bosnia, Herzegovina and Dalmatia, but without mobilization, which might be taken as a form of provocation. Fearing Serbian agitation in the Yugoslav provinces of the Monarchy, he recommended the strictest measures to nip it in the bud, and was in favour of a General being appointed head of the Croatian government.²⁰⁵ All in all, Austria was mostly concerned to see to it that if she herself could not gain any advantages from the break-up of Turkey, she did not allow them to Serbia either. Hence her

203 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, IV, pp. 491-3.

204 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, pp. 126-7.

205 *Ibid.*, pp. 528-31.

motto that the *status quo ante* must be maintained at all costs, “*Niederhaltung Serbiens*” was one of the four fundamental points of Austria’s Balkan policy, which Count Berchtold communicated to the Austrian Ambassador in Constantinople for his own information.²⁰⁶

On 1 October, as the possibility of war with Turkey became imminent, Pašić addressed the following message to Vienna through the Austrian Minister: the hour had now struck when the Danubian Monarchy might win Serbia’s lasting gratitude with its attitude. “This might be the turning point in the relations between the Monarchy and Serbia, and nothing else could stand in the way of the most cordial relations.”²⁰⁷ However, Vienna thought differently; Serbia’s message was believed to be insincere. Pašić was pretending now to be pacific and friendly, because he feared their attack, and not because he really thought of seeking better relations. We cannot say that there was not some justification for this view, but there can be no doubt that a friendly attitude on Austria’s part would certainly have improved their relations. Refusing to grasp the hand that was offered him, Berchtold suggested to Berlin on 2 October that the Balkan states be informed that the Powers would not only disallow any change of the existing territorial order, but that they would also refuse to allow any autonomous privileges to individual nationalities in Turkey, “which might be considered a further step towards the dismemberment of Turkey or which did not suit the interests of certain Powers”, referring, of course, primarily to Austria and to the privileges which the Serbs might obtain.²⁰⁸ Thus the attempt at a direct understanding between Serbia and Austria-Hungary failed at a historically important moment, and failed, as we can see, not through Serbia’s fault, but through the fault of Austria, which pursued her entire policy in this question on the basis of mistrust and ill-will towards Serbia.

Having herself suggested an exchange of views amongst the Great Powers about reforms in Turkey, Austria-Hungary could not undertake any major individual intervention later and provoke repercussions which might imperil the peace. Her suggestion was therefore accepted wholeheartedly by Russia, although that country was full of suspicion and could not agree to all the proposed measures. In order to restrain Austria from direct action in the Balkans, Sazonov was even prepared at one point to make certain sacrifices. On 8 October, during his stay in Berlin, he asked the German diplomats to soothe Austria. If Turkey won, Austria-Hungary had no need to take action; and if the Christian states won

²⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 551.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., pp. 518-9.

²⁰⁸ *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, p. 153.

and the Serbs entered the Sanjak of Novi Pazar, the Danubian Monarchy could drive them out as something of an executor for the Great Powers.²⁰⁹ On the following day, he informed Berchtold through the Russian Ambassador that he deprecated “*d’une manière formelle and solennelle*” the action of the Balkan allies and declared that it was his “firm and unchangeable decision” not to allow any territorial concessions “*pas un pouce*” in the final settlement in the Balkans. But at the same time he requested Austria-Hungary to do nothing on its part that might excite Russian public opinion, since Russia’s non-intervention in the Balkan dispute depended on Austria-Hungary’s similar attitude.²¹⁰ In particular, he wanted that Austria-Hungary should do nothing against Serbia and that it should not alarm her by military preparations on her borders. Very polite in form, Sazonov’s message was rather definite in its content. It implied that Russia could not observe indifferently, if Austria-Hungary embarked on any action in the Balkans on its own. Berchtold replied that Austria had no intention of going to war or making any conquests and that she wanted no more than to ensure that her “specific interests” in the Balkans should not suffer. The concentration of the Austrian army on the borders was within her indisputable rights, to preserve order in her own provinces, and nobody in the world had any right to interfere.²¹¹

But Berchtold could not maintain this negative attitude for long when he saw Berlin’s decided mood in favour of a Russo-Austrian understanding, and he felt that Austria-Hungary’s active policy might not only remain isolated, but also be condemned. For that reason – even the date of this change can now be ascertained – Austria’s attitude started to change considerably from 9 October onwards, after Sazonov’s visit to Berlin and the reception of more definite messages from Germany urging Austria not to be too hasty or provocative.

As early as 10 October, the Austrian Ambassador, Count Szögyény, returned from Vienna to Berlin with the assurance of the Vienna government to the

209 Ibid., pp. 190–1.

210 *Der diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, II, p. 297.

211 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, IV, pp. 589–90. Austria-Hungary had already begun certain military preparations on the Serbian border during the spring and summer of 1912. According to the report of the Russian Ambassador and Military Attaché in Vienna on 15 August 1912, the Austrians had started to build fortifications on the northern border of Serbia, opposite the confluences of the rivers Morava and Mlava; they concentrated their troops in Graz for the reinforcement of the garrisons in Bosnia and Herzegovina; they prepared a considerable number of wagons in Slavonia and southern Hungary. The Deputy Foreign Minister of Russia, Neratov, drew attention of the Austrian Ambassador to this, but the latter replied at first that he knew nothing about it, and then that it was, if the information about the building of fortifications were correct, only a defensive measure. Cf. Benckendorff, *Diplomatischen Schriftwechsel*, I, p. 436; *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, IV, p. 313.

effect that Austria-Hungary would remain quiet for the present, "with its rifle by its side", and that it would take no steps even if Serbia temporarily entered the Sanjak. It would not make its decisions before the final settlement for that territory came under discussion. Emperor Wilhelm II was satisfied with this and noted on the report: "Salonica is better than throwing the Serbs out of the Sanjak if they conquered it valiantly!"²¹²

Not knowing of this change in the Sanjak question, for Austria-Hungary did not want to announce it, the friendly Powers continued to advise Serbia and Montenegro to refrain from any operations in the Sanjak. Russia particularly insisted on this. King Nicholas himself, at the beginning of the war, gave his word to the Austrian Minister that he would not undertake anything either in the Sanjak or elsewhere that might give rise to dissatisfaction in the neighbouring Monarchy. On 11 October, the Italian Minister visited Cetinje to impress the same message on the King in the name of the Italian government.²¹³ On that day, Sazonov told the Austrian Ambassador that Austria, in the interests of peace and to calm the public opinion, ought publicly to explain the purpose of her military measures on the border, and he let it be understood that any action on the part of Austria in the Sanjak, even a temporary one, would give rise to many difficulties.²¹⁴

The discussion of these questions offered an opportunity to Berchtold to explain the attitude of Austria-Hungary to the German Ambassador in more detail on 14 October. Austria did not so much want the Sanjak as such as it was anxious that territorial changes in the Balkans would be carried out in such way that the Powers, especially the Danubian Monarchy, would have no opportunity to protect their interests. The possession of the Sanjak meant no more for Austria than a free passage to the east. If Serbia barred the way beyond Mitrovica, that would be the same for Austria-Hungary as if the Sanjak became Serbian.²¹⁵ To others, however, Berchtold did not express his opinion on the matter, and the Austrian attitude presented thus a great and serious enigma. On 13 October, Berchtold ordered the Austrian Minister in Cetinje to avoid all discussion of the Sanjak question and to reply, if directly questioned, that he had not yet received any instructions in the matter. He might say as his personal opinion, however, that according to the declarations of the Powers

212 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, p. 194.

213 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, IV, pp. 615-6.

214 *Ibid.*, p. 621.

215 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, pp. 218-9.

there would be no territorial changes, which also applied to the Sanjak, and that Austria-Hungary did not want the theatre of war near its borders.²¹⁶

Austro-Hungarian diplomacy clearly wanted to leave the question of the Sanjak open, since Austria had not succeeded in settling it to her own satisfaction, with the intention of using it one day as a basis for her demands when the matter of Turkey's break-up emerged. Seeing that this reserved attitude could not be maintained, that a negative attitude would not meet with approval even in Berlin, and that it was giving rise to the increasing suspicion in St. Petersburg, and when, finally, it became necessary to draw the logical conclusions from all the declarations made by Berchtold since 10 October, Vienna decided to speak openly. On 15 October, the Austrian Ambassador informed Sazonov that the Danubian Monarchy would remain passive even if military operations were carried into the Sanjak.²¹⁷ When on 18 October, immediately after the declaration of war, Turkey suggested to Austria that the latter should occupy the Sanjak in order to draw her indirectly into the war, Austrian diplomacy resisted this major temptation and thereby undoubtedly rendered a great service to Serbia and to the peace of Europe.²¹⁸ But it should be also noted that Kiderlen-Waechter's biographer, E. Jeak, has stated that this was due to Kiderlen-Waechter and not to Austria's independent decision.²¹⁹

After the declaration of war, Berchtold informed the Bulgarian Minister, Salabashev, on 19 October, as one of the representatives of the Balkan Alliance, that Austria-Hungary would remain neutral during the war, "if it were not greatly provoked by some violation of its interests." He told the Serbian Minister on the following day that Austria-Hungary's attitude towards Serbia would be "favourable, for Austria-Hungary wished Serbia well. But its attitude would also depend on Serbia's attitude and on the avoidance of anything that might have an adverse effect upon the maintenance of good relations." But at the same time he did not miss the opportunity to reproach Belgrade on account of certain paragraphs in the King's manifesto on the occasion of the declaration of war that spoke of Serbia's hopes for territorial aggrandizement.²²⁰ On 21 October, the Austro-Hungarian Minister in Belgrade stated "that the Austro-Hungarian government, in view of the geographical position which Austria occupies in the Balkans, would maintain an attitude of passive waiting upon events as long as Austrian interests were not imperiled." He took

216 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, IV, p. 633.

217 *Der diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, II, p. 303.

218 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, IV, p. 675.

219 Jackh, *Kiderlen-Waechter*, II, p. 210.

220 Simić Pašiću, Beč, 21. 10. 1912, Pov. Br. 265, in: M. Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije 1903-914*, knj. V, sv. 3, Beograd 1986, pp. 160-163.

the opportunity, however, although very clumsily, to sow the seeds of discord between the Allies by saying to the Serbs: "You are playing into the Bulgarians's hands. You will see later why they have taken your soldiers."²²¹

At a conference of all the departmental chiefs in the Viennese Foreign Ministry, on 16 October, a thorough discussion took place regarding further aims and interests of the Monarchy. Austria-Hungary was faced with a number of very important questions and it was urgently necessary to work out the attitude to be taken up with regard to them. It was necessary, perhaps, fundamentally to revise Austria's whole Balkan policy and to seek out new paths. In the course of these discussions, the following conclusions were reached: 1) that Austria would have to resort to war only if some Great Power attempted to establish itself on the eastern shores of the Adriatic or the Ionian Sea; 2) that it was not in the vital interests of the Danubian Monarchy to acquire any more territory in the Balkans, but that it appeared advisable to obtain certain border rectification, e.g. on the Lovćen mountain, in Ada-Kale, or in the Sanjak; 3) as for the question whether the occupation of the Sanjak by Serbia and Montenegro would be contrary to the vital interests of the Danubian Monarchy it was decided that a) the possession of the Sanjak might be replaced by agreements on the traffic and political matters, which would be valid not only in the Sanjak, but also in the entire territory of Old Serbia and beyond, for the mere possession of the Sanjak without such agreements would be of no value; b) since the vast majority of the population in the Sanjak were "Slavs, Orthodox and Muslim", it could not be included in the territory of a Greater Albania, if the partition of Turkey took place. Therefore, a connection between Austria and Albania through the Sanjak would be difficult and almost impracticable, especially as they were separated by the Muslim Slav region of Gusinje and the Rugovo area. "In order to ensure such a connection, we should not only have to obtain the Sanjak, but to oppose by force the historical and religious aspirations of the Serbs in respect of Old Serbia, which are supported by Russia, and give later such a form to an autonomous Albania as would hardly be compatible with the healthy economic development of that country and with the communications policy to be pursued there. Moreover, such a territorial aggrandizement of Albania and her position as Austria's immediate neighbour would involve a strong obligation on the part of the Monarchy to protect Albania's autonomy, even against all the Balkan states, and that would present militarily and financially a very onerous task. In view of these difficulties, the present means

221 Dnevna zabeleška u Ministarstvu inostranih dela Kraljevine Srbije, Beograd, 21. 10. 1912, Pov. Br. 3858, in: *Ibid.*, p. 159.

of communication with Albania by sea seems in every respect more advantageous than communication through the Sanjak." c) The Sanjak was also losing its importance as a corridor separating Serbia from Montenegro, as these two states might unify somewhere to the south of the Sanjak. To prevent such a thing, the Danubian Monarchy would have to drive in the wedge of its occupation much further down, and that would no doubt stir up great indignation against the Monarchy. Such a policy would also have great repercussions in the Yugoslav provinces of the Monarchy and would give rise to dissatisfaction. Instead of forcibly preventing a union between Serbia and Montenegro, other ways and means might be found to protect Austria-Hungary from the Greater Serbian idea. Such would be the strengthening of the strategic position against Montenegro in the Boka, the regulation of the border "as a compensation for our consent to the aggrandizement of Montenegro to the south", or "the economic annexation to the Monarchy of Montenegro or Serbia, or possibly both." In this connection, it was necessary to instruct the press to place the "popular ideas on the Sanjak question" on a new basis. Against the possible formation of a strong and more lasting Serbo-Bulgarian union, closer co-operation between Austria-Hungary and Italy might be developed.²²²

Count Berchtold was not present at this meeting, and we cannot say to what extent he shared these views. They certainly influenced him, as can be seen from the fact that he assured Russia on the same day that Austria would not consider the occupation of the Sanjak a pretext for direct intervention. These views are of the greatest significance and suggest the possibility of the unsuspected change in Austria's Balkan policy. They showed a breadth of outlook in respect of Serbia and the Serbs that was unthinkable in Viennese diplomacy in the past. Had they been realized and had they been communicated in any form to the Serbian government and the public, with the same explanations and considerations, they would no doubt, and quite justifiably, have led to very different relations in future and to an atmosphere of greater confidence and friendship. For Serbia, as we have seen, had long desired and sought some such explanation from the representatives of the Danubian Monarchy and a clearer outlook for her national aspirations at least in one direction.

On the same day that this conference was held in the Viennese Foreign Ministry, the Austrian Ambassador, Count Thurn, had a very important conversation with Sazonov. He stated that the Danubian Monarchy was seeking no territorial aggrandizement in the Balkan Peninsula and, moreover, that it would not be opposed to Bulgaria's acquiring the borders of San Stefano. To Sazonov's question as to what Austria-Hungary's attitude would be towards the

222 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, IV, pp. 659-61.

aggrandizement of Serbia, Count Thurn replied "that the increase in Serbia's territory would not in itself have any special significance, but that Austria could in no event allow her way to Salonica to be barred and that therefore she could not agree to Serbia's extending to the sea." Austria needed a direct connection with the Aegean Sea and she therefore wanted to ensure it. That could be done, he said, if Austria-Hungary were given a railway line to Salonica. "The Ambassador remarked that Austria was so convinced of the necessity for access to Salonica that no government could satisfy public opinion, if it were to renounce the idea."²²³ This meant that Austria was giving way only partially, and did not yet make her intentions completely clear. It was known that she would not be opposed to the creation of a Greater Bulgaria. However, Austria could not yet fully agree to the aggrandizement of Serbia, because it would have meant, on one hand, barring the way to Austria's further penetration and, on the other, because it would have meant a major strengthening of Serbia and the Serbdom. For that reason, unable to take up a definite standpoint, Viennese diplomacy long hesitated and gave the impression that certain concessions that Austria made were not obtained with her free consent, but rather under pressure. Austria-Hungary did not put forward its own demands, so that it might have been clear what it exactly wanted. It preferred to appear before Europe as a country which had renounced its expansionist ambitions and only sought security for its economic interests. But it did not state precisely what constituted those economic interests and what their nature was. Another question was to which extent it wanted to secure them and with whose assistance. In whose hands would that direct connection with Salonica remain? Clearly not in Serbian. Then perhaps in Turkish hands? Or Albanian? Perhaps Austrian? The Vienna government did not broach with Russia its possible request that Serbia should join Austria in a customs union, for that could not be defended as unselfish. It seemed, therefore, that the attitude of the Vienna government was not based on a clearly formulated point of view, but rather concealed some secret plans, and suspicion of Austria remained as great as ever and prevented any close cooperation.

The conferences were continued in the Ministry on 17 and 18 October. Various questions were discussed, the most important being whether Austria-Hungary, in the event of a division of spheres of interest between the Balkan states and peoples, should also designate its own sphere. This was considered inopportune: 1) because both the Serbs and the Albanians would resist it, Russia would oppose it and Italy would demand compensation; 2) because Austria would thus find herself in a less favourable position from a military point of view than

223 *Der diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, II, pp. 305-6; *Krasnii arhiv*, XV, 1926, p. 7.

if she resorted to direct action against Serbia, “which now as ever seems on the whole the best means to adopt, if we felt, at some favourable international situation, that we were called upon to settle the Serbian question by force”; and 3) because Serbia’s consent to such a sphere of interest for Austria could hardly be obtained “since the territory in question represents the place of the historical traditions of Serbdom and Orthodoxy.” In further discussion, the note of the Balkan states to Turkey was debated, as well as the possibility of its being taken, with certain modifications, as a basis for a new reform campaign. That question, however, lost its significance, as the war was a *fait accompli* as early as 18 October.

After the war had broken out, it was necessary to take up a position in regard to events. On 19 October, the day after the declaration of war, this attitude was discussed at another conference in the Ministry. It was thought that Austria should act very cautiously and not identify herself too much with the old order in Turkey, which was now falling into pieces, and that public opinion should gradually be prepared for an eventual change in the existing order. This was not desired and was not as yet in the programme, but it was necessary to take it into account in advance. With a change in the existing order, the strengthening of the Slav Orthodox element in the Balkans would naturally come about. Apart from a discussion as to what policy Austria might pursue afterwards, certain concrete conclusions were reached with regard to Serbia and Montenegro. The conference agreed “after the protracted discussion”, as we learn from the minutes, on the following: 1) that the Danubian Monarchy should conclude a customs union with Montenegro, 2) that it should allow Montenegro to obtain the Sanjak and other smaller districts, such as Berane and Gusinje, while Austria in return demanded the improvement of its border at Lovćen and in the Sanjak. “The improvement of the border at Lovćen would increase our military superiority, while the transfer of our customs boundary to the east of the Sanjak would prevent the realization of the Greater Serbian ambitions.” In regard to Albania, it was decided at further conferences that Austria-Hungary would have to prevent, at the cost of war if need be, any Great Power, or even any smaller state, for example Serbia, from establishing itself on the eastern shores of the Adriatic. The formation of a free Albania, as large as possible, was very much in the interest of the Monarchy. Vienna wanted her borders to be established as follows: in the Janina Vilayet, Greece would receive only Janina with its immediate surroundings and the area to the south of it; in the Bitola Vilayet, the Albanian border would be fixed to the watershed between the lakes of Ohrid and Prespane, and Albania would obtain the entire Sanjak of Elbasan and the larger part of the Sanjak of Debar; in the Kosovo Vilayet, the Albanians would receive the “purely Albanian territory” of the Sanjaks of

Prizren and Peć; and in the Scutari Vilayet, Montenegro's gains would be limited to the Catholic Malësia and to the town and valley of Scutari. If it proved impossible to obtain all these borders, a smaller but still independent Albania would be satisfactory, for any other combination would be less favourable for Austria. The discussions about Serbia were also very important. The officials started to be resigned to the possibility of Serbia's aggrandizement, but they thought that Austria should demand special compensations from her in return. These compensations would be of an economic character, "but on technical grounds and for reasons of internal policy they could not include a complete customs union." The political side of the agreement would ensure more friendly relations between the two states, which in time might be strengthened. Austria could not under any conditions allow Serbia to take over any purely Albanian territory in order to obtain an outlet to the Adriatic. "Serbia cannot, if indeed she wants to live on terms of permanent friendship with the Monarchy, put forward any real economic reasons to prove that the possession of an Adriatic coastline is an economic necessity for her, as we offer her free passage for her cattle through Bosnia to the Adriatic and in addition – either with or independently of us – the possibility of securing an outlet for exports through Salonica." Serbia's insistence on an outlet on the Adriatic would show that Serbia did not want Austrian friendship. If Serbia tried to force its way to the coast, Austria would oppose that *a limine*.²²⁴

When we examine today the acts and various declarations and memoranda of the different responsible Austro-Hungarian functionaries on the outbreak of the Balkan War, we are surprised at the lack of orientation and consistency. At first, there was more determination and energy in the statements of the Viennese circles, a legacy from Aehrenthal's course and the bellicose attitude of the group around Conrad von Hötzendorf. But when Vienna found out that in an eventual crisis it could not count on such support from Germany as it desired, the energy of Viennese diplomacy visibly subsided and the reasons were sought to justify the calmer course of policy. We have seen from the above-quoted discussions in the Foreign Ministry that there was willingness to look at matters without excitement and to discuss them in a manner free from many of the prejudices which had hitherto reigned in those circles. There are, moreover, certain memoranda and drafts which show this change still more clearly, for instance a memorandum prepared in the Foreign Ministry on the subject of the Sanjak of Novi Pazar. Austria-Hungary pursued a policy towards the Sanjak which its own diplomats could often not understand. At the Congress of Berlin it used all its influence to obtain the Sanjak, only to prevent the union of Serbia

224 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, IV, pp. 677, 698-702.

and Montenegro and open the doors for its further advance to the east. This was Andrásy's appreciation of the political significance of the Sanjak and it prevailed until 1908. We have seen the importance that Count Goluchowski attached to the possession of the Sanjak at the time of the reform campaign in Turkey; we have also seen the activities of Baron Aehrenthal for the realization of the Sanjak railway, which was proclaimed a matter of exceptional economic and political importance for Austria. In the summer and autumn of 1908, it was suddenly found that the Sanjak had no such exceptional importance for the Danubian Monarchy and that it could easily renounce the possession of that area. In 1908 and 1909, particular attention was drawn in Vienna to that fact as the best proof that Austria-Hungary had no further dreams of conquest. On the eve of the Balkan War, however, four years later, Vienna again started issuing messages and declarations to the effect that the Sanjak question was of vital interest to the Monarchy and that it could not remain indifferent to its fate. Even the memorandum which we have just mentioned employs the curious arguments to explain the Sanjak question and very sensibly urges the necessity to settle it once for all. Having once been abandoned with the declaration that it no longer represented an absolute necessity to the Danubian Monarchy, the Sanjak could not be demanded again without arising suspicions as to the aims of Vienna's policy and their justification. Moreover, the possession of the Sanjak would not present any sort of security for the Danubian Monarchy against the Greater Serbian propaganda, but would rather nourish it. In addition, if it obtained the Sanjak, Austria-Hungary would not obtain a free access to Salonica on the occasion of an eventual change in the Balkan map and it would have to look for other possibilities to realize it under more difficult conditions, for it would be generally mistrusted. The way to Salonica, after all, did not lead through the Sanjak, but through Belgrade. The best way of settling the whole matter, therefore, would have been for Serbia or Montenegro to come into Austria's sphere of interest. If, however, it proved impossible for the present finally to settle the Turkish question – the memorandum was written around 25 October – and reforms proved necessary, then it should be urged: 1) that the Albanian borders be moved as far east as possible at the expense of the Serbs; and 2) that Serbia's sphere of interest be enlarged at the expense of Bulgaria, while the latter should be pushed as much as possible towards Constantinople against Russia's interests.

This memorandum embodies in its conclusions a good deal of the legacy of the old Austrian diplomacy: the strengthening of the Albanians at the expense of the Serbs and provoking the rivalry between Serbia and Bulgaria, and it shows that Vienna was still strongly anti-Serb even at the time it counted on Serbia's friendly cooperation. As for the Sanjak, it "hit the nail on the head", as

the saying goes, and offered a solution which was undoubtedly the most logical one. The memorandum was examined and initialed by Berchtold himself, who thus gave it something of a sanction. The Sanjak question was then dropped.

3

Emperor Wilhelm II understood practically from the first that the Balkan states would keep what they conquered, if they won the war. In his marginal notes on the reports from his Ministers, even before the actual declaration of war by the Allies, he mentioned the partition of the Turkish Empire. "If the 'little ones' are victorious", he wrote on 16 October, "and conquer some territory, they will want to have their say, which cannot with justice be denied them and which Russia will favour."²²⁵ The same conviction was held by many other responsible persons who dared not express it so openly, and it was gradually finding favour even with those who had at first thought differently. After the news of the terrible and unexpected losses of Turkey and of the Christian victories, this became the general opinion of almost the whole of Europe. "Macedonia is lost, and also the Sanjak. *L'intégrité de l'Empire Ottoman* in Europe is over with ... The Greeks, Serbs and Montenegrins have fought with an unexampled heroism. The Bulgarians were led in a masterly fashion and brilliantly employed; no conference of the Powers can take a single village away from them. I shall certainly vote against it, if I am asked", read Emperor Wilhelm II's note on the telegram which brought the news of the Serbian victory at Kumanovo.²²⁶ Similar definite statements started to come from other quarters too. Sir Edward Grey said before the diplomatic representatives that British public opinion would under no circumstances allow the government to use any forcible means to deprive the Balkan Christians of their gains. In early November, the British King himself told the Austrian Minister that the Balkan question should be definitely settled this time. "These men have fought splendidly and now it is only right that they should enjoy the fruits of their victories."²²⁷ In Russia and France, a similar mood could be expected from the beginning.

When it became clear to all that the *status quo* in Turkey could not be maintained, Russian diplomats began to fear that Austria-Hungary might now come forward with a claim for compensation. There had already been certain suggestions of that kind – we have examined them in some detail. For that reason, Sazonov sent word to Paris on 29 October that he wanted the French

²²⁵ *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, p. 223.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 253.

²²⁷ *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, IV, p. 802.

government to take further step to bring the Powers to declare their complete disinterestedness in compensation of any sort in return for mediation between the belligerents.²²⁸ Poincaré immediately agreed to Russia's wish and drafted a proposal. On 31 October, Berchtold gave his reply. The Danubian Monarchy as a neighbour of the Balkan states could not agree to the "absolute disinterestedness", for it had to protect its own interests. Such a declaration on Austria's part would have unpleasant consequences in her relations with the small Balkan states; it would tie her hands, and they might suppose that they were given a *carte blanche*. Berchtold felt, and said so at once to the German Ambassador, that there was some tendency against Austria's policy, emanating perhaps from Russia.²²⁹ In this he was right, but he would not see at the same time another fact, i.e. that by this declaration Russia was binding her own hands too, although she no doubt had her own interests in the matter and put them aside now to avoid any further complications. To Sazonov's question as to why Austria would not give the required declaration, when she stated publicly that she did not seek any territorial gains, the Austrian Ambassador replied that their disinterestedness concerned only territorial acquisitions but not other matters.²³⁰

Feeling the general change in European public opinion as regards territorial changes in the Balkans, even the Vienna government could not maintain its attitude of utter refusal to consider them. As early as 26 October, Berchtold informed Berlin that he reckoned that the maintenance of the *status quo* in Turkey was increasingly less probable, and that he therefore wanted to exchange views on the subject with the German government. His message crossed a similar communication coming the same day from Berlin. On the following day, 27 October, Berchtold authorized the Austrian Minister in Belgrade to tell Pašić, as his personal opinion, that if the latter started a conversation in a friendly spirit to Austria the Danubian Monarchy would not oppose the expansion of Serbia, "if Serbia for her part offered guarantees as to the permanent security of our economic interests. The closer the economic relations established between Serbia and Austria-Hungary, the more forthcoming will be the attitude of the Vienna Cabinet in the above mentioned sense."²³¹

In his messages to Berlin, Berchtold described on 30 October his intentions in respect to Serbia as follows: 1) Austria-Hungary made its consent to

228 *Der diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, II, p. 321; Poincaré, *Au service de la France*, II, p. 288-9.

229 *Öst.-Ung. Aussennpolitik*, IV, pp. 731, 736; *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, pp. 764-5; Poincaré, *Au service de la France*, II, pp. 291-2.

230 *Sbornik diplomaticheskikh dokumentov*, p. 32.

231 *Öst.-Ung. Aussennpolitik*, IV, p. 717.

the expansion of Serbia dependent on a guarantee from the latter as regards her future policy. That policy must not be unfriendly to Austria. The required guarantees would consist in the first place in closer economic relations. The same applied to Montenegro. 2) An outlet to the sea for Serbia must be refused at once. 3) Austria considered it her vital interest to create a free Albania as large as possible. 4) The Danubian Monarchy would demand a "very slight" revision of the border (e.g. Ada Kale and something else). 5) The security of the economic interests of the Monarchy in the areas formerly under Turkey must be guaranteed. The questions of Salonica and the railway to it came in here. Salonica should become a free port, and the free railway traffic would be ensured by a special convention. All this, with a few other items, was not yet a fixed programme, but rather the general lines of policy which he pursued and which would be adapted to the circumstances.²³² In this general outline, it is easy to distinguish certain traits which were indicated at the above mentioned conferences in the Viennese Foreign Ministry. Emperor Wilhelm II made remarks of his own on a special report submitted to him concerning these messages: Germany and Austria-Hungary would have to endeavour to attract the Balkan Alliance, as a seventh Power, to their side. The attitude of Austria-Hungary had hitherto been "too haughty". He did not agree that Austria-Hungary should dispute Serbia's outlet to sea across the Albanian territory. But as Kiderlen-Waechter considered these demands a proof of Austria's great compliancy and that they ought to be supported, the Emperor gave his consent, noting only that Austria should show more consideration for Serbia as a member of the Balkan Alliance, the collaboration of which they desired.²³³

Having received his instructions from Berchtold, Ugron, the Austrian Minister in Belgrade, first spoke with Jovan Jovanović, the departmental chief of the Foreign Ministry, on 1 November. To Jovanović's question as to what would constitute closer economic relations, Ugron replied that he had a customs union in mind. Jovanović answered at once that it seemed to him that the government would be faced with great difficulties in the country, if economic relations were to be initiated by a customs union.

In their desire not to disturb peace, the Powers of the Triple Entente wanted to settle all questions arising out of the Turkish problem through constant contact between all the Powers and the parties interested, and not by separate agreements which might lead to misunderstandings and conflict. Grey said to the German Ambassador on 2 November that he deprecated the inclination which manifested itself in certain quarters to allow the Balkan states to settle

232 Ibid., pp. 727-9; *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, p. 263.

233 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, pp. 274-6; cf. Poincaré, *Au service de la France*, II, p. 285.

their difficulties with Turkey alone, with Austria only “endorsing” their gains later, but he also deprecated Austria’s wish to deal directly with the Balkan states without previous agreement with the other Powers. If there had been a guarantee that these negotiations would end well, such a procedure might even have been welcomed, but if there was any divergence of opinion or pressure on the part of Austria to impose her proposals, or an appeal of the Balkan states to Russia’s protection, that would no doubt lead to more serious complications. London was especially perturbed by Austria-Hungary’s silence and refusal to declare its demands openly, and by its conduct of secret negotiations; more information on this matter had therefore been requested through Berlin.²³⁴ Meanwhile, Belgrade was given to understand through St. Petersburg that Serbia’s independent negotiations with Austria-Hungary might be dangerous and that therefore, if accepted at all, they should not be carried too far. The Serbo-Austrian negotiations arising out of the Turkish settlement had a European and not a local, neighbourly significance.

Refusing to state publicly that it was completely disinterested, Austria-Hungary was indeed under an obligation to say which of its interests were affected by the changes in the Balkans and to what extent. It realized this itself, to some extent, and for that reason Count Berchtold invited the Russian Ambassador on 2 November to discuss the matter with him. He told him of Austria’s economic interests and expressed the wish that Russia would put no obstacle in their way. He then mentioned that Austria would not allow the Serbs to obtain an Adriatic port on the Albanian coast, as he thought, although he said nothing to the Russian of his fears, that such a port might sooner or later be turned into a naval base and as such serve either Russia or Italy.²³⁵ On 3 November, Berchtold addressed similar messages to the Austrian Minister in Paris, who was supposed to convey them as his private opinion. In these messages, he particularly emphasized that the Danubian Monarchy wanted, as the circumstances might dictate, to negotiate with the Balkan states “without control of the Powers”.²³⁶ On 4 November, to avoid the reproach that Austria did not state clearly what she wanted, the Austrian representatives communicated to other Powers the view of their government, which had already been brought to the knowledge of Berlin on 30 October and which we have already mentioned above.

²³⁴ *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, pp. 268-9.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 270.

²³⁶ *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, IV, p. 761.

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In October, on the eve of the Balkan War and at the beginning of it, the main question was how Austria-Hungary, apart from its attitude towards the war in principle, would receive Serbia's penetration into the Sanjak of Novi Pazar. When this question was tided over, the main issue in November became the question of Serbia's outlet to the sea on the Albanian coast. Austria was rigid in that respect from the first. Her attitude also influenced Germany and Italy, and they sided with the Vienna government after 5 November. Germany declared firmly that in that matter Austria-Hungary could count on the "full support" of Germany.²³⁷ Italy, on the other hand, was bound in advance by a special agreement with Austria-Hungary on the Albanian question, which, in view of their susceptibilities in respect of the possession of that country, provided for the creation of an autonomous Albania in the event of the break-up of the Turkish Empire.

If the policy of the Serbian government under Pašić might be criticized for having at one time envisaged the partition of Albania with Greece, the necessity for an outlet to the sea for Serbia could not be questioned. Long before the war, for purely economic reasons, Serbian statesmen had wanted an Adriatic railway and a free access for Serbia to the sea. Now it seemed that the long desired moment had arrived for the fulfillment of that wish. Only by direct access to the sea could Serbia's economic independence be safeguarded and the possibility of the extensive development of her export trade secured. Austria-Hungary stood unconditionally opposed to any such outlet, and, in doing so, it was motivated by many reasons and considerations, although one of the most important ones was its intention to bind Serbia to itself economically as closely as possible by a customs union or some other connection. That was the intended price of Serbia's aggrandizement. A connection of this kind would undoubtedly mean that Austria was the party to demand and obtain. She desired this not only to strengthen her own economic power, but also to subordinate Serbia as far as possible to her own economic and, eventually, political interests. The Austrian Ambassador in Paris wrote as early as 6 May of the desire of his government to bind Serbia to the Triple Alliance.²³⁸ If Serbia obtained free access to the sea, these Austrian plans would become less practicable, as well as her entire future policy; Austria could exercise pressure on Serbia, if she kept her land-locked, or if she gave her an outlet to the sea in her own territory, at Split or Metković, where she would again be dependent

237 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, p. 281.

238 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, IV, p. 789.

on Vienna. Even in Austria no one could deny that Serbia needed an outlet to the sea, and therefore Serbia was offered an outlet in Dalmatia or on the Aegean.²³⁹ The latter offer was insincere and was intended only to sow the seeds of discord between the Balkan Allies. Moreover, an outlet to the Aegean Sea, although useful, was not of real economic significance for Serbia, as only part of her territory gravitated in that direction.

Sazonov used all diplomatic means and all his eloquence to induce Austria-Hungary to make concessions in this matter. He even made it a personal issue with the Vienna government and insisted that on that depended more cordial relations between Austria and Russia in the future, which might one day, if this question were happily settled, develop into a closer understanding. The difficulties that the Vienna Cabinet created for Serbia in this matter could not be made up for by compensation in another direction, and instead of improving after the war the relations between Vienna and Belgrade could only become worse. He could not see what Austrian interests could be seriously imperiled by Serbia's receiving a small port such as San Giovanni. Thurn, the Austrian Ambassador in St. Petersburg, influenced by Sazonov's words, was all in favour of concessions in this matter, and personally urged Vienna in this sense.²⁴⁰

Emperor Wilhelm II also was fully convinced of the justification of Serbia's demands, and on 7 November he wrote to Kiderlen-Waechter that it seemed to him that the danger from Serbia, if she obtained a port on the Adriatic, was "a flight of fancy born of Vienna's needs" and that it was only personal interest which made Austria stand in the way of it. "As I wanted at the beginning of the war to prevent a *casus foederis* on account of the Serbs in the Sanjak or in Skoplje and managed to do so, I am still less willing to allow it on account of the Serbs in Durres or Albania." Austria was not now defending her possessions, but exercising her influence in the matter of others, and that made a great difference. "Undoubtedly many of the changes in the Balkans resulting from the war are awkward and undesirable for Vienna, but not one of them is so decisive that we can allow ourselves to be exposed on that score to the danger of complications which might lead to war; I could not justify it either to my people or to my conscience."²⁴¹ He even thought of Albania's becoming

239 The Hungarian Prime Minister, Lukács, suggested in a conversation with the Serbian Consul in Budapest that Serbia should be given an outlet to the sea at Fiume, that the Sava should be made navigable as far as Sisak and that goods should be carried from there by rail. See Milanković Pašiću, Budimpešta, 10. 11. 1912, Pov. Br. 2551, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. V, sv. 3, pp. 279-281.

240 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, IV, pp. 779-81; *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, p. 283.

241 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, p. 295.

an independent state under a Serbian prince. Austria unwisely adopted, in his words, a stiff dictatorial tone in regard to Serbia's demands. "This may prove provocative and lead to complications." Austria's clash with Serbia, in view of Russia's attitude, might develop into a world war, which Germany was not interested in. The German army could not be at the disposal of the whims of Viennese policy. Vienna must be more elastic, must appear more conciliatory, and must leave it to the Russians and Serbs to refuse its acceptable proposals, instead of the opposite being the case. Then Vienna would not be a provocateur and its policy could be defended, if need be, by extreme measures.²⁴² However, the Emperor did not maintain this energetic attitude, but gave way in face of Bethmann-Hollweg's arguments, who urged that Vienna's inclinations should receive more consideration, even though they did not entirely agree with them. Germany had restrained Austria's first step in the matter of Sanjak; in order not to offend her, it should support her now in this second question, which Vienna had from the first insisted was most important for her.

Serbia found herself, however, in rather awkward position as regards Austria. To the first offers which she had made Austria-Hungary just before the war, she had received a very reserved reply, almost a refusal. The refusal of the Austro-Hungarian government to declare full neutrality during the war, then its criticism of the King's manifesto, and, lastly, its obvious military measures on the border had all had the effect of making Belgrade suspicious of Vienna's attitude, especially since the Vienna government had long refused to say what exactly they wanted, how far their demands went and why they were put forward. For that reason, Belgrade welcomed the advice received first from the Russian and then from the French government on 3 November (21 October) to the effect that the Balkan Allies should not enter into separate negotiations with the Great Powers, but rather negotiate as a body. In Paris, this was explained by the mistrust of the King of Bulgaria, but Austro-Serbian relations also counted for a good deal, especially in St. Petersburg.²⁴³ The Russo-French suggestion was also supported on 4 November by the British Minister in Belgrade. That same day, Jovan Jovanović informed Pašić, who was in Skoplje, of these suggestions and expressed the opinion, in the absence of information as to Austria's intentions, that Vienna wanted: 1) to prevent Serbia's obtaining the whole of the Sanjak with the consequent formation of a great Serbian Kingdom in the south; and 2) to demand from Serbia, as a price for

²⁴² Ibid., pp. 302-4.

²⁴³ Benckendorff, *Diplomatischen Schriftwechsel*, II, pp. 467-8; even the German Ambassador in St. Petersburg informed Berlin as early as 4 November that St. Petersburg looked askance on the attempts to negotiate separately. See *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, p. 288.

concessions made, freedom for Austrian expansion in the Balkans. He added that “it looked doubtful whether the newly acquired position could be established by pacific means.” This unfavourable news was corroborated by a report from the Minister in Athens on 2 November (20 October), in which he stated that Austrian diplomacy worked against the Allies in the Greek capital, and that it tried to convince the Greeks that Serbia’s or Bulgaria’s outlet to the sea spelt a menace to them. On 3 November, the Viennese Foreign Ministry issued a recommendation in the *Frendenblatt* that Serbia, having occupied Prizren, should cease her penetration towards the sea, for there were no longer any military or national reasons for that.

Under the influence of such news and of the warning that Austria-Hungary would not allow Serbia any outlet to the sea, the Serbian government viewed the behaviour of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy as an act of hostility. For that reason, when Dr. Vladan Djordjević, whom the government had sent to Vienna to get into contact with persons close to the Ballplatz, reported Vienna’s offer of a customs union, Pašić replied on 5 November (23 October) that “under the present circumstances, when Austria-Hungary is making difficulties for us in the matter of our outlet to the sea, the Royal Government cannot accept any undertaking to form a customs union, the public opinion having no confidence in Austria-Hungary and fearing lest it should exploit Serbia and blackmail her”.²⁴⁴

On 6 November (24 October), Pašić was approached by Professor Redlich of the Vienna University, who was reported to have been something of an emissary of Count Berchtold. He arrived, he said, to try to remove the difficulties in the way of Serbo-Austrian understanding. Professor Redlich mostly blamed Viennese diplomacy for the past disagreements, and that, according to Pašić’s report, “certainly with the motive of inducing Serbia as much as possible to believe in Austria’s present good intentions and sincere wish to repair now all the faults she had committed in the past, and to place her policy in the Balkans on a different basis.” To Redlich’s question as to how much of Old Serbia he wished to include within Serbia’s borders, Pašić replied that those borders included the Sanjak of Novi Pazar and the Vilayet of Kosovo with the Adriatic coast from Durres to San Giovanni. An outlet to the sea was a vital question for Serbia; without it, she would be stifled and stewed as in a cauldron, with the lid on.” When Redlich asked him whether Serbia would be willing to enter into customs union with Austria-Hungary, Pašić answered that the moment was not now opportune for such negotiations. It was necessary first of all to remove

244 Dimitrijević Ministarstvu inostranih dela, Beč, 2. 11. 1912, Pov. Br. 1934, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. V, sv. 3, p. 219.

the mistrust which existed in regard to Austria's Balkan policy. And that mistrust could be removed only if Austria-Hungary met the territorial demands of the Balkan states and if it led the other Powers in supporting the wishes of the Balkan peoples. There was, for example, the question of Serbia's outlet to the sea, which all the Allies considered justifiable and supported Serbia in it. "It is an opportune moment for Austria-Hungary to gain the sympathies of the Balkan states and to lay the foundation of her economic rapprochement with them. It is for Austria-Hungary to make possible the formation of a customs union with Serbia and the other Balkan states." The Serbs did not ask for an illegitimate subjugation of any foreign elements; after all, "the Albanians on the northern littoral were of Serbian blood, but had changed their religion under the persecution and pressure of the Turkish authorities ... To what extent that region had been Serbian in the Middle Ages could be judged from geographical names, costumes, historical monuments, and from the fact that King Vladimir was venerated as a saint by all the Albanians, both Catholic and Orthodox, in that region." In this conversation, Pašić returned to his old idea that the best solution of the whole problem would be the partition of Albania between Greece and Serbia. "When economic rapprochement with Austria-Hungary is advocated, that policy is incompatible with the creation of a theatre of disorder and revolt by attempting to form a state out of the tribes which have never had a state of their own, and which have been living for thousands of years among the peoples which have their own states."²⁴⁵ On this basis, however, it was impossible to come to an agreement. Austria wanted – and all the Powers were agreed on that – to form an autonomous Albania; it was just that at the time of the break-up of the Turkish authority the pure principle of nationality should prevail. But what made an agreement particularly difficult and even impossible, was Austria's categorical demand that Serbia must not obtain an outlet to the sea, even at the northernmost and ethnically mixed part of the Albanian coast.

The discussion of Serbia's outlet to the sea was further complicated by a statement made by M. Bogićević, the Serbian Charge d'Affaires in Berlin, to Kiderlen-Waechter on 7 November, without the authorization of the Serbian government, although he said he was acting on its orders. He said that the Serbs, in spite of Austria's warnings, would force their way to the sea, for they needed that outlet. When Kiderlen-Waechter told him that would mean a clash with

245 Pašić svim poslanstvima Kraljevine Srbije na strani (cirkular), Beograd, 7. 11. 1912, Pov. Br. 2466, in: *Ibid.*, pp. 251-253. The Serbian Minister in Vienna, Dj. Simić, expatiated on the same ideas in the Viennese Foreign Ministry on 11 November. See *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, IV, p. 841.

Austria and Italy and that it would be better to ask for an outlet on the Aegean, Bogićević replied that the Balkan Allies had already divided the Aegean coast between them and Serbia therefore looked to Albania. The plan for the partition had been submitted to Russia and she had already approved it. If Austria opposed an annexation of Albania to Serbia, the latter would have not only Bulgaria but also Russia behind her. Bogićević even asked Kiderlen-Waechter what Germany's attitude would be, if it came to war on this account between Russia and Austria, and France remained neutral. The Austrian Ambassador in Berlin gave a more dramatic account of this conversation. He said that Bogićević had stated that according to the decision of the Allies, Serbia would get "almost the whole of Albania" and that Russia would declare war on Austria, if she attempted to stand in Serbia's way. Kiderlen-Waechter lost his patience at that and declared angrily that if Serbia and Russia wanted war they could have it, but that they would have to reckon not only with Germany, but also with Italy. Kiderlen-Waechter himself remarked that it seemed to him that this declaration was not in harmony with the attitude of the Russian government, but that the behaviour of the Russian representatives in Belgrade and Paris seemed to him suspicious and that it all "conceals serious danger in itself, especially in view of the impression on the Balkan states." For that reason, he immediately informed Vienna, Paris, London and St. Petersburg of this interview.²⁴⁶ When questioned by the German Ambassador, Sazonov denied outright these statements, which had unjustly placed him in a very awkward situation,²⁴⁷ and the Prime Minister Kokovtsov did the same later.

What Bogićević said – if the reports are true, as his own telegram about the conversation does not report any mention of Russia and her attitude in this connection²⁴⁸ – was not in agreement either with the facts or with the instruc-

246 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, pp. 293-4; *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, IV, p. 792.

247 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, IV, pp. 822, 847. Cf. especially *Der diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, II, pp. 339-40.

248 Bogićević Ministarstvu inostranih dela, Berlin, 7. 11. 1912, Pov. Br. 2485, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. V, sv. 3, p. 254. When called by the Serbian government to account for his action, after Sazonov's complaint, Bogićević admitted having spoken to Kiderlen-Waechter, "expressing the opinion" "that Serbia could certainly count on the support of Russia in that matter." Bogićević Pašiću, Berlin, 17. 11. 1912, Pov. Br. 4071, in: *Ibid.*, pp. 338-341. This is obviously far removed from what Kiderlen-Waechter reported. In fact, we cannot rely on Bogićević's truthfulness, and there are other instances of his speaking contrary to the instructions of his government. Thus, on 11 November, he told the Austrian Ambassador that Serbia would like an outlet on the Aegean and that it would serve her interests better than an outlet on the Adriatic. See *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, IV, pp. 842-3. Cf. also in this connection *Der diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, II, pp. 486-7. Bogićević, who as an official representative of the

tions of the Serbian government. In Belgrade, it was well-known that Russia was strongly in favour of Serbia's obtaining an outlet to the sea, but she had given it clearly to be understood that she did not intend to go to war for the sake of it. On 8 November (27 October), the Serbian Minister in St. Petersburg, D. Popović, reported that Russia, although defending Serbia's outlet to the sea, nevertheless considered that "the interests of Serbia would be equally well satisfied, if she received a neutral railway, such as Austria-Hungary would have to [reach] Salonica" and that Sazonov warned that Russia would not go to war even if Austria-Hungary attacked Serbia on that account.²⁴⁹ He clearly wanted to create as strong an impression as possible in Belgrade with these words to induce Serbia to give way, but at the same time this was the tendency of Russia's policy in that respect. Three days later, Sazonov advised Belgrade that the Serbs should not descend on Durres, lest they might give fresh food to Vienna's resistance to their wishes.²⁵⁰

The idea of a neutral railway down to the Adriatic and to Salonica, which would serve the commercial traffic of both Serbia and Austria-Hungary, also appeared in one of Berchtold's messages to Belgrade.²⁵¹ But the proposal was not well received in Serbia. The experience with the Albanians acquired over the years, made the Serbs very cautious. Who could, despite neutralization, guarantee that the Albanians would not put obstacles in the way of such a railway as they had done for years in the matter of the introduction of reforms? Would there not arise disputes, on account of their well-known ill-discipline, which might give grounds for foreign intervention and all kinds of incidents. Instead of such a settlement, Serbia desired an outlet to the sea through a narrow belt of her own territory, so that traffic on that railway could be safeguarded

Serbian government worked secretly against its interests, has described his conversation with Kiderlen-Waechter in his work *Die Auswärtige Politik Serbiene*, Berlin 1931, pp. 171-2 to the effect that he warned Germany that Russia had a well prepared plan against Austria-Hungary and that Serbia's outlet to the sea and her demand for a port formed part of that plan. As we can see, Bogićević made three different statements to three different parties about the same matter. This best shows the extent to which he could be believed in this case and in general. The declaration quoted here also shows the moral qualities of the man. If the policy of the Serbian government was, in his opinion, really such that he had to condemn it, why did he not dissociate himself from it and resign from the post in which he had to represent and defend it? In his official dispatches, on the contrary, he approved that policy and pretended to support it with conviction.

249 Popović Ministarstvu inostranih dela, Petrograd, 9. 11. 1912, Pov. Br. 2575, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. V, sv. 3, pp. 268-269; Sazonov, *Les années fatales*, p. 89.

250 *Der diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, II, p. 342; Poincaré, *Au service de la France*, II, pp. 323, 325-6.

251 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, IV, pp. 798-9; *Der diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, II, p. 340.

fully. She wanted that strip of territory to be as large as possible, and asked for much, even going too far in this respect.

After the first news of the Serbian victories, the Governor of Bosnia and Herzegovina, General Potiorek, said to Baernreither that if the Slav states were enlarged at the expense of Turkey and form a belt around us, that could only be suffered in case Austria-Hungary concluded a customs and commercial alliance with Serbia and Montenegro to be followed by a military convention. If this proved impossible, Austria-Hungary could no longer hold Bosnia and Herzegovina, for they could not resist the attracting power of those states. In his opinion, war would be necessary even on account of a customs union.²⁵² If so drastic an opinion was not entirely shared by the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Ministry, its attitude in fact amounted to as much, for the complete absorption of Serbia into Austria's sphere of influence was aimed at. Conrad von Hötzendorff thought the same as Potiorek. In his note of 28 October, he also recommended either that Austria herself join the Balkan alliance, so that the Balkan states should be placed in relation to her similar to that which Bavaria held in relation to the Reich, or that a customs union be created with a joint federal council for the settlement of all common questions, which would include foreign affairs, military preparations, the organization of the army and a common currency.²⁵³ In other words, according to this plan, Serbia would lose her independence and place her destiny in the hands of the leaders of the Habsburg Monarchy.

It was therefore quite dangerous for Serbia to enter into any closer negotiations with Austria-Hungary alone, without the collaboration of other Great Powers, especially when she was engaged in the struggle against the Turks. On the other hand, there was no small danger that Austria-Hungary, angry at Serbia's reserved attitude, might adopt more severe measures against her. The friendly Powers, and British diplomacy in particular,²⁵⁴ therefore recommended that on any occasion of foreign mediation the Allies should insist that nothing could be asked of them as long as the war lasted, as that would mean a violation of neutrality. After the cessation of hostilities, Europe would have to subject whatever might be decided to revision, so that the interests of all parties in the political and material development of the Eastern question would

²⁵² Baernreither, *Fragmente eines politischen Tagebuches*, p. 165

²⁵³ Hötzendorff, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, II, p. 316.

²⁵⁴ Tittoni, the Italian Ambassador in Paris, had also worked energetically for the same end. See Vesnić Pašiću, Pariz, 14. 11. 1912, *Pov. Br.* 506, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. V, sv. 3, pp. 318-320. Cf. Poincaré, *Au service de la France*, II, pp. 320 ff.

be taken into consideration. On this basis, Grey met with signal success when on 11 November he obtained a promise from the Vienna government that they themselves would undertake nothing as long as military operations took place, even in the matter of Serbia's drive to the Adriatic. The way was thus paved for a pacific settlement of the dispute.

5

In the question of Serbia's outlet to the sea, the attitude of the Italian government was, to certain extent, unfavourable to Serbia. While San Giuliano, the Foreign Minister, and the General-Secretary Bollati assured Vienna that they shared its opinion, other Italian statesmen were sending messages to Belgrade to the effect that Serbia's wishes, with certain limitations, might be fulfilled. On 14 November, the Serbian Charge d'Affaires in Rome, Lj. Mihajlović, telegraphed that "in the circles of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, they consider that Serbia should occupy Durres as soon as possible, and not enter into negotiations with Austria-Hungary, as they believe that we shall succeed in getting through to the Adriatic." In his more detailed written report, Mihajlović explicitly stated that San Giuliano himself "gave him to understand that they had not declared their agreement with Austria concerning our outlet to the Adriatic" – which was not correct (or Mihajlović was under misapprehension)²⁵⁵ – and that he said openly that he considered various possibilities for a settlement, including that of an outlet through the territory of an autonomous Albania. "Austria offers you Split", San Giuliano said, "but I think that you cannot be content with that; you can accept that offer too, but along with the other solution which we are seeking, for the more outlets you have the better it will be for

255 According to what Tittoni said in Paris, Italy had undertaken not to allow Serbia a territorial outlet to the Adriatic, but to let her have a free hand in all other matters. See *Der diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, II, p. 348. Cf. J. Cambon's report from Berlin in Poincaré, *Au service de la France*, II, p. 315. The French Ambassador in Rome got the impression that Italy was opposed to a Serbian port for fear that Serbia might, under Austrian pressure, agree to becoming economically dependent on her and that the port would thus indirectly become half Austrian. Poincaré, *Au service de la France*, II, p. 314. This information certainly came from Italian official circles. It can be seen how inaccurate it was from the fact that Italy continued its opposition even after it learnt the history of the whole question. Meanwhile, according to confidential information given to Pašić by the Czech politician K. Kramář, as Berchtold's emissary, Austria defended her refusal to allow Serbia a free port on the grounds of fear lest Serbia should come into direct contact with Italy through that port, and thus serve the interests of that Power. See *Documents diplomatiques français*, 3me série, V, p. 147.

you. If, however, you try to obtain a port on the Adriatic by making concessions to Austria, we shall be against it.”²⁵⁶

Apart from the attitude of Italy, which had indeed united with Vienna in opposing a Serbian port on the Serbian littoral, Austria's intransigence was also, to some extent, influenced by Bulgaria's stance. Dr. Danev, who visited Hungary on a special mission, had a conversation with Berchtold on 9 November in Budapest which lasted almost two hours. In the course of that conversation Serbia was of course discussed. Serbia, he said, should come closer either to Bulgaria or Austria; there was no third alternative. If she showed herself persistent, “and the Serbs are capable of anything”, then neither Bulgaria nor Austria would need to take her into consideration. As for Serbia's outlet to the sea, Danev spoke in favour of it, appealing to Austria's generosity and presenting such an outlet, from the Austrian point of view, as a danger to Serbia rather than a gain. In his conversation with Rudolf Pogatscher, an official in the Austrian Foreign Ministry, and with Count Berchtold himself, Danev left the impression that he was speaking in favour of the Serbs more from political etiquette than out of conviction, and he promised that he would bring his influence to bear with the Serbs in order to make them more moderate. After this conversation, Berchtold informed the German Ambassador that on the whole he had the impression that Bulgaria was not backing Serbia unconditionally.²⁵⁷ However, Danev seized upon Pogatscher's remark that this “purely Serbian matter” should by no means influence the friendly relations between Bulgaria and Austria. “The geographical position, power and the whole constitution of the Monarchy assure her a natural supremacy in the Balkans. The Balkan Peninsula is nothing but an extension of Austria-Hungary – I am known as a Russophil, but nevertheless I am talking to you in this way.” Such were his concluding words.²⁵⁸ After Danev's visit, Vienna formed the opinion that Bulgaria would not be willing to expose herself for the sake of Serbia to any unpleasantness, and this provided further reason to persevere in the direction it had chosen. In another conversation with Berchtold on 12 December, Danev even said explicitly that Bulgaria could not express herself openly as regards her relations with Austria as long as the Serbian armies, together with her own, were fighting at Jedrene, but that after the conclusion of peace things would be different,²⁵⁹ clearly not in the spirit of the Alliance. Other Bulgarian Ministers

256 Mihailović Pašiću, Rim, 15. 11. 1912, Pov. Br. 200, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. V, sv. 3, pp. 324–326. Cf. report of the German Ambassador in Rome, *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, pp. 342–4.

257 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, p. 313.

258 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, IV, 836–40.

259 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, V, p. 106.

abroad, such as Toshev in Belgrade and Kolushev in Cetinje, were much more explicit than Danev, speaking in the same sense.

In order to win over Bulgaria more completely and to influence her more directly, Danev was received in a private audience both with the Emperor and the Crown Prince, which was quite an exceptional matter in Austria. In addition, various attractive offers were made to Bulgaria and she was led to expect considerable gains mainly at the expense of her present allies. In these audiences, Serbia was of course mentioned, and both the Emperor and the Crown Prince declared themselves opposed to her outlet to the sea. Danev asserted that Franz Ferdinand declared on that occasion that this would not, however, be a sufficient cause for war.²⁶⁰ But this statement was immediately denied by the Crown Prince himself as soon as he heard that Danev was spreading it; he claimed that he had said just the opposite.²⁶¹

Geshov's attitude in the matter was more correct. He was fully aware that the full solidarity of the Balkan Alliance was the first condition to maintain its gains intact as much as possible. Such was the advice which he received from all friendly quarters. He therefore declared to the Austrian Minister on 13 November that Serbia's wishes were justifiable and that he did not understand Austria's opposition to the formation of a narrow corridor to the sea. Bulgaria must also support Serbia's aspirations in regard to the Adriatic, because she could not allow Serbia an outlet to the Aegean,²⁶² i.e. because she did not want Serbia to penetrate further in the easterly and south-easterly direction, in Old Serbia and Macedonia. Two days earlier, on Geshov's instructions and at Serbia's request, the Bulgarian Minister in St. Petersburg announced that the Balkan Alliance might even agree to war for the sake of Serbia's outlet to the sea,²⁶³ and Geshov himself told the Serbian Minister that evening "that he considered the question of Serbia's outlet to the Adriatic Sea the most important in the whole Balkan problem, and that Serbia could count on the complete loyalty of Bulgaria and on the support of her army".²⁶⁴ On 15 November, the Greek

260 Spalajković Pašiću, Sofija, 12. 11. 1912, Pov. Br. 3987, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. V, sv. 3, p. 296; *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*. IV, p. 881; Toshev, *Balkanskite vojni*, II, p. 58.

261 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*. IV, p. 900; *Documents diplomatiques français*. 3me sèrie, V, pp. 91-2.

262 Ibid., p. 866.

263 Popović Ministarstvu inostranih dela, Petrograd, 12. 11. 1912, Pov. Br. 2618, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. V, sv. 3, p. 295; Dr. Aleksander Girginov, *Narodata katastrofa: Voynata 1912-1913*, Sofia, 1926. p. 113.

264 Spalajković Ministarstvu inostranih dela, Sofija, 13.11.1912, Pov. Br. 2625, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. V, sv. 3, pp. 299-300. But this was not the opinion of other Bulgarian statesmen. Their Minister in Belgrade, Toshev, said to the

Foreign Minister, Koromilas, also made a similar statement to the German Minister, and Venizelos repeated it three days later.²⁶⁵ But on 23 November, they hastened to assuage these statements in Vienna in order to secure Salonica for themselves.²⁶⁶

Austria-Hungary could see during the first weeks of the war in 1912 that its policy towards Serbia did not meet with much sympathy in Romania either. The Bucharest Court and government did not, in fact, want Bulgaria to become too strong and they therefore sought for certain balance of power in the Balkans. But Bucharest criticized the Vienna government for preventing the Serbs from obtaining their outlet to the sea and for not allowing Montenegro at least to extend its territory to San Giovanni.²⁶⁷

In Russia, Slav enthusiasm for the Christian victories was increasing in the meantime. People considered that the difficulties which Austria was putting in Serbia's way were not so much the result of some vital necessity, but rather an expression of ill-will towards Serbia and, to no small extent, towards Russia herself. Sazonov watched his steps very carefully, but he did not hide his great distrust of Vienna's policy nor was he able to refrain from criticizing some of its actions. On 11 June 1909, the German Ambassador at the Vatican, Mühlberg, wrote of him that during the Bosnian crisis he had "shown himself a stubborn and keen opponent of Austria-Hungary and made no secret of his opinion that Russia ought to oppose Aehrenthal's policy",²⁶⁸ Sazonov expressed his opinion of the significance of the annexation in his memoirs.²⁶⁹ He considered it not only as a blow to Serbia's national feelings, but also as evidence of further intentions of the Vienna government and, from Russia's point of view, a change in the balance of power in the Balkans to her detriment. In the present conflict, Sazonov did not unconditionally support all Serbia's wishes and demands – he even deprecated certain extravagance in them – but he started to insist increasingly on what seemed to him justifiable and he was supported in this by the military circles around the Grand Duke N. Nikolaevich and almost all the Russian press. To the German Ambassador he said that he considered Serbia's

British Minister on 16 November that Bulgaria had no intention of supporting Serbia "in her unreasonable demands", or of being involved in war with Austria-Hungary for her sake. The Bulgarian Minister in Cetinje, Kolushev, spoke still more openly to Baron Giesl. See *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, IV, pp. 1016-7. For Sazonov's advice to Bulgaria that she should not go so far in the question of Serbia's outlet to the sea as to come into conflict with Austria-Hungary, see *Der diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, II, p. 344.

265 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, IV, pp. 881, 925.

266 *Ibid.*, p. 979.

267 *Ibid.*, IV, p. 853.

268 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXVI, p. 809.

269 Sergei, Sazonov, *Les années fatales*, Paris 1927, pp. 15, 17-6.

demand for an outlet to the sea justifiable, and that Austrian refusal was only "a continuation of her petty policy." "Austria-Hungary cannot seriously affirm that for Serbia to get a small port on the Adriatic would be really detrimental to her vital interests."²⁷⁰ On 14 November, Sazonov sent a message to Izvolsky in Paris that France should be influenced not to remain indifferent, if Austria decided to take some part of the Turkish "or even Serbian" territory, and if Russia had to intervene on that account.²⁷¹ Since the beginning of the war, undoubtedly as a measure of precaution in case of emergency, Russia had kept prepared some 200,000 troops on her western border, which had been called up for maneuvers in the spring of 1912. In all circles in Russia, it was often emphasized that, although she did not desire war, she would not allow herself to be treated as she had been treated in 1908-9. The Russian Minister in Belgrade, N. Hartwig, and the Military Attaché, Artamonov, were on Serbia's side and considered that her demands were fully justified. Hartwig was undoubtedly a great friend of the Serbs and an opponent of the Danubian Monarchy, and in some of his private statements he spoke against the latter without any consideration. The Romanian Minister in Belgrade reported confidentially that Hartwig had told him recently that Russia would not abandon Serbia, that after the partition of Turkey Austria's turn would come, and that a large Serbian state would be formed with Montenegro, Bosnia and southern Hungary. In this conflict, he believed that Italy would not side with Austria, and that Germany would remain passive.²⁷² If he said even half as much in this or a similar manner to Serbian politicians, it is very understandable that the Serbian government believed that it might hope for success in the matter of an outlet to the sea, despite all Austrian opposition. And there is direct evidence there he did speak so. The Deputy Foreign Minister, Jovan Jovanović, complained to the French Minister that Hartwig behaved criminally, if he were not acting on the explicit instructions of his government, for he was pushing Serbia into war and making her too dependent on Russia.²⁷³ However, Hartwig had no such instructions. On the contrary, Sazonov himself felt it necessary to point out that Hartwig's interpretation of Russian policy in Belgrade was entirely his own, and that it incurred considerable inconvenience.²⁷⁴

Serbia's drive in the direction of the Albanian seaboard, in spite of the fact that Austrian diplomacy was opposed to it and issued open warnings against

270 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, p. 334

271 *Der diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, II, p. 345.

272 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, IV, p. 851. Hartwig denied the truth of this information. *Ibid.*, p. 900. Cf. *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, p. 319.

273 *Documents diplomatiques français*, V, p. 149.

274 Sazonov, *Les années fatales*, pp. 87-8.

it, was influenced, apart from the vital needs of Serbia and her hope in Russian assistance, by certain messages received in Sofia from London. The Bulgarian Minister in London, Madzaharov reported that the British government had advised the Balkan politicians to refrain from making any premature declarations or starting individual negotiations, and to endeavour to end the war as soon as possible. "Serbia should occupy territory down to the Adriatic as soon as possible", his message stated explicitly.²⁷⁵ He perhaps made it a little more emphatic in order to divert Serbia's attention from the Vardar valley towards the west. But at the time his message was taken very seriously both in Sofia and Belgrade, and it had a major influence on policy, although Geshov pointed out that it was not in harmony with the messages received from St. Petersburg. Neither was it in harmony with the messages that the British Minister in Belgrade, Sir Ralph Paget, conveyed in the name of his government, advising the Serbs to be much more moderate in the Albanian question, nor with the reports Count Benckendorff sent from London to his government. According to them, Grey had even said that Serbia would run the risk of losing the sympathy she had gained, if she insisted that in the matter of the Serbian coast Europe should accept no other view than that which Serbia found the only one possible and which Pašić emphasized somewhat inopportunistically in some of his statements. The French government was also opposed to such an expedition and urged St. Petersburg to try and prevent a descent on Durres in particular.²⁷⁶

The official declaration of the Austrian government that they could not allow Serbia an outlet to the Adriatic through the Albanian-populated territory, was communicated to Pašić on 10 November by the Austrian Minister, Ugron, who also made a reference to the concurrence of Germany and Italy. In putting forward his government's message, he first invoked the principle of nationality, which also gave the Albanians the right to their own autonomous or independent state in the Balkans. Austria-Hungary had "given proofs of its sympathy" for Serbia in that it had not mobilized and prevented Serbia from taking the Sanjak of Novi Pazar, although it had "special interests of its own" there. Austria had been the first to refrain from demanding any territorial gains in the Balkans, and it would seek economic advantages only when matters were more settled; even then those advantages "would not interfere with the independence of the Serbian state." Austria had abandoned Turkey,

275 Spalajković Pašiću, Sofija, 10. 11. 1912, Pov. Br. 2581, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. V, sv. 3, pp. 271-272.

276 Benckendorff, *Diplomatischen Schriftwechsel*, II, pp. 485-8; Poincaré, *Au service de la France*, II, pp. 348-50.

which had shown to be without the strength to survive, and she wished to safeguard her interests by an agreement with the Balkan states. She recognized Serbia's right to an outlet to the sea and would help her to obtain it on the Aegean or in Dalmatia, "with major rights that would entitle her to erect buildings and all she needed for her trade." Lastly, she would help Serbia to realize her project of the Adriatic Railway, but through an autonomous Albania, or through Montenegro. Pašić's answer was roughly similar to that which he had given to Professor Redlich. Avoiding all, as Ugron noted, "that might be unpleasant to us", he did not mention Serbia's suspicions of the utility of a Serbian port in the Austrian territory, or the motives that might have driven the Vienna government to express their willingness to help the Serbs obtain an outlet to the Aegean Sea. He only pleaded "as a weak neighbour" that "the mighty Monarchy" would "by this last act of generous helpfulness (its consent to a free Serbian port) lay the foundation for a permanent, unbroken, good agreement".²⁷⁷

Two days later, the Austrian Minister informed King Nicholas that Austria-Hungary would put no obstacle in the way of military operations against Lezhë and Medua, but that he should appreciate that the Austrian government reserved those places for an autonomous Albania.²⁷⁸ That in conveying these messages Austria was nevertheless prepared to bargain not in the interests of the future Albania but in her own is proved by Berchtold's instructions to Baron Giesl on 17 November, in which he ordered the Minister to explain to Crown Prince Danilo and King Nicholas that the Danubian Monarchy wanted Scutari to remain Albanian, and that that town was of great importance to Austria herself. But if Montenegro agreed to hand over to Austria a part of Lovćen "as a very small pledge of its future friendly policy, which would include no aggressive plans", Vienna would be prepared to meet the wishes of Montenegro in the matter of Scutari. In addition, a customs union was offered, in which the Vienna government would be willing to assure Montenegro of a regular annual contribution as an indemnity for the loss of its customs revenue. The Austrian mercantile flag would then be used without restriction on the Bojana river and on the lake of Scutari; Austria would be given the right of sabotage on the coast and link up her railways with Albania through Montenegro. In other words, Montenegro would economically be entirely subjected to

²⁷⁷ Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Pašić's note on this meeting, unregistered; *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, IV, pp. 829-30. When Pašić later said that Serbia had received an offer from "certain" quarter for an outlet to the Aegean, the Austrian government denied it because of the Bulgarians. See *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VI, pp. 545, 564-5.

²⁷⁸ *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, IV, pp. 854-5. For the King's attempts to change Vienna's attitude, see *Ibid.*, pp. 894-6.

its powerful neighbour²⁷⁹ and serve, as had already been explained in the above mentioned plan of the chief of Franz Ferdinand's military office, as a corridor to Albania. Berchtold said as much to the German Ambassador on 13 November: Montenegro was "of special importance to the Monarchy as a corridor (*Durchzugsland*)".²⁸⁰ With such Vienna's intention in view, it is clear why Austrian diplomacy did not allow Serbia an outlet to the sea across her own territory in Albania. For the above mentioned economic-political reasons, Vienna did not want to see the link which Austria needed between Albania and Montenegro to be broken by a belt of Serbian territory. The attitude of Austria-Hungary in the Albanian question thus takes on a very different and certainly less principled character; this offer to Montenegro indicates what motives influenced its diplomacy in this crisis and what price had to be paid for its goodwill. As a further indication of its attitude, Berchtold's message sent to Cetinje on 21 November is no less characteristic. Baron Giesl was instructed to tell Crown Prince and the King that a Serbian corridor to the sea through northern Albania would not be in the interests of Montenegro, "for it would cut it off from the south forever".²⁸¹

Austria's direct political interest can be also seen from another conversation, which Count Berchtold had with the German Ambassador in the middle of November. Austria-Hungary would be willing, he said, to agree at last even to a Serbian port and to drop the whole matter, if it were given Valona. "That would so greatly strengthen our position in the Adriatic that we could cheerfully let the Serbs have their port." But he feared difficulties, especially from the Italian side.²⁸² It is clear from this statement that the Albanian question became so acute in Vienna not so much on account of the Albanians and their future as on account of Austria herself and her interests. The danger to Austria of a Serbian port in the Adriatic only existed if Austria wanted to penetrate towards Albania, as she obviously did. Otherwise, none of her arguments was tenable. Austria saw this herself, for the entire discussion was based not on reasons but on force. When defending herself, Austria used strikingly inconsistent arguments. If Austria vetoed Serbia's outlet to the sea on the grounds that Serbia had to respect ethnographic borders and must not cut across Albanian

279 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, IV, pp. 906-9.

280 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, p. 339.

281 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, IV, p. 955. Cf. Giesl's proposals as to the attitude to be adopted towards Montenegro. *Ibid.*, pp. 955-8. He is inaccurate in his memoirs, *Zwei Jahrzehnte*, p. 232, when he claims that the offer of the cession of Lovćen to Austria was first made by King Nicholas on 23 November. Elsewhere, he also speaks of Berchtold's initiative for the exchange, but he incorrectly dates it in May, after the Scutari crisis. *Ibid.*, p. 246.

282 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, pp. 354-5.

territory, why did Austria then come forward with a plan of her own with still less ethnographical justification? At first, Austria-Hungary's view in defending Albania's independence appeared principled and might be sympathetic; now, when the background of her entire policy becomes so clear, it appears in quite a different light. Although ignorant of all these details, Paul Cambon wrote on 4 December that behind the conflict between Serbia and Austria-Hungary in the matter of a port and all the rest there was a deeper cause, namely Austria-Hungary's egoistic aims in the Balkans.²⁸³ Austria-Hungary did not seek for its own security, but rather demanded sacrifices from others.

After all, that was clearly seen at the time. On the instructions of his government, the Italian Ambassador drew Count Berchtold's attention to certain steps of Austria which were giving rise to all sorts of interpretations and suspicions. Italy drew the attention of the Vienna government not only to Austria's economic policy, which she sought to ensure in the Balkans at the expense of other states by demanding a sort of monopoly for herself, but also to the inappropriateness of her declaration that her consent to territorial concessions for the Balkan states would correspond to the extent to which the economic relations between Austria and those states became closer.²⁸⁴ San Giuliano told the Austrian Ambassador that Italy could not agree to such transactions. When the Austrian Ambassador further informed San Giuliano of the intention of the Vienna government to demand a rectification of the border at Lovćen, Rome saw still more clearly Austria's aims and her loyalty in the negotiations. While the Austrian and Italian representatives made joint statements in Belgrade and Cetinje concerning the protection of Albanian interests, the Austrian Minister at Cetinje was at the same time, behind the back of his colleague, offering the afore-mentioned political bargain. After this, it was no small an offence for the Vienna government when Rome warned Austria and asked her to bind herself by a written declaration as to Italy's and Austria's common aims in the Albanian question, and when it was pointed out that to demand compensation for concessions in Albania was a unilateral step and inopportune under the circumstances.²⁸⁵ Rome better understood Austria's further attitude. On 23 and 24 November, King Nicholas personally and through the agency of Lazar Mijušković emphatically refused any idea of ceding Krstač on Lovćen, and he was, just like the Serbian government, very reserved in the matter of

283 Poincaré, *Au service de la France*, II, pp. 362-3.

284 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, IV, pp. 933-8.

285 *Ibid.*, pp. 1020-24.

customs union.²⁸⁶ Having failed to achieve what was intended in respect of Montenegro, Vienna now changed its attitude towards that country. Austria's intransigence was thereafter no longer conditional, but rather definite and based on her intention to punish both Serbian Kingdoms for refusing to accept the offers made to them. Austria especially adopted a firm stance in dealing with Cetinje, on the compliancy of which she had counted, and the behaviour of which foiled the earlier plans in respect of Montenegro and Albania, and the combination for the acquisition of Lovćen.

From official Austrian documents we learn that in the middle of November, in agreement with the Crown Prince Franz Ferdinand himself, and at the expense of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, special emissaries were sent from Vienna to Albania to start a movement for an autonomous Albania.²⁸⁷ One of the Albanian leaders, Ismail Kemal, was also sent from Vienna to Durres with special recommendations.²⁸⁸ Although Serbia did not know everything about these connections between certain Albanians and the Vienna government, she nevertheless knew a good deal. What was known was sufficient to create the anxiety from the creation of an autonomous Albania, which I. Kemal proclaimed on 28 November. Austrian representatives spoke on several occasions of their fear that a Serbian port in the Adriatic might serve Russia and Italy. That this argument was purely problematic and just an excuse was clear from the fact that both Russia and Italy, even if they had wanted to use a Serbian port on the Eastern Adriatic coast, could have used the Montenegrin ports of Bar and Ulcinj. In Serbia, however, there was a justifiable and genuine fear that this autonomous Albania, created by Austrian agitation, should become a mere instrument of Vienna. For that reason, the question of Serbia's outlet to the sea in that direction gradually acquired in Belgrade, apart from its economic character, which at first had been predominant, a distinctly political character.

286 Ibid., pp. 1003-6. At the end of December, San Giuliano informed the Austrian Ambassador that Italy could by no means agree to the cession of Lovćen, because it would mean, on the one hand, the end of the real independence of Montenegro in favour of Austria, and, on the other, because the balance of power in the Adriatic would thereby be modified to the detriment of Italy. Ibid., V, p. 305. On 6 January 1913, Russia also drew attention of the French government to these Austrian offers and expressed her dissatisfaction with them. See R. Poincaré, *L'Europe sous les armes, 1913*, Paris 1926, p. 14.

287 Ibid., p. 892.

288 Ibid., p. 929.

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Insofar as as the Austrian Ministry for Foreign Affairs indeed changed its views as regards Balkan questions in connection with the above mentioned conferences and showed less nervousness and irritation, if not always a willingness to meet certain wishes of the Balkan states, it did not give to its own subordinates sufficient information of the change. In many cases, it even expressly ordered them to adopt a completely reserved attitude and, if need be, only to issue statements as if they were their own personal opinions. To others new instructions could not have been sent and these therefore adhered to the old ones. Such was the case with some of the consuls in Turkey. Their attitude, suspicious and sometimes openly hostile, consequently gave rise to the undesired clashes and, in some cases, even to more serious diplomatic incidents. Such was, for instance, the case with the Austro-Hungarian Consul in Priština, Oscar Prochaska. This man was unfavourably disposed towards the Serbs and the staff of the Serbian Third Army received several reports of his inciting the Albanians to resistance against them. In some cases, the news was confirmed by persons in the Consul's immediate entourage. A female servant in his employ stated before the authorities that he had even distributed pistols and rifles among the Albanians. Other persons stated that he had advised the Albanians to seek the protection of Austria against the Serbs. It was even submitted that just before the arrival of the Serbian army shots had been fired from the Consulate and that the Consul's dragoman had fired them from the old fortress. On the arrival of the Serbian army, the Consul demonstratively avoided contact with its commanders, and even with the new civil authorities. On 8 November, on the basis of these reports and of his attitude, the Serbian Minister in Vienna lodged a complaint against Prochaska, requesting that in the interests of good relations he should be recalled as soon as possible. At the same time, the Serbian military authorities restrained his movements. Berchtold replied that he must first investigate the matter, because since the beginning of the war he had had no contact with, or news from, the Consulate. He therefore asked on 14 November that one of Austrian diplomatic officials, Consul Edel, should go to Prizren and question Prochaska. The Serbian government agreed to this on 19 November. This permission was delayed five days because it needed the consent of the military authorities. In Vienna, the delay created a bad impression and the Austrian Minister used a very firm and even threatening tone in urging the matter. The Austrian press went still further. Without waiting for the report of Edel, they started spreading most alarming rumours about Prochaska, asserting that he was ill-treated in various ways and that he had perhaps even been murdered.

The enquiry showed that most of Prochaska's reports to the Vienna government against the Serbs were exaggerated and based on insufficient evidence, and that he personally had indeed taken up an attitude towards the army which might have been considered offensive and provocative. Certain junior officers in the Serbian Army, as it happens in wartime, had behaved arbitrarily and been somewhat insolent, but the commander-in-chief and the higher officers showed a complete readiness to make enquiries immediately and to put right any mistakes that had been made. The main mistake was no doubt that the authorities did not prevent demonstrations against the Consul when he left Prizren on 23 November.

From the circles of other Austrian Consuls, too, most fantastic reports were circulated about the Serbian Army and the Serbs generally, and these show better than anything else not only the extent to which they were biased, but also what their attitude was. Even the official Austrian collection of documents contains reports from these men such as, for instance, that the Serbs had given the order "that all Albanians over eight years of age should be killed and the entire nation exterminated".²⁸⁹ These and similar reports were spread deliberately, so that it might be said, as it was actually said in a report of one of the Consuls, who thought that in doing so he was acting in accordance with the wishes of his government, that the Albanians hoped for salvation "from Austria-Hungary alone".²⁹⁰

Another incident occurred in connection with the Austrian Consul in Mitrovica, Ladislav Tahy. The Military Commander of Mitrovica restricted to some extent his freedom of speaking with other persons, as well as his personal freedom of movement outside the town.²⁹¹ The Consul therefore closed the Consulate at once and went away. On 17 November, Berchtold approved of his action and demanded full satisfaction for him.

After the failure to induce Serbia and Montenegro to accept its difficult conditions, Austro-Hungarian diplomacy began to take these consular incidents as a particular proof of Serbia's ill-will, even before verifying Serbian complaints or enquiring into the origins of the incidents and into the personal responsibility of all concerned. Had they only waited for Prochaska's reports, they might have seen even from them the hatred for the Serbs with which that man was imbued and how impossible it was for him, with such feelings, to be unbiased.²⁹² These incidents were welcome and deliberately exploited against the

²⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 882.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ It is not true that he was "locked up", as it is said in *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, p. 363.

²⁹² Cf. for example, *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, IV, p. 1032.

Serbs at the moment when the penetration of the Serbian Army to the sea became a *fait accompli*, and when Austria decided not to allow Serbia, at any price, to remain in possession of the territory she had conquered.

When the Serbian government did not obey Vienna's warnings not to send their army beyond Prizren, and did not agree to enter into direct negotiations with the Danubian Monarchy at the price which Viennese diplomacy demanded, a change was at once felt in the tone of the Austro-Hungarian press, which was gradually raised against Serbia. The latter was made responsible for everything, for things possible and impossible, and uncritically at that, just like during the Annexation Crisis. Old hatreds were coming to the surface again and seemed to have become stronger after having been restrained for a while. It was now suddenly found that Serbia was "adopting a provocative attitude." Under the influence of the new mood, Berchtold complained to Tschirschky at the time that "he has for present no sufficient grounds for direct pressure on Serbia",²⁹³ which undoubtedly he would gladly have resorted to. The Serbian government noted this change of attitude and did their best to avoid its effects. The Serbian Army's penetration to the Adriatic coast was indeed undertaken in the desire to present Europe with a *fait accompli*, and to prove Serbia's readiness to defend her demand for a port in every possible way. Serbia asked for more in order to receive something and hoped, of course, that the friendly Powers would help her insofar as their interests permitted, but she was conscious that she would have to give way. At the moment, she still hoped that nobody would hinder her military operations and that the question of her remaining on the coast would not be settled separately and before the final arrangement with the Turks. The Serbian government replied to the protests of the Triple Alliance through their Ministers on 18 November "that the treatment of the question ought to be left for later, when the definite results of the present conflict between Serbia and Turkey would be fully known."

From mid-November onwards, Vienna was increasingly thinking of the possibility of war and it was even working to that end. The Austrian Minister said to Jovan Jovanović, Pašić's deputy, on 16 November that it was his personal but firm conviction that his government "would not shrink from any means of ensuring the fulfillment of their justifiable wishes", i.e. that they would be prepared, in order to prevent Serbia's remaining on the coast, to resort to military measures.²⁹⁴ On 17 November, Berchtold made enquiries of Berlin as to how it would be received there if Austria reinforced her army in Galicia, in view of the fact that Russia was making considerable military preparations on

293 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, p. 354.

294 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, IV, p. 893.

her western border.²⁹⁵ In the direction of Serbia, the concentration of troops all along the line had been started even earlier and the opinion was gaining ground in military circles that the matter should be settled by force of arms. As early as 13 November, the German Military Attaché reported on the mood of the Viennese Ministry of War. Not only were they in favour of war, but also of a surprise attack on Serbia. "A march into Serbia would really be a military walk now. Around 14,000 reservists constitute the defense of the Kingdom."²⁹⁶ At the head of the war party at one time was Crown Prince, Franz Ferdinand himself. He told General Auffenberg on 12 November that Serbia would certainly have to withdraw her troops from the Adriatic coast, "for he has already engaged himself to that effect."²⁹⁷ In military circles, Kagenneck reported, it was thought along the following lines: "Either Serbia should be asked, under a threat of war, to give a clear answer, and if the Kingdom hesitated, a part of Serbia occupied as a pledge until satisfactory guarantees were obtained, or, if the events were watched with hands folded, Austria must admit being a second-class Power and, after the example of Switzerland, should have our possessions guaranteed."²⁹⁸ This mood of irritation took on incredible proportions. Even the municipal council in Vienna adopted a resolution on 28 November, in which it was stated that the peace of the Danubian Monarchy was being threatened "by unjustifiable, immoderate desires of conquest", and that it should not be preserved "by dishonourable weakness."²⁹⁹ Except for Turkey, Baron Hötendorf said, nobody was "more seriously hit than Austria-Hungary" by the successes of the Balkan Allies.³⁰⁰ Many other responsible persons in the Danubian Monarchy also thought and said the same.

The attitude towards Serbia now appeared in its true light. R. Poincaré is quite right in saying that it could not be expected from Austria, with her bureaucratic way of conducting her Eastern policy, to abandon in two months the course of policy which she had been following for years.³⁰¹ The minds were not yet sufficiently prepared for a new policy, nor had the proper new direction yet been found.³⁰² In the entire new situation, the Austro-Hungarians only saw the Serbian menace, and instead of the Turkish question and that

295 Ibid., pp. 914-5; *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, pp. 356-8.

296 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, pp. 329, 354.

297 Auffenberg, *Aus Österreichs Höhe und Niedergang*, p. 215.

298 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, p. 358.

299 Kanner, *Kaiserliche Katastrophen-Politik*, p. 117.

300 Hötendorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, II, p. 312.

301 Poincaré, *Au service de la France*, II, p. 360.

302 This was clearly perceived by the German diplomats as well. Cf. *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, pp. 460-2.

of the Balkans as a whole, they saw primarily the Serbian question. However, it was military circles rather than civil ones that emphasized this so much. On 19 November, instead of giving a technical explanation why relations were becoming so entangled, General Krobatin said only that monitors should be sent to Belgrade and the town bombarded.³⁰³ This state of mind could by no means be justified by saying that Serbia was bent on an outlet to the sea and that she had made no reply to Austria's warning against it. The war was still going on; a part of the defeated Turkish army (Cevad Pasha's corps) was retreating through Albania and the Serbs had every right to pursue them there, since Albania was still Turkish territory. Vienna's belligerent attitude, with its unchivalrous intention of invading Serbia while she was undefended and fighting the Turks, only shows the extreme ill-will and impatience to crush as soon as possible that country which had given proof of its undoubted vitality. Austria was, moreover, angry because Serbia had not agreed to her demands at once, and because she was trying to take full advantage of her successes. "Our far-reaching compliancy in the matter of territorial changes which took place there", Count Berchtold has written recently, "was met with a rigid rejection of our minimal demands."³⁰⁴ These Austrian demands, as we have seen, were not minimal. The proposals put forward by the military circles amounted to the limitation of Serbia's sovereignty as a state. The Vienna government even seemed not to have been fully conscious of the scope of their demand. Baron Hötendorf seriously claimed that his proposal for a federal council in which Serbia, under Austria's control, would discuss her foreign policy and military organization, showed a great willingness to satisfy the Serbs.³⁰⁵ Nor was Berchtold's compliancy much greater, although his attitude was more moderate than that of the military circles, for he too had essentially the same aim. Moreover, his compliancy was only shown after the failure of the first plan, namely to keep in check Serbia's activities by military action.

Most importantly, the belligerent mood began to show itself in Austria in the very first month of the war, after the unexpected and brilliant successes of the Serbs, almost as soon as negotiations had been begun, and by no means from sincere motives. The questions of Lovćen and Valona clearly showed that Vienna's compliancy was, to a large extent, calculated from the first to achieve other ends, and when these were not achieved it all turned into the fury against the Serbs. From now on war was sought and preached on the grounds that Austria-Hungary should take the settlement of the Yugoslav question into its

303 Baernreither, *Fragmente eines politischen Tagebuches*, p. 175.

304 E. Steinitz, *Rings um Sasonow*, Berlin, 1928, p. 47.

305 Hötendorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, II, p. 317.

own hands and work it out in accordance with its own wishes. In this respect, the Hungarians were particularly truculent, for they wanted to make the settlement of the Yugoslav question in a manner unfavourable to themselves impossible. And although it looked almost paradoxical, they came nearest in this respect to the military circles around Baron Hötendorf and Franz Ferdinand. J. Baernreither has recorded that in November 1912, during the session of the Delegations in Budapest, the whole psychological atmosphere was hostile to the Yugoslavs. A former Secretary of State, Molnar, told him without hesitation that it must eventually come to the situation in which the Hungarians would rule in Hungary and the Germans in Austria. Count Czernin, one of Franz Ferdinand's men, was all for war. Acting under the suggestions of Baron Hötendorf, he declared that it was better to go to war now "when the constellation was favourable" for Austria-Hungary than later when it changed, and that it did not matter much that it was a *Va banque* game. Another of Crown Prince's men, Count Clam-Martinic, was also in favour of war. "Serbia must necessarily belong to us or our Serbo-Croats to the Serbs." War was therefore a necessity to settle this question.³⁰⁶ General Krobatin even said openly at various dinner parties that Serbia ought to be annexed "the sooner the better". A "bath of steel" would cure the Monarchy inside and out. To justify Austria's strategic measures against Serbia, Conrad von Hötendorf wrote that Serbia might even attack Austria with her victorious army, or, being mobilized, impose her claims at the conclusion of peace "more forcefully than the Monarchy".³⁰⁷

Meanwhile, Russia constantly advised Serbia to give way, but also increasingly showed the will not to allow any attack upon her and to secure for her, in one form or another, an outlet to the sea. Berlin at first held a very similar point of view to that of Russia. Austria's stance was met with considerable reserve and criticism there, despite all due consideration for her as an ally, as it was considered unnecessarily harsh and one-sided. Berlin therefore recommended the Vienna government not to act alone in Belgrade in the Albanian matter, but together with Italy, so that for very comprehensible reasons it should not incur all the fury and to emphasize as much as possible the collaboration of the Powers of the Triple Alliance. Apart from this, Austria should not herself take any steps against Serbia as long as the war continued. If she declared, together with Italy, that she did not consider a situation created by military occupation definite, but that the Powers would also have to have their say in the matter in accordance with their interests, she would thereby ensure the possibility of influencing matters later on and avoid the danger of having to

306 Baernreither, *Fragmente eines politischen Tagebuches*, pp. 175-6, 178-80, 195.

307 Hötendorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, II, pp. 371, 380-2.

accept the newly-created situation unconditionally. Moreover, German diplomacy considered that Serbia might be given a commercial port in the Adriatic without any hinterland, which could be placed under international control. As for Austrian demand for closer economic relations with Serbia, that is to say for special commercial privileges, Kiderlen-Waechter warned of Italy's reserve in that respect, which was very marked and which excluded the possibility of an Austrian monopoly, and also emphasized that he himself could not agree to such privileges, since they would be detrimental to Germany's interests.³⁰⁸ In the face of German arguments concerning the latter question, Berchtold soon gave in and promised on 20 November that he would abandon that demand.³⁰⁹ That Russia would not agree to Austrian special privileges as well could be expected from the first. Sazonov's statements on that subject left no room for doubt.³¹⁰

But the attitude of Berlin soon changed considerably. On 21 November, Emperor Franz Joseph issued orders that the army in Galicia should be reinforced in view of Russia's attitude and, in the words of the War Minister, General Auffenberg, he was "quite clear as to the possible far-reaching effects of that measure." "This is a more difficult moment than that in 1866", the Emperor said. Two days later, it was ordered that the troops on the Serbian border should be increased to four army corps. The Minister himself said to the German Ambassador: "We shall see how Russia reacts to our measure. If she takes it quietly, we shall have a free hand in regard to Serbia. We need at least half a century of peace in the Monarchy to bring the Yugoslavs to order, and we can only have that peace if the Yugoslav hopes of Russian help are finally removed. Otherwise, the Monarchy will break up." Austria's ill-will against Serbia, therefore, was not aroused by the question of the sea port, but rather by the old dread of Serbia's becoming stronger and the consequent danger for further development of the Yugoslav question. Serbia's port in Albania was only a pretext for an attack, and not the real reason for it. General Auffenberg has written clearly: "The victors were praised, but their successes were secretly cursed, and we did not know how to bring about a check to their advance without being discredited in the eyes of Europe and our own Slav population."³¹¹ To military circles war seemed a vital necessity in order to get the Monarchy out of many difficulties. Believing that war would turn out favourably for themselves, they thought that the prestige of the central authorities would be raised afterwards,

308 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, IV, p. 916; *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, pp. 355-6.

309 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, p. 372.

310 Benckendorff, *Diplomatischen Schriftwechsel*, II, p. 530.

311 Auffenberg, *Aus Österreichs Hohe und Niedergang*, p. 210.

that criticism would be muzzled, and that all centrifugal tendencies would be done away with; the Danubian Monarchy would, as if by magic, solve not only the Yugoslav, but all the other questions. Conrad von Hötzendorf indeed said as much plainly: "The crux of the matter was to smash Serbia, the uncompromising, unyielding and assisted-by-Russia enemy of the Monarchy, and thus safeguard the existence of the state, which was at present gravely threatened. All other questions, such as those of Albania, the port, the Danubian-Adriatic railway, etc., were secondary and derivative phenomena."³¹² The French Consul in Sarajevo, Gabriel Bertrand, saw this very clearly and reported to his government on 8 December that there was an indescribable hatred for the Serbs in Austrian circles, and that it made no difference how much Serbia restrained herself, since they simply wanted her to be humiliated, weakened and annihilated. Any reason for war would serve the purpose, and all those put forward were sheer pretexts; the hardest thing for Austria to bear was Serbia's success and the strengthening of her power and prestige.³¹³

On 22 November, the Chief of the Austrian General Staff, General Schemua, arrived in Berlin to discuss military operations with his German opposite number. A day earlier, the Austrian Crown Prince had also come to Germany, as the Emperor's guest at a shooting party. His visit visibly changed Emperor Wilhelm II's attitude. On 22 November, Count Szögyény reported from Berlin that the Crown Prince had told him his impressions of his conversations with the German Emperor. "Emperor Wilhelm II has assured him that if it were a matter of Austria-Hungary's prestige, he would not be afraid of a world war, and that he would be prepared to go to war with all the three Powers of the Triple Entente. As for Serbia's attitude, the German Emperor used the most severe expressions. His Imperial and Royal Highness emphasized on that occasion that Austria-Hungary could under no circumstances allow that country a port in the Adriatic."³¹⁴

Among the Austrian diplomats, however, there were persons who considered that the attitude of the Viennese central authorities was not in keeping with the interests of the Danubian Monarchy. The attitude of the Austrian Embassy in St. Petersburg was especially pronounced in this respect. On 20 November, the Counselor, Baron Szilassy, even drafted a sort of a political memoir in which he set forth, item by item, the grounds on which he based his opinion that no

³¹² Hötzendorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, II, p. 379.

³¹³ *Documents diplomatiques français*, 3me serie, V, pp. 37-8.

³¹⁴ *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, IV, p. 971. Cf. a telegram from Crown Prince himself, which confirms this. Ibid., p. 979; *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, pp. 372-4. The opinion that Emperor Wilhelm II discouraged Franz Ferdinand with his criticism is, according to this, unfounded. Cf. M. Muret, *L'Archiduc François Ferdinand*, Paris 1932, pp. 238-9.

difficulties should be put in the way of the Serbs. He argued as follows: 1) the harm, both political and commercial, of a Serbian port was problematical, if Serbia and Montenegro received the Sanjak. 2) After becoming stronger, Serbia might free herself of Russian influence and perhaps make an rapprochement with Austria, just like Bulgaria had done after 1879. 3) It was not certain that the strengthening of Slavism and of Russia would necessarily be directed against Austria. In any case, relations would depend not so much on a single port as on friendly attitude towards Serbia in general. 4) In giving way to the Serbs, Austria would not come into conflict with the Balkan Alliance, whereas if she behaved in an unfriendly way she might only strengthen it. 5) The public opinion in Austria-Hungary would not be favourable to any strict measures against Serbia; all the Slavs and many others would be against it. 6) Even a successful war with Russia would be a disaster for Austria, and it was a question whether Austria's present interests were sufficient to justify her disregarding that axiom. 7) The condominium of Austria and Italy in Albania might lead to a conflict. In such condominium one party or the other must sooner or later be ousted. In order to push out Italy, Austria would need Russia's neutrality, and therefore she should not play her false. 8) To call upon Germany for help again would be more than inconvenient, as it would show that Vienna could do nothing without Berlin, even in Belgrade.³¹⁵ The Minister of War, Baron Auffenberg, was also in favour of letting Serbia enter Albania. "When they get into Albania, they will be stuck there for the next thirty years. We know that from our own experience in Bosnia and Herzegovina. And during that time much can be done."³¹⁶

After the visit of the Austrian Crown Prince, Emperor Wilhelm II suddenly began to consider that Austria-Hungary had been challenged, and that it was entitled to start a war. He therefore wanted to find out at once what the attitude of France and Britain would be in the crisis. The official German collection of documents indicates that the Emperor's instructions were not taken up by German diplomacy and that he himself attempted to calm down the Austrian Crown Prince. But the Austrian official records show the opposite, and without ambiguity. Both the Crown Prince and Schemua returned from Berlin fully convinced that Germany would certainly stand by them. It is true, however, that Bethmann-Hollweg and Kiderlen-Waechter, in particular, viewed the matter more reasonably and steadily than the impulsive and inconsistent Emperor, and that they did not allow themselves to be easily shaken by either personal or objective impressions.

315 Szilassy, *Der Untergang der Donau-Monarchie*, pp. 218-9.

316 Auffenberg, *Aus Österreichs Hohe und Niedergang*, p. 214.

The other Great Powers, Britain and France, were in favour of giving the Serbs a small strip of land in northern Albania and of their getting a purely commercial port. This port, together with the corridor, would be neutralized under European guarantee and in no event allowed to be turned into a military base. Poincaré made a formal proposal to that effect to the Austrian Ambassador on 20 November, but it was immediately rejected in Vienna. The Italian government, according to the statement of their Ambassador in Paris, agreed to Serbia's being given a port, perhaps even in Durres, on the condition that the railway leading to it, as well as the port itself, was neutralized.³¹⁷ But seeing Austria's intransigence, the Italian government also abandoned the proposal on 23 November, and even renounced it,³¹⁸ though they were fully aware of the motives behind the Austrian obstinacy. Instead, they proposed on 26 November that San Giovanni, together with Scutari, be handed over to Montenegro,³¹⁹ which could then give Serbia a port in its own territory. But after Montenegro's refusal of the Austrian offers, the Italian government received a negative reply from Vienna on 30 November.³²⁰ The Russian government too, as we have seen, thought at one time of a similar solution for Serbia's outlet to the sea as that proposed by the Italians, but they afterwards changed their mind due to Serbian arguments and adopted the proposals suggested by France and Britain. The Serbs initially demanded the partition of Albania, and when they did not succeed in this, they wanted a very wide strip of Albanian territory leading down to the sea. Austria would permit nothing of the kind. As a middle course between these two opposing views, the Powers of the Triple Entente, which believed that a compromise might be reached, put forward their own proposal, since they were not aware of the motives for Austrian refusal. On 26 November, Emperor Nicholas II interceded personally with the Austrian Ambassador in favour of some such solution.

Russia was sincerely disposed to make concessions. But there was, of course, a limit to that. St. Petersburg therefore informed all the Powers that Russia could not allow Austria simply to dictate to her, however much she desired peace. "We have given the Slav states in the Balkans their independence; our mission is over", Sazonov said, stressing Russia's pacifism. But it was clear that that mission would be revived, if the acquired independence of those states came into question again.³²¹ To make their intervention possible, to secure European

³¹⁷ *Der diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, II, pp. 348, 354.

³¹⁸ *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, IV, p. 989.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 1023.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 1083.

³²¹ Poincaré, *Au service de la France*, II, pp. 397-8.

interest in the Serbian question, and to reduce Serbia's demands to unobjectionable proportions, the Russian government confidentially advised Belgrade on 21 November to reply to Austrian questions as to what Serbia wanted that her claims "might be the subject of discussion between the Powers".³²² In that way, Russia thought that she would save Serbia from the direct pressure of Vienna and that she would, in the eyes of all Europe, confine Austrian claims to less selfish boundaries.

Rome constantly repeated that Serbia should by no means negotiate separately with the Vienna government, apparently because of fear lest Austria could extort from Serbia in such negotiations some special privileges which might be detrimental to Italy's pretensions. "Austria seeks to extort as much as possible from us and Italy is anxious that we should give her as little as possible" the Serbian Minister in Rome rightly observed.³²³ In order to encourage Serbia to remain as firm as possible in her attitude and to have confidence in the final decision of the Great Powers about the issues that concerned her, the Italian Charge d'Affaires brought a message to Belgrade from San Giuliano on 24 November to the effect that he would try "when military operations have been concluded and the storm in Vienna subsided" to obtain a free outlet to the sea for Serbia, and that in the Serbian territory.

Under the pressure of these messages from St. Petersburg and Rome, Serbia accepted Russia's proposal on 27 (14) November. "We do not want to enter alone into the question of our outlet to the sea, but to leave it to the Great Powers when the war is over and peace concluded. We shall not in the end be opposed to the creation of an autonomous Albania, if Europe is agreed on that point. But we think that an autonomous Albania will not make for the peace which is necessary both to the Balkan allied states and to the whole of Europe. Our wish is to have an outlet to the coast and to possess a port in our own territory – but we leave that question to the Great Powers for settlement when they settle all the other questions which will arise after the conclusion of peace." Such were the words written by Pašić to be delivered to St. Petersburg. This meant giving way. The decision of the Great Powers, in spite of all sympathies for Serbia, would surely involve concessions. Nobody wanted to risk a world war for the sake of this question, and Austria would certainly provoke one, if her views were not taken into consideration. Serbia's hopes that Vienna

322 Popović Ministarstvu inostranih dela, Petrograd, 21. 11. 1912, Pov. Br. 4197, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. V, sv. 3, p. 383; *Der diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, II, pp. 353-4.

323 Mihailović Pašiću, Rim, 23. 11. 1912, Pov. Br. 4234, in: Vojvodić, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. V, sv. 3, pp. 397-398.

might nevertheless give way out of consideration for Russia or that Russia, supported perhaps by Italy, would defend her cause more vigorously proved to be unfounded.

Austria not only remained completely unyielding but also changed completely her attitude from mid-November onwards. After the visit of Crown Prince Franz Ferdinand and the Chief of the General Staff to Germany, she became much more determined. Believing in Germany's support, she now deliberately set out to provoke a war with Serbia, even at the risk of more serious complications. To justify this, Count Berchtold wrote to Berlin on 28 November that during the last three and a half years Serbia had twice "attacked" Austria's interests, that "with her immoderate stance she was challenging her and in fact threatening her with an armed attack." On the basis of such an untruthful and fundamentally incorrect statement, he tried to justify Austria-Hungary's decision not only to oppose Serbia's free outlet to the sea, but also to submit the question of the new Serbian borders in general to revision. War would be provoked, regardless of the fact that Serbia had given no concrete grounds for it. Austria's compliancy at the beginning of the war had arisen from her supposition that Serbia would consent to closer relations, both economic and political, with the neighbouring Monarchy, and it had actually been planned, although the expression is a strong one to use, as something of a diplomatic blackmail: having failed to prevent Serbia's advance, Austria would agree to the aggrandizement of Serbia, if in return Serbia came completely over to her side and paid tribute to Austrian interests for her successes. As that had proved impossible not only on account of Serbia's reserved attitude and because the Powers of the Triple Entente saw through Vienna's intentions, but also because even Italy and Germany showed signs of distrusting them, Vienna now wanted to settle the matter more directly. It therefore sought to secure themselves against Serbia in a different way, at first by means of some kind of guarantees, such as, for instance, complete demobilization, certain rectifications of the border, securing the commercial road to Salonica, etc. Berchtold intended to follow up the demand for these guarantees with some kind of an ultimatum.³²⁴ But Austria's own ally, San Giuliano, rightly said that the guar-

324 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, IV, pp. 1048-1051. The falsity of Berchtold's statement is clear from the report of the Austro-Hungarian Minister in Belgrade sent on 29 November. Ibid., p. 1066. "It looks almost incredible that in so critical a moment as the present one, and in face of our military preparations, of which they are by no means ignorant here, Serbia is quietly watching the development of events, continuing unchecked her conquering march to the Adriatic, and not even thinking seriously of protecting her northern border with troops." The French Ambassador in Vienna, Dumaine, noted on 11 December, on the strength of completely fabricated information that he had gathered there, even

antees which Austria-Hungary meant to ask from Serbia could actually only be obtained at the expense of Serbia's independence, either political or economic.³²⁵ And the manner in which Berchtold meant to make his demands, as well as the demands themselves (e.g. that for demobilization), were of such a nature as to present a sheer attack, rare in the history of modern Europe, and would bring Austria into a much worse situation than had been the case during the annexation.

The bellicose Baron Hötendorf, whose opinion as to the settlement of the Serbian question has already been examined more than once, emerged on the scene again at the end of November as an important agent. In late 1911, he had been withdrawn from the post of Chief of the General Staff, because he had come into conflict with Aehrenthal for demanding severe measures against Italy at the time of her war with Turkey. His new public appearance meant that the competent quarters were returning to his ideas and projects, and gave him the opportunities to further their realization. That was felt very soon. On 25 November, he prepared a memorandum in which he asked that Russia should first be attacked, if she defended Serbia, and to remain on the defensive on the Serbian front. Just like Schemua, he considered that Russia was "the root of the evil".³²⁶ Then, on 29 November, he arrived in Bucharest on a special mission, with a letter from the Emperor, to conduct important negotiations. The same day Berchtold wrote to the Austrian Ambassador in Berlin that "in further development of matters" it was possible that a conflagration might break out between the Danubian Monarchy and Russia, and he gave him instructions what to do in the event of his recall or of a war.³²⁷ Count Szapáry wrote from the Ministry on the same day to the same person that Austria was prepared to go to war over the question of Serbia's port, obviously without consideration for all the grave consequences which might ensue from it in Europe.³²⁸ In order to show the world that Austria was prepared for anything, Baron Hötendorf was again appointed Chief of the General Staff on 12 December. His appointment made a grave impression in Italy and in all other quarters it was considered a preliminary to war. Sazonov plainly said as much to the Austrian Ambassador.

Austria would undoubtedly have embarked on a war, had she not been restrained at the last minute by German diplomacy. Seeing the danger of an

at the Ballplatz, that Serbia was working through *chetniks* for an uprising in Bosnia. See *Documents diplomatiques français*. 3me série. V, p. 55.

325 Ibid., V, p. 92. Sazonov protested rather violently to the German Ambassador about similar, very indefinite Austrian statements that only obscured the situation. Ibid., p. 115.

326 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, pp. 426-7.

327 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, IV, pp. 1072-4.

328 Ibid., p. 1075.

imminent conflict in which Russia and other Powers with her would immediately have been involved, Kiderlen-Waechter felt it necessary to save the peace. He declared that the question of Turkey's break-up was a matter for discussion between all the Powers and that no other question should be treated in advance in this connection.³²⁹ Austria should act in such a manner as not to appear as an aggressor, as she would certainly have been considered in this case. Thus he seized Austria's out-stretched arm and dissuaded her from resorting to a unilateral act of provocation. In Austria, this attitude of Germany caused profound surprise in all the leading circles. It seemed to them that they had already been assured in Berlin. Berchtold therefore said with distress to the German Ambassador that Germany's attitude had prevented him from settling score with Serbia before the final settlement of the whole question, and that it had left him with the impression that Austria was isolated in her policy. Franz Ferdinand was not a little surprised, as Kiderlen-Waechter's attitude was not in accordance with the assurances he had received only a few days earlier from another and much higher place in Berlin.³³⁰ To be true, Bethmann-Hollweg and Kiderlen-Waechter insisted in the parliament on 28 November and 2 December that Germany was prepared to defend the vital interests of its ally, stressing the necessity of that alliance from the German point of view, and, as we shall see, they sometimes went even further in that direction than Austria's "vital interests" required, but their present reserve resulted from political prudence and the hesitation to provoke a world war, and it was likely to have a moderating effect in many circles in Vienna. On the other hand, by insisting that it could not allow an attack of any Power on Austria-Hungary when its vital interests were at stake, Germany intended to warn Russia. That it did this somewhat tactlessly and considered it necessary to lay too much emphasis on its military loyalty was a product of the German character and the military spirit that imbued the entire German diplomacy. As for the Serbs, Kiderlen-Waechter plainly said before the Council of the Alliance on 28 November that if they did not submit to the decision of Europe, Austria would forcibly prevent their remaining on the Albanian coast.³³¹ However, the most important thing in the situation was the fact that Germany this time prevented a serious conflict and saved the peace at the most critical moment by insisting that the final decision on the points of contention be left for consideration before the forum of Europe.

329 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, pp. 424-5; Jackh, *Kiderlen-Waechter*, II, pp. 191-2. "Mit Wien hab'ich wieder meine liebe Not," he wrote in his diary on this occasion.

330 *Ibid.*, p. 429.

331 Jackh, *Kiderlen-Waechter*, II, p. 196.

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In order to avoid the danger of separate negotiations and settlements, which, with the concentration of troops on the borders, threatened with serious conflicts, to give an opportunity to all the parties concerned to state publicly how much their interests had suffered as a result of the war and to put forward and explain their claims, to meet half way those who had said that they could not accept the newly-created situation in the Balkans without their say, Sir Edward Grey proposed on 29 November a conference in which the representatives of all the Great Powers would meet.³³² It is interesting to note that opposition to the very idea of a conference came again, as at the time of the Annexation Crisis, from Austria and Germany. Austria undoubtedly wanted to conduct separate negotiations and make separate settlements with the Balkan states, considering that she would be less free openly to put forward demands of the kind she made on Serbia and Montenegro before a European tribunal. At a conference she would be a Power like any other, while in her negotiations with the Balkan states she would be, as a powerful and threatening neighbour, in a position to extort special benefits for herself. Germany, on the other hand, was always afraid of remaining isolated with Austria at the conference, for it was perfectly aware of the opposition of interests between Austria and Italy in Balkan questions and their future development. Germany therefore preferred European cooperation through the exchanges between the cabinets.

Sir Edward Grey explained his proposal by fear lest the question of Serbia's outlet to the sea should lead to a conflict not only between Austria-Hungary and Serbia, but also between Austria-Hungary and Russia.³³³ According to his proposal, the conference would take place in Paris, but Austria and Germany, which finally agreed to the conference after having realized that it was the best way out, proposed London because the Ambassadors Izvolsky and Tittoni were there. This was accepted. Germany agreed to the conference mainly in order not to repeat its behaviour from 1908-9 and again create the impression that it wanted, together with Austria, to impose on Russia a solution that was disagreeable to her. Austria gave in because of Germany's attitude. However, as a measure of precaution, she put through the provision that the representatives

332 *Mémoires de Edward Grey*, p. 247. A first proposal had already been made by Poincaré on 15 October. See Poincaré, *Au service de la France*, II, pp. 256, 346, etc.; *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, pp. 400-1.

333 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from London, 17 November. See *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, IV, p. 1071.

present at the conference could make no binding decisions, but must subsequently refer all proposals to their governments.

In order not to be outvoted at the conference, Austria-Hungary wanted to make itself secure beforehand. On 2 December, Berchtold proposed to the Italian government to make a joint declaration in London to the effect that their delegates would take no part in any discussion of the territorial extension of Serbia to the Adriatic or of Serbia's obtaining a port on the Adriatic coast; they could only agree to a discussion as to how Serbia should be assured of an economic outlet.³³⁴ But the Italian government was at first unwilling to associate themselves with so uncompromising a statement and demanded for their part that the same attitude should be taken towards Greece as towards Serbia and Montenegro in respect of Albania.³³⁵ Meanwhile, Germany agreed to Austria's proposal.³³⁶ On 6 December, these two Powers informed London of their reservations and thereby created a bad impression on Grey and all others concerned. If all the Powers went to the conference with some predetermined reservation, the discussion would be futile, as well as the convocation of the conference.³³⁷ Finally, on 11 December, Italy also joined its allies, abandoning the course it had taken earlier.

Austria-Hungary no longer wanted to negotiate with Serbia, partly because of the failure of its first offers and in order not to expose itself to the humiliation of fresh refusals, partly because it no longer hoped for success in the negotiations about economic questions after Italy and Germany had adopted such a determined attitude. However, after seeing Austria's hostility, Serbia was now prepared to come to terms. In the name of the Serbian government, Jovan M. Jovanović proposed to the Austrian Minister that the Danubian Monarchy should present its demands point by point and that Serbia should answer them in the same way,³³⁸ and to move from general and indefinite statements about "vital interests" and "important economic interests" to concrete questions. But Vienna did not at first agree because, as Berchtold admitted to the German Ambassador,³³⁹ they were not yet clear as to what exactly they should demand, on the one hand, and because the military view gained ground, on the other, that Serbia should be driven into submission by diplomatic means and pressure, or even by force of arms, and rendered harmless rather than bargained with. Many non-political circles in the Monarchy

334 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, V, p. 13.

335 *Ibid.*, pp. 34, 41-2.

336 *Ibid.*, p. 76.

337 *Ibid.*, p. 45; *Documents diplomatiques français*, 3me série, V, p. 7.

338 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, V, pp. 68-9.

339 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, p. 479.

shared Berchtold's view. At the end of November, the President of the Austrian Chamber of Commerce in Vienna would not even receive representatives of the Serbian Chamber, Kosta Risnić and Milorad Pavlović, who had come to negotiate about commercial questions and to try to obtain some kind of commercial agreement.

At the end of the first week in December, news came to Belgrade that Austria was preparing to present an ultimatum to Serbia in the very near future, on 15 December. On 7 December, Emperor Franz Joseph did indeed sign an order that the 15th and 16th Corps should fully prepare for war, while the 4th, 7th, 12th and 13th Corps were also getting ready.³⁴⁰ The situation on the border seemed as if both countries were on the eve of a war. On 16 December, the Austrian Minister in Belgrade wrote of the situation as follows: "Zemun is a veritable military camp, only the military have any say there, the mail is carried and its contents examined by officers, traffic in this direction is almost completely broken, merchants from this side are often arrested and handed over to the military authorities as soon as they step on our territory, which then decide whether they should be imprisoned or released; our searchlights disturb the civilian population at night, our patrol boats circulate quite close to the Serbian shore."³⁴¹ The French Minister reported the same to his government on 18 December, emphasizing that the night alarms and military marches caused nervousness, while the deliberate aiming at and illuminating the Royal Palace by Austrian searchlights certainly showed extreme lack of consideration.³⁴² At the same time, Austria withdrew all her commercial shipping from the Serbian ports on the Danube and sent a message to Romania to do the same.³⁴³ Austria prepared for war and no longer concealed that fact; the Austrian Minister in Bucharest, Fürstenberg, showed his bellicose mood without hesitation.³⁴⁴ Baron Szilassy has recorded that many of the officials in the Foreign Ministry in Vienna were unusually excited and crying out for war.³⁴⁵

Seeing all these preparations and troubled by the news of an ultimatum, the Serbian government addressed themselves to St. Petersburg, London and Paris, and asked what to do in case it was presented with an ultimatum. On 10 December, Sazonov officially enquired of Vienna about this matter, expressing his hope that Austria would not take such a step now that the

340 For rumours and reports in Paris on Austria's intentions as regard Serbia, cf. *Der diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, II, p. 384; *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, p. 463.

341 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, V, p. 136.

342 *Documents diplomatiques français*, 3me. série, V, p. 108.

343 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIV, p. 77.

344 A. Marghiloman, *Note politique*, Bucharest 1927, I, p. 137.

345 Szilassy, *Der Untergang der Donau-Monarchie*, p. 225.

London Conference was just about to start its work.³⁴⁶ Next day, a warning came to Vienna from Berlin that the Austrian press took too dim a view, that it published “alarming reports which did not at all correspond to the facts” and that it was very dangerous to insist too much on the danger of war”.³⁴⁷ The Austrian Ambassador in Paris, Count Szécsen, reported to Vienna that Poincaré had told him openly that neither he nor the public could understand that need for Austrian military measures on the southern border when Serbia was giving way and the conference was about to begin.³⁴⁸ The reproaches of the Italian government were no less frank. The friendly Powers recommended to Serbia that she should address them all the statement, as she had informed Russia, that she would leave the whole dispute concerning her port to the decision of all the Powers, thus making it not a bone of contention between Serbia and Austria, but rather a European question.³⁴⁹ In doing so, it was generally considered, she would avert an ultimatum. Serbia agreed to this, in order not to make the position critical by her refusal and hoping she would be credited for that in some other way. It also seemed to her more dignified to bow, as far as necessary, to the will of Europe than to the will of Austria-Hungary alone. On 13 December, the text of the Serbian declaration referring to the Powers a decision concerning Serbia’s remaining on the coast³⁵⁰ was dispatched to all the Great Powers.

As we have seen, many quarters in Vienna were inclined to harsh measures. As a pretext, it was thought of taking advantage of the Consular affair previously referred to. The press therefore wrote about the Prochaska incident with calculated irritation and would not stop even when official quarters began to receive news that many of the rumours issued were false. When Baron Szillassy, himself an official in the Foreign Ministry, pointed this out to the Chief of the official Press Bureau, the latter defended himself by saying that he could not deny the reports, because the whole country wanted a war.³⁵¹ However, Sazonov rightly said on 11 December that this was not as important as other and larger questions on the agenda, about which discussion would begin in

346 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, V, p. 88.

347 *Ibid.*, p. 91; *Sbornik diplomaticheskikh dokumentov*, p. 40.

348 *Ibid.*, p. 92.

349 The Russian government at first proposed that Serbia should answer that she was leaving that question to the Powers of the Triple Entente. The other recommendation emanated from France. Poincaré, *Au service de la France*, II, pp. 378-9; *Documents diplomatiques français*, 3me série, V, pp. 40, 55; *Der diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, II, p. 381-2.

350 On the question of Serbia’s outlet to the sea, see the work of R. Giesche, *Der Serbische Zugang zum Meer und die europäische Krise*, 1912, Stuttgart 1932.

351 *Der Untergang der Donau-Monarchie*, p. 230.

a few days in London. He therefore personally requested the Vienna government kindly to show a little more patience in that matter.³⁵² Seeing the reception accorded to his messages in Berlin, Rome and elsewhere, even Berchtold started to deny any intention of an ultimatum. He was able to give way more easily as the Austrian investigation established, in the words of Ugron, the Austrian Minister in Belgrade, that the affair had been "very much exaggerated" and that the fault lay not only with the Serbian military authorities, but also with the Consuls themselves, who had not shown sufficient impartiality and tact.³⁵³ Even the Catholic Bishop of Albania said some "very unfavourable things" about Prochaska in Vienna and declared that he had no reputation and was to blame for the affair.³⁵⁴ In a conversation with the German Ambassador, Berchtold admitted that Consul Edel's investigation brought out "nothing very burdensome for the Serbs".³⁵⁵ In a report to his government, Tschirschky then wondered why the Vienna government had calmly allowed the most alarming reports to circulate for weeks in the press.³⁵⁶ An Austrian aristocrat wrote from Berlin, when the whole matter had been settled, that general opinion was against Austria: "Great indignation is felt everywhere at the way we acted in the Prochaska affair; it seems incomprehensible everywhere that the fury had been allowed to reach such an extent in the whole Monarchy".³⁵⁷ The Viennese official Press Bureau was especially responsible, since it had learnt the truth quickly, when B. Lončarević, the official correspondent of the Press Bureau, had informed them from Belgrade, but they deliberately refused to take account of it.³⁵⁸ Finally, when Serbia had given way on the main question of her free port, it was indeed unjustifiable to provoke a conflict with her over the Consular affair, even if it had been more serious than the investigation established.

The war party in Austria-Hungary, and even its diplomats, argued that a reckoning with Serbia was also necessary, apart from the above considerations, because they could not afford expensive mobilizations every three or four years and expose the country to all sorts of alarms because of Serbian

352 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, V, p. 94.

353 *Ibid.*, p. 110.

354 Baernreither, *Fragmente eines politischen Tagebuches*, p. 190. Only the historian, H. Friedjung, who is already known to us, asserted that Serbia had tried to provoke Austria to resort to more vigorous measures with the Prochaska affair. The Serbian military party, he wrote, wanted a clash with Austria in order to turn the victorious Balkan armies against her. *Das Zeitalter des Imperialismus*, III, p. 225.

355 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, p. 461.

356 *Ibid.*, p. 475.

357 Baernreither, *Fragmente eines politischen Tagebuches*, p. 229.

358 *Yugoslaviens Entstehung*, p. 461.

provocation. If any accusation was unfounded, it was surely this. Could Serbia, after having embarked with all her forces upon a war with Turkey, present any military danger to the Dual Monarchy, such that the latter was forced to mobilize because of it? Did Serbia exercise pressure on Austria in the matter of her outlet to the sea, or was it vice versa? Karl Tschuppik put it very well and correctly: "Austria had declared that she wanted nothing in the Balkans, but for two years she kept her hand on her sword, constantly asking for something".³⁵⁹ If Austria had to ask for certain economic guarantees from Serbia, she did not have to ask for them with a sword in her hand. "One does not mobilize in order to conclude a commercial treaty", R. Poincaré pointed out with good reason.³⁶⁰ Even Mérey, the Austrian Ambassador in Rome, while informing his government of the mood prevailing there, wrote that the disproportion between what was officially demanded and Austria's military preparations justified the conclusions of those who mistrusted the Dual Monarchy. "We look like a man who arms to the teeth to go rabbit-shooting".³⁶¹

When forced to state clearly what he wanted from Serbia, Berchtold was often in a great difficulty. His answers were too general and indefinite and left even the German diplomats with the impression of hastiness. Austria knew what she wanted: to prevent the strengthening of Serbia, i.e. to minimize her successes in order to reduce her prestige with the Yugoslavs and so weaken their self-confidence and make herself safe in the future, i.e. to create the conditions necessary for the settlement of the Yugoslav question to her own liking. But it was not easy to appear before Europe with such arguments, which were essentially aggressive. Serbia had by no means directly violated Austria's interests, and insofar as Vienna considered that she had violated them indirectly, Serbia had shown herself amenable to reason in this respect as well. When Berlin wanted to know what Austria's demands were, Berchtold sent a memorandum which was handed to the Foreign Ministry on 4 December and the contents of which were forwarded indirectly to other governments. Austria demanded: 1) the guarantees that Serbia would live with her "in peace and amity"; 2) that Serbia should definitely renounce her conquests in Albania and on the Littoral and recognize the situation to be established in Albania; 3) the safeguarding of the Monarchy's interests in Salonica pertaining to commerce and communications.³⁶² On the second point, Austria's demands were satisfied; on the third, she did not have to deal with Serbia alone, but with the other Balkan states and

359 *Franz Joseph I*, Leipzig 1928, p. 594.

360 Poincaré, *Au service de la France*, II, p. 395.

361 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, V, p. 277.

362 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIV, p. 16.

the Great Powers as well; and on the first point, which was the most important one, all the Powers found Austria's demand quite indefinite. What guarantees, it was asked, could be demanded of an independent state, which were binding and at the same time did not interfere with its independence? Furthermore, why should only one party give guarantees? Finally, there could be no great advantage in a forced friendship, and if no better means of reconciliation could be found, that would be of no avail. Sazonov particularly reminded the Berlin government that any attempt to demand such guarantees humiliating for Serbia would be the worst road to an agreement and for the future. It was necessary to proceed gradually. The wounds that the Danubian Monarchy had inflicted on Serbia had to be allowed to heal. "To try to demand guarantees from Serbia now would mean heaping new and unbearable indignities on that country".³⁶³

It is interesting and important that Count Berchtold, a man who was very susceptible to influences, constantly avoided entering into any more intimate negotiations with Serbia, although Belgrade suggested this again with a view to coming to some agreement.

At the most critical time, on 12 December, T. Masaryk had an interview with Berchtold. He had just returned from Belgrade, where he had gone at the suggestion of some of his German colleagues from the parliament in order to obtain first-hand information about the state of feeling there. Pašić sent special messages through him to the Vienna government. Serbia wanted, he said, to live in peace and amity with Austria-Hungary; she only asked that her political and economic independence was maintained. From a commercial point of view, Serbia was willing to meet the wishes of her powerful neighbor, to place with Austria-Hungary more important contracts and even to grant it preferential treatment over other Powers upon the expiry of the existing treaties in 1917. Serbia would also meet Austria's wishes in the matter of railways. But to have her economic independence, he repeated the well-known wish, Serbia needed a free outlet to the sea. The Serbian government would agree to give all guarantees that a port should remain purely commercial and that it should never serve as a naval base for any foreign fleet. Pašić also offered to go to Vienna himself and reiterate his messages and wishes. But Berchtold now took the view that this personal offer was unnecessary, for he had already entered into negotiations with other Powers and the Serbian question would be discussed at the London Conference.³⁶⁴ He also refused to receive Dr. Jovan Cvijić, a well-

363 Ibid., p. 47.

364 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, V, pp. 107-8; Baernreither, *Fragmente eines politischen Tagebuches*, pp. 182-4.

known Serbian geographer and scholar, who had come to Vienna in order to offer some expert information and an assurance of the best intentions of the Serbian government. These last attempts of the Serbian government to save their port were thus unsuccessful, but they showed that Serbia's present attitude could not be deemed provocative and that Belgrade did not consider war to be the only method for mutual explanation.

While Serbia was seeking to come to an agreement by direct means, Russia remained firmly opposed to that. She feared further complications due to the possibility that Austria might find in these uncontrolled negotiations another reason for alarm or for exerting greater pressure. It was not at all desirable that Austria should eschew the collaboration of European Powers. France was also dissatisfied with Serbia's attempt to negotiate separately. She feared lest Serbia, in giving way to Austria in commercial questions, should sacrifice some French interests at a time when France supported Serbia.³⁶⁵

The convocation of the London Conference of Ambassadors was an enormous service to the cause of peace. In the course of the mutual explanations, under something of a joint control, many ambitions were moderated, much asperity softened, and the means of conciliation found. The idea that certain points at issue might be settled without resort to force of arms increasingly gained ground. It even gradually took hold of certain Austro-Hungarian diplomats who had hitherto been rather bellicose. On 14 December, Berchtold rejected Hötendorf's proposal that the sale of food to the Serbian Army in Albania be prohibited and that the Austrian fleet patrol the Albanian shore; and on 24 December the Ministerial Council in Vienna rejected the petition of the Governor of Bosnia and Herzegovina, General Potiorek, and military circles that the 15th and 16th Corps should be fully mobilized, and a negative attitude was adopted towards their purely aggressive intentions.³⁶⁶ The Consular question, which had aroused so much excitement, was settled at the same time in an amicable fashion. On 19 December, Austria-Hungary asked that the Serbian government should express regret for the irregular conduct of the military in Prizren and Mitrovica, and that the army, that is to say a company of soldiers led by an officer, should salute the Austrian flag when it was hoisted at the Consulates in those places. The Serbian government at once agreed to this in principle. Pašić had already expressed regret on his own initiative, even before the Austrian statement, while the flag was going to be honoured after certain formalities had been settled.

365 *Documents diplomatiques français*, 3me série, V, p. 87.

366 *Ibid.*, pp. 123-4; 238-9. Cf. also pp. 341-2.

Austria-Hungary came to the conference bound in advance only by its own decision in the matter of a Serbian port. Otherwise, its representatives had every possibility for maneuvering. Viennese diplomacy was especially prepared to meet the wishes of Bulgaria and Greece, especially the former. Austria wanted to win that Power over to her side at all costs, and she had no small success in that direction. The Bulgarian Exarch had informed the Austrian Ambassador in Constantinople that his compatriots desired Austria's help in order to obtain the region of Adrianople and Kirkilis during the negotiations, i.e. the line from Midia along the rivers Ergena and Maritza. In return for this service, they would help Austria against the Serbs: "there are many areas with the mixed or even purely Serbian population which would be a good acquisition for Bulgaria".³⁶⁷ In the case of Albania, Viennese diplomacy sought to secure for that country as extensive borders as possible, largely at the expense of the Serbs. In his instructions to the Austrian Ambassador in London on 15 December, Berchtold said that the towns of Peć, Prizren and Ohrid should be treated as objects of compensation and their union with Albania defended as long as possible, although he was fully aware how important these towns had been in Serbian history and how the thought of their possible allotment to Albania would make for bad blood and arouse protests. On the other hand, he thought of helping Serbia in the east and south to bring her, as he admitted, into conflict with Bulgaria and thus break up the Balkan Alliance. On 17 December, he sent this message to Ugron, expressing the wish that he should start separate negotiations with Serbia on that basis and about some other questions either through the new Serbian Minister, Jovan M. Jovanović, or some important Serbian statesman who would come to Vienna for that purpose as an emissary of the government.³⁶⁸

Seeing Austria's attitude, Russia herself proposed, through the intermediary of Sir Edward Grey, that the new Albanian state should border on Montenegro in the north. The question of a Serbian corridor along the northern Albanian border was thus dropped as early as 17 December. By giving way in this important question, Sazonov wanted to show at once his desire for a general agreement; he wanted, as he said himself, to deprive the whole question of its air of Serbo-Austrian or even Austro-Russian dispute.³⁶⁹ The Ambassadors agreed on the same day in principle on the matter of a Serbian port, and again on the basis of the Russian proposal that Serbia should be assured of a commercial outlet in a free and neutral Albanian port, to which an access would be

367 Ibid., p. 124.

368 Ibid., p. 144.

369 Ibid., p. 52.

provided by an international railway under European control and guarded by a special international gendarmerie. Serbia would have there a free transit for all her trade, and even for armaments.³⁷⁰ On 20 December, Russia made further proposal that Serbia should have the right to choose the route of the railway and its terminal port and to share in the international control of both the line and the port. Serbia would be guaranteed the freedom to choose the port and trace the railway in spite of any difficulties that the new Albanian government might raise.³⁷¹ The Serbian delegation declared through Grey that Serbia would abide by the decision of the Powers, but Count Berchtold considered that the rights of Albania were considerably constrained³⁷² and he took steps to reduce the principal benefits resulting from this decision. Sir Edward Grey was satisfied with the attitude of Serbia in the matter of a port and he asked that Austria, too, give evidence of her friendly intentions after Serbia had yielded.³⁷³

Having achieved complete success in this matter, Austria-Hungary proceeded further with its attempts against the Serbs. On 19 December, Berchtold authorized the Austrian Ambassador in London, Count Mensdorff, to propose to the conference a map of Albania that would include Peć, Prizren and Ohrid. As for Ohrid, Mensdorff might be more yielding and reassure Dr. Danev in that respect, for Vienna deemed at that time that the town would belong to the Bulgarians.³⁷⁴ That this Austrian proposal advanced on 20 December made a grave impression on the conference was quite understandable. Not only the

370 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, V, p. 148; Benckendorff, *Diplomatischen Schriftwechsel*, II, pp. 538-41; *Documents diplomatiques français*, 3me série, V, pp. 116-7.

371 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, V, p. 183-4; Benckendorff, *Diplomatischen Schriftwechsel*, II, pp. 552-3.

372 *Ibid.*, pp. 170, 226-7.

373 *Ibid.*, p. 172. Cf. the French point of view, *Documents diplomatiques français*, 3me série, V, pp. 102-3. In June 1913, after protracted negotiations, the Russian and Austrian Ambassadors in London drew up an agreement in principle about the Serbian port and railway. 1) The port was to be neutral and unfortified. 2) The railway was to be international, with free transit. In its construction, Serbia and Albania would take part together with the six Great Powers and they would also have a share in its management. 3) A Commission that consisted of representatives of all the eight states, on the model of the Suez Canal Commission, would exercise control. The line would be guarded by officials of the Albanian security forces, under the control of the European Powers. 4) The port might be used for the export of armaments and munitions, but in the event of a war the belligerent states would be free to search and seize vessels with such cargoes before they entered the port itself. See *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VI, p. 758; *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIV, p. 178.

374 *Ibid.*, p. 169. Danev said that Berchtold wished to include even Bitolj in Albania. See Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from London, 2 December, conf. no. 7. Cf. Girginov, *Narodata katastrofa*, p. 77.

Russian, but also the Italian Ambassador opposed it. The situation was made worse by the fact that Austria-Hungary was insistent in its demand to allot Scutari to Albania in its desire to punish Montenegro for refusing the offers made to it.

On 21 December, Pašić informed the Austrian Minister that the Serbian government were prepared to yield in the question of their free port. "We are making a great sacrifice", he said, requesting that Austria showed her goodwill towards Serbia in the delimitation of the new territories.³⁷⁵ The German Ambassador in London, Prince Lichnowsky, also recommended to his Austrian colleague to be more amenable towards Serbia now that the Serbs had yielded in the question of the port, both because of Serbia and Russia, and more especially, because of Britain, whose representative had done much to induce Russia and Serbia to give way.³⁷⁶

8

In Russia, the indignation against Austria-Hungary increasingly gained ground in the course of 1912-13. Russia yielded in front of the whole world, in the question of Serbia's free port. In the Scutari question, the settlement of which involved no benefit for Austria's bugbear Serbia, but rather for Montenegro, Russia sought in vain for more consideration from the Vienna government. Russia was also annoyed by the concentration of troops on Serbia's and on her own border, as well as by the increased Austrian agitation in Russia herself to incite an uprising of the Poles and Ukrainians, the "Imperial and Royal insurrection", as Dr. Baernreither, formerly Austrian Cabinet Minister, ironically termed it. The maintenance of troops on the border might indeed have been justified, although not easily, before the London Conference started. After the opening of the conference, which morally bound all the states concerned to collaborate in the search for an agreement, this piling of troops could be interpreted only as an act of ill will. The army concentration on the Austrian borders assumed such proportions in December and it was so open that it even began to alarm the people. Public opinion in Russia was, Sazonov said, so excited that he was afraid whether he would be able to retain control over the events.³⁷⁷ Sazonov several times drew attention of the Austrian government to the impropriety of these military measures, especially when the international conference was already deliberating. Austria's statement that her extraordinary

375 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, V, pp. 193-5.

376 *Ibid.*, p. 202. Cf. Benckendorff, *Diplomatischen Schriftwechsel*, II, pp. 511-3.

377 Sazonov, *Les années fatales*, p. 84.

military measures were necessary as long as there was a difference of opinion between the Ambassadors, and that they represented a sort of warning, as well as an assurance that Austrian interest in the questions under discussion was not lessening, called for an understandable protest. On 26 December, Sazonov informed Grey that this statement was “infringing on the honour of all the states taking part in the discussions” and that the question of the Albanian border should not be taken up before Austria had started to disarm.³⁷⁸ He said to the Austrian Ambassador that Austria’s action had given him the impression that she had come to the conference with her sword girded on, always ready to use it if any of her wishes were not met.³⁷⁹

To justify the continued maintenance of troops on the border, Berchtold said that he must await the results of the London discussions in order to be sure whether their conclusions would be carried out. He was most doubtful of Serbia’s willingness to withdraw her army from Albania.³⁸⁰ He arbitrarily assumed the part of a controlling officer on behalf of the London Conference, to which nobody had authorized him. If it proved necessary to impose any sanctions because of the non-execution of the decisions made by the Great Powers, it was for the latter to determine such sanctions and not for Austria alone. Her partial mobilization was and remained, therefore, only a form of constant pressure on the Balkan states and on the Great Powers. Russia even considered that these measures were directed against her alone. For that reason, General Tatishchev, who was attached to Emperor Wilhelm II, informed von Moltke, the Chief of the General Staff, and Plessen, the General-Adjutant, on 1 January 1913, that his government had suggested to Vienna to demobilize the Austrian troops on the Russian borders and that, if this were not done, they would consider the possibility of mobilizing the Kiev military district. Both Generals pointed out to Tatishchev that in the event of a conflict, Germany would at once stand by its ally.³⁸¹ Tatishchev communicated the same message to Emperor Wilhelm II, on behalf of Emperor Nicholas II, but the former’s reply was much more reserved and he expressed his hope that an agreement would be possible. The message nevertheless had its effect, for after it Bethmann-Hollweg drew attention of the Austrian Ambassador to

378 *Der diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, II, pp. 406-7; Benckendorff, *Diplomatischen Schriftwechsel*, II, pp. 560-3; *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, V, p. 237.

379 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, V, p. 247.

380 *Ibid.*, p. 253. The Austrian Ambassador in Paris even spoke as if keeping the Austrian army mobilized on the borders was a kind of service to the Serbian government, which without that would not be masters of their own too powerful army. See *Documents diplomatiques français*, V, p. 166.

381 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIV, pp. 117-8.

the seriousness of Russian views and to the difficulties that might arise from Austria's mobilization.³⁸²

To show that Serbia would respect the will of the Great Powers and to relieve the general situation, Pašić informed the Austrian Minister on 4 January 1913 that the Serbs would withdraw from the Albanian coast as soon as the peace was concluded;³⁸³ the same statement he repeated to the Great Powers. Sir Edward Grey communicated it officially to the London Conference of Ambassadors on 9 January. This was considered enough to pacify Austria; if after that she still thought of military measures, the danger of a general conflict would be much closer. On 9 January, Sazonov told the German Ambassador that Russia would protect Serbia from any "écrasement". The Austrian newspapers had written before the war that Austria would "zerquetschen" Serbia – these foreign expressions were used by Sazonov himself – and in view of that, Russia had increased her army at the beginning of the war, but not so much as Austria did now.³⁸⁴ Austria's intransigence and reluctance to reduce her army to its normal size gave rise to all sorts of interpretations in Russia. It was considered that Austria was doggedly maintaining her point of view, because she intended to make the whole Serbian nation dependent on her will and to turn Albania into an Austrian protectorate. Emperor Nicholas II perceived Austria's behaviour as a personal slight.³⁸⁵ Sazonov therefore definitely announced to the Austrian Charge d'Affaires on 24 January that Russia could not yield any further,³⁸⁶ and he advised the German Charge d'Affaires that the Vienna government should be careful "not to stretch its bow against Serbia too far".³⁸⁷ "However peaceful we might be", Kokovtsov, the Russian Prime Minister, had earlier said to the French Ambassador, "we have not failed to do what is necessary to be prepared for any emergency".³⁸⁸ On 24 January, King George V of Britain himself advised the Austrian Ambassador to give way; the British government had helped Austria in the matter of Serbia's outlet to the sea, but now in the question of Scutari and the Albanian border they had to be on the side of Russia.³⁸⁹

In his extremely important *Fragments of a Political Diary*, J. Baernreither has recorded Baron Hötzenndorf's statements that he had heard on 22 December from his friend, who had heard them himself in his own home. The conflict

382 Cf. F. Stieve, *Die Tragödie der Bundesgenossen*, Munich 1930, pp. 112–8.

383 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, V, p. 322.

384 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIV, p. 184.

385 *Ibid.*, pp. 224–5.

386 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, V, p. 532.

387 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIV, V, p. 307.

388 *Documents diplomatiques français*, V, p. 137.

389 *Ibid.*, p. 541.

with Serbia, Hötendorf said, should not be allowed to die down; the wound must be left open; “as soon as one difficulty is put aside, a new one must be created, so that there is always a pretext for an attack.” Serbia must by all means be prevented from becoming a magnet for the other Yugoslavs.³⁹⁰ Unfortunately, this view does not seem to have been merely his personal one; it started indeed, as everything indicates, to be clearly felt in Austria’s policy. It was openly said that it was not even desired that Serbia should yield, as that would remove the grounds for war. Berchtold feared that he might be reproached in military circles, just like Aehrenthal, for not availing himself of a suitable opportunity for a showdown, and he therefore pursued, being a weak man susceptible to influences, an indefinite policy, both allowing war propaganda to spread and, at the critical moment, letting the peace be preserved, although not so much on his own initiative but rather under pressure. Baernreither made the following observations in his diary: “Berchtold’s pacific assurances, set against his hesitation to receive Pašić, the dragging out of the Prochaska affair, the hue and cry against Serbia in the press, in which the Press Bureau itself took part, various statements which I have quoted here must all give rise to suspicion that our wish for peace is not sincere, but that in fact, as Conrad ardently desires, we intend to keep up the quarrel with Serbia just in case.”³⁹¹ Such tendencies could not of course be concealed. It is interesting that the Serbian government learnt of them through its minister in Athens, Mate Bošković, who heard of them in a friendly and well-informed Legation.

Baernreither’s statements were confirmed by the German Military Attaché in Vienna, as well as by Hötendorf himself. The latter never tired of finding new occasions for a clash and was unhappy when any incident ended peacefully. As early as January 1913, he counted on the Albanians as allies against Serbia and was prepared to smuggle arms and ammunition to them; he even suggested that Albania should be urged to “insurrection” to keep part of the Serbian forces engaged by the uprising.³⁹² Both the Emperor and Berchtold were opposed to this idea, but they consented to the shipment of arms destined for Albania to Trieste.³⁹³ On 22 January, Hötendorf said to Count Kageneck, the German Military Attaché: “The Minister of War, the Commander-in-Chief of the Fleet, Biliński, the Joint Minister of Finance, and I myself – we are not giving way.”³⁹⁴ They were joined by the entire Christian Socialist Party and major sections of

390 Baernreither, *Fragmente eines politischen Tagebuches*, pp. 186–7.

391 *Ibid.*, pp. 187, 201.

392 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIV, pp. 228, 250; *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, V, p. 677.

393 *Ibid.*, p. 250; *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, V, pp. 655–6.

394 *Ibid.*, p. 254.

the clerical circles and the Austrian and Hungarian aristocracy, as well as by the majority of the officers corps – all those who supported the idea of a new and powerful Austria (*Grossösterreich*) and who believed that this aggressive policy was in line with the desires of Crown Prince, Franz Ferdinand. Berchtold therefore showed, having these tendencies in mind, a stubbornness in the matter of the borders, which neither his allies nor other friends of the Danubian Monarchy could understand.

Austria's proposal for the eastern Albanian borders, which would embrace Peć and Prizren, caused astonishment in almost all diplomatic circles and genuine indignation in Serbia. Even Sazonov called Vienna's proposal unacceptable, not hesitating to criticize the much-emphasized "vital interests" of Austria in those parts. He sent a message to London on 21 December to the effect that Russian public opinion was already greatly dissatisfied on account of the concessions made in the port question and that it would emphatically condemn Austria's new demands.³⁹⁵ "I assure you", he said to the Austrian Ambassador, "we have come to the point of not making further concessions."³⁹⁶

Together with the border question, the question of Scutari became very acute. After King Nicholas had refused Austria's suggestion that Montenegro should give her Lovćen in exchange for Scutari, the Vienna government decided to make the Scutari issue one of its vital questions as well. Had Montenegrin army succeeded in occupying Scutari before the London Conference, the town would probably have remained in their hands, for both Russia and Italy definitely urged that, while Britain, France and even Germany were not opposed to it. Austria could hardly have won both points at once i.e., that Serbia should give up the coast and Montenegro Scutari after having occupied it. But, as the siege of Scutari was dragging on, the Vienna government gained enough time to elaborate its view and made it the central question in a new crisis. Vienna at first stated in a message to Berlin on 18 December that Scutari was "almost an Austrian town and a center of Austrian Catholic influence".³⁹⁷ Then from 27 December onwards, another argument against the cession of Scutari was used, namely that San Giovanni must go with Scutari, and that since Montenegro might, for one reason or another, cede that port to Serbia, the latter country would indirectly have got round Austria's opposition and achieved her objective.³⁹⁸

395 Benckendorff, *Diplomatischen Schriftwechsel*, II, p. 558.

396 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, V, p. 336.

397 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIV, p. 60.

398 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, V, p. 213.

Viennese diplomacy became more insistent still after the beginning of January 1913, when San Giuliano declared definitely that Italy would in no event agree to Lovćen being ceded to Austria – at which price Austria had formerly been willing to yield – and when he even warned Berlin of the dangerous consequences which the cession of Lovćen might have for the relations between Italy and Austria.³⁹⁹ The Russian government, too, when informed of the matter, vigorously protested against any such scheme, deeming that, apart from anything else, it would be a violation of the declaration on the part of Great Powers of their territorial disinterestedness in this crisis.⁴⁰⁰ Having thus no prospect of gaining anything for herself in that direction, Austria became adamant as regards Scutari in her annoyance. Henceforward no argument could move her, not even the general belief that depriving Montenegro of Scutari might have the most serious consequences for the Montenegrin dynasty, which was better thought of in Vienna than the Serbian one, and that its fall might accelerate a union of the two Serbian states that would be unpalatable to Austria. On 14 January 1913, Count Mensdorff, the Austrian Ambassador in London, informed his German colleague that Vienna would now rather decide for war than hand over Scutari to the Montenegrins. When Prince Lichnowsky asked the Ambassador and his technical adviser, Baron Giesl, what Austria could gain from such a war, both answered that she would obtain strategically important modifications of the border, a bridgehead at Belgrade and “other security measures”. “If Russia then attacked us, it would give Germany *casus foederis*”.⁴⁰¹ This bellicose declaration made a bad impression on the German Ambassador and he did not hesitate to let them know.

In the borders question, Austria had even before been prepared to give in as regards Peć and Prizren (the latter without Ljuma), fully aware of how much these historic towns meant to the Serbs, but she wanted to sell her consent to this concession as costly as possible. Meanwhile, Austria unconditionally demanded Djakovica and Debar for Albania. In the case of Djakovica in particular, Crown Prince Franz Ferdinand used his influence, undoubtedly at the suggestion of his military advisers.⁴⁰² As a final concession, out of consideration for Russia, Berchtold agreed on 21 January 1913 that the monastery of Dečani also be excluded from the new Albanian state.⁴⁰³ That his attitude was

399 Ibid., pp. 248, 349. The offer made to Montenegro was later denied on the Austrian side and disloyally declared to have been “entirely fabricated”. See *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIV, p. 124.

400 *Documents diplomatiques français*, 3me série, V, pp. 201-3; 214-5.

401 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, V, pp. 304-6.

402 Giesl, *Zwei Jahrzehnte*, p. 234.

403 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, V, pp. 506-7; *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIV, p. 234.

not influenced so much by consideration for the Albanians as for selfish interests and the ill-will towards the Serbs could be seen from the negotiations with Montenegro about Scutari. There is another example: on 14 January, Berchtold instructed the Austrian Ambassador in London that if Ohrid and Struga were ceded to Bulgaria, Austria would raise no objection; but if they were likely to go to Serbia, they should certainly be claimed for Albania then.⁴⁰⁴ This Austrian view was, of course, communicated to the Bulgarians, and Daneff at once declared himself in favour of the Austrian stance against the Serbs in the Scutari and Djakovica questions and against the Greeks in that of Janina;⁴⁰⁵ four weeks later, on 21 February, he informed the Austrian Minister in Sofia that after the war with Turkey Bulgaria's obligations under the treaty of alliance with Serbia would be terminated.⁴⁰⁶

Vienna would very likely again have stubbornly defended its views, had not Berlin, both the government and the Emperor, begun to recommend moderation. Austria-Hungary had won over the questions of the Serbian port and the independence of Albania; it would prevail in the Scutari question too; it ought therefore, after these successes, to be more prepared to give way and not continue its policy of prestige.⁴⁰⁷ The Italian government gave the same advice as Berlin. In agreement with his Italian colleague in London, the German Ambassador, Count Lichnowsky, who observed the Austrian attitude with great concern and considerable criticism, decided on 26 January to find himself, together with Sir Edward Grey, some form of compromise. He said openly that it was not in line with Bismarck's policy, or in Germany's interest, to be "obliged blindly to follow" its duty as an ally and "not to throw its own opinion into the scales" in questions of war and peace.⁴⁰⁸ Emperor Wilhelm II himself warned Vienna on 30 January that Austro-Hungarian diplomacy would make a mistake, if it did not give way and provoked a conflict and a world war over a question that "does not look anything like important enough" and which would hardly justify him in the eyes of his people.⁴⁰⁹ The German Ambassador in Vienna declared "emphatically" on 2 February at the Ballplatz "that there must be no conflict with Russia over the border question and that some way out must be found".⁴¹⁰ Even the Chief of the German General Staff wrote on 6 February to the new Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Jagow:

404 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, V, p. 450.

405 *Ibid.*, p. 479.

406 *Ibid.*, p. 787.

407 *Ibid.*, pp. 497, 501.

408 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIV, p. 270.

409 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, V, pp. 584-5.

410 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIV, p. 299.

"I cannot understand why Austria, if she really only wants to arrive at some *modus vivendi* with Serbia, should have kept half her army mobilized for so many months and ruined herself financially ... Your Excellency's principal duty will be to put a stop to Austria's folly, if possible, and that is neither agreeable nor an easy task."⁴¹¹ He himself wrote a letter to his Austrian colleague on 10 February, in which he developed the above-quoted words of Emperor Wilhelm II and further recommended the Vienna government to try to take every advantage of the looming rift between Bulgaria and Serbia.⁴¹²

Germany's attempt to dissuade Austria from going to war resulted not only from its own consideration, but also from the realization that in the event of any widespread conflict it would have to face the entire Triple Entente. On 22 and 23 January, the Russian and French Ambassadors reported, on the authority of King George V himself, that Emperor Wilhelm II's brother, Prince Heinrich, had asked the King of Britain outright whether Britain would go to war, if it came to a conflict between Russia and Austria and Germany and France, and had been told that this would "certainly" be the case under certain circumstances.⁴¹³ It was thus said more frequently in Germany that there was no sense in risking a war on three fronts for the sake of questions so insignificant for them.

This attitude of the leading German persons had a marked effect on Vienna, which throughout the crisis, and indeed from 1908 onwards, had counted more on German than on its own strength; now that Berlin made it clear enough that Germany was not prepared to support unconditionally Vienna's every claim, the Austrian capital gradually began to sober down and pull back. The first to adopt the German views were certain persons at the Court, including Crown Prince Franz Ferdinand. Emperor Franz Joseph initially decided to mollify Russian opinion by sending a letter to Emperor Nicholas II through a special emissary, Prince Hohenlohe, a former Military Attaché in St. Petersburg, who was popular there. The letter was handed to Emperor Nicholas II on 4 February with the assurance that Austria-Hungary wanted an agreement and that it had shown as much by concessions that it had made in the course of the crisis. During the audience, Serbia and her attitude were also discussed and Prince Hohenlohe expressed his doubt as to whether Serbia would keep her promise to withdraw her troops from the littoral, in order to justify the Austrian military measures. To this the Russian Emperor declared that he himself guaranteed

⁴¹¹ Ibid., p. 319.

⁴¹² Ibid., p. 353.

⁴¹³ *Documents diplomatiques français*, 3me série, V, pp. 317-9; Benckendorff, *Diplomatischen Schriftwechsel*, III, pp. 52-3.

that.⁴¹⁴ On 2 February, Duke Albrecht of Württemberg reported an intimate conversation that took place in his presence between Franz Ferdinand and the Archduke Eugene. Both considered that a war against Serbia at that time would be "senseless", but the former used a number of violent expressions in referring to the Serbian people in his somewhat coarse manner. However, Eugene even suggested that Austrian provocation might make Germany cease to consider itself bound to carry out the treaty of alliance: "If I were asked what reason we could give for a war against Serbia, I must admit quite honestly that I do not know of a single one." The Crown Prince explained that he was at pains to suppress warlike opinions in many quarters, and he added that Berchtold alone understood and agreed with him.⁴¹⁵ To Baron Hoerzendorf he said later that he did not want a conquest in Serbia and that the best solution would be, in his opinion, a renewal of the Alliance of the three Emperors.⁴¹⁶ When the German Ambassador in Vienna later drew attention of Count Berchtold to the provocative tone of the press and the bellicose speeches of the War Minister, the Austrian Foreign Minister, now obviously more willing to give way, replied that he had himself warned his military colleague. The Emperor himself did so later. The German Ambassador personally attempted to influence certain representatives of the Viennese press and spoke to them without ambiguity. "All competent quarters here are agreed that none of the questions now before us are matters of vital interest, and we must refuse to support the indefinite wishes of the military party which is pushing us into war ... Now that Austria has gained her point over the two chief questions that she raised, the Albanian question and the question of the port, it would be folly to risk a great war for the sake of a few remaining differences."⁴¹⁷

In spite of all this, Viennese diplomatic circles would not make more substantial concessions, and those they made resulted from almost incredible, Oriental haggling that left a very bad impression. Prince Hohenlohe told Emperor Nicholas II outright that Austria could not allow "Serbia to grow beyond the limits which we consider suitable"⁴¹⁸ and that she was therefore rather intransigent in the matter of the new Serbian borders. On 7 February, Berchtold informed all the Embassies of the Great Powers that he could go no further in concessions than allow Montenegro to have Hoti and Gruda and to cede Plav, Gusinje, Prizren and Dečane to the Allies. If these were not accepted,

⁴¹⁴ *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, V, p. 634.

⁴¹⁵ *Die Grosse Politik*, XXIV, pp. 309-10.

⁴¹⁶ Hötendorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, III, pp. 155-6.

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 323-4; cf. also pp. 416-7.

⁴¹⁸ *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, V, pp. 672-3.

Austria would return to her old uncompromising attitude.⁴¹⁹ Count Thurn, the Austrian Minister in St. Petersburg, warned his government of the danger of such a declaration, which might be understood in Russian circles as a threat or even as something of an ultimatum.⁴²⁰ Berchtold paid some attention to this advice and did not send any such message to St. Petersburg, but it reached the Russian capital indirectly from the other capitals and had the effect that Thurn had foreseen. The Russian government emphatically turned down the proposal, demanding also Djakovica and Debar. Moreover, Hohenlohe had the impression that irritation in Russia because of Austria's actions was exceptionally great and that Austria, if she did not want a war, must do something to relieve the situation. Both the German and Austrian Ambassadors in St. Petersburg made similar reports to their governments. On 10 February, Bethmann-Hollweg sent Berchtold a private letter, asking him not to push matters to extremes, for a "forced settlement" would be "a mistake of incalculable proportions", particularly in this case, where there was every prospect of getting out of the entanglement with some undoubted successes.⁴²¹ As a result of these new warnings, a decision was taken in Vienna that, in agreement with Russia and to soothe public opinion, the armies on both borders should be reduced. The Russian government then asked, both in Vienna and Berlin, that Austria should declare that she did not intend to attack Serbia. Vienna refused to make any such declaration and added that the agreement on the reduction of its army applied only to the Russian and not to the Serbian border, and that it remained to be seen what course the events would take. Emperor Wilhelm II made a note on a dispatch dated 5 March to the effect that Austria ought to give some such declaration, the more so as "Vienna's policy towards Serbia has been a failed one".⁴²² But none of his messages to that effect had any influence in Vienna.

9

A new argument which the Germans began to use after mid-February to induce Austria to agree to concessions was as follows: the Montenegrin army, which the Serbs were helping, might in a few days occupy Scutari, as they had started further determined attacks on Bardhanjoret, Brdica and Tarabosh, while the Serbian government had decided on 19 February, at King Nicholas's request, to

⁴¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 667-8.

⁴²⁰ Ibid., pp. 671-2, 681.

⁴²¹ *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIV, p. 348.

⁴²² *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIV, p. 456.

send a whole division to Montenegro's aid and started to dispatch troops by sea from Salonica to Durres and San Giovanni. As the fate of Scutari had not yet been decided by the conference, its occupation might make the situation considerably more difficult for Austria. The conference should therefore settle the Albanian borders as soon as possible, and the consent of Russia was necessary to obtain Scutari for Albania, whether the Montenegrins captured it or not.⁴²³ No lesser impression was created in Vienna by the declaration of the Italian government on 18 February that in the event of Montenegro's taking Scutari, Italy would not undertake any military measures against Montenegro to force it to evacuate the captured town, and that it could hardly bear, in view of its public opinion and its own interests, to see Austria fulfil that mandate alone.⁴²⁴ It was only under the pressure of these declarations that Austria began to yield, first on the subject of Debar on 18 February. Then another declaration of the Italian government was made on 22 February to the effect that, if Austria took action against Montenegro, Italy would reserve for itself the freedom to act in some other direction.⁴²⁵

British diplomacy, for many reasons, urgently insisted both in Vienna and Berlin that the peace of Europe should not be imperiled merely for the sake of Djakovica, which was the only point of dispute between Serbia and Albania. The Russian government explained that it could not yield any further, because of its prestige abroad and in the Balkans, and its own public opinion. It was impossible at the same time to put pressure on Montenegro because of Scutari and on Serbia because of Djakovica, after they had given way over the port; Austria would have to yield on one of these two questions. The Powers of the Triple Entente accepted this view of the Russian government and the German government agreed with it, to some extent. Austrian diplomacy hesitated nevertheless and sought all possible means to obtain Djakovica for Albania. They would have persisted in that, had not the Serbian Army, sent to help the Montenegrins, begun active operations near Scutari. On 9 March, the Austrian Minister warned the Serbian government that their sending troops would make a bad impression in Vienna and would not affect the fate of the town. But the fact that the troops had been dispatched did accelerate Austria's decision as regards Djakovica. Vienna now respected the value of the Serbian army; after its arrival, the fall of Scutari could be expected shortly and, in this connection, further complications as to the possession of the town. To placate Vienna, the Serbian government at once declared that they would abide by the decision

423 Ibid., p. 367.

424 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, V, pp. 768.

425 Ibid., p. 801.

of the Great Powers in the question of Scutari too, if it were communicated to them as final.⁴²⁶ This declaration was repeated to the other Cabinets.⁴²⁷ This was done at the request of Russia, which told Serbia on 28 February and on two or three subsequent occasions that Scutari would remain Albanian and that further sacrifices for its sake were futile. Sir Edward Grey addressed similar advice to Serbia and Montenegro. In a letter to King Nicholas of 4 March (19 February), King Peter said that Serbia would gladly fulfil her Serb and allied duty to help Montenegro to obtain Scutari. "But if the Ambassadors decide either before or after the fall of Scutari that it must be handed over to Albania, we consider that we should harm the interests of both states if we resisted the will and decision of the whole of Europe, because in this case we should not only lose the protection and support of Russia and her allies in other questions on the agenda, but also risk losing other gains we have won in this war. For the same reasons which led us to give up the Littoral, we shall have to submit to the decision of the whole of Europe in the matter of Scutari as well, but we shall not decide about that until we are informed of the decision of the Ambassadors."

However, instead of hastening the settlement of the border question, Count Berchtold thought first of resorting to more energetic measures against the Serbs. He informed the German Ambassador of his own and General Hötzendorf's idea to seize the transport ships with Serbian troops, but the Ambassador said at once that that would be a direct violation of neutrality.⁴²⁸ Emperor Franz Joseph said the same when his consent to this measure was asked.⁴²⁹ Berchtold then attempted intimidation. On 12 March, he informed Rome that he could not be indifferent to the landing of Serbian troops near Scutari and that he would therefore, regardless of the London conversations, undertake the necessary measures "in his own sphere" to prevent the transport of the troops. He initially thought of the fleet demonstration. He was fully aware, he said in his instructions to the Austrian Ambassador in Rome, that such a step would not be agreeable to Italy, but he proposed to force the Italian government to hasten the settlement of the border question.⁴³⁰ A similar mes-

426 Ibid., p. 931.

427 Ibid., p. 957.

428 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIV, p. 440. The Turkish cruiser Hamidiye's attack on Serbian troops that landed in Durres and San Giovanni on 2 March was believed in Serbian circles to have been undertaken at the instigation of Austria-Hungary and based on information supplied by its authorities. It was even rumoured that it was the Austrian cruiser *Maria Theresa* rather than the Hamidiye that carried out the attack.

429 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIV, p. 482.

430 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, V, p. 932.

sage was sent to Berlin.⁴³¹ The Russian government agreed, along with other Powers, to request Serbia and Montenegro to abandon the territory allotted to Albania and to raise the siege of Scutari, but on the condition that the border question be finally settled and Djakovica allotted to Serbia, which would not cede it in any case.⁴³² The Serbian Ministers abroad had in fact declared on behalf of their government on 3 and 4 March that in respect of Debar and Djakovica Serbia did not intend to submit to the decision of the Great Powers, for she had also reached the limit of her concessions. Berchtold thereupon informed London on 14 March that after such a statement he found further negotiations illusory and declared that as long as the execution of the conclusions of the London Conference remained in doubt, there was no need for Austria to take part in the theoretical discussions in London. If the doubt were not removed, Austria would reserve a free hand for herself as regards future events.⁴³³

The Serbian government, of course, used every means in its power to obtain as favourable a border with Albania as possible. Their position was a difficult one. While on the one hand the friendly Powers put pressure on them to give way over the port question and to abandon the coastal region that the Serbian army had captured, on the other the country was greatly dissatisfied because of these concessions. The people were proud of their victories and regarded the successes achieved as a reward for their great efforts. The Army openly reproached the government for not being able to keep diplomatically what the Army had won. It was murmured in many quarters that the army ought to take power into its own hands; it was believed that its successes would not be less in the diplomatic than in the military sphere. Pašić had therefore informed the Cabinets of the friendly Great Powers as early as 23 (10) December 1912 that since Serbia had caved in completely over the question of the port, she could not also give way over the borders question. "We demand, and we cannot and will not desist from demanding, no matter what the consequences may be, that we should retain the lands in Old Serbia and Macedonia which our army has conquered and now holds," his vigorous communique read. On 3 February (21 January), he informed St. Petersburg that his government might have to resign, as public opinion was too much dissatisfied with their concessions. He repeated the same statement on 11 February to the Cabinets of all the Great Powers on hearing from St. Petersburg that Djakovica and Debar must be given up, as Sazonov seriously thought at one time. Pašić informed the

431 Ibid., pp. 937-8.

432 Ibid., p. 945.

433 Ibid., p. 956.

friendly governments that after his resignation the military might take over the government, which might risk a war with Austria, regardless of the fact that it could be detrimental to Serbia. These messages from Serbia, sincerely felt and passionately expressed, no doubt had an effect in St. Petersburg, where it was already considered that of all the Balkan states Serbia had to contend with most difficulties. Therefore, on 12 February, Sazonov sent word to the Russian Ambassador in London, Count Benckendorff, to try to secure at least Debar for Serbia.⁴³⁴ Belgrade would not agree even to this concession, although both the British and French government endeavoured to influence the Serbian government not to make much of an issue of this. The Serbian government's declaration to the Great Powers of 3-4 March was the expression of Serbia's absolute determination not to make further concessions. On 15 (12) March, Pašić himself drafted a message for St. Petersburg in which he said: "Serbia has been compelled to withdraw from the Littoral at Austria's wish and be locked again on all sides. Albania is being created on her border by means of paid agents, bands are organized and arms and other means given for fighting against Serbia. Scutari has been taken away from Montenegro, which has been fighting for its life for the last two hundred years, only to create a Greater Albania. The territory and holy places of Old Serbia are taken from us to be given to those who have ravaged them in the past. Djakovica is left in doubt. A new impulse is given to foreign agitation, the Serbian people are reduced to despair, and a fresh field opened for further entanglements. The Bulgarians and Greeks are not treated so ruthlessly! The Balkan Alliance is stabbed at the heart."⁴³⁵ After this message, Sazonov told the Austrian Ambassador on 17 March that Russia had used a good deal of influence with Serbia to induce her to give way and that she had indeed given way considerably; he was now convinced that there was enough of this advice and of these concessions.⁴³⁶

Austria's threats that she would possibly attempt certain measures against Serbia and Montenegro on her own initiative aroused great suspicion in Rome. San Giuliano immediately informed the Berlin government of Italy's dissatisfaction with those intentions, and he pointed out the far-reaching effects of such measures and the danger they involved for the peace of the world. The

434 Benckendorff, *Diplomatischen Schriftwechsel*, III, pp. 93, 96-7.

435 "We are doing badly", he wrote the same day to London, "because we hold on to the Triple Entente. We were offered the entire Vardar valley together with Salonica, if we only agreed to a Customs Union, and Montenegro would have received Scutari and beyond as far as the Mati, if only it had agreed to cede a hill above Kotor. We are losing everything because we did not accept the offer and because we believe in the solidarity of our interests with those of the Triple Entente." See Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, conf. no. 1023.

436 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, V, p. 988.

Berlin government endeavoured to placate the Italian government, defending Austria's nervousness, to certain extent, but they nevertheless drew attention of Vienna to the fact that certain measures, e.g. the prevention of the landing of Serbian troops, would provoke Russia, which would consider it a violation of neutrality, especially as no definite decision had as yet been taken regarding the borders of Albania, and might in the same way strain Austria's relations with Italy. In order to prevent hostilities, Germany appealed to London on 18 March to hasten the decision there. Germany particularly insisted that Austria-Hungary should not be the Power to break off the negotiations in London and bear the odium of provoking a conflict. But to assist Vienna, Germany declared jointly with it that the siege of Scutari and Serbia's aid to capture the town showed "gross disregard for the conclusions of the Powers", although those conclusions had not yet been finally reached or communicated to Serbia and Montenegro.⁴³⁷

Berchtold, meanwhile, in his oscillation between peace and war, under the influence of the indefatigable war party of Baron Hötendorf⁴³⁸ was again ready to fight. On 18 March, he ordered the Austrian Minister in Cetinje resolutely to request the King of Montenegro to stop the bombardment of Scutari until the civilian population had left the town. At the same time, to make this step appear more important, an order was issued to the Austrian fleet in the south Dalmatian waters to be prepared to make a demonstration, if Montenegro failed to agree to that demand.⁴³⁹ Berchtold informed Rome of the step he had taken, inviting Italy to join with Austria in these measures.⁴⁴⁰ Montenegro curtly refused Austria's demand on 19 March just as Bulgaria had on an earlier occasion refused to permit foreign subjects to leave Adrianople. On the same day, Austria-Hungary informed all the other Powers of her action. The following day, it addressed a new and very harsh message to Cetinje, in which it raised another question with the attendant threats. On the basis of unverified reports, with a view to creating greater impression and justifying its action on other grounds, Austria-Hungary demanded that its Acting Consul in Prizren, together with the Catholic Archbishop, go to Djakovica and the surrounding area and restore in the Catholic faith all those who had allegedly been forcibly converted to Orthodoxy under the Montenegrin rule. The Consul would, apart from this, investigate all Montenegrin actions in this area. He would further

437 Ibid., p. 991; *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIV, pp. 503-4.

438 Cf. Hötendorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, III, pp. 169-74. Franz Ferdinand himself sent the head of his military office, Colonel Bardolff, to Hötendorf with the message to cease influencing Berchtold.

439 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, V, pp. 993-4.

440 Ibid., pp. 998-9.

announce that the official Montenegrin investigation of the assassination of the Franciscan priest Luka Palić must be carried out in the presence of a representative of Austria as the protecting Power of the Catholics in Albania.⁴⁴¹

On 19 March, San Giuliano replied to the Austrian Ambassador that his government's demand seemed to him "unconsidered and quite impracticable". He was willing to ask the Montenegrin government again to suspend the bombardment of the town or to spare Christian and foreign institutions, or to allow the Consuls and other foreigners to leave it, but he considered the idea of fleet demonstration "extremely dangerous" and premature. He was, moreover, already informed that the bombardment had been in fact suspended. Furthermore, the negotiations in London were not yet terminated and the cooperation of the other Powers was necessary.⁴⁴² From St. Petersburg also came the answer that the Scutari question concerned all and not only certain Powers, and that unilateral action on the part of one Power would involve a "grave danger".⁴⁴³

Seeing this and feeling that the Scutari question, as well as that of Austria's further relations with Montenegro, would complicate matters too much, especially in view of Russia's intransigence and Italy's attitude, Berchtold at last decided, on 20 March, to give way over Djakovica at least to be able to exercise more pressure in other matters. But he made even that concession on the above mentioned condition that the Powers should imperatively require Serbia and Montenegro to withdraw their armies from those areas and places which would form part of Albania, and in particular to raise the siege of Scutari and to suspend all operations in that neighbourhood.⁴⁴⁴ In addition, the Albanians, as a national minority, would be guaranteed religious and national protection. Berchtold also thought of asking the conference to authorize Austria and Italy with a mandate to force Serbia and Montenegro to leave Albania, if they refused to do so, but the German Ambassador dissuaded him from this, advising him first to exhaust all peaceful means.⁴⁴⁵

Without waiting for the answer of the Powers or for the decisions of the London Conference, Berchtold immediately, on 21 March, requested and obtained the consent of Emperor Franz Joseph to address demand to Montenegro to stop the bombardment of Scutari and to make it responsible for the fate of its population in case Scutari capitulated. If Montenegro failed

441 Ibid., pp. 1013-4.

442 Ibid., pp. 1008-9.

443 Ibid., pp. 1016-7.

444 Ibid., p. 1014.

445 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIV, p. 529.

to give a satisfactory answer, Austria decided first to close the border between the two countries and then to start a blockade of the Montenegrin and part of the Albanian coast. The next day Berchtold informed the Great Powers of this step, adding that if these measures were of no avail, others might follow. In its communication to the Powers, Austria-Hungary declared, without any authorization, that it had taken it upon itself to bring the Montenegrin government to reason by forcible means.⁴⁴⁶ This step was arbitrary and without regard for the other Powers. The London Conference still held its mandate and the joint decision that the Powers were to work in agreement still held good. If the action of Montenegro had been incorrect or irregular or in any way contrary to the decisions of the Great Powers, its case could have been brought before the conference, the censure of that body required and the application of sanctions demanded. But Austria had no right to assume a mandate to use forcible means on behalf of Europe, especially given that the decision on the Albanian borders had not yet been sanctioned, mainly because of Austria-Hungary's delays.

The London Conference did not decide before 22 March to notify Serbia and Montenegro of the agreement reached on the northern borders of Albania and to demand security for the Catholic and Moslem population of the areas that would remain under the two Serb states. At the same time, the Powers would invite Serbia and Montenegro to raise the siege of Scutari, the allocation of which had been decided on the day when Austria renounced Djakovica, irrespective of whether it were captured or not, and to evacuate the territory allotted to Albania as soon as possible.⁴⁴⁷ When this resolution was passed, the representatives of Russia and Italy were not yet informed of the Austrian latest move in Cetinje. The same day Sazonov expounded to the Austrian Ambassador Russia's views on these decisions, not yet knowing what Austria demanded from Montenegro. Russia's views were as follows: 1) the protection of the minorities should be provided for in the peace treaties, and some external control, which would infringe on the sovereign rights of the countries concerned, could not be requested; 2) Russia would join in the appeal to Montenegro and Serbia to evacuate Albanian territory as soon as possible, but that appeal should not be accompanied by threats. Sazonov particularly defended Serbia, but he had an unfavourable opinion of Montenegro. In the course of the conversation, he himself mentioned the possibility of using forcible means, if it were not amenable but not before the peace had been

446 Ibid., pp. 1026-8.

447 Ibid., p. 1032.

concluded.⁴⁴⁸ When Austria's action became known, San Giuliano declared that it had no legal foundation, and that he was opposed to such unilateral action, which would cause "grave complications". The attitude of Vienna, he said, was quite incomprehensible to him. They had given way on the important question of the border, and they were now taking a minatory attitude over this minor matter. He doubted Austrian information from Scutari and Albania about Montenegro's actions, because it did not agree with that received by Italy.⁴⁴⁹ Moreover, as he pointed out to the German Ambassador, Italy had never recognized Austria's protectorate over the Catholics of Albania and considered it in general a very inconvenient matter.⁴⁵⁰

Sazonov's voice was trembling with emotion, according to the report of the Austrian Ambassador, when he asked him for an explanation of the affair. He said that he could not understand the hastiness of the Austrian government, "which threatens to ruin all that has been achieved", especially at the moment when the London Conference was about to decide on the collective action of all the Powers to bring about the evacuation of Albania as speedily as possible. Austria was spoiling the Concert of the Powers over a question which did not concern her alone – the question of the evacuation of the civilian population of Scutari and of the suspension of the bombardment was a European one – and her attitude could not be held to agree with the principles which had so far prevailed. "He could not conceive that Vienna was not conscious of a tremendous danger this isolated act involved for the peace of Europe." The whole of Russia would think, he said, that Austria had proposed the mutual demobilization in order to deceive Russia, so that she, being unprepared, would have no influence on the matters while Austria completed her business in the south. The whole Scutari affair might thus be interpreted as a search for a pretext for the Danubian Monarchy to interfere. There was now nothing left for Russia to do but to mobilize again. In Austria's action, he saw a disregard for the Powers and for himself personally.⁴⁵¹ Peace was hanging by a thread, Sazonov said three days later; he had never seen the Emperor so excited as when they spoke about this matter.⁴⁵² Other Russian diplomats spoke in the same strain as Sazonov, with no less bitterness and criticism. The Austrian Minister in

448 Ibid., p. 1036.

449 Ibid., pp. 1042-3.

450 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIV, p. 562.

451 Ibid., pp. 1049-52; *Der diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, III, pp. 99-100. Emperor Wilhelm II also considered that Austria's step might be interpreted as perfidious. *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIV, p. 532.

452 Ibid., 1081-2. Cf. a similar report of the German Ambassador in *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIV, p. 532.

Belgrade complained in particular about the attitude of his Russian colleague, N. Hartwig.⁴⁵³

Italy's attitude had a profound effect on Berchtold, although he might and should have foreseen it. On 24 March, he begged the Crown Prince Franz Ferdinand by telegram to prevent some "landing" of their people in Albania, because complications might arise "from a quarter which we have at present every interest to keep peaceful",⁴⁵⁴ clearly referring to Italy. Immediately afterwards, on 25 March, he addressed a circular to all the Great Powers, in which he attempted to defend himself and to blame them for not having hastened to join Austria's action to stop the bombardment of Scutari. He had acted, he asserted, in the spirit of the London Conference which had in the main decided the question of Scutari, and he had been prompted by humanitarian considerations. Austria could not remain inactive while the Montenegrin army, in spite of all warnings, was turning its guns on Consulates, churches, hospitals and "other foreign institutions". Austria's step had been taken in view of the urgent necessity and he had hoped that the other Powers would join in it. Under pressure of Sazonov's and San Giuliano's emphatic protests, Berchtold sent word that he would wait and see if Montenegro would indeed stop the bombardment and begin negotiations for the evacuation of the civilian population and if the Powers would make a joint demarche in Belgrade and Cetinje.

The German Ambassador proposed at the London Conference on 26 March that the Powers give a mandate to Austria and Italy to undertake forcible measures against Montenegro, if it did not back down. Grey immediately rejected this proposal, preferring to await the results of the intended joint demarche of all the Powers in Cetinje and Belgrade; if some forcible action proved necessary, he was only in favour of its being carried out by all the Powers. For many reasons, Italy appeared reserved towards the acceptance of a mandate together with Austria, and Russia at once declared she was opposed to it.⁴⁵⁵ Meanwhile, Serbia informed King Nicholas of the seriousness of the situation and advised yielding. They had given way on many points that were more important and could therefore give way on that of Scutari, especially as the town was not captured and its capture might cost further great sacrifices, and those expensive sacrifices would after all be useless. Serbia could not decide on the suspension of the siege alone. She was bound to Montenegro as an ally; her army at Scutari was under the supreme command of King Nicholas; and the Serbian government made its decision dependent upon that of the Montenegrin government.

453 Ibid., pp. 1053-4.

454 Ibid., p. 1053.

455 Ibid., pp. 1057-9; 1067-8; 1074-5.

Montenegro, however, refused to yield. On 24 March, the King consented to the evacuation of the civilian population and to the cessation of the bombardment for the time being, on condition that this was done without the participation of any third Power.⁴⁵⁶ His government also prepared a note for the Great Powers, in which they protested against the Austrian threats, declaring them a violation of neutrality. On receiving the note, the Austrian Minister returned it on the grounds that he would not take cognizance of accusations against his country.⁴⁵⁷

Meanwhile, the commander of Scutari refused to allow the civilian population to leave, saying that it was well protected and supplied with food. To the representations of the Great Powers, the Montenegrin government replied on 27 March that it accepted their terms insofar as they were dictated by humanitarian motives, but that it would nevertheless continue hostilities until Scutari fell. On that point neither the King nor the government were prepared to yield. When the Powers made their joint demarche in Cetinje, the Montenegrin government replied that it would consult its Allies, but that it could not suspend the hostilities as long as the war with Turkey lasted. Even before this reply was known, as early as 28 March, it had been decided in London that the Powers should make a joint naval demonstration, if Montenegro failed to yield; even Russia had agreed, but she had said that for particular reasons she could not herself take part in that demonstration.

On 29 March, the representatives of the Great Powers in Belgrade communicated to the Serbian government the decisions of the London Conference concerning the northern and north-western borders of Albania, and on the basis of these decisions requested the end of the siege of Scutari, cessation of military activities in Albania and the evacuation of the Albanian territory as soon as possible. Austria had asked that instead of “as soon as possible” the note should read “at once”, but the Russian wording was accepted. The Powers of the Triple Alliance demanded, in addition, special measures to secure the “protection” (*la protection*) of the non-Orthodox Christian population, while the Entente Powers, at the wish of the Russian government, used the expression “freedom of cult” (*la liberté du culte*). Pašić replied that Serbia had taken note of the wishes of the Great Powers, but that their execution did not depend entirely on her. The Serbian government, together with the Bulgarian and Greek governments, would do all they could to induce Montenegro to yield, but until it did so, Serbia must fulfil her duty as an ally. The question of Scutari had to be settled with Montenegro; Serbia would accept any solution which

456 Ibid., pp. 1045-6.

457 Ibid., p. 1056.

the Powers might come to with Cetinje. As for the “protection” of the non-Orthodox elements, Pašić declared that he would “never accept it and under any conditions”. The religious freedom was guaranteed in Serbia, and what was now being asked would mean the limitation of her sovereignty. The Russian Minister agreed with this.⁴⁵⁸ This demand was held to have reflected Austria’s tendency – that Power had been the protector of the Catholic faith – to retain her influence in the future and to obtain in a new form the right to interfere with Serbia’s internal affairs. In this connection, attention was drawn to the violent campaign in the Austrian press against the Serbian administration in the newly acquired provinces, while the Prochaska affair had shown clearly what the representatives of the Danubian Monarchy might do on the strength of a new mandate and where further friction might lead if that mandate were given to them.

In the Scutari question, as we have seen, Serbia had long been in favour of yielding. But it was difficult for her as an ally to abandon Montenegro, as it was known that such matter would make a very bad impression in Cetinje. It would be said, in so many words, that Serbia had betrayed Montenegro at the most critical moment. Pašić told the Austrian Minister this on 29 March, promising that he would do all in his power to induce Montenegro to yield. In Vienna, this answer made the impression that Serbia wanted to get out of the undertaking she had given to the Great Powers and that by protracting the whole matter, together with Montenegro, she wanted to wait for the fall of Scutari, hoping that this might influence the Powers to alter their decision.⁴⁵⁹ Vienna believed that Montenegro would yield at once if the Serbian army withdrew, knowing that it could not take Scutari alone; the Belgrade government rather than Cetinje was therefore held responsible in Vienna for the trouble over Scutari. Belgrade was accused of insincerity and ill will. This conception started to gain some ground in the rest of Europe, which was weary of long negotiations and wanted peace. But this conception, as far as the Serbian government was concerned, was quite wrong. Pašić told Ugron the whole truth, and the Russian Minister in Belgrade defended his view with equal frankness.

Cetinje, however, would not yield. King Nicholas was even unmoved – not to mention any other advice – by a very curt personal message from the Russian Emperor, who said that all further struggle was futile. King Nicholas had made

458 Ibid., pp. 1092-3. After protracted negotiations, a joint formulation was adopted in London on 29 July for the protection of minorities, when at the request of Austria the word *la protection* was inserted, and a note added to the resolution defining the term more strictly and narrowing its application.

459 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, V, pp. 1098-9.

of Scutari a matter of personal honour, and he now intended to get it at any cost. The bombardment of the town was recommenced and preparations begun for a new general assault. That led the Powers in London to resolve on 31 March to begin the naval demonstrations and to call upon the Greek government to transport no more Serbian troops. Since the Montenegrin government again refused Austria's demands on the same day, the Austrian fleet was ordered to sail for Bar on 1 April, without waiting for the units of other Powers. In issuing this order, Vienna was prompted not only by impatience to end the matter as soon as possible, but also by the desire to make the whole demonstration appear as a result of Austrian initiative and influence. It was only at British suggestion that the Austrian government later decided that their fleet should await the arrival of the other vessels in the open sea off the coast of Montenegro. The French government hesitated to take part in the demonstration without Russia, but Sazonov himself requested them to do so. "In the interests of peace", he repeated, "do not leave the Austrians alone".⁴⁶⁰

On 3 April (21 March), in order to associate the Serbian army as closely as possible with his plans, King Nicholas appointed General P. Bojović Commander-in-Chief of the entire army that besieged Scutari. In this way, although the Scutari question remained politically a "Montenegrin" one, it now became more of a Serbian question from a military point of view, especially as the Serbian government issued the official declaration in reply to the demarche that the Powers made on 6 April to the effect that they could not withdraw their armies from Scutari as long as the war with Turkey lasted and as long as Turkish troops were in a state of war with the Allies, or until the fall of Scutari. The government would withdraw the Serbian army from Albania, as they had promised, as soon as the peace was concluded and they received full information on the Albanian borders. As for the demand for the protection of the non-Orthodox population, the Serbian government could not consent to any foreign interference in its internal affairs, which would infringe its sovereignty, especially in view of the liberal Serbian legislation in these matters.

On that same day, 6 April, Berchtold informed Berlin that he had decided on war. The Pan-Slav faction in Russia, he explained, had influenced the Serbs, through Hartwig, to remain unyielding. Serbia was preparing to take advantage of the Scutari question to effect a union with Montenegro; it was for that reason that she had sent a large army to the latter's assistance. With the aid of Russia, Serbia was thinking of intimidating the Danubian Monarchy by demanding recognition of the union of Serbia and Montenegro as her price for abandoning Scutari and Albania. Austria could not of course agree to that.

460 *Documents diplomatiques. Les affaires balkaniques*, Paris 1922, p. 133.

She therefore wanted a radical settlement of the question. Austria would take action against Serbia and Montenegro even without the other Powers; she would only endeavour to secure, if possible, the cooperation of Italy. That a war with Russia might ensue was clear to Berchtold and his colleagues, but in his opinion it was the only way to solve the whole question. It depended on Russia, he informed Berlin, whether it came to war or not. If Russia put pressure on Serbia and Montenegro, peace could be saved; if not, Austria would leave the conference and begin to act on her own.⁴⁶¹ The principal supposition on which Berchtold based his decision was a sheer hypothesis without real foundation. Serbia did not have, in connection with the Scutari expedition, any secret plans to bring about a union with Montenegro, nor did she contemplate to complicate the situation with such a matter. This was only the assumption of the Austro-Hungarian Minister in Cetinje, Baron Giesl, but it was welcomed in Vienna as an effective pretext for its bellicose decisions.

Austria's intentions again met with great mistrust in Italy. The collaboration with Austria against Montenegro was almost out of the question.⁴⁶² In St. Petersburg, Sazonov told the Austrian Ambassador that the Serbian declaration of 6 April was sufficiently clear and loyal,⁴⁶³ and he did not think there was any possibility of a conflict in that respect. In Germany, Austria's message was taken very seriously, but an attempt was made to restrain her impulsiveness. If the tone of 1908 were to be used again, Berlin said, it would achieve no concessions but only lead to war.⁴⁶⁴ But in the matter of the Albanian autonomy and Scutari, which not only presented the only success of Austria's Balkan policy, but were also bound up with her prestige, Germany was decidedly on her side. Germany wanted the decision of the Powers and Austria's demands to be executed as soon as possible, primarily in the interests of the prestige of the Danubian Monarchy. However, Berlin set great store by the attitude of Britain, which assumed the leading part in the settlement of the crisis, and therefore advised Vienna, largely out of consideration for the London Cabinet, not to abandon the concert of Europe. It should also be noted that the Austrian Crown Prince Franz Ferdinand had held a similar view since February, in opposition to Baron Hötzen-dorf, and much more decidedly than Count Berchtold.⁴⁶⁵ St. Petersburg was informed, however, on 7 April that Russia's not sending her ships to take part in the demonstration and the whole attitude

461 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VI, pp. 50-2; *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIV, pp. 651-2.

462 *Ibid.*, pp. 54-5; Poincaré, *L'Europe sous les armes*, pp. 171-4; *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIV, pp. 636-7.

463 *Ibid.*, p. 64.

464 *Ibid.*, pp. 69-70.

465 Cf. Hötzen-dorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, III, p. 236.

of Russian diplomacy made it impossible to adopt more vigorous measures against Montenegro, which had to be undertaken, and that the German government, which had hitherto undoubtedly been very conciliatory, would not consider itself responsible for further consequences in view of the state of mind prevailing in Vienna.⁴⁶⁶

With this in view, Serbia declared on 8 April that she would send no more troops to Scutari so as not to come into conflict with the Great Powers, which from that day onwards turned their peaceable demonstration into a blockade of the whole coast from Bar to the mouth of the Drim, their object being to keep off Serbian military transports, since the Montenegrin government had not yielded (they declared that they looked upon the entire demonstration as a violation of the promised neutrality).⁴⁶⁷ Austria wanted to start the blockade earlier and to extend it to Durres to prevent the landing and movements of the Serbian troops there, but Britain and France did not consent. They did not agree either to the blockade having any other than a "peaceful character", while Austria demanded more vigorous measures (the occupation of some Montenegrin port, the landing of troops, etc.). At the request of the Powers, the Greek government also declared on 9 April that its fleet would take no more Serbian military transports.

The blockade having already begun and having been informed of Austrian intentions, the Russian government instructed its Minister to advise the Serbs to withdraw their army completely from Scutari and to use their influence with Cetinje to the same end. At a Cabinet meeting on 9 April, the Serbian government decided to cease hostilities at Scutari and to repeat the declaration that their army would be withdrawn from Albania "after the conclusion of peace and the settlement of the questions connected with it." The Austrian and German Ministers in Belgrade informed their governments that a rumour was spreading in Belgrade that the Vienna government had announced to St. Petersburg that Austria had prepared an ultimatum for Serbia and threatened to send her troops into the Sanjak, if the Serbs did not withdraw from Scutari.⁴⁶⁸ The decision would accordingly be made as a result of direct pressure, just like in 1909, and for that reason it aroused much indignation. On 12 April, the Serbian government communicated its decision to all the Great Powers with the proviso that its army would defend itself, if the troops in Scutari attempted any kind of sortie. Montenegro continued the struggle on its own. To induce it to yield, Italy proposed, among other measures, that in the interests of the dynasty and

466 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIV, pp. 632-3.

467 Benckendorff, *Diplomatischen Schriftwechsel*, III, p. 156.

468 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VI, p. 90; *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIV, p. 661.

in view of Montenegro's susceptibilities, the Montenegrins might be allowed to enter Scutari temporarily, only to have the town later handed over to the troops of the Great Powers. But Count Berchtold would have none of it.⁴⁶⁹

After a protracted siege, Scutari fell to the Montenegrins on 22 April. Its fall aroused much indignation in Vienna. Montenegro's action was considered a flouting of the Great Powers that should not go unpunished as such. The prestige of the great Powers had been violated, and they must be given satisfaction. Berchtold was this time resolute not to wait so long again. On 23 April, he demanded from the Great Powers to either occupy or bombard the Montenegrin ports, if the Montenegrin government did not leave Scutari by a fixed date. If this were not done, he declared that Austria herself would force the Montenegrins to evacuate. He also demanded that the decision of the Powers in that respect be made within two days at the most.⁴⁷⁰ The Austrian Minister in Cetinje, Baron Giesl, proposed that Cetinje be taken as soon as possible by a surprise attack. "If Montenegro were to be honoured with a declaration of war, the breaking off of relations, declaration of war and attack should take place at the same time."⁴⁷¹

Independently of this, it was repeated at the London Conference on 23 April that the occupation of Scutari by no means affected the previous decision of the Powers and that Montenegro must hand Scutari over to them as soon as possible. But no date was fixed for that at the proposal of Russia. Two days later, at Austria's insistence, the decision was made to tighten the blockade, if Montenegro returned a negative answer to the note of the Powers. But Austria's proposal to land marines on the Montenegrin soil was not accepted. The Powers of the Triple Entente were agreed on that point and tried to gain some advantage for Montenegro at the last moment, in order to facilitate the cession of Scutari over which so much blood had been shed and which had become a matter of honour. This was particularly felt by the Russians, among whom the Slavophile element was very active and dissatisfied with Sazonov's policy of concessions. The Russian ministers in Belgrade and Athens, Hartwig and Demidov respectively, could not refrain from responding to salutes on the occasion of the celebrations after the fall of Scutari. Sazonov himself, who had used gross words of reproach against the Montenegrin government, began to waver for a while and to declare that the fall of Scutari had changed the situation. He would probably have persisted in this attitude had not France strenuously opposed it, as it feared major complications and insisted, together

469 Ibid., pp. 126-7.

470 Ibid., p. 215; cf. Benckendorff, *Diplomatischen Schriftwechsel*, III, pp. 164-5.

471 *Zwei Jahrzehnte*, p. 244.

with Britain, that once made decision had to be respected.⁴⁷² Nevertheless, throughout the crisis he would not pronounce himself in favour of a more drastic, coercive measures against Montenegro. Montenegro counted on such an attitude and on the influence of the King's two daughters married to the powerful Russian Grand Dukes, while some Russian diplomats also hoped that with the fall of Scutari Austria would not readily decide on extreme measures.

But this time Austria was resolute. To messages from St. Petersburg that all measures had not yet been tried with Montenegro and that it was not necessary to resort to the most drastic ones, a curt reply came from the Austrian capital to the effect that Austria's patience was at the end. King Nicholas's suggestions that Austria and Montenegro should come to a direct understanding were rejected too. Even Emperor Franz Joseph was in favour of energetic measures; Prince Montenuovo informed the German Ambassador that the general idea that the aged Emperor was unconditionally in favour of peace was by no means correct.⁴⁷³ After 26 April, Franz Ferdinand agreed with him too.⁴⁷⁴ On 24 April, the German Government also adopted the Austrian view. Emperor Wilhelm II himself noted that Austria's attitude was quite comprehensible, for the Montenegrin occupation of Scutari, "which was a direct blow to the Powers, would ruin the only political achievement of Austria, the creation of Albania".⁴⁷⁵ The German Ambassador in Vienna wrote to his government on 24 April that "it is indeed high time for the Monarchy to let Europe, and even more its own nationalities, see that it is not a corpse that others might dispose of as they please ... The internal process of disintegration would gain the impetus of a torrent, if the Monarchy were now unable to ensure the respect for its will ... If the Monarchy failed to carry out its wishes now, it would mean the defeat of the German tribe which is still predominant, for it would thereby admit its impotence to uphold the Monarchy in its status of a Great Power. The Slav tide in the Monarchy could no longer be resisted and unity could hardly be preserved for long".⁴⁷⁶ In the general excitement, as can be seen, the Scutari question had become, without any real necessity, a matter of conflict and prestige between the Germandom and Slavdom, and even a matter of the very existence of the Monarchy. The German government then came out with the declaration that it would no longer attempt to restrain Austria from a separate action, if the other Powers did not agree to use more energetic means against

472 Poincaré, *L'Europe sous les armes*, p. 178; *Documents diplomatiques français*, p. 167; *Der diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, III, p. 138.

473 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIV, p. 739.

474 Hötendorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, III, p. 275.

475 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIV, p. 724.

476 *Ibid.*, p. 732.

Montenegro, or if they hesitated to grant a mandate to the Vienna government. However, Berchtold did not think of asking for a mandate from the Powers, for he considered that not getting it, on which he could count on, would make Austria's diplomatic position considerably more difficult. The same view was taken in Berlin, but the cooperation, if not of all the Powers, at least of Italy and Britain was preferable. This, however, was not to be obtained easily. The King of Britain himself was in favour of exhausting other diplomatic means first. Italy too hesitated for a long time. The Prime Minister, Giolitti, and the public opinion were decidedly against any joint action by Italy and Austria or any action by Austria alone.⁴⁷⁷ San Giuliano did not hesitate to tell the Austrian Ambassador some unpleasant truths as to the way in which the whole matter would be interpreted, and to warn him frankly that a separate action on the part of Austria might lead to all sorts of entanglements and dangers. In the event of Austrian action, moreover, he invoked the previously mentioned seventh point of the Triple Alliance treaty, which provided for compensation for Italy. To the German Ambassador, who urgently advised cooperation, he said clearly that by her action Austria would acquire, either with or without a mandate, a preponderant influence in Albania, to which Italy could not be indifferent and which in the long run might lead to war.⁴⁷⁸ If any steps had to be taken against Montenegro on account of Scutari, after all other means had been exhausted, San Giuliano wanted that, if Italy and Austria were to cooperate, everything should be determined in advance: the plan of operations, their respective contingents, the landing places, etc. In no event could he agree to an attack on the Montenegrin territory. Russia, Britain and France held similar views on this matter, because a punitive expedition against Montenegro was not intended, but rather the seizure of Scutari in order to carry out the will of the Powers concerning the future of that town.

If action were taken, however, it could not be limited to Scutari alone, but would involve other questions connected with Albania, in which all was still in a state of ferment. Italy openly pointed out that it was interested in the fate of southern Albania and that in the event of Austrian action in the north, it could and indeed would have to act there. For Austria, Italy's attitude opened up new questions, which complicated matters considerably, but she still proceeded on the road she had embarked upon, not even fully conscious, so it seems, of the dangers to which she might expose herself on account of this cooperation. In military circles, judging by what Krobatin told Tschirschky to the latter's great surprise, there was even an inclination to accept Italy's terms, if only in order to

477 Cf. Hötzendorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, III, p. 287.

478 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIV, p. 772.

obtain a free hand to take action against Montenegro and later against Serbia. On 27 April, Count Berchtold confirmed that to the German Ambassador, naturally on the assumption that Austria-Hungary would gain new territories in the Balkans at the expense of the Serbs.⁴⁷⁹ Berlin recommended Vienna two or three times to accept Italy's collaboration, essentially under the terms proposed by Rome, but to avoid action against the Serbs because of Russia, unless Serbia herself provoked it.

Determined to fight, Austria declared resolutely in London on 28 April that she maintained her right to take separate action, and on the same day, the German Ambassador in St. Petersburg asked for the consent of the Russian government to grant a mandate for the purpose of disciplining Montenegro jointly to Austria and Italy, or to Austria alone. This was requested in London as well. But Sazonov at once declared that he considered such a demand impossible and he insisted that Austria's separate action might lead to a European war in view of the popular mood.⁴⁸⁰

The Russian government then recommended Serbia, on 29 April, to abstain from any action, if the Austrian army entered Scutari and to avoid giving the Vienna government any excuse whatever to attack her. "That is exactly what it is looking for", the message from St. Petersburg read, "because Serbia is primary and Montenegro secondary [target]."⁴⁸¹ The French and British governments repeated the same. That they were right in this appreciation can be clearly seen from the statements made by Hötzendorf and Krobatin to the German Military Attaché, which confirmed that they wanted to include Serbia in their attack on Montenegro.⁴⁸² As early as 21 April, the Austrian Ambassador in London circulated rumours that Serbian troops in Montenegrin uniforms took part in the fighting at Scutari to prepare public opinion for an attack on both states.⁴⁸³ The German Military Attaché, Major Kageneck, reported on 28 April a plan of the military circles for Montenegro's and Serbia's further fate. The former country, according to Hötzendorf, would simply be annexed by Austria, "as a valuable bridge to Albania", while Serbia would be divided, the Sanjak and western Serbia going to Austria, the Nish and Pirot regions to Bulgaria, and eastern Serbia between the Morava and Timok rivers to Romania.⁴⁸⁴

479 Ibid., p. 754.

480 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VI, pp. 269, 283, 302-3; *Documents diplomatiques. Les affaires balkaniques*, II, p. 171; *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIV, p. 759.

481 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from St. Petersburg, 16 April, conf. no. 1754; *Der diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, III, pp. 141-2.

482 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIV, pp. 730, 744, 754; Hötzendorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, III, p. 272.

483 Benckendorff, *Diplomatischen Schriftwechsel*, III, p. 163.

484 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIV, p. 764.

The dangerous situation started to improve after 30 April. On that date, the Montenegrin government replied to the Powers that they would not give up Scutari and that they would discuss its fate with them only when the time came for the final peace negotiations. This statement would no doubt have made a bad impression on all concerned, as it embittered Sazonov, had not the Montenegrin Minister in London called on Sir Edward Grey to ask him on behalf of his government what compensation, territorial or economic, Montenegro could obtain if it gave up Scutari. Grey rightly saw this step as a willingness to negotiate and the conviction that Montenegro would after all have to abandon Scutari.⁴⁸⁵ Therefore, he considered this, just like other representatives of the Entente Powers, a turn for the better and urged the Vienna government to wait for negotiations on this point. He hesitated, of course, to authorize it to take separate action against Montenegro in the meantime and endeavoured at the meeting of the Ambassadors in London on 2 May to limit Austria's possible action by requesting Vienna to make a clear statement as to how far it meant to go in forcing Montenegro to give up Scutari. The French Ambassador, Paul Cambon, added that he considered that such an action, undertaken because of Scutari, could not be at present extended to Serbia.⁴⁸⁶ But under the pressure of the war party, Austria would not consider this change in the situation. Vienna rejected any idea of further territorial concessions at the expense of Albania, and it was only prepared to negotiate about economic compensation if Montenegro first submitted to the will of the Great Powers. In principle, the Viennese view might be deemed justifiable in the interest of the prestige of the Great Powers and their decisions, but the attitude of the Vienna government in this particular question had an unpleasant effect on Cetinje and other capitals, where it was known what offers Austria had previously made and how she had haggled over the cession of Scutari to Montenegro, for it was clearly felt, as Baron Hötendorf has indeed admitted in several places in his memoirs, that the Scutari question was more of a pretext to crush Montenegro and Serbia than a real cause for such intense hostility. As early as 9 April, Hötendorf declared that there were only two ways left open to Montenegro: to take side with either Serbia or Austria. And it could count on the help of the latter only if it unified with her as a state.⁴⁸⁷

At the Cabinet meeting on 2 May, Berchtold said while explaining the general situation that Scutari had become "the key to their Balkan programme" because of Albania, since he now considered that without it that country could

485 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VI, p. 307.

486 *Documents diplomatiques. Les affaires balkaniques, 1912-1914*, II, p. 183.

487 Hötendorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, III, p. 246. Cf. also pp. 249-50, 269-71.

not exist and because of the necessity to repress the Serbian element; at the same time, Scutari became a question involving the prestige of the Monarchy on which depended all its moral strength, its reputation, might and influence. For the sake of this programme and of her prestige, Austria was ready to dissociate herself from the other Powers and to embark upon a war with Montenegro, and perhaps with Serbia. The War Minister, Krobatin, expressed the most radical point of view. Italy was obviously making matters difficult, and Austria must therefore either use her own energy to force Italy into cooperation, or take action on her own initiative. Such action must at once be extended by the occupation of the Sanjak and northern Albania. The Joint Minister of Finance, Biliński, was of a similar opinion, only he proposed that the war should at once be extended to Serbia, which had helped Montenegro and with the aid of which Scutari had been taken, and that the Serbian people should simply be annexed to Austria-Hungary. Berchtold replied that he found this idea attractive, but that Italy would not allow any such disturbance of the balance of power, and that it might provoke Russia as well. The Hungarian Minister of Finance, Dr. Teleszky, who passed a very unfavourable opinion on the financial situation of the Dual Monarchy, was decidedly against "a pretext being sought to bring Serbia into the war." The Hungarian Prime Minister, Dr. Lukács, asserted that the crux of the matter was not so much the allotment of Scutari, but rather how to solve the Yugoslav problem in general. In Biliński's proposal, he already perceived the origins of the trialism, which was so distasteful to the Hungarians. With the Serbs, there would be a Slav majority in the Danubian Monarchy, which would mean an end of dualism, and to that the Hungarians, naturally, could not easily reconcile themselves. Lukács was, like Teleszky, against seeking a pretext for an attack, and at the same time he insisted that nothing should be done without a European mandate, but that the matter should certainly be speeded up, "for the longer we hesitate, the greater the danger of an internal hemorrhage". The result of the whole conference was that war against Montenegro was considered almost inevitable and, in the way of preparation, certain sums were approved and the calling-up of the Bosnian reserves decided upon. At the same time, note was taken of the possibility of cooperation with Italy, but with many reservations of a general nature in respect of its terms ("so that their feet should not be fettered").⁴⁸⁸

In the meantime, Italy wavered both because of its own insecurity and in deference to the Russian wish. Russia made it perfectly clear that she would in no event agree to Austria-Hungary and Italy together undertaking any measures whatsoever in Albania, which had been created as an autonomous state

488 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VI, pp. 324-36.

under the control of all the Powers, nor would she agree to a European mandate being granted them for that purpose.⁴⁸⁹ On the contrary, she declared “categorically” that she also wanted to take part in the Albanian expedition in order to restrain Austria’s activities or perhaps even turn the tables on her. Sazonov informed Count Pourtalès that Albania had been created with the cooperation of the Powers and that Russia could not watch without protest the Italo-Austrian bargaining about the division of spheres of interest in that country. He further warned Paris and London that peace could only be preserved if, in addition to preventing unilateral action, any attempt by any Power to institute the right of exclusive mediation or political supremacy in any of the Balkan states were equally prevented.⁴⁹⁰ On 4 May, France also adopted this Russian view,⁴⁹¹ being concerned with the critical situation. The Russo-Austrian conflict, which was looming on the horizon, might even then have resulted in unforeseeable complications, had not Montenegro yielded at the last moment. Even then, on 5 May, Sazonov said to Pourtalès that the Powers had created Albania to be free, and had not driven out the Serbs and Greeks only to allow Austria and Italy to replace them.

San Giuliano was particularly indignant when he received news from the Italian Ambassador in Vienna, Duke Avarna, that Berchtold would not state clearly whether Austria was thinking of retaining some part of Montenegrin territory. If Austria obtained on that occasion part of Lovćen, which she had previously demanded, the cooperation of Italy would be contrary to its own interests and would provoke violent protests from the people against the government and its participation in an unpopular action. There had never been any real confidence between these two allies. Italy even suspected that, after having finally entered into Scutari, Austria might remain there under the pretext of maintaining order. Rome therefore insisted that Austria was not left alone, that not even the two of them should be left alone, but rather that all the Powers should take part in the whole matter.⁴⁹² In order to gain time, the Italian government, which Vienna and Berlin constantly urged to cooperate, declared on 1 May that they needed another fourteen days to prepare an expeditionary force and that they could only enter into action on 14 or 15 May, if forced to do so.

489 Ibid., pp. 344, 388.

490 *Sbornik diplomaticheskikh dokumentov*, p. 83.

491 *Der diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, III, pp. 142-3, 145.

492 *Documents diplomatiques. Les affaires balkaniques, 1912-1914*, II, p. 186; *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIV, p. 798; *Der diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, III, pp. 148, 150-3.

To make the generally unfavourable impression worse, Berchtold issued orders on 3 May that Hungarian officials alone should replace the Turkish administration on the Danubian island of Ada Kala. Although the island was small and of no sufficient importance to deserve mention in its own right, the arbitrary Austrian action was nevertheless characteristic of their methods – Berchtold did not inform of it even the friendly Turkish government, although the island was under their supreme authority, let alone the Great Powers or the neighbouring Serbia, the shore of which faced the island. It was only on 13 May that he instructed the Austrian Ministers abroad to explain the incident and even then only in case a foreign representative brought up the matter.⁴⁹³

Seeing that Vienna was prepared to resort to extreme measures, all representatives of the other Great Powers urged King Nicholas on 3 and 4 May to give up Scutari, as otherwise Austrian action was inevitable. In advising him to do so, they promised certain economic advantages to Montenegro; the British Minister even gave a written note to that effect. The German and Italian Ministers further informed the King that the Austrian army would cross the Montenegrin border on 5 May.⁴⁹⁴ In his memoirs, Giesl has expressed the opinion that the German Minister formed the impression from a conversation with him on 3 May that the Austrian army was already on its way on Cetinje, and that his statement had a marked effect on the Montenegrin Court.⁴⁹⁵ Russia again asked the Serbian government to bring its influence to bear on Cetinje and draw attention “to the great and serious consequences.” On 4 May, Pašić sent a telegram to the Montenegrin government in which he suggested Montenegro to yield, but to point out the great sacrifices it had suffered to acquire Scutari and which it was now making in abandoning the town for the sake of European peace, and to seek in return some territorial compensation in another direction, to the south and north of the Scutari lake on both banks of the Bojana river. “According to our appreciation of the present political situation, Austria is prepared to undertake an isolated action, which she had eagerly looked forward to, to make up for the opportunity lost at the beginning of the war, to raise her prestige, to minimize the military successes of Montenegro, and to weaken Montenegro for a long period of years, and at the same time to create the conditions for imposing on Albania such an organization as Austrian interests dictate. The sacrifice is great, but it must be made

493 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VI, pp. 426-7. Russia later endeavored, on the strength of this act of Austria, to obtain recognition of some territorial compensation for Montenegro, but she failed. See Mihailović Pašiću, Rim, 24.5.1913, Pov. Br. 131, in: D. Lukač, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije 1903-1914*, knj. VI, sv. 2, Beograd 1981, pp. 324-325.

494 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Telegram from Cetinje, 22 April, conf. no. 1834.

495 *Zwei Jahrzehnte*, p. 247.

when the whole of Europe demands it. Our case in respect of the Littoral was the same." Under the influence of all these reports and counsels, and faced with the danger of an Austrian attack, Montenegro yielded on 4 May and informed Sir Edward Grey, as the chairman of the London Conference, that it was handing Scutari over to the Powers unconditionally. His own honour, King Nicholas said, as well as that of his people, did not allow him to bow to the wishes of a single Power, and he therefore placed the fate of Scutari in the hands of all. Berchtold, however, demanded that Montenegro's withdrawal be communicated directly to Austria-Hungary, either orally or in writing, in order to clearly emphasize that it was Austrian pressure that had forced Montenegro to give way.⁴⁹⁶ The military circles and the Austrian Prime Minister, Count Stürgkh, further urged that even after Montenegro had yielded an ultimatum be addressed to its government.⁴⁹⁷ Baron Giesl also proposed, always inclined to extreme measures, that an ultimatum be presented to Montenegro to force it to "bow" before Austria-Hungary as the Power, "which had made the greatest sacrifices".⁴⁹⁸ These men did not care so much about the fact that Montenegro yielded as that it be known that it was Austria that had brought that about, for they considered that this contributed to the growth of her prestige. In fact, it only showed how strong a desire was in Vienna to humiliate the enemy and make the blow more painful.

Relations between Austria-Hungary and Montenegro were so bad afterwards that they could not be worse. The whole of Montenegro had received direct proof that it was only because of Austria that Montenegro had been deprived of the main fruits of its victory despite so many casualties. There was no possibility that their relations would improve for a long time to come; the blow had been too great. Neither did Austria, dissatisfied with Montenegro's attitude, bother about the negative effects of her action. The question of territorial compensation for Montenegro, after it had abandoned Scutari, was rejected in Vienna *a limine*.

Austria's relations with Russia also became aggravated on this account. The German Minister in St. Petersburg reported to his government that indignation against Austria-Hungary had spread to wide circles in Russia, and not only the Pan-Slavs. Sazonov said that he did not yet dare to hope that the crisis was coming to an end. "He is, moreover, convinced that Austria-Hungary will not yet leave Europe to settle down, but will come forward again with further surprises." Dissatisfaction with Austrian diplomacy went so far that the Austrian

496 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VI, p. 360.

497 Hötendorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, III, p. 298.

498 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VI, p. 374.

Ambassador was avoided in social intercourse and almost all personal relations with the Embassy were broken off. "The task of those factors which are working for peace here will become increasingly difficult",⁴⁹⁹ the German Ambassador wrote gloomily and with certain foreboding of the serious crises to come.

499 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIV, pp. 810-1.

Austria and the Clash between the Allies

Austrian diplomacy was very anxious to break up the Balkan Alliance and to win over Bulgaria to its side. "Our policy from the beginning of the crisis aimed at breaking up the Balkan Alliance", A. Hoyos, the head of Berchtold's Cabinet admitted on 18 June 1913 in a letter to the Austrian Minister in Bucharest.⁵⁰⁰ The Vienna government, therefore, endeavoured to present itself in Sofia as a special friend, expecting naturally the same attitude on Bulgaria's side. Knowing Bulgarian aspirations and the old rivalries between the Balkan states, Viennese diplomacy started from the first to talk in Sofia about the San Stefano borders of Bulgaria. On 28 January 1913, the Austrian Minister in Sofia, Count Tarnowski, received explicit instructions to inform the Bulgarian government that Austria was resolved, under certain conditions, to work in favour of Bulgaria alone getting Salonica.⁵⁰¹ Soon afterwards, on 9 February, Berchtold promised the Bulgarians "under certain conditions" his "full diplomatic support" in order to receive Bitolj and Ohrid, in addition to Salonica.⁵⁰² We have already discussed Austria's negotiations with Danev, on whom Austrian hints had a considerable effect. They had the same effect on others too, and visibly envenomed Serbo-Bulgarian relations. As early as 4 February, the Bulgarian Military Attaché declared to the Chief of the Austrian General Staff that Bulgaria, in the event of war between Austria and Serbia, would not carry out her obligations as Serbia's ally on the grounds that she had already suffered major casualties.⁵⁰³ On 11 March, King Ferdinand's secretary Dobrovich, told the Austrian Minister that Bulgaria would certainly not side with Serbia against Austria and that the Balkan Alliance would break up after the conclusion of peace, if not before.⁵⁰⁴

In connection with the dispute between Bulgaria and Romania, which demanded a strip of the Dobruja in view of the balance of power in the Balkans, Count Berchtold proposed that the Bulgarians be assured of Salonica in return for their possible cession of Silistria. Germany opposed this proposal, deciding

⁵⁰⁰ *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VI, p. 664.

⁵⁰¹ *Ibid.*, V, pp. 575-6. The report that Danev sent on 22 December 1912 to Sofia from London to the effect that Serbia had begged Austria for an outlet to the Adriatic through Bitolj and Korča was a sheer fabrication. See Toshev, *Balkanskit voini*, II, p. 95.

⁵⁰² *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, V, p. 684.

⁵⁰³ Hötendorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, III, p. 164.

⁵⁰⁴ *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, V, p. 929.

as a matter of principle that the Powers should not interfere in the partition of the conquered territories between the Balkan states.⁵⁰⁵ The Vienna government, nevertheless, repeated their proposal on 5 March, particularly opposing the German view adopted as a matter of principle. They pointed out that Austria was unconditionally of the opinion that “every territorial change in the Balkans should be subject to the revision of the Powers.” Every change in the Balkans, Berchtold explained, directly concerned the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy as the nearest neighbour; Austria had agreed that the war should be localized, but she had not promised to refrain from using diplomatic influence in matters that might arise from its settlement. “It is quite justifiable that we are interested in breaking up the Balkan Alliance, but in so doing it is not sufficient for us to separate the Greeks from the Bulgarians; we must certainly win over one of the two Slav states to our side.” Berchtold wanted to win over Bulgaria, for Vienna had no “serious differences” with her, and the Bulgaro-Serbo-Montenegrin chain, under Russian auspices, would present a “fatal danger” to the Danubian Monarchy. Berchtold’s arguments influenced German diplomats, but did not alter their decisions regarding this question, because Emperor Wilhelm II was and remained on the side of the Greeks, largely for family reasons connected with the Greek dynasty.⁵⁰⁶

In a personal letter to the German Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Jagow, on 13 March, Berchtold tried again to explain Austria’s policy and to obtain Germany’s consent. Austria was anxious that there should be no break between Romania and Bulgaria. The former was an Austrian ally and the latter her future supporter. Berchtold therefore tried to see to it that Romania was satisfied and that Bulgaria, with the acquisition of Salonica and most of Macedonia, did not consider the concessions made to Romania humiliating. Romania and Bulgaria together with Turkey, he hoped, would form a chain that would prevent the penetration of Russian influence in the west. With the Serbs, there could be no agreement. The Serbs not only wanted to have access to the sea, but also aimed to obtain the Serbo-Croat provinces of the Danubian Monarchy. The annexation of Serbia to Austria, if it were even possible, would only mean that the Serbs would wait for an opportune moment and then achieve their aspirations with even greater success. Serbia might be brought to reason only by the danger that would threaten her if she were pressed on all

505 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, V, p. 868; cf. *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIV, pp. 444-6.

506 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, V, pp. 999-1000; *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIV, pp. 459-62, 466-8; Baernreither, *Fragmente eines politischen Tagebuches*, p. 217.

sides by Austria, Romania, Bulgaria and Albania, all intent on strengthening themselves at her expense and making irredentist claims in her midst.⁵⁰⁷

Berchtold's explanation was a clear expression of the political conceptions of the Danubian Monarchy and the motives behind its foreign policy. It also showed how deep a gulf there was between Austria-Hungary and Serbia and that their clash was inevitable sooner or later. But if we look deeper into the matter, we also see clearly that in order to put a stop to Serbia's activities in the future, Austria worked against her on all sides in the present. In preparing her defenses, she was in fact making an attack and initiating diplomatic hostilities. Jagow himself wrote on 3 March that in Vienna matters connected with Serbia were like a red rag to a bull.⁵⁰⁸ The Danubian Monarchy's diplomacy became impatient and lost its calm, despite having immense power at its disposal; it introduced into the whole political situation a feeling of irritation which afterwards spread to all circles in and around the Balkans.

Austria's offers and recommendations were well received in Sofia, particularly in the Court and in some sections of the government. Geshov maintained a reserved attitude throughout. The Austrian Minister, Count Tarnowski, started his lively activities in Sofia, inviting all the politicians from both the government and the opposition to expatiate on the ideas and offers of his government. The main tenor of all these conversations, apart from the Romano-Bulgarian questions, was as follows: Bulgaria ought to rely on Austria, because Russia, for many reasons, preferred Serbia to Bulgaria. The common interests of Austria and Bulgaria lay in reducing Serbia to the least extensive borders. The Bulgarian politicians, Radoslavov and Genadiev, were determined enemies of the Serbs and they sought for Austrian assistance in the struggle with them.⁵⁰⁹ Dobrovich raised the prospect of that conflict with the intention of securing Bulgaria's rear by coming to a previous agreement with Romania, with Austrian help.⁵¹⁰ Austria was convinced due to her own estimates and Bulgarian assurances that Serbia would be beaten in that conflict, and she was thus looking forward to it.

When in March the Conference of the Ambassadors of the Great Powers met in St. Petersburg to settle the Bulgaro-Romanian dispute, Count Berchtold instructed Count Thurn, in spite of Germany's opposition, to demand Salonica as a compensation for Bulgaria in return for her cession of Silistria to Romania, or to demand an indemnity in Macedonia if this combination failed. The latter

507 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, V, pp. 937-40; *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIV, pp. 495-9.

508 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIV, p. 446.

509 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, V, pp. 1003-3.

510 *Ibid.*, pp. 1036-7.

compensation would be granted mainly at the expense of Serbia. This move was designed to affect Russia, as she would be placed in an awkward position of having to offend either Serbia or Bulgaria. The representatives of the Triple Entente, however, rejected this proposal unanimously, seeing clearly through it.⁵¹¹

On 14 and 16 April, Berchtold authorized the Austrian Minister in Sofia to promise the Bulgarian government Austrian support in the partition of the conquered territory and to draw attention to the close relations between Serbia and Greece.⁵¹² At the same time, he worked actively in Bucharest to bring about closer cooperation between Romania and Bulgaria against Serbia. But while his policy in Sofia met with complete success, it broke down completely in Bucharest. Being Austria's ally, Romania felt deeply injured because Austria treated Bulgaria on the same footing as Romania in the Bulgaro-Romanian dispute lest she should alienate or lose Bulgaria by her support of Romania's interests. The impression was sometimes given that Vienna was more anxious not to offend Bulgaria than to satisfy Romania. Instead of the energetic attitude taken in the Albanian affair against Serbia, there was certain attitude of reserve when Bulgaria was in question, and to this Bucharest largely ascribed the little success with which its claims met.

As for Bulgaria's relations with her other Balkan allies, Austria played in Sofia the role of instigator. On the instructions of his government, Count Tarnowski told Geshov on 17 April that "Bulgaria might hope to realize her aspirations only if she showed herself to be determined." "We tell you what you should do in order to succeed, for we should not like you to be plundered by the Serbs and Greeks". "If you merely talk and expect generosity from your allies and from Europe, you will get nothing."⁵¹³ Count Tarnowski himself wrote clearly and unequivocally on 19 April that reconciliation between the allies "would at once spoil our chances".⁵¹⁴ The direction that further negotiations took can be clearly seen from the words of Dobrovich, King Ferdinand's secretary, to Tarnowski on 20 April to the effect that a conflict with Serbia must come, and so must an agreement between Austria and Bulgaria about the partition of Serbia. "That nation must disappear, or there will be no peace."⁵¹⁵ To encourage the Bulgarians in their determination, the Austrian Minister declared in the name of his government that his country could not agree to any solution of the

⁵¹¹ Poincaré, *L'Europe sous les armes*, pp. 175-6.

⁵¹² *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VI, pp. 150-1, 167-9.

⁵¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 175-6.

⁵¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

⁵¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 197.

Balkan question "which in their opinion did not take Bulgaria's interests into sufficient consideration".⁵¹⁶

Fearing these intrigues and underhand activities, the French government proposed that the Powers declare they would not interfere in the disputes between the Balkan states except in cases where their own special interests were harmed. The Italian Ambassador communicated this proposal to Vienna on 23 April with his own recommendation. Germany was also in agreement with it. But Berchtold at once declared that he would not have his hands tied and that this proposal reminded him of that made by Poincaré at the beginning of the war, which had obliged Austria, to a large extent, to pursue a peaceful policy.⁵¹⁷

With the conclusion of peace between the Allies and Turkey on 30 May in London, the question of the partition of the conquered territories between the Allies was now on the table. The dispute between them entered an acute phase.

To bring about a change of opinion in Berlin in favour of Bulgaria and to the detriment of Serbia, Count Berchtold explained at length on 2 May Austria's interests not to be inactive in the matter. Austria and Bulgaria, he reasoned, had a common interest in preventing further strengthening of Serbia. Austria also needed Bulgaria's cooperation against Serbia to silence the dissatisfaction of her Slav subjects, who might otherwise see an anti-Slav tendency in her struggle with Serbia. Moreover, the cooperation of Bulgaria would strengthen those elements in that country that were desirous of freeing themselves of Russia's influence. "All in all, we are convinced that Sofia is the point on which the influence of the Triple Alliance must be brought to bear to prevent the Balkan crisis from ending unfavourably for the Alliance and in favour of Russia and the Entente through skilful exploitation of the present constellation."⁵¹⁸ However, Germany did not agree with this view, estimating the situation more correctly and with less prejudice. To win over Bulgaria in so overt a fashion, Berlin warned, would mean losing not only Greece but also Romania, which had hitherto been firmly sided with them and the importance of which it valued more than that of Bulgaria.

To prevent Bulgaria from yielding to the Russian influence, because she feared a joint action on the part of Serbia, Romania and Greece, and for reasons of Slav sentiment and a feeling of isolation, Berchtold decided on 16 May formally to offer her Austria's support. The price was that Bulgaria should "not play Russia's game", but rather to take into account Austria's relations with

⁵¹⁶ Ibid., p. 213.

⁵¹⁷ Ibid., p. 220.

⁵¹⁸ Ibid., p. 220; *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIV, pp. 820-4.

Romania and abandon the Balkan Alliance. Vienna expected that Bulgaria would let it know her wishes as to the nature and manner of Austria's promised support.⁵¹⁹ Tarnowski made this communication not only to the Prime Minister, but also to all the leaders of the opposition to influence further development of events more directly, not hesitating to agitate against Geshov's Russophile government, which still showed that it took notice of the wishes and recommendations of St. Petersburg. Radoslavov and Genadiev said on 31 May that they blamed Geshov's government for not settling scores with Serbia once for all, but being satisfied to take only what Bulgaria was entitled to under the terms of the treaty of alliance; they would personally be in favour of partitioning Serbia with Austria-Hungary and Romania.⁵²⁰ These ideas had certainly come to their ears from Austria-Hungarian circles. On 28 May, Baron Hoetzendorf wrote to Berchtold, proposing to carry out the partition of Serbia in such a manner that Romania would obtain the Krajina, Bulgaria the Pirot area and Macedonia, and Austria the rest of Serbia together with Niš and the Sanjak of Novi Pazar.⁵²¹

The German Emperor was from the beginning on the side of the Allies against the Bulgarians, and this spoilt all Austria's plans and combinations on that occasion. There were several reasons for the Emperor's attitude, but the following two were the most important ones: his close family relationship with the Greek Court (his sister Sophia was the wife of the Crown Prince, later King, Constantine) and his unconcealed antipathy for the King of Bulgaria, of whom he had a very bad opinion. As early as 13 March 1913, he said to the Austrian Military Attaché that the struggle of the Serbs and Greeks against the Bulgarians was on the horizon, that this was "good news", and that it would be good if Austria came to an agreement with Serbia before the conflict broke out.⁵²² On 15 March, he repeated this to the Austrian Ambassador.⁵²³ J. M. Baernreither had the impression that Austria was working to encircle Serbia and Germany to encircle Bulgaria. On a telegram from Sofia dated 3 March, in which the German Minister reported Spalajković's statements that Serbia had concluded an agreement with Greece and that she intended to approach Turkey and Romania, Emperor Wilhelm II noted his approval.⁵²⁴

519 Ibid., pp. 316-20.

520 Ibid., pp. 574-5.

521 Hötendorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, III, p. 334. He had made a similar proposal before, on 27 January. Ibid., p. 52. This had been discussed for some months.

522 Ibid., V, p. 942; Baernreither, *Fragmente eines politischen Tagebuches*, p. 217. The Emperor had made a note of the same idea before, on a report dated 5 March.

523 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, V, pp. 979-80.

524 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIV, p. 443; cf. pp. 456, 462.

Like a number of German diplomats, he thought that such a form of the Balkan Alliance, if it were realized, might be of considerable advantage to the interests of the Triple Alliance. He once even suggested to the Austrian Ambassador that he himself should mediate between the Danubian Monarchy and Serbia so that this combination might be realized,⁵²⁵ and Tschirschky spoke in the same spirit to Berchtold. But the latter was completely taken up with the idea of winning over Bulgaria at all costs.⁵²⁶ Jagow was of the same opinion as the German Emperor, and on 23 March he wrote along those lines to Berchtold. In advising an agreement with Serbia, he said wisely: "Four million Serbs form a national body which cannot be removed by magic or stifled. Driven into opposition, they will only strengthen the irredentist claims, while a political agreement with the neighbouring Monarchy would certainly lessen that danger, as it is the case in the Romanian question."⁵²⁷ Berchtold, however, stuck to his anti-Serbian policy. He admitted to Baron Tschirschky on 13 March that in her policy towards Serbia Austria had committed "many grave" mistakes; he assured him that the Austrian government would be willing to improve their relations with Serbia – but that the Serbs "did not want an honest reconciliation with Austria-Hungary." "The Serbs are fanatical in their political plans, as are all the Yugoslavs more or less. They dream of a great Serbian state; they have subjected all their decisions to the realization of that dream, and they would never – at least not by peaceful persuasion – renounce the idea of annexing the Yugoslav provinces to their state. The experience of 1908 and 1909 showed that. The annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which did not harm any genuine Serbian interest, but which destroyed the Serbian dream of a great Serbian state stretching to Trieste and the Drava, brought about at that time, as it is well-known, an elementary outburst of fury and hatred against the Monarchy. One must know the soul of the Serbian people to understand Serbian policy, its methods and aspirations. If Austria were to side with Serbia now, she would be obliged, in order to satisfy her, to work for her strengthening and aggrandizement. And no Austrian statesman could do that. Apart from the fact that such a policy would have public opinion in Austria and Hungary against it, with the exception of a few Czechs and Yugoslavs, it is directly dangerous. It would only help create a great Yugoslav state."⁵²⁸ These words of Count Berchtold throw sufficient light on the fundamental policy of the Danubian Monarchy towards Serbia. In addition to his statement to Tschirschky on 9 May to the effect that

525 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, V, p. 1055.

526 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIV, p. 460.

527 *Ibid.*, pp. 548–51; *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, V, pp. 1040–1.

528 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIV, pp. 504–8.

Austria could not remain inactive in the event of a Serbian victory over the Bulgarians, as that would lead to the creation of a still greater Serbia,⁵²⁹ the direction of Viennese policy becomes perfectly clear. Convinced that they were correct in their views on the future, which they hoped to conform to their own conceptions, Austrian politicians destroyed all prospects of an agreement in the present and precipitated the course of events the historical progress of which would otherwise have been much slower, if not perhaps in some respects different.

In an audience with the Serbian Minister, M. Ristić, on 2 April, King Carol spoke of the possibility of and necessity for closer relations between Romania, Greece and Serbia.⁵³⁰ Pašić thereupon authorized Ristić on 15 April to offer an alliance to Romania through the agency of Minister Take Ionescu. The latter spoke of this on 19 April to the Prime Minister, T. Maiorescu. A month later, on 15 May, Romania received a similar offer from the Greek government, which had already decided on an alliance with Serbia and concluded it on 1 June. A military convention between Serbia and Greece had been signed on 14 May. Both the alliance and the convention were of a purely defensive character;⁵³¹ the two countries wanted a similar treaty with Romania as well. These treaties would, on the one hand, offer security from the aggressive intentions of Bulgaria; on the other hand, it was hoped that with the collaboration of Romania the hostility of Austria-Hungary might be, to a large extent, assuaged if not entirely removed. But no formal alliance between Romania, on the one hand, and Serbia and Greece, on the other, was made, although the sympathies of the Romanians were clearly on their side. On 25 May, Take Ionescu explicitly informed the Russian minister that Romania could not remain neutral in respect of Bulgaria, if it came to a conflict between the latter and her allies. The hesitation of Romania to conclude a formal alliance, although the said statement amounted to one, was the result of Austrian pressure. In fact, Vienna constantly warned Bucharest that Austria could not consider closer relations between Serbia and Romania, as that would be contrary to the policy pursued by the Triple Alliance (as if that alliance had any policy at all in that respect!)

529 Ibid., p. 833.

530 Ristić Pašiću, Bukurešt, 3. 4. 1913, Pov. Br. 3406, in: D. Lukač, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije 1903-1914*, knj. VI, sv. 1, Beograd 1981, p. 476.

531 The treaty and the conventions are published in the official Greek collection, *Documents diplomatiques 1913-1917: Traite d'alliance greco-serbe: Invasion germano-bulgare en Macédoine*, Athènes, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 1917, pp. 5-21; cf. in particular p. 27.

and Romania's loyal relations with Austria, which was opposed to Serbia. Such a message couched in very curt terms was dispatched as early as 16 May.⁵³²

Being fully aware of the former close relations between Austria and Romania, Sofia steadily hoped that Austria-Hungary might restrain Romania from action against Bulgaria, and therefore did not show much eagerness completely to satisfy the Romanians and their claims, or to settle their mutual relations. On 16 May, Geshov requested the Austrian Minister to restrain Romania, declaring that Bulgaria could beat the Serbs and Greeks by herself and achieve her objectives. Vienna believed that Romania would act in accordance with Austria's wishes, so Berchtold replied to Sofia the next day in a manner that could reassure the government there.⁵³³ He was therefore much surprised at information provided by Fürstenberg, who had heard from the Romanian King himself on 18 May that in view of the prevailing mood of the Romanian people, no Romanian government could restrain its people from joining the enemies of Bulgaria.⁵³⁴ Taken aback and angry, Berchtold addressed a new message to Bucharest on 2 May to convince both the King and the government of necessity for a different attitude. Among other things, Berchtold said in this message that the people in Bucharest "must be clear in their mind that in the event of a Serbo-Bulgarian conflict we shall be forced to oppose Serbia and, if need be, resist her with force of arms".⁵³⁵ On 27 May, he asked the Berlin government to issue a similar warning to the Romanians, and repeated that Austria "could not suffer peacefully the creation of a Greater Serbia at the expense of Bulgaria".⁵³⁶ The Berlin government considered it its duty to draw Romania's attention to the Austrian view, but it made it clear that it did not insist on it. Berlin's view was that Romania should not conclude an alliance with Serbia, as that would be badly received in Vienna; but Germany had no desire to moderate Romania in her decisions against Bulgaria, for it considered that Romania must weigh her own interests.⁵³⁷ Romania mainly accepted Berlin's message and thereby defused Austria's insistence.

Austria's messages did not have the desired effect in Bucharest. The development of Serbo-Bulgarian relations was there considered from the point of view of Romanian, and not Austrian, interests; Romania decided to pursue her own and not Austria's policy. Vienna's threat on 29 May that Romanian collaboration with Serbia would bring Romania into the "open opposition" to

532 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VI, pp. 436-7.

533 *Ibid.*, pp. 448, 455.

534 *Ibid.*, p. 458.

535 *Ibid.*, p. 490.

536 *Ibid.*, p. 536; *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIV, p. 874.

537 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIV, pp. 876-7.

the Austrian Empire was of no avail.⁵³⁸ On 10 June, the Romanian government informed all the Powers that in the event of a conflict between the Allies they could not remain inactive. And on 18 June, Maiorescu informed the Serbian Minister that Romania, once she decided to take action, would not turn against Serbia. The same day, Take Ionescu also declared that they could not conclude a formal alliance with Serbia, “but even without that their attitude would be the same as if they had a treaty”.⁵³⁹

Austrian military and diplomatic circles were very dissatisfied with the reserved attitude of Germany and often complained that Berlin held them back in this crisis as well. Diplomatic circles were no less indignant at the attitude of Italy. It was believed that if it came to some important decision, Germany would side with Austria; as for Italy, however, this could not be said with any certainty. On the contrary, criticism from that quarter was open and harsh. As early as 7 April, San Giuliano told the German Ambassador that no Italian government would, as Austria's ally, enter a war that she had provoked, as might be the case in the present crisis.⁵⁴⁰ For Austria herself, it was more than awkward to be faced simultaneously with two opponents in her Eastern policy, Russia and Italy. Her annoyed diplomats started therefore at one time to threaten a change in the entire course of Austria's policy. On 11 April, the Austrian Ambassador in Rome received a letter from the Foreign Ministry that hinted at that, along with many reproaches directed against Italy.⁵⁴¹ But Austria's threats were this time of little avail. Rome knew very well that Austria's hands were completely tied as regards Italy as long as the Vienna government was in conflict with Russia. As for Austria's policy towards Serbia, the Austrian Ambassador reported San Giuliano's criticism: “We (i.e. the Austrians) have for some time now, especially during the present crisis, and even more than our claims justified, bullied, menaced, economically pressured, and shown her our hostility in every possible way. It is no wonder then that on the other side of the Sava such hatred of us is gaining ground. The longer we continue this pressure, the greater, naturally, will be the hatred of Serbia for us. From the economic point of view, Serbia used to look to us, but we closed our border to her, waged a customs war against her, and thus not only irritated her, but forced her to look for outlets in some other direction”.⁵⁴² In other words, the Italian government had no intention of following Austria's policy in this

538 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VI, p. 547.

539 Ristić Pašiću, Bukurešt, 19.6.1913, Pov. Br. 281, in: Lukač, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. VI, sv. 2, pp. 525-526.

540 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIV, p. 635.

541 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VI, pp. 111-3.

542 *Ibid.*, p. 601.

direction or of engaging itself unnecessarily for the aims, which were far from its own interests and even indirectly opposed to them.

While Austria urged war in Sofia, Russian diplomacy was doing all in its power to save the Balkan Alliance or at least to prevent the Allies from coming to blows, suggesting an agreement based on mutual concessions. Differences between the Allies, Sazonov warned, might jeopardize all they had gained in the war and would only serve the cause of their enemies. On 25 April, he informed the Russian representatives in the Balkans that all their endeavours should be directed to smoothing over the differences between the Balkan states.⁵⁴³ When this did not succeed, Russia proposed to both parties on 1 May that she arbitrate in their dispute as provided for by the treaty. The role of an arbitrator was by no means an agreeable one, but Russia would undertake it in order to save the Alliance; the renewal of the Alliance would indeed be an "indispensable condition" for her arbitration.⁵⁴⁴ But both parties to the dispute hesitated for a long time. The Serbs unconditionally demanded the revision of the treaty of alliance on the basis of the many modifications which had already been made in it, and which had changed the conditions on which it was concluded, but the Bulgarians refused to make any concessions. St. Petersburg warmly recommended that in the interests of the Balkan peoples themselves their solidarity and their consciousness of the need for cooperation should be preserved; that was more urgent and important than a few Macedonian districts on one side or the other. On 16 (3) May, Sazonov sent the following message to Sofia: "Bulgaria is being called in one direction by her false well-wishers and in the other by Russia." Of the two invitations, it was clear which one was more sincere and more in the interests of the Balkan cause and of the Slav cause in general. Sazonov said prophetically that if Bulgaria followed Vienna's advice, she would be embarking upon a path of political adventure in which she might expect nothing but disappointments.⁵⁴⁵ The Russian Minister in Sofia, Neklyudov, reminded the Bulgarians of the possibility of a Romanian and another Turkish attack, and he said clearly in the name of his government that if Bulgaria provoked war she would forfeit all sympathy in Russia. St. Petersburg constantly recommended negotiations: let the Prime Ministers meet; let the whole situation be re-examined.

To incline Serbia to yield, Sazonov and many Russians told the Serbian representatives that Bulgaria was completing her national unification with the war against Turkey, while Serbia had still to achieve gains in the west, in the

543 *Sbornik diplomaticheskikh dokumentov*, p. 104.

544 *Der diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, III, p. 159.

545 *Sbornik diplomaticheskikh dokumentov*, p. 119; Girginov, *Narodata katastrofa*, p. 135.

lands of Austria-Hungary, and that it was therefore necessary to have behind her a satisfied and friendly Bulgaria. The Serbs answered that this was “the music of the future” and that they must reckon with actualities and defend their interests at every moment, wherever and whenever they appeared. In this connection, a conversation which took place on 26 May between Sazonov and a former Serbian Minister and Pašić’s emissary, Dj. Genčić, was extremely important. “When he (Sazonov) began to speak to me of the brilliant perspectives which are only now opening up for the Serbian people, I answered him”, Genčić reported, “that the Great Powers had upheld the rotten and uncultured Turkish Empire for two whole centuries for the sake of the maintenance of the balance of power in Europe, although Turkey was situated on the very edge of the European Continent. And when two whole centuries were necessary for the settlement of the Turkish question in Europe, how long would be necessary for the settlement of the Austrian question? As a Central European Power, her existence was necessary in a very different sense for the maintenance of the balance of power in Europe. Allow me, Your Excellency to tell you that it is my profound conviction that even your best ally today France would think twice before supporting Russia, if and when she raised the Austrian question. Austria is not Turkey, and after Bethmann Hollweg’s pronouncements in the German parliament on the complete solidarity of Germany and Austria-Hungary and on the possible conflict between the Germandom and Slavdom, believe me that we Serbs should be very naïve, if for a moment we believed it possible to realize in the near future those brilliant prospects which you, Excellence, have just mentioned. To this remark he answered: “Yes, I believe that it is difficult for you Serbs to let go the bird in your hands for the sake of the bird in the bush, but I nonetheless believe in your brilliant future.”⁵⁴⁶

At Russia’s wish and desirous themselves of attempting to arrive at an understanding, the two Prime Ministers, Pašić and Geshov, met at Caribrod on 1 June and agreed that all four Allied Prime Ministers should meet again, first at Salonica and then, if they did not come to an agreement there, at St. Petersburg, where Sazonov would preside over their meetings. But soon after this meeting, on 6 June, Geshov resigned, having lost the confidence of the Crown, on the grounds that he was too inclined to compromise, and a new government was formed on 15 June by Dr. S. Danev, who was more inclined towards Austria.

When the Russian Emperor wrote on 8 June (26 May) to King Peter and King Ferdinand, stating his wish that they should come to an agreement and

546 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Dj. Genčić’s letter to Pašić from St. Petersburg, 16 May.

his fear lest a fratricidal war should break out, and appealing to them, in accordance with their agreement, to submit to the arbitration of Russia, i.e. to his own arbitration, he said that a war between the Allies could not be a matter of indifference to him, but that the party which started it would be "responsible before the Slav cause" and that Russia would reserve her freedom to decide on the attitude she would adopt towards the eventual results of "so criminal a struggle". Sazonov was quite right in saying that by this unusual gesture, which the Emperor took personally to avert a clash, Russia provided more than sufficient evidence of her desire to preserve the peace and to avoid any further complications in connection with the dispute. On the other hand, Austrian diplomacy was actually seeking such complications. In the correspondence between Count Tarnowski and Berchtold, it was explicitly stated that they did not want a solution of the dispute that would satisfy all parties. Count Tarnowski explained at length, on several occasions, why it would not be in the interests of Austria for even Bulgaria to be satisfied, although Austria had used her influence on Bulgaria's behalf. Only a dissatisfied and even humiliated Bulgaria under the regime of the Russophiles Geshov and Danev, he said, could turn towards Vienna and its policy. Under any other circumstances, Bulgaria would remain independent in her policy or establish further connections with St. Petersburg and its group. Vienna did not also want to see the demands of Romania, Austria's own ally, satisfied. If Bulgaria had to satisfy Romania because of the latter's connection with the Triple Alliance, she would later strengthen her relations with the Balkan Allies and with Russia. From the Greeks, as we have seen, the Vienna government wanted to take Salonica and put great difficulties in their way in the matter of delimitation of Albania. Vienna's attitude towards Serbia and Montenegro has been well documented. The complicated policy that Vienna eagerly pursued resulted in a widespread lack of confidence, discontent and division throughout the Balkans after the war, an atmosphere of endless intrigue, and the development of a war psychosis.

Count Berchtold planned to issue a circular letter to protest publically against the above mentioned step of the Russian Emperor and against the Russian government's invitation to the four premiers of the Balkan states to come to St. Petersburg to settle their dispute under Russian aegis. On 19 June, the German Emperor warned him that this would not be wise, but that the results of Emperor Nicholas II's arbitration should be waited and then draw the dissatisfied party into their camp.⁵⁴⁷ But Vienna did not listen to this advice. The telegram of the Russian Emperor was there considered, according

547 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VI, p. 674.

to Tschirschky's report, "as a direct blow to Austria-Hungary".⁵⁴⁸ Instead of Berchtold, it was the new Hungarian Premier, Count Tisza, who raised his voice against Russia's step and did it publicly in the Hungarian parliament in a manner by no means diplomatic or tactful, as was characteristic of him. He said among other things:

"We must interest ourselves, and we shall interest ourselves, in all that is happening in the Balkans, and we shall suffer no development which might be contrary to our interests. Our interests in the first place lie in the security of the real independence of the Balkan states. I cannot repeat this too often. For it is, so to speak, the alpha and omega of our Balkan policy, it is the compass needle by following which we shall best be able to realize our own interests. This consideration has led us in the past and will lead us in the future, and we are adopting the same point of view in the present very interesting phase in the settlement of the Balkan question, which has developed before our eyes during the last few weeks and days. Now, in view of the peace concluded with Turkey, the Balkan problem has entered upon the partition stage. The victorious states must now come to an agreement as to the possession of the conquered territory. This question has given rise to marked differences of opinion that look like creating the menace of war and are arousing serious concern among all those who are the sincere friends both of peace and of the victorious Balkan peoples themselves. In this situation, Russia has taken a unilateral step in respect to Serbia and Bulgaria, which has aroused the most serious attention of public opinion and brought to light conceptions in regard to which we consider it our duty completely and clearly to define our standpoint. Our starting point here, too, is naturally that the Balkan states are indeed independent states. As such they can choose between various ways of settling the questions under dispute and likely to arise. They may choose war; we should regret it if they did, but they are fully entitled to do so. But they may choose a peaceful settlement, and one of various modes of settlement. They may choose direct negotiation, arbitration or mediation. But it is self-evident that these latter means of settlement, i.e. arbitration or mediation, can only operate on the basis of full freedom of decision in accordance with the independence of the Balkan states. It is also natural that neither arbitration nor mediation can limit in any way our expression of our own point of view on the final settlement of Balkan relations and it is equally natural that we can accept only such a solution as will really safeguard the full independence of the Balkan states and which will not allow any other Power to obtain preferential rights detrimental to the basic principle of our policy accepted by all the Powers, namely

548 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXV, p. 40.

the independence of the Balkan states. The safeguarding of that principle we consider our vital interest. We have defended it with much emphasis and success for centuries in the past and we shall continue to defend it in the future."

It would have been awkward for such a statement to be made by the Minister of Foreign Affairs himself; coming from his mouth it would undoubtedly have had still greater effect and have led to more serious explanations and consequences, in view of the person to whom such an answer was given. But Vienna wanted some such declaration to be issued publicly immediately after Russia's announcements and before the final decision of the Balkan states. The task was therefore entrusted to the energetic Count Tisza. In Vienna and Budapest, the declaration at once received full sanction. The Hungarian Speaker, Pál Beóthy, declared that Tisza had told Europe "perfectly plainly" the views of the Monarchy. On the following day, 20 June, the *Neue Freie Presse* emphasized, not without reason, that in nominating Tisza as the Hungarian Premier, the Emperor "has presented him to the world as a man enjoying his special confidence." And it was also stated in no equivocal terms that the choice of István Tisza "could not have been a mere chance" when it was matter of a public reply to the Russian Emperor.

Why was this declaration made? Simply to encourage the Bulgarians in their resistance to the St. Petersburg decisions, which they were not quite certain that would turn out to be completely in accordance with their wishes. Vienna considered that the message of the Russian Emperor limited the freedom of decision of Belgrade and Sofia, especially the latter, with its bellicose higher circles, and it wanted publicly to emphasize that Bulgaria might count on the favourable attitude of the Danubian Monarchy, if she freely decided, regardless of Russian advice, to act as she saw fit.⁵⁴⁹ Tisza was fully aware that Russia, i.e. the Russian Emperor, was entitled to have a say in the matter, for Serbia and Bulgaria had chosen him of their own free will as their arbitrator. In interfering with the matter now, uninvited, Austria-Hungary was obviously coming in not to protect the independence of the Balkan states and their freedom of decision, which was never questioned when they chose their arbitrator, but to instigate those who were not certain that all their demands would be fulfilled to disregard the arbitrator. St. Petersburg refused to consider war; in Tisza's speech, it appeared prominently as a means of settlement. In Vienna, we repeat, it was known that Russia had the right of arbitration by the terms of the treaty of alliance; the fact that Vienna objected to Russia's mediation now, on the eve of the departure of the Balkan premiers for St. Petersburg and before it was possible for the effects of direct contact and conciliation to make themselves felt,

549 Cf. a similar conception in Ewart, *The Roots and Causes of the War*, II, p. 974.

showed clearly Austria's desire to hinder that mediation. Austria-Hungary's reasons for this are well-known: she did not want to allow the strengthening of Russian prestige in the Balkan Peninsula, which would undoubtedly follow the success of the St. Petersburg conference. On the other hand, confident in the superiority of the Bulgarian army, Vienna would have found it desirable if Bulgaria struck a few blows at Serbia to deepen the gulf between the two nations, weaken Serbia for many years and humiliate her before the world and before the Yugoslavs of the Monarchy. Moreover, Austria's policy in the Balkans would have no success, if an agreement were reached between the Serbs and the Bulgarians – to prevent that all available means were to be employed.

In view of this, the Viennese press at once commented on Tisza's speech in an unequivocal fashion. The *Neue Freie Presse* of 20 June said explicitly that Austria-Hungary did not approve and even that she could not allow the realization of the Russian Emperor's idea that the provocateur of war should suffer some considerable moral or other loss. "A war between Serbia and Bulgaria for the partition of territory" wrote this paper with its usual cynicism, "would be neither more nor less criminal than is usually the case when, owing to the impotence of human civilization in its present state, two independent nations have to take up their swords because they cannot agree on questions vital to them. Count István Tisza states expressly that Serbia and Bulgaria may settle their differences by pacific means or choose the path of arbitration or some other form of mediation, but the right to choose war is also an attribute of their full independence, so that nobody is entitled, if they do so, to accuse them of committing a crime. This is perhaps the most important statement in the Hungarian Premier's speech. For the Balkan states will realize from this that the Monarchy has no intention of interfering with the dispute, that contrary to the Russian Emperor's telegram it does not wish to intimidate or threaten any of the Balkan peoples, which are passing through a dangerous crisis, and that it leaves them full freedom to act in accordance with their own views and their own needs, without having to fear that they will be prevented by an attack from the rear or by the intervention of a Great Power at the most critical moment of their national decision. This magnanimous promise which the Monarchy makes to the Balkan countries is a proof of the profound sincerity of its policy, which does not desire there to be in the Balkans mere puppet Kings and nations which only change the name of the supreme authority." A more open invitation to war than this could not be imagined! The semi-official *Fremdenblatt* of the same date paraphrased Tisza's speech, supporting his views completely and emphasizing the following sentence: "No pressure can be put upon the Balkan states which is not in accordance with the basic principle of their independence." In Serbia, where the pressure of Austria herself had been

felt so often and so directly, these words were seen as a bitter irony and their real meaning was understood at once.

Count Berchtold also admitted that Tisza's speech was an expression of the views of the official circles in the Monarchy.⁵⁵⁰

How much Vienna desired war to take place may be also seen from the following facts. When even the military circles in Austria started to insist around 20 May that their mobilized troops gradually be demobilized, Berchtold himself opposed this, fearing that such a measure might have a discouraging effect on the Bulgarians. "We want to protect the rear of the Bulgarians", he said to Baron Hötendorf.⁵⁵¹ When Danev asked the Romanian Minister what would be the price of Romania's neutrality in the event of a Serbo-Bulgarian war and when the latter hesitated to enter into negotiations with him about this matter, Berchtold telegraphed on 20 June to Bucharest to hasten Romania's answer. He obviously feared that Bulgaria, uncertain of Romanian attitude, would not have the courage to start a war. He therefore recommended the Romanian government on no account to miss this rare opportunity, but to state their claims to facilitate Bulgaria's decision.⁵⁵² For the same reason, he made the Romanian government an offer to mediate between them and the Bulgarians. In this connection, Austrian agents were even openly offering Romania part of the Serbian region of the Timočka Krajina, which the Romanians had never laid claim to. The Romanian King told this to the German Minister and complained of Austria's behaviour.⁵⁵³

In addition, the Vienna government did not want to associate themselves with the demarche of the other Great Powers in Sofia, which proposed the partial demobilization of the Allies in the interests of peace, but it did take such a step in Belgrade. The Austro-Hungarians explained that their behaviour in this respect was due to the fact that the proposal for demobilization had been first put forward by Serbia. Sazonov rightly said that this very fact should have induced the Powers to take the step in Sofia, for with the consent of Serbia their work was half done.⁵⁵⁴ Seeing that his reason was too feeble, Count Berchtold later justified his holding back by his unwillingness to recognize Russia's right to preponderance there and to the role of protector of the Balkan states. Such behaviour on the part of Austria, together with the conversations and statements of Count Tarnowski in Sofia, had a marked influence on Bulgaria's

550 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VI, p. 685; *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXV, pp. 53-4.

551 Hötendorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, III, pp. 324, 329.

552 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VI, pp. 681, 771.

553 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXV, p. 75.

554 *Sborník diplomaticheskikh dokumentov*, pp. 154-5.

determination not to make concessions. Counting on Serbo-Bulgarian conflict, as the Austro-Hungarian War Minister, Baron Auffenberg, explicitly said, he sold Bulgaria 50,000 rifles; that too undoubtedly increased Bulgaria's anti-pacific feelings.⁵⁵⁵ Moreover, Berchtold stated plainly on 21 June in a telegram to Tarnowski that he did not even want Bulgaria to yield, for it "would result in the material and moral success of Serbia and in strengthening of the Serbian idea".⁵⁵⁶

To what an extent Tarnowski entered into intimate relations with the Bulgarians, influenced their attitude and was informed of their steps can best be seen from the fact that as early as 23 June he informed Vienna that the Bulgarians would attack Serbia without a declaration of war in order to occupy the territory they claimed.⁵⁵⁷ On 24 June, Berchtold sent word to Sofia that "further material and moral strengthening of Serbia at the expense of Bulgaria is contrary to our interests and therefore Bulgaria may count in this case not only on our sympathy, but also on our active support, if circumstances lead her to fear that there may arise such a development as we consider undesirable." This active support would partly depend on Bulgaria's satisfying Romania in some measure, so that Austria could keep her neutral.⁵⁵⁸ On 25 June, Berchtold invited Italy to insist together with Austria that Bulgaria be given common border with Albania contrary to Serbian and Greek views.⁵⁵⁹ Serbia spared no effort indeed to free herself from the ring that Austria was closing around her. To the north and west Austria herself, to the east and in south the Austrophile Bulgaria and Albania would, according to Austria's plan, hem in Serbia so as to render her incapable of any independent action. For that reason, the Serbs especially insisted on having as direct and extensive links with Greece as possible in demanding the revision of the treaty of alliance.

Berchtold, who was very active at this time, appealed to Berlin on 27 June with the suggestion that they should together attempt to influence Romania at the eleventh hour. The Romanian declaration of her interestedness in the development of relations between the Allies and her possible mobilization threatened Bulgaria and might drive her into giving way. On the other hand, a conflict between the Allies "would from the point of view of the Triple Alliance be very desirable." It was therefore necessary to make every attempt to induce Romania to come to an agreement with Bulgaria as soon as possible, especially

555 Auffenberg, *Aus Österreichs Höhe und Niedergang*, p. 211.

556 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VI, p. 695.

557 *Ibid.*, p. 715.

558 *Ibid.*, p. 721.

559 *Ibid.*, pp. 726, 741.

because Romania's cooperation with Serbia would be inconvenient as it could bring Romania indirectly into opposition to Austria-Hungary, since the latter intended to mediate actively in case Serbia inflicted a decisive defeat on Bulgaria.⁵⁶⁰ This statement, which is extremely important, shows clearly that Tisza's speech and the public comments on it were completely insincere and that Austria-Hungary did not intend, as it was insisted in Vienna, to observe peacefully the possible conflict between the Allies. By encouraging Bulgaria with its statements, Austria intended to prevent Russia's intervention on Serbia's behalf, if the latter were defeated; in the event of a Serbian victory, however, Austria was firmly resolved to threaten Serbia. Two days later, Berlin replied that the German government could not continue to repeat its advice to Bucharest, especially in view of King Carol's categorical statements.⁵⁶¹ This answer naturally came as a heavy blow to Vienna, especially as it was clear that Austria's influence in Romania was rapidly declining and that all Vienna's warnings were without effect.

The Romanian government interpreted Bulgaria's hesitation to meet its wishes in the face of the serious danger of a conflict both with the Allies and with Romania as being due to Austrian guarantee to Sofia that Romania would not attack her. Certain foreign and Austrian diplomats even admitted the justification of such an interpretation, and that could only increase the coolness that Bucharest had begun to feel towards Vienna. Seeing this, German diplomacy became afraid lest the Triple Alliance should lose reliable Romania for the sake of unreliable Bulgaria and started to reproach Vienna that its policy was estranging Romania and was detrimental to the Triple Alliance.⁵⁶² The Germans had many reasons for this fear. King Carol himself had told the German Minister that his government could not work with Austria-Hungary in her Balkan policy. There was a great deal of friendly feeling in Romania for Germany, but only antipathy for Austria. The stubborn attitude of Bulgaria was put down to the support that she received from the Danubian Monarchy.⁵⁶³ "In the Balkan chaos", Jagow wrote, "Romania is the only fixed point for the Triple Alliance and we cannot, without seriously endangering our future relations, force her to join Bulgaria from whom she has nothing to gain. Romania cannot be asked to subordinate her own interests to Austro-Serbian hostility."⁵⁶⁴

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid., pp. 746-7.

⁵⁶¹ Ibid., p. 762.

⁵⁶² Ibid., pp. 785-6.

⁵⁶³ *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXV, pp. 46-7.

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 62.

Moreover, Romania was right in pursuing her own policy, it was said in Berlin, for the position of Bulgaria in the Balkans concerned her more than Austria.⁵⁶⁵

It is fully established today, as the Bulgarians themselves admit⁵⁶⁶ and as King Ferdinand has admitted, that it was he who issued through General Savov the order for the “precipitate” surprise attack on the Serbs and Greek during the night of 29/30 June, with the full strength of the Bulgarian army, so that the Bulgarians would seize the positions and places which they claimed in a single powerful assault. It was thought and affirmed in many circles that this attack was carried out in accordance with a preliminary agreement with the Austrian Legation, i.e. with the Austrian government. There is no evidence for this assertion. Austria undoubtedly pushed Bulgaria into the war; King Ferdinand himself admitted that to Dr. Baernreither. “He asserted that Austria had strengthened him in the idea of attacking Serbia and that he had had reason to count on our help.”⁵⁶⁷ But we cannot affirm that Austria advised that the war should be begun in the manner on which King Ferdinand and Savov decided. Certain elements of suspicion certainly exist. There is, for instance, the above mentioned report of Tarnowski to the Vienna government, based on what an active Bulgarian Minister told him on 23 June, namely that Bulgaria was going to attack Serbia without a declaration of war. On the other hand, it seems more probable today that even Danev, the head of the government, was not previously fully informed of such an order from the Bulgarian Supreme Command – King Ferdinand admitted this to Tarnowski – and judging by Tarnowski’s telegram to Vienna on 1 July,⁵⁶⁸ he was not quite clear how the hostilities had broken out. From the mutual accusations that passed between Danev and Savov, we can only see that some such attack had indeed been discussed between them and that the Austrian Minister was not entirely unfamiliar with the matter.

It was very embarrassing and almost impossible for Austria to decide on an active support for the Bulgarians against the Serbs, while Romania, her ally, prepared to, and actually did, attack them. Romania’s attitude in general upset many of Austria’s plans. Count Berchtold told the German Minister in his hope

565 Ibid., p. 68.

566 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VI, p. 944; VII, p. 246; cf. Guéshoff, *The Balkan League*, p. 92; Toshev, *Balkanskiti vojni*, II, pp. 362-3, 472; Danev, *Blgarija*, no. 1, 1913; Colonel Lamouche, *Quinze ans d'histoire balkanique*, Paris 1928, pp. 153-4.

567 Baernreither, *Fragmente eines politischen Tagebuches*, p. 283.

568 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VI, p. 783; cf. especially p. 842. King Ferdinand stated that the order for the attack on the Greeks was given by Danev himself. Ibid., p. 944; Girginev, *Narodata katastrofa*, pp. 357 ff., endeavours to prove that the Bulgarian government also knew about the surprise attack.

that Bulgaria would beat Serbia that in the event of Russian intervention on behalf of the Serbs, Austria would resolutely oppose her and would even perhaps occupy Belgrade. In the event of a Serbian victory over the Bulgarians, Austria would certainly find a pretext for her own "intervention". With surprise, Emperor Wilhelm II made the following note on the telegram: "Quite mad: that means war!"⁵⁶⁹ But after Romania's entry into the war the situation became much more complicated.

As soon as the war broke out between Bulgaria and her Allies, the Vienna government used all its influence in Sofia to induce the Bulgarians to give way to the Romanians and obtain their neutrality, so that it could have a free hand later itself. After Romania's mobilization, Berchtold asked Berlin on 4 July to intervene once more. Romania was clearly going to enter the war against Bulgaria. But Bucharest should know, Vienna pointed out, that Austria would take action, if Bulgaria was defeated. Austria could not allow Serbia to extend beyond the borders of Old Serbia, and she would never allow her to obtain Bitolj. The Danubian Monarchy was in an "urgent situation" (*Zwangslage*) and it would be forced to take action. Austria's intervention might provoke Russia and consequently involve the action of the Triple Alliance. In carrying out her obligations as an ally, Romania might find herself between two fires, Russia and Bulgaria.⁵⁷⁰

In Berlin, Austria's message was received unfavourably. On 4 July, the Under-Secretary of State advised Vienna, for the well-known reasons connected with Romania, not to lose patience. Let Austria endeavour to reconcile Romania and Bulgaria, but at the same time let her be careful not to intensify the ill-feeling for herself that existed in Romania. In the Balkans, Austria had already achieved much, and the conflict between the Allies and Bulgaria "does not so far affect the lines along which Austria-Hungary's policy runs." The war was even advantageous for the Danubian Monarchy. It weakened both sides and would leave them at loggerheads for a long time to come. The Balkan Alliance was broken and the influence of Russia shaken. Furthermore, by extending into Macedonia and towards the Aegean, Serbia would be averted from the Adriatic. Although enlarged, "Greater Serbia" would not be dangerous in the near future after "having been bled so much in this war".⁵⁷¹ Bethmann Hollweg said more clearly that he could not take the required step in Bucharest, for it would mean in fact a threat to Romania. Austria's fancies and fears as regards

569 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXV, p. 116.

570 *Ibid.*, p. 803; *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXV, p. 123. Cf. M. Montgelas, *Leitfaden zur Kriegsschuldfrage*, Berlin, 1929, p. 62.

571 *Ibid.*, p. 805; *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXV, pp. 129-30, 134-5.

Greater Serbia were exaggerated and her direct participation in the war might lead to a European conflagration.⁵⁷² Emperor Wilhelm II agreed with these views and particularly advised that Austria not behave in case of Bitolj as she had done in that of Dures.⁵⁷³

Italy was no less reserved. On 6 July, the Austrian Ambassador in Rome reported that he had there met with “grave comments on our attitude, especially criticizing our possible action against Serbia”.⁵⁷⁴ San Giuliano personally declared to Jagow that Italy could not allow Austria to overwhelm Serbia.⁵⁷⁵

In the meantime, fearing some separate action on the part of Austria-Hungary, the French and British governments again brought up the proposal that the Great Powers refrain from any intervention in the Balkans, so that the war might be localized. But as before, Austria would not agree to such a declaration, although she was greatly disappointed with the attitude of Dr. Danev's government. The latter was indeed taking account of Russia in his policy. He needed Austria because of Romania, and not because of Serbia, for he thought that Bulgaria alone could settle scores with Belgrade. Since Austria had not succeeded to restrain Romania, Danev tried not to alienate Russia completely, if for no other reason then because that Power had guaranteed Bulgaria's territorial integrity by the secret treaty of 1902. He therefore turned repeatedly to Russia for help and support, especially after 9 July, when the Serbian victory at Bregalnica made it clear that Bulgaria lost the war. Berchtold's statement to the French Ambassador on 7 July that Austria did not intend to interfere in the Balkan conflict was insincere; he made such a statement under the temporary influence of Germany and Italy, on the one hand, and Bulgaria's attitude, on the other. He wanted to make the latter Power feel what she was losing by clinging to Russia and looking to her for salvation. When the leaders of the Bulgarian liberals, Dr. V. Radoslavov, Dr. N. Genadiev and D. Tontschev addressed a memorandum to King Ferdinand on 6 July, requesting the full orientation of Bulgaria's policy towards Vienna,⁵⁷⁶ and when the King handed over the government to them on 17 July after the Romanians had crossed the Danube – the King started direct negotiations with Austria on 9 July and four days later placed himself and his dynasty under the protection of the Danubian Monarchy – Berchtold again changed his attitude. On 18 July, a day after the

⁵⁷² Ibid., p. 825.

⁵⁷³ *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXV, p. 125. In view of all these facts, the opinion of Emile Laloy that Germany did not exercise a restraining influence on Austria in this conflict is not correct. See *Mercure de France*, CCL, 1934, pp. 53-68.

⁵⁷⁴ *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VI, p. 832.

⁵⁷⁵ *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXV, p. 134.

⁵⁷⁶ Cf. Toshev, *Balkanskiti voini*, II, p. 373.

formation of the Radoslavov government, he sent word to Serbia and Greece, "advising" them to cease hostilities, and he ordered the Austrian Ministers abroad to let it be understood "that the complete strangling of Bulgaria could not be in accordance with Austria-Hungary's wishes".⁵⁷⁷ This was undoubtedly the first step in Austria's intervention. At the same time, it was a rebuttal of the principles professed in Tisza's speech and of all that Austrian diplomacy had said before the war in the attempt to provoke war and in the hope that Bulgaria would win it.

In pursuing this Bulgarophile policy, Berchtold came into conflict with his own allies in the first place. After the meeting of Bethmann Hollweg and San Giuliano in Kiel, the German and Italian Ambassadors went to see Count Berchtold on 7 July to put before him the views of their governments. Germany feared that Austria's attitude would drive Romania over to Russia and it therefore insisted that Romania's claims not be opposed. It would be wisest, Berlin thought, in view of the very complicated situation in the Balkans, to maintain "the strictest reserve" and "not enter into any binding negotiations with any of those states, for their decisions appeared unpredictable".⁵⁷⁸ According to the report of his sister, the Queen of Greece, Wilhelm II spoke very harshly about the Bulgarians to the Austrian Military Attaché and hoped that they would be beaten, saying further "that they ought to get no support at all for their ambitious tendencies." "Austria's policy, in his opinion, would be gravely mistaken if it attempted to help Bulgaria at the expense of Serbia and Romania." The present was perhaps the most opportune moment for Austria to oblige Serbia in some way and to fulfill the wishes of her old and loyal ally, Romania.⁵⁷⁹ Emperor Wilhelm II was also personally affected by Bulgaria's attitude. When he received an account from his sister, the Queen of Greece, of the first Bulgarian attack on the Greeks on 23 May, the Emperor personally informed the Emperor of Russia and the King of Britain, who were in Berlin for the wedding of Wilhelm II's daughter, and asked them to mediate in the interests of peace. Emperor Nicholas II indeed warned the King of Bulgaria, as did Emperor Wilhelm II, pointing out to him the danger for Bulgaria, if she provoked a new war. When the King of Bulgaria nevertheless decided to attack his allies, the indignation of the German Emperor was almost too outspoken. Apart from that, Germany wanted to satisfy Greece, the Court for family reasons and diplomatic circles for political ones, hoping that conciliatory policy might win Greece over to the Triple Alliance, for that country was necessary to

577 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VII, p. 126.

578 *Ibid.*, VI, p. 837.

579 *Ibid.*, pp. 837-8.

Germany on account of the latter's plans in Asia Minor. For that reason, when Sir Edward Grey put forward a proposal for the localization of war and non-intervention of the Powers on 8 July at the London Conference, the German Ambassador at once signified his consent, and the Italian government followed suit the next day.

In Rome, in the absence of San Giuliano, the departmental head of the Foreign Ministry, Giacomo de Martino, had a very important discussion with the Austrian Ambassador. When the latter told him that Austria might go to war in order to prevent the "excessive strengthening" of Serbia, de Martino was amazed as he had never been before.⁵⁸⁰ He would not consider, he said, whether there really existed in Serbia such aggressive political hostility towards the Danubian Monarchy as the latter country made it out, or whether that could only be resolved by war; he would not consider whether the downfall of Serbia would put an end to that situation, for if Serbia no longer existed, the Serbs would still remain, only more bitter and more justified in their claims to free political and economic development. He would only ask whether under present circumstances it would materially alter the relationship of Serbia to Austria, if Serbia obtained the Bitolj region – that being the root of the dispute between the Serbs and Bulgarians. It seemed to him that it was even in the interests of Austria that the road to Salonica should not cross several countries. Austria's action was an obvious threat and, to speak sincerely, she had recently threatened so often, without carrying out her intentions, that it was evidently damaging her prestige. Austria was now threatening the whole world: Romania, Serbia and even, indirectly, Russia and Germany because of Romania. For an act of self-defense, these were really too disproportionate and far-reaching consequences. If Austria made a move against Serbia, Russia would certainly not take it calmly. And that meant a world war. But the provocation of war on the part of Austria was now less understandable than before, when the question concerned Serbia's conquest of the Sanjak and the establishment of the common border between Serbia and Montenegro. A war for such a cause would be a very difficult matter for Italy, because it could not see its real purpose. Could it be possible to explain to the Italian public that a war was necessary to settle whether Bitolj should be Serbian or Bulgarian?⁵⁸¹ On 12 July, San Giuliano expressed his full agreement with the views of de Martino. Austria's policy, he further added, was arousing the opposition of all three of her allies, Germany, Italy and Romania. "To provoke a European conflagration for reasons of defense, an imminent threat to the Monarchy would

⁵⁸⁰ *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXV, p. 165.

⁵⁸¹ *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VI, pp. 839-14.

be necessary and not an imagined danger in the future from a small state." It was quite impossible to discuss the assumption that Serbia wanted "to attack Austria". France, too presented a danger to Germany on account of Alsace and Lorraine, but the latter country did not attack her because of that. Austria's interference in the war would be a "clear case of offensive". Italy could not follow Austria in such a course, no matter how much it might otherwise want to carry out its duties as Austria's ally, for the simple reason that the Triple Alliance was a defensive alliance. Finally, San Giuliano said that he did not really believe that Austrian action was possible. It would be prevented at the last moment; "you will be held back by the tails of your frock-coat if necessary." Berchtold noted at this point: "Tschirschky says the opposite",⁵⁸² but he soon realized how much San Giuliano's estimate of Germany's views was more correct than his own, which he had formed on the strength of Tschirschky's comments. Only it should be noted that there were great differences between the attitudes of Italy and Germany. It is true that both countries were opposed to Austria's action and that both dissuaded Vienna from embarking upon it; but while Italy declared that it would not, in the event of such a war, carry out its duties as Austria's ally, Germany announced that it could not leave Austria alone and that it would come to her aid.⁵⁸³

Austria, however, despite such opposition from her allies, maintained her old line of policy in all its essentials. On 11 July, Berchtold reproached the Romanian government for adopting so grave a decision as mobilizing against Bulgaria without having previously come to an understanding with Vienna and for "pursuing aims opposed to our vital interests".⁵⁸⁴ The same day, he informed Paris that he would accept the French proposal for mediation between the Allies on the basis of the border line which French diplomacy suggested; but he did this not to prevent further bloodshed, but rather in order to have the whole question of the territorial partition laid before the Great Powers. In this way, he affirmed, they would avoid "one or another government being subsequently forced to oppose a partition decided upon without its participation or perhaps contrary to its vital interests".⁵⁸⁵ He informed Berlin with more sincerity on 15 July that he had not given his consent to the French proposal because he did not agree with the proposed borders (allotting to Serbia the whole right bank of the Vardar and an area including Bregalnica).⁵⁸⁶ His intention was,

582 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VI, p. 881-3; *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXV, p. 157.

583 *Ibid.*, pp. 881-3; *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXV, p. 157.

584 *Ibid.*, pp. 869-70.

585 *Ibid.*, p. 874.

586 *Ibid.*, pp. 897-8.

as he explained to the German Ambassador, that Romania be fully satisfied, Greece given whatever possible, and the pressure put on Serbia alone to the benefit of Bulgaria.⁵⁸⁷

In order to pacify Austria, i.e. to restrain her from intervention against Serbia, Sazonov agreed on 16 July that the decisions of the Balkan states as to the partition of the territory be submitted to the revision of the Great Powers. In this, there was undoubtedly also a desire to help Bulgaria to some extent, for Russia felt a good deal of sympathy for her. Sazonov told the Austrian Ambassador on this occasion that for the time being “the interests of the Monarchy and of Russia in the Balkans completely coincided, for they both desired to maintain a balance of power there and neither could allow Bulgaria to be strangled.”⁵⁸⁸ The British government then proposed that Russia and Austria come to a previous agreement on the question of the partition, for without some certainty on that point the belligerent parties would perhaps not be willing to suspend hostilities. This view was also adopted by the German government. But it was impossible to come to any further conclusions, since the situation on the battlefield was growing rapidly worse for Bulgaria. The desperate situation of his army forced King Ferdinand to appeal directly to the King of Romania for peace. Thereupon, on 21 July, Grey proposed at the London Conference that the Powers intervene in favour of the conclusion of peace as soon as possible, and that in accordance with the wishes of Russia and Austria the eventual agreement between the Allies would be submitted to the Great Powers for examination and approval. He was particularly actuated in this by the Turkish action against the Bulgarians and the reconquest of the territories renounced under the treaty of peace concluded in London. The same day, the Austrian government informed all the Great Powers that they reserved the right to revise the conclusions of the Allies, and Russia suggested the summoning of a special conference of the Great Powers for that purpose.

When Vienna received the news that King Ferdinand, on their advice, had appealed for peace to the Romanian Court, Berchtold sent his chief of Cabinet, Count Hoyos, on a secret mission to Bucharest on 18 July and authorized Fürstenberg, the Austrian Minister in Bucharest, to make every endeavour to separate Romania from Serbia and Greece and to bring about a direct and separate agreement between Bucharest and Sofia.⁵⁸⁹ Vienna thought that this was the only way to ease Bulgaria's difficult situation and to gain a free hand either for diplomatic or military action against Serbia. But Bucharest did not agree to

587 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXV, p. 142.

588 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VI, p. 909.

589 *Ibid.*, pp. 929-30.

these proposals. It demanded that Bulgaria enter into negotiations with Serbia and Greece at the same time as with Romania, so that the war might be finally brought to a conclusion on all fronts. Romania, Serbia, Greece and Montenegro had agreed that none of them should conclude a separate treaty of peace, and the Bucharest government was loyal to its undertakings. In this they were supported by Italy, and the other Great Powers were of the same mind.

Hoyos's mission was also supposed to convince the Romanians that it was imperative both for them and for the Austrians not to permit too great strengthening of Serbia after the Bulgarian defeat. If Romania did not want a Greater Bulgaria, Austria for her part did not want a Greater Serbia; Romania had entered the war in order to maintain a certain balance of power between the Balkan states, and if she were not willing to allow the excessive strengthening of Bulgaria, she should not allow the excessive strengthening of Serbia either.⁵⁹⁰ At the peace conference, which was to take place in Bucharest, Romania would become a kind of arbitrator through whose voice Austria herself would speak of certain questions. Vienna would prefer even more if Romania came to the assistance of Bulgaria and protect her from possible future attacks, in case Serbia and Greece were too insistent on their claims. Bulgaria was faced with a catastrophe, which she should be spared of; Romania ought, Berchtold proposed on 22 July, either to force Serbia and Greece to stop their advance, or to refuse them her further indirect collaboration.⁵⁹¹ He ordered the Austrian Ministers in Belgrade and Athens to urge the governments there to accept the Bulgarian offer of an armistice, declaring that further struggle would by no means improve their prospects, while Austria would see in it a proof that Serbia and Greece were trying to ruin Bulgaria completely, which the Vienna government could not allow.

But such special persuasion was hardly necessary. Serbia had not embarked upon war with Bulgaria in order to take possession of the latter's territory, but because she intended to defend and secure what she thought was her national right. Having routed the Bulgarians at Bregalnica, the Serbs were prepared for any negotiations on the condition that they were final and direct. For a long time, the Bulgarian government avoided offering peace to Serbia and Greece directly, but appealed first to the Great Powers in the hope of obtaining their mediation. They later appealed to Romania alone. The Serbs and Greeks demanded that peace must be offered them directly and that negotiations be carried out between the allied belligerents, including Romania, and Bulgaria. They refused an armistice, for they did not want Bulgaria to have an

590 Ibid., pp. 972-4.

591 Ibid., p. 988.

opportunity to prepare for further struggle during that time, or to bring about foreign intervention by protracted negotiations. They agreed, however, that a preliminary peace should be concluded in Niš and the final negotiations conducted in Bucharest. Such were also the terms of the answer that Serbia, Montenegro and Greece gave to the Austrian Ministers. The Allies readily agreed upon Bucharest as the seat of the peace negotiations, for Romania had entered into action to defend the principles for which they were fighting, and the personal prestige of King Carol and the favourable diplomatic position of Romania, for whose friendship both Russia and Austria had recently been competing, was for them a kind of guarantee that there could be no foreign intervention as long as they were joined with Romania. The Austrian game in Bucharest to separate Romania from her Allies was not difficult to see through; the natural answer to it was the Allied decision to cling to Bucharest and thus retain Romania as an ally.

On 24 July, after the answer of the Allies, Berchtold asked Romania: 1) to conclude a separate peace with Bulgaria, and 2) to show by her attitude "that she was not at all willing to further the excessive claims of the Allies, but that under given circumstances she might even act in opposition to them".⁵⁹² In accordance with the wish of Austria and Italy, and after Bulgaria's offer of peace, Romania ceased the advance of her army and called upon the Allies to cease hostilities and to begin negotiations. The Allies immediately responded to the appeal of the King of Romania and agreed that the negotiations, both as regards the truce and the peace, be carried out in Bucharest, but they first demanded certain guarantees from Bulgaria. Austria made another move in Belgrade on 25 July, as something of a reply to this, with the declaration that Austria could not remain indifferent to further aggressive advance of the Serbs against the Bulgarians.⁵⁹³ The next day, Austria warned Serbia that her military operations in the direction of Vidin were completely futile.⁵⁹⁴

With a view to finding some pretext for a conflict with Serbia, Austria had already ordered her Minister in Belgrade on 23 July, while the war with the Bulgarians was still in progress, to demand of Serbia the evacuation of a few remaining villages in the vicinity of Orosh, which her army still held in order to prevent the organisation and dispatch of *comitadji* bands from the Albanian territory into Old Serbia and Macedonia, in the rear of the operative Serbian army. The Bulgarian *comitadji* leader, Sandanski, was in Albania, preparing bands for use against Serbia. The Serbian government had been reliably

592 Ibid., p. 1019.

593 Ibid., p. 1030; Marghiloman, *Note politice*, I, pp. 172-7.

594 Ibid., p. 1048.

informed of this both indirectly and directly. M. Bogićević wrote from Berlin: "The British Charge d'Affaires told me that the British Admiral in Scutari had informed the British government that the Albanian chiefs there were preparing some action against us and that he had urged them against any such action." The Austrian Ambassador in Berlin himself considered it quite comprehensible that in repulsing such attacks Serbia would not show much respect for the still non-demarcated borderline.⁵⁹⁵ Although Serbia had asked for a confirmation of the decision of the Conference of Ambassadors as to her outlet to the sea before her army left Albania, so that this question should definitely be settled in her favour, Austria-Hungary had prevented this, and continued to do so, in spite of the attitude of all the other Powers and of Grey's explicit warnings. But it found it necessary to raise the matter of the evacuation of Albania at that moment, in the midst of the armed struggle, although the Serbian army had left all the Albanian territory, including the entire coast, with the exception of a few villages near the Serbian border. On 18 July, Pašić confidentially informed St. Petersburg that he would give up these villages too as soon as peace with Bulgaria was concluded and Serbia was secured against an attack from that direction. To avoid the justifiable reproach that she was herself making the settlement of the evacuation more difficult by her hesitation to agree to the Powers's repeating to Serbia their declaration concerning her free commercial port in the Adriatic, Austria finally decided to consent to that declaration. On 30 July, her Minister in Belgrade repeated the demand that Serbia should evacuate Albanian territory and at the same time reiterated the decision made in London as to her port. Belgrade was struck by the fact that the Austrian Minister alone made this declaration and not the representatives of other Powers as well; it was considered that Serbia would do well to adopt a reserved attitude until she received the information from other quarters. The confirmation was received, but not before 17 August, after the conclusion of the war with Bulgaria.

How far Austria went in helping Bulgaria not only diplomatically, but also materially during the war can be seen from the following example. During the war, Bulgaria was supposed to receive certain war materiel from Austria. The Bulgarian Minister in Vienna asked that the ship carrying this undoubtedly important cargo be escorted by Austrian patrol boats. The Austrian War Minister, Krobatin, replied that he could not meet this request in the manner proposed, as it would attract too much attention, but that he would order

595 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from Berlin, 2 July.

Austrian patrols to carry out such maneuvers “as would unobtrusively afford a means of protection for the transport ship”.⁵⁹⁶

When Turkey entered the war between the Allies and Bulgaria and reoccupied Adrianople and part of Thrace, considerable alarm was felt throughout Europe and especially in Russia. Turkey had violated peace which she its signed a month earlier under the aegis of Great Powers, and its action might indirectly call for their intervention in the Balkan dispute. Certain tendencies in that direction were already making themselves felt. In Russia, the desire to check Turkish advance inspired not only the government, but also the masses. The Emperor himself informed Sofia that he could not allow a major humiliation of Bulgaria. But the new Bulgarian government under Genadiev and Radoslavov appealed exclusively to Austria for assistance, although it hoped for help from Russia as well. On 22 July, Bulgaria made Vienna the offer of an alliance between Austria, Romania and Bulgaria to be concluded as soon as possible – Austria should try in the meantime to hold Serbia back, as otherwise the Bulgarians “were threatened with a complete disaster”.⁵⁹⁷ Sofia repeated this the next day, finding herself in a desperate situation because of the Turkish advance.

Austria's old jealousy of Russia impelled Vienna to show the Bulgarians as directly as possible that their recent policy of dependence on Russia had brought them to the verge of a catastrophe and that in the hour of need only Austria-Hungary had been able to save them. It was therefore quite in keeping with this that Berchtold accepted Bulgaria's offer in principle, although he could not immediately give it a concrete form because of the other allies. But although he was personally quite prepared to help Bulgaria, it was his own attitude that considerably contributed to the extreme difficulties of her position in the past and at present. Indignant at the Turkish attack, Russia wanted to check Turkey's further advance first by an action of the Powers of the Triple Entente, then by serious demarche on the part of all the Powers, and lastly, if this failed, by direct pressure, invoking the Peace of London concluded between Turkey and the Allies with the collaboration of the Great Powers. On 24 July, Austria informed St. Petersburg that she would agree to this procedure, but she declared at the same time that if Russia undertook any measures against Turkey, she would apply under similar conditions stricter measures of pressure on Serbia and Greece,⁵⁹⁸ with a view to saving Bulgaria from the undesirable breakdown. That such a corollary could not be accepted in St. Petersburg was

596 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VI, p. 885.

597 *Ibid.*, p. 999.

598 *Ibid.*, p. 1026.

perfectly clear; to save Bulgaria by allowing Austria to threaten Serbia was a measure that could only lead to further complications and, in any case, would be more detrimental than advantageous to the Slav cause. Austria herself did not really want Russia's intervention against the Turks for fear lest the conviction should be formed in Bulgaria that in the last resort Russia could save her.⁵⁹⁹ But seeing that Russia decided to take more serious measures, Austria wanted to take advantage of this and, at the same time, help the Bulgarians and threaten or perhaps weaken Serbia.

It was Germany, on the one hand, which would not take any steps against Turkey, and Serbia, on the other, that spoiled this plan. On 27 July, Pašić set out for Bucharest with the Greek and Montenegrin delegates to commence the peace negotiations and thus deprived Austria of any reason for exerting pressure on Serbia. Moreover, Germany did not agree to any further steps being taken in Belgrade and Sofia. Serbia and Greece, Berlin considered, were entitled to seek security from fresh surprise attacks and other stratagems; they agreed to peace in principle and were willing to conclude it as soon as they were given the assurance and the guarantee that Bulgaria wanted peace and was not procrastinating merely to gain time. Sazonov would perhaps have agreed to some new démarche in Belgrade and Athens in order to obtain Austria's consent to a démarche in Constantinople, since he considered Turkey's action more important and dangerous for the Bulgarians, while at the same time it weighed more with the Russian public opinion than the action of Serbia and Greece, which he saw was abating and which could be influenced more easily. But Sazonov's conciliatory attitude, which was not unconditional, was opposed by other influential persons in Russia, especially his Deputy, Neratov, and Sazonov also saw the danger of collaboration with Austria. On 26 July, he said to the Serbian Minister, D. Popović: "The whole world would know that Russia's intervention was sincere and aiming at peace, and that of Austria-Hungary designed to acquire selfish ends."⁶⁰⁰ Furthermore, Sazonov's desire to take action did not meet with much response in London and Paris. The French government feared that Russia's intervention might spoil the existing European agreement

599 The Hungarian Prime Minister, I. Tisza, made a sincere proposal that Russia and Austria save Bulgaria from the Turks. The Austrian army could pass through Serbia. In view of Russia's collaboration, he thought that Serbia would allow it to pass, and if she did not, that could serve as a pretext for war. See *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VII, p. 200. All the influential elements in Vienna, however, including the Emperor, were opposed to this proposal. *Ibid.*, pp. 235-6. But Hötendorf was in favour of any measure against Serbia, and therefore of this too. *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, III, pp. 405-6.

600 Popović Pašiću, Petrograd, 26.7.1913, *Pov. Br.* 207, in: K. Džambazovski, ed., *Dokumenti o spolnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije 1903-1914*, knj. VI, sv. 3, Beograd 1983, pp. 207-208.

and provoke Germany and Austria to make some move of their own,⁶⁰¹ which in the case of the latter was, as we have seen, very probable. The French government was practically informed by the Austrian Ambassador that Vienna was seriously thinking of an advance into the Sanjak, and being in receipt of such information they were even more opposed to Russian action. Meanwhile, in the midst of these negotiations, on 30 July, a five-day truce was concluded between the Balkan Allies and Bulgaria, and the necessity for keeping in check the Serbian and Greek armies by force of arms was completely obviated. A week later, on 7 August, the peace treaty was drawn up settling the borders, and finally signed three days later.

On 25 July, on the eve of the peace negotiations in Bucharest, Count Berchtold informed the Romanian government of his views as to the solution of the Balkan problem. The Serbian and Greek military victories had to be taken into account after all, no matter how disagreeable that might be. The matter ought therefore to be arranged so that Serbia should not obtain much more than the uncontested territory won in the Turkish war and that the Serbo-Greek belt around Albania, if it were really inevitable, should be as narrow as possible. Efforts should be made, he pointed out, to ensure that the Bulgarians did not lose much in Macedonia. Since the Serbs would certainly get Bitolj, which had been the main cause of disagreement, Bulgaria should receive Morihovo together with Štip and Kočani in the northeast, according to the Austrian proposal. "That Bulgaria should remain in possession of at least part of central Macedonia seems to me to be just as much in our interests as in Romania's, for Bulgaria's future policy would thus be tied to Macedonia even more than would otherwise be the case." In the south, Austria demanded for Bulgaria the valleys of the Strumica and of the Upper Struma as well as the Kavala region.⁶⁰² The same day Sazonov explained to the Austrian Ambassador his views as to the Serbian future border with Bulgaria; it should run from the Lake of Dorjan to the watershed east of the Vardar, for it seemed to him impossible to drive Serbia back to the Vardar.⁶⁰³

The next day, Emperor Franz Joseph sent a dispatch to the King of Bulgaria, not only assuring him of his "very sincere sympathy" and of his policy of "benevolent friendship", but also emphasizing that his government would not allow "Bulgaria's future to depend entirely on the fortunes of war".⁶⁰⁴

601 *Documents diplomatiques. Les affaires balkaniques, 1912-1914*, II, p. 270; *Der diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, III, pp. 212-3.

602 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VI, pp. 1034-6.

603 *Ibid.*, p. 1044; Marghiloman, *Note Politice*, I, pp. 182-3.

604 *Ibid.*, p. 1057.

Austria's principal task now was not to remain isolated in her policy towards the Balkan Allies and to prevent further fundamental divergences of views between herself and Germany. Without Germany her policy would be sterile, for it would not have the necessary military backing to enable her to pass from the diplomatic to the military sphere. Germany had so far been very reserved in respect of the Danubian Monarchy's Balkan policy; in the matter of Austria's relations with Bulgaria in the war with the Allies, it had adopted a view completely opposed to that of Vienna. It was therefore necessary that the attention of the Berlin government should be drawn once again by means of suggestive explanations to the fundamental needs of Austrian policy and an attempt made to obtain support for it. For that reason, Berchtold addressed a long memorandum to Berlin on 1 August to be presented orally by the Austrian Ambassador. Berlin did not know, he argued, the essence of the Serbian question and underrated its importance. "The root of the opposition between ourselves and Serbia lies in the fact that since the Radical Party came into power and, under foreign influence, set up the Greater Serbian ideal as its leading political conception, Serbia's policy has aimed at the union of all the Serbs within the framework of the Serbian national state and consequently at the separation from the Monarchy of those provinces populated by Serbs. This opposition is permanent and unbridgeable, for the realization of the Greater Serbian ideal, which would at the same time bring Serbia the long-desired territorial outlet to the sea, which is necessary for her future development, now no longer represents the programme of one political party, but has become the national ideal of the entire Serbian people, while on the other hand it presupposes a victorious conflict with the Monarchy. When Berlin recommends to us, as a kind of esoteric means of settling our relations with Serbia, a benevolent complaisance in the political sphere and rapprochement in the economic one, then it proves a complete ignorance of the fundamental clash of our interests. Such a policy towards Serbia on our part would only be appropriate if we somehow or other succeeded, perhaps by means of a victorious war, in convincing the Serbian people of the impracticability of their Greater Serbian dreams and inducing them to look loyally to Austria-Hungary for support." Even if Vienna took Berlin's advice, Serbia would accept Austrian offers not with a view to changing her policy, but only to strengthening her own position. Meanwhile, Serbia alone, being a small state, would not present any great danger, if she were not backed by the powerful Pan-Slav element in Russia, i.e. by Russia herself. On the other hand, Austria could be certain that in any conflict with Russia she would have Serbia against her. To be true, Austria was not faced with direct Serbian aggression now, but after the break-up of Turkey that possibility was considerably nearer. So far Serbia's policy had been directed against

Turkey as the line of least resistance, but as soon as the new territory became organically united to Serbia, her aspirations towards the west would take on a more acute form and lead to an intolerable situation. Austria had no aggressive designs for Serbia. Her activities were purely defensive. "I do not doubt that our Cabinet and even more the German Cabinet will fully realize the defensive character of our policy towards Serbia when the situation becomes more perilous on account of the Greater Serbian movement, as we have described, and we are forced into a conflict, in which no matter which side actually starts the war we shall inevitably find ourselves in a position of the party attacked and shall have only one aim – to protect the territorial integrity of the Monarchy against aggression and save ourselves from constant disturbance. Just because we do not desire a conflict with Serbia, the policy of Austria-Hungary, which foresees a danger of this, must constantly keep an eye on, and already make it its business to frustrate wherever possible, the aggressive plans of Serbia and the Russian Pan-Slav party and prepare favourable conditions in case a conflict should arise." Austria would therefore see to it that the expansion and strengthening of Serbia was as limited as possible, as she had already begun to do with the creation of an independent Albania. But this was not enough. In spite of all Austria's attempts to stand in her way, Serbia would come out of these wars with her territory almost doubled. Austria therefore must create such a state of affairs in the Balkans as would prevent Serbia from devoting herself entirely to her Greater Serbian plans, and she must look, in case of a conflict, for natural allies against her. She would attain both these ends by helping Bulgaria. Berchtold therefore urged the Berlin government to modify its views in favour of Bulgaria and take into consideration the arguments of its Austrian ally. To strengthen his case, he particularly stressed the military arguments. If Bulgaria turned again to Russia, Romania would be unable to do anything against the latter because of her in the event of an Austro-German war with Russia, whereas Serbia, with her excellent army, could attack Austria; but if Bulgaria and Romania were united, they would be of immense military benefit to the Triple Alliance.⁶⁰⁵

The same memorandum was to be orally communicated to the Italian government, somewhat modified at the Ambassador's discretion. But it made no impression there. The Prime Minister Giolitti fully approved of the views of San Giuliano and laid stress on the statement that Italy would not consider its obligations as Austria's ally binding if Austria took action. If the Vienna

605 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VII, pp. 1-7; *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXV, pp. 346-9.

government took any action, they must do so on their own responsibility, "but nobody is thinking of attacking them".⁶⁰⁶

In Berlin, the Viennese conception of the Serbian question had already begun to gain ground in competent quarters, and it would not have been difficult for them to associate themselves with Berchtold's policy, if it had been a question of Serbia alone. But since Greece, as Serbia's ally, would share the fate of Serbia, to a large extent, and since the Romanian government held the same views as Serbia on almost all the more important points, the minimizing of Serbia's successes would also have meant minimizing the successes of Germany's own allies. And this Berlin certainly did not want to do. As early as 14 July, Tschirschky had correctly reasoned that Austria's opposition to the Bucharest decisions would result in the joint hostility of all the negotiators (with the exception of Bulgaria) against Austria herself and the formation of a new Balkan alliance for the maintenance of the newly created order.⁶⁰⁷

The chief aim of Bulgarian diplomacy in Bucharest was to gain Romania's favour for a separate agreement and to have the results of the Bucharest Conference, if they did not satisfy her, submitted to Great Powers for revision. On both these scores, Bulgaria had the full support of Viennese diplomacy. Count Berchtold even advised Sofia on 4 August to let the Bulgarian delegates in Bucharest give way on every point, but with the reservation that the interested Powers would also have to agree to the decisions made.⁶⁰⁸ Bulgaria's two above mentioned aims, however, were difficult to reconcile with those of Romania. The latter was very anxious to be looked upon as something of an arbitrator at the Bucharest Conference, and she therefore wanted 1) to remain in a sense above all parties in order to be able to influence them all; and 2) to ensure that the decisions made under her guidance remain as final. She did not therefore accept Bulgaria's offer of an alliance and of a separate agreement, and for the same reason she was even more opposed to Bulgaria's desire to subject the Bucharest agreement to revision or maintain the conviction that it was not permanent.

In the course of the peace negotiations, Austria requested that Morihovo, Strumica, Radovište, Štip and Kočane remain Bulgarian. As she was unable to influence the negotiations directly, Austria communicated her requests to the Romanian government, asking them to mediate along those lines, not waiting for the negotiations to become strained, but taking the initiative themselves

606 Cf. T. Tittoni, *Nuovi scritti di politica interna ed estera*, Milan 1930, pp. 64-6.

607 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXV, p. 153.

608 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VII, pp. 47, 58.

and even exerting pressure.⁶⁰⁹ In addition, the Austrian Minister put direct pressure on Pašić, even after the Bulgarian delegates had given their consent to the cession of Štip and Kočane. The Greeks were asked to cede Serres, Drama and particularly Kavala to the Bulgarians.

In the meantime there was no agreement between the Powers themselves on these questions. The German Government, in spite of the repeated requests from Vienna, stuck to their view that Kavala should go to the Greeks. But as the Bulgarians had declared that they attached more importance to Kavala than to Štip and Kočane, it was impossible to ask the Serbs to give up those towns, if Kavala went to the Greeks. As for Kavala, Russia was also in favour of Bulgaria, but France, just like Germany, supported the Greek interests. When Austria saw that it would be difficult to get Kavala for Bulgaria, Count Berchtold conceived of the idea that the Bulgarians should be given Bitolj as a compensation for Kavala,⁶¹⁰ just as he had previously thought of giving Bitolj to the Greeks, also as a compensation for Kavala.⁶¹¹ But his suggestions met with no response. In deference to the friendly advice of St. Petersburg and Paris, which warned her of the danger of Austrian revision, Serbia agreed that Strumica should remain Bulgarian, while Radovište, Štip, and Kočani were given to her, according to the final agreement on 7 August.

On 7 August, Sazonov told the Austrian Ambassador that even now when the peace was concluded, he agreed with Austria that Kavala should have been kept for Bulgaria, but he expressed the hope that Austria would accept the borders assigned to Serbia by the treaty.⁶¹² However, Vienna had already decided differently in this respect, and Ugron had to declare in Belgrade, in accordance with instructions given him on 8 August, that the Vienna government, dissatisfied with the Bucharest negotiations, held the view that the treaty revision was absolutely necessary and insisted on it. Revision *in toto* instead of the revision of the Kavala question only, as it was at first expected in many European capitals, had been promised by Austria in Sofia, and the promise therefore had to be abided by. The Austrian Minister in Sofia particularly recommended his government to spare no effort "to obtain anything for Bulgaria of that which Russia had earmarked for Serbia".⁶¹³ Berchtold himself was of the same opinion. In a memorandum sent to the Ambassador in St. Petersburg on 8 August, he protested emphatically against the borders that the Bucharest Treaty had

609 Ibid., p. 51.

610 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VII, p. 48.

611 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXV, p. 154.

612 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VII, p. 78.

613 Ibid., p. 90.

provided to Serbia, contesting her right not only to Kočane, Štip and Radovište, but also to the border on the Bregalnica, since that threatened Sofia herself.⁶¹⁴ But although he had earlier been inclined to revision, Sazonov did not agree now to any discussion, much less to cooperation in that direction,⁶¹⁵ realizing the real objective of Austria's intervention.

Austria's plans for revision were largely frustrated, however, by the Romanian and German governments. King Carol informed Emperor Wilhelm II on 7 August of the results of the negotiations and expressed the desire that the treaty concluded in Bucharest would remain an accomplished fact with the help of the latter. His personal prestige and that of Romania were at stake, since the agreement concluded under her auspices and with her participation was considered her own triumph. In a private telegram sent to King Carol on 8 August, the German Emperor hailed the concluded peace, finding it particularly agreeable to see it recognized that he himself "has been able to contribute to what has now been achieved" and being delighted "at common action for the cause of peace".⁶¹⁶ This reply signified his consent to what had been accomplished at Bucharest, and it was at once understood as such, especially when he appointed the Greek King Marshall of the German Army while congratulating him victory on 10 August. The German press now began a sharp polemic with Austrian views. This was in line with the views of the government itself, for Bethmann Hollweg had issued, with the Emperor's consent, instructions to the Foreign Ministry on 8 August "that as far as possible Vienna's plans for the revision of the Bucharest Treaty should be opposed".⁶¹⁷ The Emperor's opinion of Viennese policy at this time was by no means flattering. As early as 9 August, Berlin informed Vienna that "the agreement between the Balkan states and Romania reached with so much difficulty at Bucharest should not, in our opinion, be imperiled. Any interference by the Great Powers with the conditions there established would be open to the most serious criticism." It was particularly emphasized in Berlin that Romania, Greece and Serbia were not to be touched. Any step against them would not only meet with no sympathy, but would on the contrary provoke vigorous resistance. King Carol's desire that the peace should remain definite had to be taken into consideration. Moreover, after their unfortunate experience in the delimitation of Albania, the Great Powers showed no desire now to enter into the discussion of another and even more dangerous problem, such as that of the delimitation between the

614 Ibid., pp. 90-91.

615 Ibid., pp. 108-9.

616 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXV, pp. 359-60.

617 Ibid., p. 360.

Allies.⁶¹⁸ Italy adopted Germany's view on 10 August. San Giuliano particularly requested the Berlin government to give Vienna to understand that Austria could not count on their military support in this matter; no Italian government could give such support.⁶¹⁹ The German Under-Secretary, Zimmermann, thereupon expressed his hope to the Austrian Ambassador on 11 August that his government would no longer insist on revision, especially as King Carol would consider it a personal slight.⁶²⁰ On the following day, the German Ambassador in Vienna declared outright that Germany could not agree to revision. Germany was actuated in this attitude, apart from anything else, by the fact that both the Western Powers and Italy were opposed to revision, and that Russia had also dropped the idea, probably because of Austria's dangerous intentions.

Berchtold replied that the Bucharest Treaty took no account whatever of Austria's interests. Romania, who had known Vienna's wishes, did not care to consider them. A Greater Serbia had been established, which went beyond the ethnographical borders of Serbdom. He even started to doubt whether Romania had not entered into closer relations with Serbia and was not about to change her policy. Being satisfied in the south, she was now going to pay more attention to her compatriots in Transylvania and perhaps cooperate with Serbia in the work of liberating their compatriots. He therefore "saw the future of the Monarchy overclouded". He regretted that German diplomacy had furthered this work instead of preventing it. Tschirschky thereupon asked him whether Štip and Kočane were so important that a world war should be provoked on their account. Berchtold thought that it would not lead to a world war, and he particularly wanted Sofia to see that it was not Austria but Russia that had forsaken her in the hour of need. Lastly, he declared, he would not renounce the idea of revision, apart from the question of principle, for two special reasons: 1) because he wanted to influence Russia, in case she should take action against Turkey, and 2) because he wanted to put pressure on Serbia in matters of economic policy.⁶²¹

To win King Carol over to its views, Austrian diplomacy put before him, on the one hand, the offer of the Bulgarian government to join the Triple Alliance and Romania, and on the other hand, explained to him, just as it explained to Germany, the true nature of Austria's conflict with Serbia. King Carol replied on 11 August that the danger from Serbia was not great and that for the next

618 Ibid., pp. 365-7.

619 Ibid., pp. 369-70.

620 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VII, pp. 102-3.

621 Ibid., pp. 114-6; *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXV, pp. 374-7.

twenty or thirty years Serbia would be fully occupied in her new provinces. He did not trust much Bulgaria, and he drew particular attention to the general feeling of the Romanian people against Bulgaria.⁶²² The same day, having been annoyed with the Romanian government and regardless of their susceptibilities, Berchtold proposed to the Sofia government to appeal to the Great Powers for the revision of the treaty on the grounds that Bulgaria had been treated harshly so that Austria-Hungary would have the basis for action and Russia would be forced "to take a definite stand".⁶²³

In this connection, the Austrian Ambassador reported from Berlin that German foreign policy was in the hands of the Emperor himself, whose opinion of the Bulgarians was well-known and who was a convinced anti-revisionist,⁶²⁴ so that any further insistence on the revision would affront him personally. Tschirschky even told Berchtold that Germany could not agree to his pursuing a policy without its agreement, which would lead to a common danger for Austria and Germany.⁶²⁵

In a memorandum of 16 August, Emperor Wilhelm II wrote himself that in the interests of the alliance he had fulfilled some of "Austria's wishes, distasteful in themselves, which might be named Sanjak, Durres, Scutari, autonomous Albania", but that it was impossible to go any further. The peace of Europe, which was guarded by Britain and Germany, meant more than petty individual interests. In the second Balkan war, he said, he had not dared to further "Austria's new and most serious mistake". Because of her "mistaken Serbian policy" Austria lost the necessary link with Romania and he "must have asked in the name of the Triple Alliance that this mistake be rectified even at the cost of Austria's temporary anger." Austria did not understand his Greek policy either. He had helped Greece to obtain as much as possible in the East, in the Aegean, in order to draw her away from the west, from the Adriatic, with a view to avoiding possible clashes with Italy. Emperor Wilhelm II desired a change in the course of Austrian policy and that Count Berchtold, whose policy was not even approved by a "good deal" of Austrian diplomats, be replaced by some person with better understanding of Germany's views.⁶²⁶

Vienna could not hide the disappointment and anger caused by the attitude of Romania and Germany. In a telegram to King Carol congratulating him on the conclusion of peace under his wise leadership, Emperor Franz

622 Ibid., pp. 104-5.

623 Ibid., pp. 109-10.

624 Ibid., pp. 116-7.

625 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXV, p. 378.

626 Ibid., XXXVI, pp. 27-30.

Joseph, angrily crossed out the word “wise”⁶²⁷ from the draft submitted to him, that word having been used by Emperor Wilhelm II. Count Szapáry, the very influential departmental chief of the Foreign Ministry and after the autumn of 1913 Ambassador in St. Petersburg, wrote bitterly that Germany “kept in close contact with Russia, started the cry of localization [of the war], which in itself compromised our Balkan policy, performed theatrical thunder over the Serbian and Albanian questions, when she was quite sure of Russia, and finally forced Austria-Hungary to recognize Russia’s cats-paw Romania as an arbitrator in the Balkans, and to allow a Greater Serbia to be established and Bulgaria abandoned.”⁶²⁸ The reputed and influential Professor Redlich wrote in distress that Germany had completely left Austria aside and itself become the leading Power in the Balkans.⁶²⁹ Count István Tisza wrote in a memorandum of 25 August that such relations with Germany would lead to the break-up of the Triple Alliance and that no effort should be spared to influence Berlin to adopt a new Balkan policy, which would take more account of Austria’s views.⁶³⁰ General Hötzenndorf demonstratively refused to attend Germany’s great autumn maneuvers, which would be carried out in the presence of the Emperor, and wrote frankly of this to the Chief of the German General staff. He even said on 28 July that Germany did not want Austria’s expansion in the Balkans, because it wanted to gain that “fertile territory for its own commercial undertakings”.⁶³¹

France was firmly opposed to revision, mainly because she wanted to safeguard Kavala for Greece, but also because she upheld Serbian interests. British diplomacy clearly saw the difficulties which might arise if the question of revision were raised in its entirety, and it therefore dropped it, if not completely, at least in essentials by 11 August.⁶³²

Despite all the messages from Berlin and Rome, Austria again invited Russia on 12 August to put forward a demand, together with her, for revision of the treaty. Austria did this with the obvious intention of bringing St. Petersburg into an awkward position in respect of Bulgaria and probably also hoped that she might realize some of her desiderata. But when the Austrian Ambassador made it clear in St. Petersburg that his government attached more importance to the revision of the Serbo-Bulgarian border than to the Bulgaro-Greek one,

627 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VII, p. 126.

628 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 25-6.

629 Baernreither, *Fragmente eines politischen Tagebuches*, p. 260.

630 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 198-201.

631 Hötzenndorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, III, pp. 410, 429-30.

632 Benckendorff, *Diplomatischen Schriftwechsel*, III, p. 201.

Russia finally withdrew from collaboration with Vienna.⁶³³ On 14 August, Sazonov rejected all further suggestions and completely dropped the idea of revision. A little later, on 19 August, Emperor Nicholas II confirmed this in a conversation with the Austrian Ambassador. The Serbian Minister, Dimitrije Popović, thought that Russia was influenced by French advice, the attitude of the German Emperor, consideration for the King of Romania, and “the realization that the Greek-Romanian-Serbian block was more useful to Russia.”⁶³⁴

Serbia firmly declared that she would defend the provisions of the Bucharest Treaty by force of arms if necessary. On 8 August, Pašić sent message to St. Petersburg, Paris and London, urging the respective governments “not to agree to revision, for if any modifications were made we would be in a worse position than before and the consequences would be more serious than in the case of Scutari, as we are determined not to give way.” The Romanian Prime Minister informed the Austrian representative on 13 August that Romania would respond to a request of the Great Powers, if it were made by all of them, but that she would consider the request of some of the Powers or of a single Power as “a hostile act directed against Romania” and would adapt her future policy accordingly.⁶³⁵

After Russia’s renouncing of revision and Germany’s determined attitude in favour of the Treaty of Bucharest, it became clear at last to the Vienna government that any step on their part would now be useless. Berchtold admitted to the Emperor with resignation on 28 August that revision “has become impossible”. However, Austria did not give up the idea completely, but thought of leaving it *in suspenso*,⁶³⁶ in order to be able to revert to it at a more opportune moment. But when on 7 September (25 August) King Peter proclaimed the annexation of the new provinces and notified Austria of this, just as he notified other Powers, Count Berchtold was forced to take a definite attitude towards that act. He took note of the act and informed the Serbian Minister that the Danubian Monarchy “have many important interests in the former Turkish areas that await their settlement, interests that concerned the rights of the subjects of the Monarchy, the Catholic Church, and especially economic matters”, and that he hoped that he would be able to settle these matters with Serbia as soon as possible. In reporting this to the Austrian Legation in Belgrade on 24 September, he said that Austria alone could no longer oppose

633 *Documents diplomatiques, Affaires balkaniques (1912-1914), tome III: du traité de Bucarest (10 août 1913) au 1er août 1914*, Paris, 1922, p. 6.

634 Popović Pašiću, Petrograd, 13.8.1913, Pov. Br. 259, in: Džambazovski, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. VI, sv. 3, pp. 291-292.

635 *Öst.-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VII, p. 127.

636 *Ibid.*, p. 219.

the established order and that she must now look to safeguarding her own interests. He had therefore raised these questions in his conversation with the Serbian Minister and intended to continue further discussion in Vienna with Pašić himself, who had intimated his readiness to come there and start negotiations.⁶³⁷ The question of revision of the Bucharest Treaty was thus buried.

During and after the Balkan War, Austria's hostility towards Serbia became a matter of common knowledge. It was no longer concealed or disguised. It was obvious to the whole world. Austria clearly pointed out to Germany and Italy the gulf, "unbridgeable" as her politicians called it, between herself and Serbia. Because of it she came into conflict with Romania. Austria did not hide her dissatisfaction in London, St. Petersburg or Constantinople. In the last-named capital, she spared no effort to bring about an agreement between Turkey and Bulgaria, so that the latter country could have a more free hand in respect of Serbia. When Venizelos asked the Austrian Minister why his country opposed Greece on so many important points, the latter answered frankly that it was because Greece was an ally of Serbia.⁶³⁸ When it was rumoured that an alliance had been concluded between Romania and Serbia, the German Secretary of State reassured the Austrian Ambassador with the statement that that alliance could not be directed against Austria, for King Carol was too loyal. Count László Szögyény, however, replied: "Any political agreement with Serbia, similar to a treaty, is against us in and of itself, for it makes Serbia stronger."⁶³⁹ Under such circumstances, it was quite justifiable to expect a reaction on the part of the Serbs. Austria endeavoured to deprive them alone of the fruits of their victory; she drove them back from the sea, forced them to abandon Scutari, reduced their borders, incited the Bulgarians against them, and tried to deprive them of their successes. All the Serbs, both in Serbia proper and in the Monarchy, followed this policy with profound indignation. Bitterness was accumulating and turning into hatred and conviction that only the fall of the whole regime of the mighty Danubian Monarchy could weaken such hostility.

Responsible circles in Serbia were, however, fully aware that this hatred must not be allowed to come to the fore. Two onerous wars had in great measure exhausted the strength of Serbia and the country needed peace and rest. In the newly conquered provinces, the government had its hands full of work everywhere. From the diplomatic point of view, the Serbian government had its hands tied, to some extent, despite their major successes. Their unfriendly

637 Ibid., pp. 340-1.

638 Ibid., p. 229.

639 Ibid., p. 864.

relations with Bulgaria made important activities in any other direction difficult; for Austria, the danger from Serbia was undoubtedly neutralized by Bulgaria's attitude, however strong a support Serbia might have in the Treaty of Bucharest.

It is true that Austria had reasons to be greatly dissatisfied with the results of the second Balkan war. No previous crisis had left her with so obviously unfavourable a balance as this one. The war between Serbia and Bulgaria, in which she confidently expected Serbia to be defeated both militarily and morally, ended with the Serbian victory and further strengthening of Serbia. What was worse, it brought about an undoubted diminution of Austria's influence in the Balkans. Romania, her ally, now not only criticized Austria's Balkan policy, but also opposed it and completely spoilt all the political and military plans of Viennese diplomacy in respect of the new order in the Balkans. Greece, which had declared her desire to approach the Powers of the Triple Alliance before the war and said that the alliance with Serbia was of a purely temporary character, now felt the necessity to bind itself as closely as possible to Serbia. Greece and Romania were just as much interested in the maintenance of the Bucharest Treaty and defending the new borders in the Balkans as Serbia. Instead of isolating Serbia, Austrian policy was responsible for strengthening Serbia's relations with Greece and Romania and making her diplomatic situation in the Balkans more favourable and more firmly established. What was even more disagreeable for Austria was that in the course of this crisis Romania had come appreciably nearer to Russia, while Germany had openly refused to associate itself with Austria's policy towards Serbia and with her Balkan policy in general. Moreover, both Austrian allies, Germany and Italy, considered Vienna's policy unduly aggressive and did not even hesitate to condemn it as such. At home the situation was also unfavourable. The Yugoslav element was embittered on two counts: because of the hostile policy of the Danubian Monarchy towards Serbia and because of its hostility towards the Serbs of the Monarchy itself; this bitterness was expressed in such manner that would have been unthinkable at the earlier times.

Defending the Austrian policy with its concern for the future of the Danubian Monarchy, certain authors find that it was necessary to suit its interests, and that the tendency of Viennese diplomats was "almost always" to employ peaceful methods.⁶⁴⁰ If it is possible to argue the first premise, the second one is blatantly wrong. If the events took course in accordance with what the most

640 E. Steinitz, "Berchtolds Politik während des zweiten Balkankrieges", *Berliner Monatshefte*, X, 1932, 672-3.

important circles in Vienna desired, Austria would no doubt took action during the First, and most definitely during the Second Balkan War. It did not depend on Austrian will that the things did not turn that way. Therefore, it is clear that whoever wants to write about these matters in a truthful manner cannot claim that Austria did not seriously endanger European peace in the course of 1913, and that without the necessity to defend a single square of her own territory.

PART III

*From the End of the Balkan Wars to the
Sarajevo Assassination
(1913-1914)*

Conflict Arising from the Albanian Raid in Serbia

After withdrawing the troops from Albania, the Serbian government was reluctant for some time to evacuate certain villages and gorges in that country lying on the borderline. It waited for the final delimitation, which was supposed to be carried out by a European commission, and requested to have the decision of European Powers regarding Serbian economic outlet to the sea confirmed, before the evacuation, perhaps with some more concrete assurances. This led to new difficulties with Austria, immediately after the conclusion of peace in Bucharest, and even to an ultimatum delivered by Vienna.

Things developed as follows: as early as 18 April 1913, the Italian Minister in Vienna drew attention of Count Berchtold to the possibility that Serbia might demand, prior to her complete evacuation of Albania, a written confirmation of the promise given by the London Conference in the matter of a Serbian trade port and its execution, stating on behalf of his government that such a demand would be entirely justified. Berchtold instantly opposed this suggestion. Serbia was entitled, he said, to be informed of the modes in which she could have an economic outlet, but she also had to wait until final decisions had been made in this matter. And those decisions were, however, dependent on the consent and goodwill of Austria, which sought to temporize as much as possible, if she was unable to prevent them. It was not before 15 April that the Serbian government was notified about the Albanian borders in the north, but it was nevertheless requested, at Austria's insistence, as early as 29 March to evacuate the area assigned to Albania. The Austrian government was in a hurry to have the Serbian evacuation carried out, under the Austrian threats, and the hostilities in Albania ceased, although the war with Turkey was still underway, and it demanded immediate guarantees for the minorities; but it made no mention at all, in a single reference, during more than three months that the obligations to the Serbs underwritten by the Conference also had to be implemented. Other Powers, however, clearly felt that Serbia's request was justified. Sir Edward Grey even said at the session of the Conference on 23 June that it was a debt of honour to Serbia. If she had been demanded to comply with what the Powers considered decided, Serbia then also had the right to ask from the Powers, if not an immediate execution, at least the clarification of a decision that was in her favour. Despite the willingness of other Powers, Austria procrastinated with a reply and when she realised that it had

to be given eventually, then she wanted to tie it to other conditions. Her representative in London requested on 13 June to make the confirmation of the statement conditional upon the question of Serbian recognition of the Great Powers protectorate over religious minorities in the newly acquired regions of Serbia.¹ Article 4 of the provisions that Berchtold proposed in London on 23 June shows clearly how Austria envisaged such protectorate and minority rights: he demanded an explicit permission to finance Albanian schools in Serbia with money from abroad. This was tantamount to opening the door to foreign influence and irredentism. Austria demanded from Serbia something that she never allowed within her borders, although there were many national minorities in Austria. Serbia would certainly never agree to such terms. But Russia declined them on 2 July before they could be discussed at the London Conference. After that, Austria had to give much milder and more innocent form to her demands in order to push them through. After prolonged negotiations, the joint Russo-Austrian proposal was finally accepted on 29 July and then submitted to Serbia.

After that, during August and September, Austria made every diplomatic effort to have Serbia withdraw from the last small Albanian area alongside the border. After some reluctance, the Serbian government issued on 15 September an order to the army to withdraw on the line behind the Black Drin until the final delimitation. But just as the Serbian army started to withdraw, the attacks on Serbian clerks and soldiers became more frequent. The Hoti and Gruda had earlier prepared for an uprising against the Montenegrins; now it extended to the Serbians. Well-organised detachments from Albania, under command of Isa Boletini and with cooperation of Bulgarian irregulars, prepared for a raid in southern Serbia not just to plunder, but also to bring about the rebellion of Albanians in the Serbian area. Their raid was undertaken on 23 September and it was well-planned and vicious. Numerous and well-armed detachments that numbered up to 15,000 men, equipped even with cannons, broke through deep into the Serbian territory at some sections and captured Debar on 24 September and then Ohrid and Struga, and attacked Gostivar. The embittered Serbs pointed out the fact that Bulgarian officers in Drač prepared this raid in the presence of the authorities and consuls and no one was found to prevent it. The cyphered dispatches of the Bulgarian officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Markov sent from Drač to Sofia partially fell into the hands of Serbian authorities and they are deposited in the archives of the Foreign Ministry as an undeniable evidence. On 23 September, the Serbian government drew the attention of Vienna on the Albanian preparations and skirmishes, of which it

1 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VI, pp. 182-3, 641-2, 712, 814-6.

collected certain information, and it also banned the Albanians to cross from Albania to Serbian markets in order to prevent organised agitation. It also warned that it would suppress further armed raids into its territory with force of arms if necessary and that it would take again the strategic positions in the border area and demanded an indemnity from Albania.

The Austrian Charge d'Affaires in Belgrade Storck wrote to his government that Serbia intended on this occasion to expand her borders arbitrarily, but he provided information on the movements of troops and its character that completely distorted the true state of affairs. The Serbian action against Albania, in his view, "would almost mean a war against us or at least against our prestige in and outside Albania". "There is just one radical resort against Serbia now, and that is war." Berchtold particularly praised this combative and rather divorced-from-reality report.² On the same day, 24 September, the Military Attaché also reported that the Serbs would respond with offensive to Albanian attack in order to punish them adequately.³

Count Berchtold immediately, on 24 September, appealed to Italy to influence Serbia together with him. The Albanians were not responsible, he claimed, for the Albanian movement but rather the Serbs, who provoked them by closing down the markets in Debar and Djakovica. Therefore, Serbia should be requested to respect the borders and neutrality of an autonomous Albania and open its markets again. The movement did not emerge from Albania, he stressed several times, but from the Albanian regions under the Serbs and from those elements which were forbidden from accessing markets by Serbs. That was also an answer to the Serbian government's note. If Italy required from other Powers to make a demarche in Belgrade in that sense, Berchtold found that Vienna would not be against it in principle but the experience with that sort of demarches had been discouraging.⁴ Belgrade considered Storck's behavior particularly offensive, since he not just justified the Albanian rebellion both in public and private conversations, but also presented it as something natural that could be expected. Other Austrian representatives abroad did the same, and Count Somssich in Paris in particular. In Europe, however, the situation was assessed more accurately. The well-informed Rome did not deny the participation, at least passive, of the government of autonomous Albania, whereas Paris attributed a share of blame for the movement to Austria herself.⁵ On 24 September, Venizelos warned the Serbian government that, according

² Ibid., VII, pp. 342-3, 376.

³ Ibid., pp. 343-4.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 344-5, 349.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 359-60.

to the news from Berlin, Austria sought for an opportunity to mediate in the Balkans, and he believed himself "that the protraction of Turco-Greek negotiations and the attack of the Albanians on Debar was Austria's doing".⁶ The raid took place at the time when Turkey was completing the negotiations with the Bulgarians concerning military convention and had very tense relations with Greece on account of the islands in the Aegean sea. It was thus believed not just in Serbia and Greece, but also in the well-informed Germany that a prepense plan was set in motion: to have Serbia preoccupied with an Albanian attack while Turkey settled scores with Greece and then carried out certain transactions pertaining to the revision of the Treaty of Bucharest. The Bulgarians were also active in this respect as they openly talked of retribution and stated that they would not remain passive in case of a Greco-Turkish conflict.⁷ Emperor Wilhelm II himself believed in these connections.⁸

Sazonov's assistant Neratov stated accurately that the evacuation of Albania had been completed in time, that is to say before responsible authorities and decent gendarmerie had been organised in that country. He acknowledged, just like Hartwig, the right of the Serbian government to take energetic measures against the Albanians who violated the border and caused turmoil, but he expressed hope at the same time that Serbia would prove wise and act only within the bounds of real necessities.⁹

Austrian diplomacy indeed endeavoured not just to improve relations between Turkey and Bulgaria, but rather to gear them to direct cooperation. Both Bulgarian and Turkish politicians duly informed Austria about their secret plans for attacking Greece and Serbia, which had long been in the making. To facilitate this attack, Albanian cooperation was contemplated as well as division of the Serbian gains between Bulgaria and Albania. Reports of the Austrian Minister in Constantinople were very clear on this score as well as those from Sofia.¹⁰ Therefore, this explanation of the causes of the attack was accepted with confidence in both Athens and Belgrade, especially because the meetings between Bulgarian and Albanian revolutionaries in Vienna were rather conspicuous and they even staged public displays against Serbia, Montenegro and Greece. Belgrade and Athens also received news from different sources that there were hundreds of Turkish officers in the Albanian army. They were transported, as well as many Albanians from Turkey and Bulgarian

6 Ristić Pašiću, Atina, 24.9.1913, Pov. Br. 333, in: Džambazovski, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. VI, sv. 3, p. 363.

7 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VII, p. 391; *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXVI, p. 102.

8 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VI, p. 380.

9 *Der diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, III, p. 292.

10 For example, *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VII, pp. 391, 396-7.

chetniks, on Austrian ships, which also carried, according to the information from Cetinje, ammunition to Albanian ports. As has been noted, the Chief of the Austrian General Staff Count Hötzenndorf had long planned to instigate insurgence in Albania. In his audience with the Emperor on 3 February 1913, he was even granted permission to send to Albania 1,000 rifles for that purpose.¹¹ On 2 March, Hötzenndorf pointed out to Berchtold the possibility of organising an uprising in Plevlja and Kolašin as a lever against the Serbs.¹² The Austrian Minister in Cetinje admitted himself that ammunition was sent to Albania from Trieste and that two of his NCOs went on the same ship as that cargo, but that a private trader sold ammunition, whereas the presence of NCOs on the same ship was a coincidence.¹³ The commander of Trieste reported on 5 October to the Chief of the Austrian General Staff that 125 boxes of ammunition were transported to Albania on a Lloyd boat and that rebels against Serbia were being prepared in San Giovanni di Medua.¹⁴

Apart from this, the reports of a councilor of the Austrian legation in Constantinople Löwenthal make it clear that Austrian diplomatic representatives were fully cognisant of the secret *chetnik* preparations against Serbia and Greece. The Austrian General-Consul Kral recommended to the Constantinople Legation Selami Tafro from the surroundings of Bitolj, who played a role in the preparations. The latter spelled out his plans as follows: in the vicinity of Greben a Turkish officer, an Albanian, prepared a 240 men strong detachment and sent it in the area in smaller groups. The Bulgarian detachments would raid the Kočane and Štip region. The purpose of this action was to extend the borders of Albania and stimulate the Powers to form an autonomous Macedonia. Tafro implored the Austrian Legation for the support of the Austrian press, which should interpret the entire movement as a consequence of the pressure exerted by the Serbian and Greek authorities and, on that basis, argue that the existing situation was untenable. Löwenthal replied that their press would write "perhaps spontaneously" in that sense.¹⁵

Serbia's complaints and misgivings were thus justified. The mood and connections of Austrian agents in that movement did not remain unknown. The Albanian government no doubt knew in advance about the raid in the Serbian area and assisted it. The Economy Minister Hasan-bey Prishtina said on 24 September that Djakovica would be captured soon after the fall of Debar

11 Hötzenndorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, III, p. 84.

12 Ibid., p. 160.

13 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from Cetinje, 10 October, conf. no. 863.

14 Hötzenndorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, III, pp. 508-9.

15 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VII, pp. 508-9.

and his words were immediately reported to the Austrian Consul in Durres.¹⁶ The Ismail Kemal government paid Isa Boletini and his men. The Serbian government received reliable information that the supporters of Essad-pasha did not take part in the movement, but only those of Ismail Kemal and the government, and that Essad-pasha refused to join them.¹⁷ Essad-pasha was a well-known opponent of Ismail Kemal and his policy. He did not want to join combinations against the Serbs after having seen their successes in the wars with the Turks and Bulgarians. During the raid in Serbia, he was not just passive, but also let know the Serbian government that he did not approve of the matter and that he was against Kemal, who assisted it. For a while, Essad adhered to Italy, Serbia, and the Powers friendly to them in the hope of being elected for prince of Albania or acquiring a real authority in that country with their help. For the same reasons, Ismail Kemal was in favour of Austria-Hungary.

Although he knew what was going on, Berchtold, just like Baron Hötendorf, still claimed with persistence that the raiders were either the Albanians from the area assigned to Serbia, or those from the area occupied by Serbs, or those who were forbidden to enter Debar and Djakovica. At another Berchtold's request to Italy to make a demarche in Belgrade, San Giuliano responded that the fighting was taking place in the territory assigned to Serbia, and not that assigned to Albania, and that it was difficult to prove that the people from autonomous Albania did not take part.¹⁸ Aware of the accuracy of its information and anxious to establish the truth publically, the Serbian government offered to Vienna on 20 October through its Minister that "a third, uninterested party could adjudicate" whose claims were more accurate.¹⁹ But this Serbian offer remained without an answer, as could be expected in view of the above mentioned facts.

Berchtold insisted that any Serbia's action beyond the borders established by the London agreement be prevented. As early as 28 September, the Serbian government itself stated, through the voice of Dr. M. Spalajković, deputy of the absent N. Pašić, that it would respect the terms of the London Conference and that it did not intend to conquer territory in Albania; the border might be crossed here and there for strictly military requirements.²⁰

16 Ibid., p. 363.

17 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from Salonica, 22 November, conf. no. 201.

18 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VII, pp. 363, 369.

19 Jovanović Pašiću, Beč, 20.10.1913, Pov. Br. 453, in: Džambazovski, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. VI, sv. 3, pp. 433-434.

20 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VII, pp. 376-7.

But it was the temporary Albanian government under I. Kemal that was not prepared to adhere to the London terms. It wanted to benefit from the rebellion and the raid of Albanians. On 28 September, the Austrian Consul from Valona reported that Albania would invite Great Powers to prevent Serbian retaliation for the raid and to carry out delimitation but with certain revision of the previous decisions in her favour.²¹ According to a report of Ž. Balugdžić, the Serbian Minister to Greece, from Corfu sent on 18 October, a memoir of the Albanian emigration from Debar, demanding from an international committee to cede that town to Albania, was drafted in the Austrian Consulate in Durres. Slightly earlier, on 27 September, Markgraf Pallavicini had told his German colleague in Constantinople about his conversation with the Grand Vizier to the effect that certain towns on the Albanian border should now be taken from Serbia.²²

The Italian government did not want to act with Austria alone in making a demarche from Vienna and it proposed that the representatives of all Great Powers do it. But such cooperation could not be realized. On 30 September, the Russian government professed that Serbia was entitled to request certain explanations from the Powers rather than the other way round, because she was attacked by a country, the neutrality of which all the Powers guaranteed. Sazonov's deputy Neratov even stated that if the Serbian army went across certain border for reasons of military necessity, that would be perfectly understandable and that Serbia was entitled to request a strategic correction of the border in direction of Debar on account of the raids she was exposed to.²³ Nevertheless, St. Petersburg did not encourage Serbia, although it openly advocated her cause. On the contrary, Neratov sent a word to Pašić – he was in Paris at the time – that he should return to Belgrade as soon as possible and, in his “peaceful and wise manner,” guide Serbian policy which was currently directed by “more fiery” Spalajković.²⁴ The Russian government did not want to see Serbia exposed to diplomatic pressure and to allow Austria to make difficulties for Serbia through the Albanian issue. Replying to Berchtold on the same day, San Giuliano promised to assist Albania in order to avoid bloodshed, but he pointed out that she was also to be blamed because her government helped and tolerated the rebels.²⁵ The British government sent a note to Great

21 Ibid., p. 375.

22 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXVI, p. 99.

23 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VII, pp. 385-5.

24 *Der diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, III, pp. 294-5. Cf. *Documents diplomatiques. Les affaires balkaniques, 1912-1914*, III, p. 52.

25 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VII, p. 383.

Powers as early as 23 September in which it anticipated turmoil due to internal anarchy in Albania and even accused Austria of not sending her delegate to control commission.²⁶

After that, the Austrian Minister made a demarche in Belgrade by himself on 1 October. When Spalajković repeated the statement that Serbia would be moderate and take into account the attitudes and decisions of Great Powers, and that she did not entertain any idea of conquest in Albania, but that the army might cross the border in pursuit of the attackers, Storck replied that a small crossing would not have political significance, but he could give him a friendly advice: "With her large and excellent army, Serbia will be able to defend her borders now and in the future without invading foreign soil." Speaking on this occasion with much tact, according to his instructions, the Minister especially declined any thought that his government was interested in instigating or assisting the rebels.²⁷

Making a demarche in Belgrade alone, the Austro-Hungarian government intended to continue to act on its own if other Powers refused to join her. The work of the London Conference was brought to an end in August and Vienna seems to have considered itself less bound to its settlement. At the joint ministerial conference held on 3 October, Count Tisza insisted that the Danubian Monarchy must make it perfectly clear that it would ensure the respect for the Albanian borders settled in London on its own and Berchtold fully agreed with him. The Chief of General Staff, Baron Hötendorf, elaborated at the conference his well-known plan. Relations with Serbia should be brought to an issue as soon as possible. Serbia should "loyally join us on the pattern of Bavaria's relation to the German Reich or face an overt hostility for which the moment is now the most opportune. The resolution of the Serbo-Albanian conflict and the attitude towards Serbia that will leave that country free of Austrian control will not be of any use. Serbia would just be given time to become stronger. This is not just a matter of the number of our opponents, but the danger lies in Greater Serbia, which would infest our southern provinces with irredentism. Serbia must be demanded to give a direct answer yes or no, and neither she nor Great Powers should be left any time." Berchtold replied that Hötendorf was "perfectly right" but Austria had no support from her allies for such a policy.²⁸ Hötendorf has claimed himself that he rushed the decision to settle scores with Serbia because he thought that 1913 was the last moment to do it with

26 *Documents diplomatiques. Les affaires balkaniques, 1912-1914*, III, p. 48.

27 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VII, p. 388.

28 *Ibid.*, pp. 400-1; Hötendorf, *Aus meiner Deinstzeit*, III, 724 ff.

success;²⁹ his exposition shows clearly that his group regarded the crisis just as a suitable means to provoke a preventive war that would either disable Serbia or force her into Austrian arms. From his audience with Franz Ferdinand on 2 January 1913, when he argued that Serbia should be attacked “before it is too late”, to this moment, he reiterated countless times the same thought: Serbia should be either annexed to Austria or broken down. “This is the last chance to settle the Serbian question in terms favourable to us. In three years at most, the Serbs will be in a different position with 400,000 men against us.”³⁰

On the same day, 3 October, after many changes in the situation, a meeting took place between the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister and N. Pašić, who was on his way back to Belgrade from Paris. Pašić wanted to clear the ground in a direct conversation with Berchtold. He expressed a sincere desire to live in peace with the neighbouring Monarchy and to reach an agreement that would last for decades. Indeed, Serbia needed peace after two wars to rest, gather strength and consolidate the conditions in the newly acquired regions, which had been for centuries almost deprived of contact with modern European civilization. Before Pašić’s trip, the French Minister in Belgrade was told in the Foreign Ministry that Serbia was in “absolute need of external peace”. On 22 August, he reported to Paris that Serbia wanted normal relations with Austria, “which would at the same time vouch for tranquility on the part of Albania”.³¹ Berchtold mentioned his meeting with Pašić at the above mentioned ministerial conference, stating that he offered no guarantee regarding the permanence and sincerity of better Serbo-Austrian relations.

Count Tisza was adamant in his opposition to the views of Baron Hötzendorf at the ministerial meeting. He realized that the annexation of Serbia would be practically impossible and that the whole of Europe would side with Serbia. Instead, he requested that an ultimatum be delivered to Serbia unless she refused to abandon her strategic positions in Albania and that she be defeated either diplomatically or militarily. The Finance Minister – and Minister for Bosnia – Biliński also took a dim view of Hötzendorf’s suggestion. Europe could rightly label Austria-Hungary a breaker of peace. Besides, it would be difficult to obtain the consent of the relevant parliaments in the Danubian Monarchy. He trusted Pašić that Serbia needed peace and that she sincerely desired it. But there was no doubt that the Serbs wanted to have one day the southern provinces of the Monarchy. For that reason, it was not necessary to wage war immediately, but it was necessary to prepare well and not to spare

29 Hötzendorf, *Aus meiner Deinstzeit*, III, pp. 11-4, 25-7, 76, 83-4, 120, 322-3, 443-4.

30 Ibid., p. 445.

31 *Documents diplomatiques. Les affaires balkaniques, 1912-1914*, III, p. 26.

money on the army. He also stressed on this occasion that the Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina were “politically the most advanced and relatively the largest part of the population”.

After his discussion, Berchtold pointed out that Hötzenndorf's view was out of the question and that Biliński's proposal seemed the most appropriate to him. “Today Serbia presents a great attraction because it has been seen that her prestige has grown at the expense of ours. If Serbia develops further, our Yugoslavs will feel even more attracted there [to Serbia], and the best internal policy is of no avail then ... The showdown with Serbia and her humiliation is a vital condition for the [existence of] Monarchy. If that cannot happen today, we must thoroughly prepare for it.” Hötzenndorf then expressed his joy that in relation to Serbia “a peaceful path has been excluded from such competent quarters and that only a path of force remains. But he believes that a war must be waged as soon as the prospects are favourable.”³²

This meeting was fateful in Serbo-Austrian relations. It was held at the moment when the Serbian Prime Minister was in Vienna and waiting to clear the ground between the two countries. On that day, Serbia was simply marked in the Austrian capital as an enemy to be stricken at first as soon as a favourable opportunity arose. Her guilt was that she emerged victorious from two wars and that her vitality and prestige made her an object of attraction to her compatriots in the Danubian Monarchy. All the relevant and responsible factors of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy concurred that she should be humiliated and destroyed at an early opportunity and that the organism of the Viennese Empire could be healed and maintained only by the blood from her wounds. The Serbs themselves were not aware of the importance that Austria attached to them and that their question was made a crucial issue for their great neighbour. Pašić believed that an agreement was possible and that it should not be too difficult to reach. The Serbian Minister in Vienna, Jovan M. Jovanović, was also hopeful. The discussion above makes it clear, however, that such an agreement was difficult or even impossible to make except in one case – that Serbia renounced her national role after all her successes and submitted entirely to Imperial will. Any other agreement would not even be a patchwork, but rather a temporary and light cover to be thrown off as soon as the opportunity presented itself to realize what had been completely matured in the minds of the Austro-Hungarian leadership.

At the meeting between N. Pašić and Berchtold on 3 October, the Serbian Prime Minister expressed his desire to arrange many economic, traffic and legal matters with Austria and his hope that, with the end of the war,

32 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VII, pp. 397-403.

political relations would also develop in the spirit of increasing trust and peace. Berchtold pointed out the Albanian question. Pašić replied immediately that the rebellion of the Albanians in Serbia would be overcome rapidly and that Serbia had no intention to encroach on the territory that belonged to Albania. When Berchtold advanced his opinion that the Albanian government had nothing to do with that movement, Pašić was skeptical. An Austro-Serbian understanding seemed to be easy to achieve in other questions concerning trade agreement and traffic matters.³³ Pašić agreed to the construction of the Sanjak railway and the connection between the Serbian and Bosnian railways in Vardište and in the vicinity of Bijeljina. Only in the matter of the Eastern Railways, he defended the view of the Serbian government that all railways should become a state property, whereas Berchtold advocated their maintenance in private property. The capitulation rights in the areas of the former Ottoman Empire were discussed at more length. Pašić stressed that the rights had been abolished with the annexation of these areas to Serbia, while Berchtold requested certain guarantees and compensations through negotiations. In the end, Berchtold wrote, Pašić assured him that Serbia would pursue a correct policy towards the Monarchy and that the Austrian treatment of the Serbs and Croats in her provinces would not affect the attitude of the Serbian government. After their meeting, which took place before noon, before the above mentioned ministerial conference, Pašić's interview on Albania was published in the evening press and Berchtold found it to contain certain ambiguities. To avoid these ambiguities, he wrote a letter to Pašić on the same day in which he underlined that he considered the Albanian borders inviolable and that the Serbian army had to respect them.³⁴

The first fresh conflict stemmed from the Albanian question. From the start, Austria demanded from Serbia to take strictly defensive attitude. After the ministerial conference and the meeting between Berchtold and Pašić in Vienna, the Austrian Foreign Minister sent a strictly confidential message to Belgrade on 7 October, not to be relayed to other Powers, to the effect that he again drew

33 The Serbian Minister in Vienna, Jovan M. Jovanović, has claimed that, according to the Austrian agenda, the following issues were discussed within the framework of Serbo-Austrian relations: the export of Serbian cattle and food via Split using the Užice-Vardarište-Split railway, the question of connecting the Klenak-Šabac railway, purchase of the Eastern Railways, railway tariffs, the cabotage of Austro-Hungarian ships in the Serbian river docks, mining and other concessions, school textbooks. See *Stvaranje zajedničke države Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca*, Belgrade, 1928, pp. 16-17.

34 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VII, pp. 425-7. Biliński's memoirs do not tally with the official version. He even says that Berchtold told him that he 'had forgotten' to warn Pašić not to attack the Albanians and asked him to do so in his name. See translation in *Novi život*, XXII, 1925, p. 101.

Pašić's attention, as he had done in Vienna, that the Serbian army should not cross the borders of Albania and to warn him about the consequences of such an action. If the border was not convenient from the military point of view at some places, it should be respected nevertheless; Austria too had such strategically inconvenient places at the border near Kotor and in Herzegovina, and she still respected it.³⁵ Before this message, Pašić told the Austrian Minister that Serbia did not seek for further expansion and that the army would take certain positions only temporary and it would withdraw from there as soon as a European commission established the borders and order was established in Albania. That commission would perhaps manage to find a more suitable mountain range as a better border between Serbia and Albania than that delimited in London. The Minister stressed at once that the border had already been established and it would not be changed.³⁶ Pašić replied to Berchtold's message on 9 October: he would insist on the strict observance of the border and if the army crossed it at some section, it would only be temporary.³⁷

On the same day, the news reached Vienna that the Serbian army crossed the borders of autonomous Albania on three sides. Berchtold then invited the Powers next day to administer advice in Belgrade to respect the borders of Albania – each Power was supposed to do so on its own and not in the form of a joint demarche that could not have been realized before. On 13 October, a Cabinet meeting was summoned again to decide on the measures against Serbia. Count Tisza requested an energetic protest to be sent to Serbia and to make the inevitable prospect of a war clear, if she did not back down. He said that Serbia should be humiliated, but he was not in favour of her division. Count Stürgkh, the Austrian Prime Minister, argued that Serbia should be reduced, “put under commercial pressure” and her dynasty replaced. Berchtold was in favour of some military action against Serbia, but he feared not just Russia and Romania, but was also not clear in his mind as to the attitude of Italy and Germany in that matter. Of course, Hötzenndorf demanded military invasion. Berchtold was personally in agreement, but he considered the fact that three weeks had to pass between the ultimatum and invasion, on account of mobilization, a major difficulty as that would provide time for the Powers to mediate.³⁸ It emerges clearly from these discussions that an attack on Serbia was sought only because the intention was to defeat her and not because of the Albanian question. It was just an excuse – and not for the sake of

35 Ibid., pp. 413-4.

36 Ibid., p. 414.

37 Ibid., pp. 422-3.

38 Hötzenndorf, *Aus meiner Deinstzeit*, III, pp. 464-6.

Austro-Hungarian public opinion, which was aware of the real reasons, but for the sake of European public opinion, which could not be told the real reason. Essentially, Tisza's proposal was accepted. Berchtold sent an Austrian representative next day to declare to the Serbian government that Austria-Hungary could not allow even a temporary occupation of the Albanian territory and to therefore inquire if the Serbian army would withdraw before certain brief deadline and cease all further offensive measures. "The Monarchy will have to make conditional its further attitude towards Serbia upon the reply to that question and the adherence to previous Serbian statements, because we have decided to ensure an unconditional respect for the London terms by all means that seem suitable to us."³⁹ On the same day, Berchtold received the Serbian Minister and told him his message for Belgrade. On that occasion, he stressed the seriousness of the situation and added that he warned him in time before "calamity" had occurred.⁴⁰

However, the Serbian government had already called a halt to the advance of the army in Albania on 14 October. Pašić replied to the message from Vienna on 15 October, stating that the army had already been ordered not to advance further, but her withdrawal would depend on the situation in Albania. The army could not withdraw while the detachments of Albanians ready for combat were facing it. Who guaranteed Serbia for the damage inflicted by Albanians? The Albanian border was still not established, since a commission charged with that task was on its way. With this in view, the Serbian government was preparing a note for Great Powers in which it intended to develop its argument for a border that would better guarantee peace. The Minister replied that Pašić's view on the significance of the border commission was based on the erroneous premise; it would not draw borders, which had already been established, but just confirm them.⁴¹

After the Serbian reply, which was not found satisfactory, Vienna decided to proceed in a most energetic manner. On 17 October, Berchtold sent a verbal note to the Serbian government, which was in the nature of an ultimatum. Serbia was demanded to accept the Austrian request and withdraw her army from the Albanian soil within eight days or Austria-Hungary would resort to different means more suitable to secure the compliance to her demand.⁴² On the same day, the Austro-Hungarian government addressed a note to all Powers in which it accused Serbia of deliberately procrastinating with the evacuation

39 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VII, p. 435.

40 *Ibid.*, pp. 436-7.

41 *Ibid.*, pp. 442-3.

42 *Ibid.*, p. 453.

of Albania and intending to play false the decisions of the London Conference. The most recent clashes, which took place in the Serbian territory and did not originated in autonomous Albania, provided an occasion to Serbia to reopen the question of the Albanian border with a view to changing it to her benefit through forcible occupation. This Serbian action could serve as an example to other neighbours and it could bring the entire London accomplishment to ruin. In order to save it and to save the peace of Europe, the Viennese note ended, Austria-Hungary took her step in Belgrade.⁴³

The Austrian step was badly received in almost all European capitals. San Giuliano said to the Austrian Minister on 17 October that measures against Serbia were too sharp as opposed to those against Greece. Greece held entire towns against the provisions of the London Conference and it had not been treated in such manner, while Serbia was actually just taking measures for her defense. Why not wait until the commission completed delimitation? Italy also wanted to see the borders established in London respected, but there was no need for such impatience and nervousness.⁴⁴ Complaining to the German Ambassador about the of Austrian reproaches, San Giuliano told him that he was in “no mood to increasingly incur hostility for the sake of Austria” towards Italy,⁴⁵ and he let it be known in Belgrade. Serbia’s stance was seen as justified in St. Petersburg and Hartwig was saying so publically in Belgrade. Vienna interpreted the difference between Pašić’s earlier and later statements as resulting primarily from the influence of Hartwig, who had just returned from a leave of absence. In St. Petersburg, Neratov defended the Serbian standpoint in all matters and endeavoured to prolong the deadline set to Serbia for the evacuation. But Vienna would have none of it. Neratov even considered it necessary to tell the Austrian Ambassador that Count Berchtold “cannot have any doubt as to the impression his decision would make on us”. The border commission was already in Albania, in the vicinity of the Serbian border, and its decisions would not have to be awaited for long.⁴⁶ The French government viewed the ultimatum with an understandable disfavour. Deputy Foreign Minister Paléologue said to the Austrian Ambassador straightaway that French information on the movement of Albanians did not tally with the representation of the Austrian government and that he did not find its step justified. He then asked if Austria guaranteed for peace after the withdrawal of the Serbian army.⁴⁷ However,

43 Ibid., pp. 455-6.

44 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VII, pp. 458-9.

45 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXVI, p. 390.

46 *Der diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, III, pp. 314-5.

47 Ibid., pp. 470-1.

Poincaré send word to Belgrade, together with Sazonov who happened to be in Paris in those days, to give in wisely rather than expose itself to threats.⁴⁸

In the summer of 1913, Count Forgách was appointed a head of the Viennese headquarters of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. This appointment was no coincidence. It was well-known that this diplomat had left Belgrade after a major affair and in a bitter mood. His appointment immediately after the Serbo-Bulgarian war meant no doubt that anti-Serbian faction was being reinforced in the Ministry and in the Minister's entourage. Forgách's attitude towards Serbia was no secret. After his arrival, he told Baron Szilassy that he would gladly place the inscription *delenda est Serbia* above the door in each room of the Ministry, because he "regarded the destruction of Serbia as a fundamental condition for the survival of the Monarchy".⁴⁹ In a short time, he acquired the greatest influence in the Ministry. The German Ambassador wrote in late autumn that he became a real "political *spiritus rector* in the Ministry".⁵⁰ It was thus no coincidence that Count Berchtold sent in September to Berlin none other than him to explain once again the Austrian attitude towards Serbia and to request more allied assistance in that matter from Germany. In a conversation with the State Secretary Jagow held on 25 September, the latter promised that Germany would support "unconditionally" Austria in her Albanian policy,⁵¹ and that was what she most needed in those days. Indeed, Germany decisively sided with its Viennese ally during this crisis in an obvious attempt to smooth over the bad impression created in the Danubian Monarchy by German attitude during the Second Balkan War and in the question of the revision of the Bucharest Treaty. On 18 October, the German Ambassador in Vienna issued a clear statement in this sense.⁵² On the same evening, Emperor

48 Poincaré, *L'Europe sous les armes*, Paris 1926, pp. 306-7.

49 Szilassy, *Der Untergang der Donau-Monarchie*, p. 254.

50 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIX, p. 458.

51 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VII, p. 357.

52 *Ibid.*, pp. 461, 470. Cf. *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXVI, pp. 388-9. The statement made by the German Minister to M. Spalajković, Deputy Foreign Minister, on 30/17 September is very interesting. He first warned of the inaccurate assumption that Germany was disinterested in Albania "as his colleagues told him that the [Foreign] Ministry believed". Then he privately gave advice regarding the sharp Greco-Turkish dispute, saying that the Serbs "should not pursue too idealistic policy, but to request of Greece an outlet to the Aegean Sea – either Salonica or Kavala – in case Greece asked for their assistance. Only that way Serbia would become politically and economically fully independent, because a guaranteed access to the Adriatic Sea could not be realized for a long time. He thinks that neither Great Powers nor Austria would be opposed to our expansion to the south, and that would be more useful for German industry as German ships drop by at Salonica on their way to Constantinople and they do not enter the Adriatic Sea." See Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Note by Spalajković.

Wilhelm II also told Baron Hötendorf in Leipzig that he approved of the Austrian action and that “he is with them”. Other Powers were not prepared, he said, and therefore they would do nothing to prevent it.⁵³ He even wrote on one report, “Now or never”.⁵⁴ Aware of the danger, the Germans considered it their duty to warn the Serbs and point out Austrian determination. As early as 15 October, the Under-Secretary of State said to the Serbian Charge d’Affaires that he was concerned because of Austrian irritation and that he “advises [us] friendly and decisively to come to terms with Austria-Hungary, since Bulgaria was anxious to attack us”.⁵⁵

The British government, of course, favoured the respect for the borders drawn in London, but it had understanding for the Serbian action and, on 19 October, requested from Serbia just a statement to the effect that her occupation was temporary and that the Serbian army would withdraw “as soon as possible”.⁵⁶ However, Ser Edward Grey sent word to the Austrian government that he disagreed with their action firstly, because the consent of other Powers was not sought, and secondly, because the note was too sharp. London found it was perhaps not necessary to demand from Serbia immediate withdrawal from strategic positions due to the lack of any real authority in Albania and it stressed that Serbia had been provoked by the attack on the part of Albanians. Berchtold defended his step as being made in order to put an end to disorder on the borders, given that negotiations between the Powers took a long time and it was not certain that they would agree.⁵⁷

Facing the energetic ultimatum of the Vienna government and careful not to take issue that could cause further turmoil, the Serbian government did not play for time and cave in at once. On 19 October, the decision was made to order the army to withdraw and the Austrian government was informed accordingly next day. Berchtold took notice of that statement, but he insisted on the completion of the evacuation within the eight days deadline and stressed that he would make sure through eyewitnesses that the evacuation had been completed entirely.⁵⁸ The withdrawal of Serbian troops was, however, completed by 25 October.

53 Hötendorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, III, pp. 469-70.

54 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXVI, p. 399.

55 Bogićević Pašiću, Berlin, 16.10.1913, Pov. Br. 6559, in: Džambazovski, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. VI, sv. 3, pp. 409-410.

56 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VII, p. 467.

57 *Ibid.*, p. 478; *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXVI, pp. 394, 407.

58 *Ibid.*, pp. 473-4.

Pašić's attitude in this matter was not clear. Austria admonished him early enough and on several occasions not to allow the Serbian army to cross the border. Why did he do it then? Probably in the hope that he could get the rectification of the unfavourable border. But why did he not then clear the ground in Vienna at his meeting with Berchtold? If Berchtold had not raised the question, he could have done it himself. And how could he have believed that Austria would make concession in the matter of the change of border when she constantly claimed that Serbia had gained too much at the expense of Albania, and especially after the failed revision of the Bucharest Treaty when Austria publically declared that the Serbs had been strengthened again at the expense of others?

After the crisis blew over, on 22 October, Stojan Novaković, former Prime Minister during the Annexation Crisis, addressed an interpellation to the parliament, asking Pašić to reply to the following: 1) did Austria issued her demand on her own or on behalf of all Great Powers; 2) if Austria did not have a mandate from Great Powers, why did the government give in without requesting to know the views of other Powers; and 3) how did the government "think to defend Serbian interests on the western borders, if they yielded to Vienna's demand on this occasion in such a reckless manner". Pašić's reply was: 1) Austria put forward the demand by herself; 2) the Serbian government was unable to ask Austria for a mandate on behalf of the Great Powers before it gave in for the following reasons: "a) because the Serbian government had stated much earlier that it accepted the decisions of the Ambassadors on Albania's borders, but it hoped that the borders could be rectified upon the arrival of an international commission; b) the Serbian government stated to Great Powers that the Albanian territory had to be violated in the course of suppression and pursuit of the Albanians, but it did not intend to use this occasion to annex the Albanian lands and it would withdraw its forces as soon as the border was definitely established on the ground; c) the expressed wish of the Serbian government to change the border in the interest of both neighbouring states in order to ease the defense and avoid the clashes aimed at the agreement between the Great Powers which created Albania to that effect – and the Serbian government did not want to act unilaterally but in agreement with the Great Powers; d) in the future, the Serbian government would defend the border in the same way as other states defend their borders. It would build fortresses and bunkers just like Austria did on the Montenegrin border and just like other states do." Such an answer begs the question why Pašić then allowed, if this was his view, the crisis and the ultimatum to take place. He was well aware of the ill will of Austria towards Serbia. When he realized that Austria would take issue with this matter – and he appreciated the need to be conciliatory – it then made

sense to clear the ground in time without the damage to Serbia's prestige. It was obvious that no thinking man in Serbia desirous of peace wanted to come into conflict over two or three gorges on a barren border or over two or three villages when so much had been gained and when the government had yielded in much larger issues.

After Serbia had given in, San Giuliano told the Austrian representative that Austrian "imperialist method" would leave bad blood in Serbia and be detrimental to the interests of the Triple Alliance. And the allies of the Danubian Monarchy found it inconvenient "to be faced suddenly with such a serious situation".⁵⁹ Sir Edward Grey considered the Serbian arguments substantial and believed that Great Powers would have to ponder what to reply to Serbia's request for a guarantee against the renewed attacks from Albania.⁶⁰ The French Foreign Minister said he regretted Austria's acting alone, although he looked forward to a speedy solution of the question.⁶¹ The French Ambassador in Vienna reported that Austrian irritation was even interpreted as stemming from Albanian reproach that Austria was not backing them enough in the trouble in which they landed themselves on account of an action to which Austria had encouraged them.⁶²

Aware of Austrian irritation and real ambitions in Albania, Sazonov advised the Serbs not to meddle in the Albanian question any more. "Moreover", D. Popović, Minister in St. Petersburg, wrote, "it seems to me that Mr. Sazonov would want us to forego even our economic outlet to the sea, in Durres, and that he would console us with highly problematical perspective that Durres would be ours entirely one day ... From all this, it can be concluded, with a view to little assistance that we could expect from here, that it is necessary, if possible, to eschew any disagreement with Austria-Hungary and endeavour to be on good terms with it, even at the price of yielding while we are exhausted from the recent wars. That will not be dimly viewed here; on the contrary, Russia would want to see us have better relations with Austria-Hungary so that she was safe from that quarter."⁶³ Just like Pichon, Sazonov also expressed his regret to the German State Secretary for the Austrian action, drawing his attention to the consequences of an arbitrary Austrian move for the improvement of Russo-Austrian relations.

59 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VII, p. 480.

60 *Ibid.*, p. 487.

61 *Ibid.*, pp. 487-8; *Documents diplomatiques. Les affaires balkaniques, 1912-1914*, III, p. 67.

62 *Documents diplomatiques. Les affaires balkaniques, 1912-1914*, III, p. 69.

63 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VII, p. 520; Bogićević Pašiću, Berlin, 23.10.1913, Pov. Br. 422, in: Džambazovski, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. VI, sv. 3, p. 448; *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXVI, p. 411; *Der diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, III, p. 329.

The Question of the Eastern Railways

After all that happened during 1912/13, not to mention what had occurred earlier, it could be hardly expected that Serbian mood regarding Austria would change for the better suddenly. The public was ignorant about the conversations that took place in Vienna when Pašić arrived to negotiate in a friendly spirit, but it experienced the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia two weeks later. How could then Austrian diplomacy expect any pleasantries from Belgrade that smarted under the still fresh impression of being humiliated? As early as 4 November Ugron requested from Pašić that Serbia prove her goodwill by deeds, and very soon, on the occasion of giving concessions for state supplies etc. Of course, Pašić could reply only that her real and financial interests in any business would guide Serbia.⁶⁴

After Serbia and Montenegro had gained a contiguous border over the territory of the Sanjak of Novi Pazar and the Serbian conquest of the northern and western part of Old Serbia and Macedonia, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy had her road to Salonica cut off completely and its political influence in the region of Kosovo and Metohija was weakened. Refusing to be ousted completely and to lose its preponderant role in the Balkans jealously guarded in the past, the Danubian Monarchy endeavoured to maintain in its hands at any cost certain powerful leverages, with the help of which it could influence the Balkan developments more actively and provoke further political combinations and solutions in more favourable circumstances. Those leverages were its traffic and economic policy towards Salonica and the question of the protection of Roman Catholics in Serbia's newly acquired areas.

Austria-Hungary never concealed its economic ambitions in the direction of Salonica; for a while, it stressed, in order to calm down the public and those who held contrary opinion, that it had no other ambitions besides economic ones, but that it would protect them with all its might for the sake of its economy. To secure as many real reasons for its activity as possible, Austria-Hungary was quick to increase an already large share of its capital in the Eastern Railways Company. In 1913, the Austro-Hungarian capital bought the shares of that company that belonged to the German Bank and the Swiss Credit Bank (51,000) and then emerged, along with the French capital, as a main factor in the negotiations with the Serbian government. The official

64 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VII, p. 535.

communiqué concerning this transaction stated openly: “the future branching out of the railway companies in the Balkans will be under the exclusive patronage of the Austro-Hungarian group”.⁶⁵ Therefore, the Austro-Hungarian state itself took the role of a negotiator on behalf of Austro-Hungarian capital, whereas private individuals kept representing French capital. Serbia realized at once what the crux of the matter was. For that reason, Serbia first stated that she had nothing to negotiate about with the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and that she only had to deal with a private company with international capital. Count Berchtold replied “that most of the shares of that company are in the hands of Austro-Hungarian capitalists”; and therefore, “the Monarchy have the right to represent state interests that have come into question”.⁶⁶

The Serbian government wanted to have the only railway that traversed Kosovo and the Vardar valley entirely under its control for strategic and political reasons. It thus proposed the Company to buy off its railway in its entirety. Serbia offered Austria-Hungary to maintain its previous privileges and guarantees which the earlier “convention *à quatre* provided for its commercial connections with Constantinople and Salonica”. The Danubian Monarchy had nothing to lose economically because of the change of ownership, but it obviously had much to lose in political sphere. For that reason, it did not even consider the offer of the Serbian government and requested that the railway remain in the hands of the Company and that the control of the Monarchy over the railway be ensured. Such request was justified on the grounds that the capital of its banks was largest in the Company and that Austria-Hungary could not be indifferent to the investment of that capital and the extent of its protection. The Serbian government insisted, on the contrary, on purely legal viewpoint: the ownership of capital “have not the slightest effect on the legal position of the Monarchy in respect to the convention *à quatre*, because it could not have in that respect any greater right even in a case it [Austria-Hungary] bought off all the shares”.⁶⁷

A group of French bankers turned up as a mediator between Austria-Hungary and Serbia with the proposal that the shares of the Company be bought off in such a manner that Serbia, Austria-Hungary and France and Russia together each receive a third of the shares; a Serbian company would then be formed for the exploitation of the railway in the Serbian territory and a director of that company would be a Serb. The French government also agreed to this plan for “internationalization” with a view to avoiding a sharp conflict

65 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from Vienna, 2 April, conf. no. 190.

66 Archives of the Paris Legation, Report from Vienna, 2 February 1914, conf. no. 25.

67 Archives of the Paris Legation, Circular report from Belgrade, 6 March 1914, conf. no. 919.

between the Serbian and Austrian viewpoint.⁶⁸ The Serbs agreed to this French proposal, considering it less inconvenient than the Austro-Hungarian one. Pašić asked, in addition, that the functioning of the railway be secured during emergency conditions and that administration and the official language be Serbian. Austria-Hungary also consented to the French proposal, but with certain reservations. It realized the weakness of its legal position and that it had to give in, but endeavoured to secure for itself as much influence as possible. Austria-Hungary tried to ensure 50 per cent share for itself and to reduce other, particularly Serbian, share to less than that. The Prime Minister of Hungary, Count Tisza, was especially persistent. "The Count finds", the Serbian Minister in Vienna wrote, "that Serbia should always be little and the Monarchy great; then they could never be together and on equal footing in any business."⁶⁹ Serbia's basis for negotiations was the convention *à quatre* and the obligation to construct the railway from Užice to Vardarište in Bosnia and to link the Bosnian railway at Uvac with Mitrovica. Serbia did not want, however, to have other issues associated with the question of the Eastern Railways; she also insisted that Greece accept the same form of internationalization of its part of the Company's railway. Jovan M. Jovanović, the Serbian Minister in Vienna, was authorized to conduct and complete the negotiations on that basis.

But Italy suddenly and energetically interfered with the matter. It rightly reduced Austria-Hungary's stance to political motives and the French stance to economic ones, and was intent on preventing them from exploiting the situation for their ends. Italy did not refer to its interest in the matter of the Balkan, and especially Adriatic, railways, but rather took up a principled, legal position that threatened to foil all the plans of political-banking groups of the Eastern Railways. On 29 January 1914, the Italian government lodged a protest in Belgrade, St. Petersburg, Paris and probably in Vienna against the trilateral nature of the negotiations, and stated that it "does not recognize the right of these Powers to settle that question separately", invoking the conclusions of the London Conference according to which "all economic questions as well as the railway matters raised by the last Balkan War have to be submitted to a financial conference in Paris". In the view of the Italian government, the negotiations in Vienna were not held in the proper place and it protested against not being invited. According to M. Vesnić's report of 4 February, this Italian step "was primarily aimed against Vienna, because it did not want to accept Italy's cooperation in the matter of arranging the Eastern Railways, although the French were initially not opposed to that cooperation". Besides, Germany

68 *Der diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, III, pp. 319, 372-3.

69 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from Vienna, 4 December 1913.

also did not entirely agree with Austria-Hungary's action. On 10 February, the Serbian Minister in Vienna relayed to Belgrade the reproach made by the German Ambassador: "When we sold you the shares of the Eastern Railways Company, we did not want you to cede them to the French and bring into question our link to Anatolia and that only for the sake of getting closer to French finances."⁷⁰

The Serbian government found Italy's stance welcome in order to renew and reinforce its own request to buy the shares. Belgrade replied to Rome that the Italian government was right in principle, "but that we were forced to discuss that question with Austria, because she pressured us to cede the exploitation [of the railway] into the hands of the old company. The Serbian government could not, of course, agree to return the exploitation to the old company, because it had sufficient reasons to believe that this would increase the difficulties for peaceful development in the Balkans and that this would be a constant source of friction and conflict with Austria-Hungary." It was natural to expect that the Powers would settle the question of the Eastern Railways between themselves, but they did not do so and Austria-Hungary insisted on its demands, which made Serbia agree to negotiate with Vienna in order to eschew further and greater difficulties. "We would greet with the utmost happiness the resolution of Great Powers to submit this question to the jurisdiction of a financial commission, because, in doing so, they would protect Serbia from a one-sided solution of this question."

The Italian attitude made the position of Serbia much easier. During the negotiations with the Vienna government, it allowed Serbia to point out that the entire dispute could assume a European character and that she could not tolerate the pressure of a single Power, "which is being exerted without a legal basis". "When I said in passing", Jovan Jovanović reported from Vienna on 15(2) February, "that it seems to me that many in Europe will be opposed to their view, I was then told: If you mean Germany, then you are wrong. We have disagreements in an entirely different matter, and in the matter that interests Serbia and Austria-Hungary we are fully at one." Among various solutions to this question, the Serbian Minister in Vienna allowed for the following possibility: "To leave the Company to exploit the undisputed railway and not to link the railway any more on either side of the Monarchy, and to ask for a strict

⁷⁰ Archives of the Paris Legation, Report from Vienna, 28 January 1914, conf. no. 19; cf. *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXVII, pp. 738-40; *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus. Dokumente aus den Archiven der Zarischen und der Provisorischen Regierung*. Edited by M. N. Pokrovsky, Authorized German translation by Otto Hoetzsch, Reihe 1, Bd. 1., 14. Jan. bis 14. März 1914, Berlin 1931, p. 95.

fulfilment of the obligations in terms of the earlier conventions concluded between the [Sublime] Porte and the Eastern Railways Company." The head of the trade department of the Foreign Ministry, Count Wickenburg, replied to this: "That solution would be most disagreeable to us and it would be a proof that you do not want to arrange good relations with us." "We want to have good relations with you", the Serbian reply read, "but we think that this is a two-way process: a concession for a concession. You ask for concessions from us and you offer none to us. And there is no solution to this, or any other, question without *do ut des*. Since the Balkan crisis started, you have always been against us: Albania, the Adriatic Sea, Scutari, the Serbo-Bulgarian conflict and the revision of the Bucharest Treaty, the Albanian raid and the ultimatum." "That is the past ..." – "But the future is based on it, and therefore it should be improved by accepting our proposal about the buying off [of the Company's shares]."⁷¹ Count Berchtold categorically stated that, "Austria-Hungary could not agree to buying off in any case, because its surest guarantee for a free road to Salonica is the possession of the railway by a company in which Austro-Hungarian capital prevails."⁷² "What minister", he asked, "could stand before the parliament and tell that he has abandoned a well-founded right of his own and especially when it concerns the prestige of the country." – "That minister could be Count Berchtold, because he stated to the Delegations, just like his predecessor, that Austria-Hungary has no expansionist territorial ambitions, that it aspires to have a safe and free road to Salonica for its trade, that it has a guarantee for a free road in the convention *à quatre* ... As far as the matter of prestige is concerned, a formula and a modus could probably be found that would not hurt the prestige of the Monarchy, because Serbia does not care to infringe on the prestige of the Monarchy but to remove, through the solution of this railway question, a mass of hindrances for arranging and further developing correct relations with the Monarchy. Count Berchtold did not reply to this, and he postponed conversation for another occasion."⁷³ It should be noted that Baron Hötzenndorf stated that he would be doing and asking for the same thing as the Serbs if he were in their place.⁷⁴

Serbia could not take a more energetic stance against Austro-Hungarian ambitions for several reasons. Above all, it was not just the question of Austria-Hungary but also France, to some extent, whose capitalists were interested to maintain the concessions of the Company. It was feared, not without good

71 Archives of the Paris Legation, Report from Vienna, 2 February 1914, conf. no. 24.

72 Archives of the Paris Legation, Report from Vienna, 7 February 1914, conf. no. 25.

73 Archives of the Paris Legation, Report from Vienna, 7 February 1914, conf. no. 26.

74 Hötzenndorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, III, p. 662.

reason, that French capital with its strong connections in Russia would influence the Russian official circles to accept its view. Germany did not express its view and Britain seemed uninterested. And Serbia could not have the railway question settled in accordance with her needs without the support of some other European Powers beside Italy. The Serbian government recommended to its diplomatic representatives to sound out carefully the views of the respective governments and to speak in favour of Serbian wishes. "It is necessary to mention", the instructions of 19 March read, "that a solution of this matter in accordance with our wishes – the buying off of the railway – would not be just in our interest but in the interest of the whole Europe. Apart from removing the main source of future disagreements between us and Austria-Hungary, Serbia would in her own interest spare no effort to ensure for her railways the largest possible share of transit to Levant by means of tariff and other concessions which would be applied to all equally in keeping with the convention *à quatre* and with Greece *à cinque*."

The negotiations about this matter were difficult, but the Serbs considerably benefited from the fact that the interests of Vienna and Paris were not quite congruent. French financiers deprived of their annuities did not want to see the negotiations complicated too much in diplomatic sphere and their resolution postponed for a longer period of time. Moreover, it was not in their interest to incur the displeasure of the Serbian government, firstly, because they hoped to get from it as much as possible through a favourable agreement, and secondly, because they intended to take part in the construction of other railways, especially the Adriatic one. They wanted to resolve this dispute like business people without major complications. Some of them were willing for a while to stick with the Austrians in the hope of making a good profit from Serbia (the sum of 50,000,000 francs was mentioned), but they quickly changed their attitude once they realized that Serbia, backed by Italy, refused to accept such basis of an agreement and that the matter assumed political character. Besides, the French government did not encourage them to identify their interests too closely with those of Austria-Hungary and turn an economic issue into political one. The friendly Powers could also have found out that the manner in which the negotiations were held during the meetings was not conducive to an agreement. The Austrian, and especially Hungarian, delegates behaved in such a manner that the Serbian Minister was forced to warn them that the negotiators were equals.⁷⁵ For that reason, the Serbian circles even considered to drop the negotiations and start building a new railway from Kosovo to the southern

75 *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus. Dokumente aus den Archiven der Zarischen und der Provisorischen Regierung.* Edited by M. N. Pokrovsky,

Serbian border. Pašić said that much not just to a representative of the Eastern Railways, but also to Baron Giesl.

The Viennese diplomacy sensed that there must be genuine and wide concessions in order to reach an agreement. From late April onwards it started to prepare the ground. The attitude of Italy was the main factor in this respect as that country openly worked to ensure that Austrian success was not detrimental to its interests.⁷⁶ The Italian Minister in Belgrade, Nicola Squitti, confided to Hartwig on 5 April that Italy "was doing everything possible" to foil an agreement favourable to Austria.⁷⁷ It is interesting and important to note that the German Minister first revealed to the Serbian government on 27 April that the project concerning the internationalization of railway had failed.

According to a circular report of the Serbian government of 25 (12) May, the Austro-Hungarian Minister in Belgrade, Baron Giesl, suggested to N. Pašić that his government was inclined to negotiate about the purchase of the Eastern Railways, sounding out what concessions Serbia would be willing to give in return. Pašić promised the following: Serbia would 1) connect the Užice railway with Vardarište or some other point "with the obligation to build it as a narrow-gauge railway in three, and no later than five, years, maintaining the right to normalize the railway when we consider it appropriate", 2) provide the connection between Uvac and Mitrovica with the standard-gauge railway; 3) extend the convention *à quatre* to the Vardarište-Stalać and Mitrovica-Skoplje railways, "with the proviso that the Austrian government agrees to its extension from the Serbian-Bosnian border via Sarajevo to the Adriatic Sea and via Vienna and Pest to the German, Swiss and Italian border"; 4) undertake revision of the railway tariffs; 5) assign the construction of one of the railways (for example, Uvac-Mitrovica or some other) to Austro-Hungarian contractors "in accordance with the prices agreed on in advance" and get from Austria-Hungary the entire rolling stock for that railway, and the prices agreed "could not be greater than those consented to for the railways by the Franco-Serbian Society de Soliers". The purchase would be carried out by agreement; if there was no agreement, then the question would be settled by arbitration or submitted before the Hague tribunal or the International financial commission. Serbia agreed to pay the compensation to the Society for the duration of time from the end of the war to the date of agreement.

Authorized German translation by Otto Hoetzsch, Reihe 1, Bd. 2., 14. März bis 13. Mai 1914, Berlin 1933, p. 257.

76 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Telegram from Paris, 1 April 1914.

77 *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus*. Reihe 1, Bd. 2., pp. 155-6.

Apart from his desire not to aggravate the conflict, one of the reasons for Pašić's lenience was a purely commercial fear that the Serbian railway could be somehow bypassed. He received the news from Athens, which originated with the French Minister to Greece, that Austria-Hungary prepared a railway plan according to which a railway would be built from the Herzegovina-Dalmatia boundary in the vicinity of Gruž along the littoral via Durres, Valona and Ioannina to Kalabalar with a branch heading to Florina. "Austria-Hungary also demands both the construction and exploitation of that line under the pretext that she wants to eschew the Serbian railway on the way to Salonica." Pašić believed in the existence of such a plan, because the French Minister claimed that the Albanian government had considered this project and that it would soon be submitted to the Greek government for its consideration. Pašić thought that this project aimed to "preempting Italy and getting concession for the railway traversing the entire Albania".⁷⁸

After an agreement in principle had been reached, further negotiations between Serbia and Austria concerned only financial and technical side of the matter and seemed to be coming to a speedy conclusion. But the Sarajevo assassination took place during the final stage of these negotiations. A day after the assassination the Austrian delegates left Belgrade and the German Minister reported to his government, with good reason, that further negotiations had been dropped because of what had occurred in Sarajevo.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Cf. *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXVII, pp. 748-51; Archives of the Paris Legation, 27 April 1914.

⁷⁹ *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXVII, p. 752.

Austria and Serbia's Negotiations with the Roman Curia for the Conclusion of a Concordat

On 9 November 1913, Berchtold sent a strictly confidential document to the Minister to Vatican, Prince Schönburg, and Ministers in Belgrade and Cetinje in which he laid out Austria's view of the concordat question. As early as 11 December 1912 and 4 February 1913, the Minister to Vatican had been told that Austria viewed all changes the Balkan states might make in the organization of Roman Catholic Church in their newly acquired regions or in their relations with it as no more than provisional, which "could not alter the existence and importance of its [Roman Catholic Church's] cultural protectorate". That question, it was stressed, could be dealt in no circumstances without an agreement with the church. Schönburg professed such views in Vatican and the state secretary entirely agreed with him. The latter stated on that occasion and afterwards that he would undertake no changes in the newly acquired regions of Serbia and Montenegro without a prior agreement with Vienna. When more reliable news about the negotiations and the prospect of a concordat between Serbia and Vatican emerged in the autumn of 1913, Austria felt the need to remind the Roman Curia of those conversations. The Curia was "rather poor-spirited" in the matter of Austrian protectorate over Roman Catholics, the document read, but it should take note of the fact that it still remained unchanged in the view of Austria and she would maintain it "completely and in its entirety" until the time "*de facto* situation had made it superfluous". The Vienna government was not against a concordat in principle, but it found it should be tied to its former protectorate over Roman Catholics in the lands taken from Turkey, that is to say to concessions that would take its place. Austria would state in Belgrade that she was willing to bring her protectorate in accordance with the newly created political situation "but not before we have a guarantee that moral and material interests of our Roman Catholic protégés have been sufficiently taken care of and when our effective right to protect [them] has been replaced by another regime that would satisfy completely the Roman Catholic interests". The conditions for such a regime to come into being were: 1) to secure materially the Roman Catholic cult and priesthood; 2) to guarantee parish schools with the instruction in Albanian language on the basis of the London Treaty. With these conditions met – Austria left to

Vatican to arrange for other conditions – the Vienna government would be satisfied to maintain only “traditional rights of honour”.

Vatican realized immediately that the Austrian “advice” concerning the protectorate over Roman Catholics was no more than dragging Vatican into Vienna’s political combinations and that it could do more harm than good. Hence that “poor-spiritedness” mentioned in the document and hence the reluctance to become involved in the matter. In the question of rights of honour, Vienna invoked the case of Bulgaria, where the rights of France and Austria remained in force after the abolition of the capitulations.

In purely church matters, Austria recommended to Rome, from obvious political motives, to ask for as great influence as possible in the appointment of bishops and priests; to intercede on behalf of Albanian crypto-Catholics; and, especially, not to allow the use of Glagolitic script. An article was written against the Glagolitic script in the *Reichspost*, no. 607 of 28 December, which insisted that it was not just a means for slavization of the Albanians, but also for propaganda among the Roman Catholics of Austria.

When Rome asked Vienna, in connection with the announcement of the Serbian Ministry for Education and Church Affairs that its delegate would arrive, what to do in certain cases, the following instructions were given: the Curia must request “in its own interest and in accordance with its ethic duty” that the priesthood of the Skoplje archdiocese maintain its Albanian national character, with the exceptions of the Christian parishes of Janjevo, Letnica and Stubla. That priesthood would be educated in Scutari, in the Collegium Pontificium, until the Serbs had opened a separate Albanian seminar. In that case, Austria would agree to exclusion of all foreign citizens, including her own, from service in Serbia.

On 20 January 1914, Vatican and the Serbian government started to negotiate. The Serbian delegate, a lawyer from Šibenik, Dr. Lujo Bakotić, was well-received in Rome, being a Roman Catholic and “up to the task”. With the negotiations underway, the adjutant of Franz Ferdinand came to Berchtold with the order to present him a plan for the eventual arrangement of religious relations in the former Turkish area and stressed “that in the Highest Opinion the renouncement on the part of the Monarchy of the rights in the Albanian regions ceded to Serbia and Montenegro would hardly meet with the highest approval of His Imperial Highness”. Of course, Berchtold was quick to explain the matter. The protectorate was based on the capitulations concluded between the Sublime Porte and Austria and it was not a patronal right; hence it was not binding to Serbia. Besides, the protectorate made sense in Turkey, whereas it was untenable in a Christian state. Every court would have to rule against Austria. The only legal basis was that Austria was in obligation to The Holy Sea to provide

protection and she could consider herself a papal mandatory until she had not been relieved of her obligation by Vatican. But if and when the Curia concluded a concordat and thus took over the right to protection, then the mission of Austria was ended. The lenience of the Vienna government, as far as it could be noted in the messages sent to Rome, did not therefore stem from its goodwill, but rather from the realization that it was not entitled to any other attitude. Nevertheless, the *Österreichs katholisches Sonntagsblatt*, no. 14, of 5 April published an article that tried to prove that Austria's rights to protectorate were "more important" than those of France and the former Republic of Venice because they were more active; on that basis, the article called for a guarantee and control of Austria in the matter of a concordat between Serbia and Vatican.

Vienna was surprised by the news that Russia was assisting the conclusion of a concordat and that she was even prepared to guarantee Serbia's financial expenses for the benefit of the Roman Catholic cult. The Russian Minister Nelidov stated on one occasion in Vatican that the Russian Emperor could make his own demands in respect to the Orthodox Christians, if the Austrian Emperor requested the protectorate over Roman Catholics in the Orthodox Christian states.

The Austrian "rights of honour" which Berchtold invoked and which he intended to maintain in Serbia were as follows: 1) the prayer for the Austrian Emperor in all present and future churches and his portraits in parishes; 2) the celebration of his birthday and other dynastic festivities and the maintenance of customary official congratulations; 3) *honor sedis et processionis* in its present form; 4) the maintenance of the existing practice during school examinations. Vatican warned that this would be difficult to obtain. The Emperor could still be mentioned in the churches he built himself. But that would also be inconvenient. Given that it was forbidden to pray for a non-Roman Catholic ruler during the mass, that is to say the King of Serbia, it would be difficult to pray for another ruler. Austria was still adamant in insisting on these rights, which she claimed to have been her minimal demands. Seeing such an attitude, Merry del Val openly said that, in his opinion, The Holy See would not be able to negotiate with Serbia on that basis, because she would see in it a clear violation of her sovereign rights. The "rights of honour" could perhaps be – he proposed again – tied to some greater donations and maintained in the churches where it had existed, but it should not be demanded in places where there were no consulates and where it would have no practical value. It was characteristic that Austria requested such rights only in the areas that belonged to Serbia, and renounced them in those that belonged to Montenegro allegedly because they had no practical purpose there. However, Vatican realized that this inequality

in making demands would be conspicuous and difficult to justify. The Roman Curia admitted it was surprised by the liberal attitude of the Serbian government and its willingness to accept any proposal useful for the church. The matter was clear. Belgrade wanted to satisfy Vatican completely and preferred, naturally, to make concessions in church affairs to Vatican rather than in political matters to Vienna. The conclusion of a concordat and the success in Rome would mean the weakening and exclusion of Austrian influence in our lands and hence the understandable effort of Serbian circles to bring the matters to an end as quickly and obligingly as possible. But the Roman Curia found itself in a difficult position during the negotiations. The interest of the church and the favourable terms offered by the Serbian government provided sufficient reasons to resolve the matter promptly; but out of consideration for Austria, the largest European Roman Catholic state and an old friend, Vatican was compelled to have certain reservations and, moreover, to support some of Austrian political demands. Although the Holy See skilfully avoided to link church questions to purely political ones, the latter could not be eschewed completely due to Austria's constant pressure and therefore the negotiations were postponed so as not to become too heated. Finally, on 19 May 1914, the draft of a concordat was sent to Vienna in a confidential manner in order not to have Austria faced with an accomplished fact; at the same time, the Austrian ambassador was given a memoir and some information on the Curia's action.

The Roman Curia was very pleased. Serbia was lenient in the matter of the appointment of bishops to the utmost extent: the Pope was entitled to choose and appoint them, while the government could only make objections concerning the candidate's political or civil record before the final appointment. Vatican encountered that much liberal-mindedness, in its own admission, only in Colombia and, besides that country, the concordat with Serbia was "the most favourable of all that Rome has ever concluded". The Serbian government did not raise the question of the origin of Roman Catholic clerics, as both Rome and Vienna expected, and proved extraordinary lenient in this matter as well. In fact, it was reasonable for Serbia not to make demands that would tie her hands. There were a few Catholics in Serbia and the government knew that the priests would have to come from abroad. It counted on certain priests from Dalmatia, Bosnia and Croatia, the regions under Austria-Hungary, and did not want to place restraints on both itself and the people that would come to Serbia through some special provisions. The founding of an Albanian seminar in Scutari was not discussed and Merry del Val was very pleased when Serbia offered herself to form a Catholic seminar near Belgrade, leaving its management to church authorities. Rome found it quite natural that the Serbo-Croat would be the language of instruction for lay subjects in that

seminar. The Glagolitic script was allowed, despite Austrian protests, although to a limited extent, i.e. only for Slav Catholic settlements. Vienna saw that as being detrimental to the Albanians and reproached the Roman Curia for not insisting on the protection of minorities. Merry del Val replied that Vatican could not undertake to apply the London Treaty and that its duty was to protect religion rather than nationality.

Vatican left the question of the Austrian "rights of honour" for the final stage of the negotiations as being the most delicate and difficult. The Serbs refused to recognize them, considering them rightly an infringement on their sovereignty and superfluous after the conclusion of a concordat. Austrian heraldry on the churches would be an obvious sign of the remnants of influence of a Great Power hostile to Serbs – the same was true of the other demanded rights. Vatican pointed out the canonical justification of the rights of patronage and wanted to maintain them in those instances where they could be proved. In doing so, it tried both to satisfy Austria and win over the Serbs. When the Serbian delegate Vesnić resolutely refused on 1 June to enter into any commitment in this respect and said that the entire concordat was brought into question with such a demand, Merry del Val turned to Vienna, looking for a way out. The Austrian government replied that it was prepared to give way in certain matters, but that it would at no cost cave in completely and that the Roman Curia could thus either postpone or break off the negotiations. Serbia just threatened anyway and, once she saw a determined will on the other side, she would be more conciliatory. The Emperor himself, Berchtold professed, wanted to maintain those "rights of honour as a memory of the past". Besides, Vienna also demanded unconditionally that a special note arrange for transformation of parish schools into private ones in order to prevent the Serbian government to close them down for any reason. To Vatican's enquiry as to whether Austria was willing to take the responsibility for the breaking off of the negotiations, Vienna replied in the affirmative, "because Belgrade has been familiar with our reservations from the beginning". Vatican still did not want a rupture in relations. It feared, with a good reason, that a breakdown would create a very unfavourable impression for the Roman Curia in the Roman Catholic world outside Austria where it would be realized that it spared no effort to back the highly problematical rights of the Danubian Monarchy and, for that reason, brought into question the entire favourable course of negotiations and rejected considerable concessions. The Cardinal Secretary thus suggested to the Austrian Ambassador another way out of the impasse. In order to calm Austria down, Vatican would state that it recognized her rights, *touts les droits honorifiques attachés au jus patronatus regium*, and then Austria could obtain the recognition of those rights from the Serbian government on the basis of

this statement. The Roman Curia was not willing to enter into other commitments and it was even less willing to break off the negotiations. In such a difficult situation, Austria finally gave her consent on 10 June, but requested, as a last concession, the solution of the schools question. Pleased with such an outcome, the Pope himself promised to do all that he could in this respect, hoping that the Serbs would not be as opposed to this matter as they were opposed to the "rights of honour". Indeed, the Pope managed to get the consent of the Serbian government to take over and subsidize the schools for minorities and to have children taught religion in these schools in a "language that children understand well".

Nevertheless, at the request of Vienna, Vatican wanted to hand to the Serbian delegates at the last moment a note containing its right to influence the rights of patronage, although Austria was not mentioned in that instance. The Serbs refused, just as in the case of the "rights of honour", the proposed special note with such a content, fearing its further application with a good reason. They made a statement that the concordat encompassed all eventualities. Austria later found this beneficial, because article 21 of the concordat concerned the canonical rights on the basis of which the Roman Curia could raise the question of the rights of patronage in Serbia. On 24 June, the concordat was formally signed. The Austrian press, and even the *Neue Freie Presse*, no. 17899, of 25 June interpreted this act as a failure of Austrian diplomacy, and the *Zeit*, no. 4217, even called it a defeat in the leading article. The point was reached when any issue, even that which was not a matter of direct negotiations between Austria and Serbia, assumed political character and was always considered from the viewpoint of mutual distrust and reproach. Every success for Serbia, wherever it was achieved, was regarded as a defeat for Austria. The latter country was uncompromising to the extreme even in matters that clearly could not have been settled to her liking and which were devoid of any real benefit for her even if they could have been resolved in Austria's favour.

Austria was then largely concerned with putting off the ratification of the treaty and its coming into force, and she immediately issued instructions in that sense to her Ambassador to Vatican. Although a war broke out soon, the matter did not lie dormant. On 8 August, Berchtold sent a message to Rome to the effect that it should prolong the ratification until after the war. The Holy See agreed to this request and prolonged the matter in a conspicuous manner, but then finally consented to ratify the instrument in the spring of 1915. The Austrian Ambassador refused to take note of the statement regarding the arrival of Serbian delegates, but he privately advanced all possible reasons against it. He was replied in Vatican that it was a matter of honour for

the Roman Curia to respect the commitments it entered into and the treaties it concluded, and that therefore the matter could not be prolonged further. Austria did not want to see the question settled before the Easter 1915, and when that deadline, set to please her, had also passed, the matter had to be ended. This was done on 20 March 1915.

The extent to which Austria-Hungary was anxious to make difficulties for Serbia on all sides was clear from the fact that it was not doing so just in Rome, but also in Constantinople in the matter of restoration of the Patriarchate of Peć. On 23 May 1914, Berchtold wrote to his Embassy in Constantinople to try and foil Serbian intentions in Phanar. The Serbs abandoned the Patriarchate of Peć, he expounded, and transferred the seat of their Patriarchate to southern Hungary in the course of their great migration. He was opposed to infringing on the prestige of the Patriarch of Karlovci at present time. Berchtold either did not know or deliberately manipulated historical facts to create a certain impression. After the departure of the Serbian patriarchs, Arsenije III (1690) and Arsenije IV (1739) from Peć, the seat of the patriarchate was not transferred – other persons were elected in the place of the departed patriarchs and the Patriarchate of Peć lasted until 1766. When the Serbs restored their patriarchate in Karlovci in 1848, its jurisdiction did not extend beyond the regions of southern Hungary, Croatia and Slavonia. Even the Orthodox Church in Dalmatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina at the time when these provinces were under Austria-Hungary was not placed under the authority of the Patriarchate of Karlovci. If the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople still agreed to granting the desire of the Serbian government and, in doing so, gave zest and glamour to the Serbian Church, which was under its authority, Berchtold threatened to deprive it of pecuniary subsidy he sent it on behalf of the Vienna government, as the head of the Orthodox Church in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and to make that church autocephalous.⁸⁰ This Austrian threat was not without its effect in the Phanar sensitive to financial matters, which made it clear that replying to the Serbian requests would be dragged out as much as possible.⁸¹

80 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VII, pp. 75-6.

81 *Ibid.*, pp. 81-2.

Further Political Differences between Serbia and Austria

After the Bucharest Peace and the ultimatum regarding Albania it was clear that relations between Austria-Hungary and Serbia would become even more poisoned. Austrian attitude embittered even the Romanian ally, let alone Serbia. “We had to defend from a friend what we took from an enemy”, it was said angrily in Bucharest and that anger was given to understand to the entire Austro-Hungarian public. But after the obvious failure of Berchtold’s policy, the bitterness was growing in Vienna and consumed increasingly wide circles. The Balkan showdown turned out much differently than expected and the responsibility for failure was not ascribed to its own wrong combinations and moves, but rather to the Serbs and Serbia.

The Greek King Constantine, who talked with the Serbian Crown Prince Alexander about the need to improve the relations between Serbia and Austria, relayed the Crown Prince’s answer to Berlin: that Serbia was very willing to come to an agreement, but Vienna should make it easier for her.⁸² However, from the autumn of 1913 onwards the Foreign Ministry in Berlin thought of anything else rather than working in that sense.

The Ballhausplatz could not come to terms with the thought that Serbia should be allowed to emerge victorious from the whole situation with great moral capital and, generally, to exploit her successes without a hindrance. Therefore, the notion of a war against Serbia was always present in their combinations during the crisis and afterwards. Such a war was considered the only means of improving all that went wrong and of restoring the lost prestige. The Serb question was not regarded as a whole – involving the Serbs outside Serbia – but rather as a matter of Serbia alone; it was believed firmly, although naively, that Serbia’s defeat would bring about the breakdown of Serb national idea in general. The experience with the defeated Italian Piedmont in 1848 was not taken into account sufficiently in these combinations.

After the Bucharest Conference had been over and the intentions to revise its decisions had been archived, Vienna sought for fresh causes of conflict. The head of the Foreign Ministry, Baron Macchio, had a conversation with Baron Hötendorf on 23 August 1913 in connection with the invitation to attend the

82 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXVI, p. 149.

German military maneuvers. Hötendorf's absence out of anger with German policy, Macchio explained, could be excused in Berlin only by the possibility of an immediate war with Serbia and Montenegro. Macchio's words that certain places in Sanjak should be occupied and the Bosnian border "rectified" made it clear that that was not just an excuse to calm down German circles. Hötendorf, an arch-enemy of the Serbs, found it himself that such an occupation at that moment, especially if carried out suddenly as Macchio suggested it, would cause a general protest and perhaps brought about disgrace for the Monarchy in the end.⁸³ Instead, he expatiated to Treutler, an advisor from the entourage of Emperor Wilhelm, in Salzburg on 8 September upon his well-known plan about the necessity to annex the whole of Serbia to the Danubian Monarchy. If that failed, then it was necessary to "prepare the war deliberately".⁸⁴ Some other statesmen held similar opinions. The Austrian Ambassador in Rome Mérey said to his German colleague upon his return from Vienna in late November 1913 that there were two factions in Vienna concerning further conduct of foreign policy. One was in favour of a peaceful development, but that would, in his opinion, mean "suicide for Austria" given "the form and content of Serbian aspirations". The other one which was, in his opinion, led by "wiser and more far-sighted politicians" endeavoured to "prepare for a confrontation with Serbia and to nurture friendship with Bulgaria".⁸⁵

Austrian diplomacy was fully informed during the entire autumn and winter of 1913-14 about the intentions and preparations of the Bulgarian government and its responsible and irresponsible factors against the Serbian state and its integrity. It is highly unlikely that Bulgarian statesmen provided that information just in order to satisfy the curiosity of Austrian diplomats; it is more likely that they had a sympathetic ear during their conversations with their Austrian friends, if they did not actually discuss these matters with them. The old Markgraf Pallavicini was one of those persons to whom such information was given and who regularly relayed it to Vienna, not to speak of the younger diplomatic personnel, such as Tarnowski in Sofia and Löwenthal in Constantinople as well as military attachés. The Bulgarian Minister Toshev, for example, told Pallavicini on 6 December 1913 about close ties between the Albanians, on one side, and the Bulgarians and "*makedonstvujsci*" on the other, and their intentions to undertake an action in the Balkans with a view to bringing about revision of the Bucharest Treaty. That action would be undertaken in two or three years so as not to allow Serbia time to strengthen.

83 Hötendorf, *Aus meiner dienstzeit*, III, p. 416.

84 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIX, pp. 441-2.

85 *Ibid.*, pp. 460-1.

For reasons of its exhaustion, the Bulgarian government was now careful not to have a conflict break out too early.⁸⁶ Colonel Pomiankowski reported to Vienna on 8 December plenty of details on how the Turks sent army officers, people and ammunition to Albania to prepare further raids against the Serbs and foment a rebellion in the Vilayet of Kosovo.⁸⁷ Count Berchtold received all such reports calmly and he decided to warn Constantinople only after he had a reliable information that those Turkish officers intended to bring Izzet-pasha at the head of the Albanian administration instead of his favourite Prince Wied and after an attempt to that end had actually been made. He also resorted to such categorical warnings when the danger of Turkey's attack on Bulgaria emerged again with Enver-pasha's becoming a war minister.⁸⁸ But he never raised his voice after having been fully informed and warned about dangers that the Bulgarians, Turks and Albanians prepared in Macedonia against the Serbs and Greeks. On the contrary, the reliable Romanian and French sources knew in late March 1914 that Austria even supplied Bulgaria with arms⁸⁹ in order to prepare her for the forthcoming events. In addition, a secret Albanian-Bulgarian committee was formed in Vienna for the purpose of fomenting a rebellion in Serbia.⁹⁰

The reasons for such an attitude on the part of Austrian diplomacy in this matter was clear from the frame of mind in the headquarters in Vienna and among a great deal of notable Austrian diplomats. Ottokar Czernin, the Minister in Bucharest, wrote on 11 March 1914 about the combinations that a victorious war against the Serbs might bring into being. Victory against the Serbs would mean for Austria settling of all scores in the Balkans. Certain areas of the Serbian territory would be ceded to Bulgaria and Greece and indirectly to Romania, "Albania could be rounded off and made a contiguous state with the Monarchy and Serbia could be reduced to the minimum". "It would be in our interest", he wrote, "to make it more difficult for the Serbs to digest their new lands, particularly Macedonia."⁹¹

Berchtold himself acted in this sense. In order to influence certain elements beyond his borders, and especially in Macedonia, King Ferdinand thought of converting the Bulgarians, at least part of them, into Catholics. He hoped that this would be well-received in the Roman Curia and ensure him its assistance. He discussed it in more detail in Vienna on 6 November 1913 during his meeting

86 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VII, p. 630; cf. pp. 743-4; 750, 845.

87 Hötendorf, *Aus meiner dienstzeit*, III, pp. 497-8.

88 *Ibid.*, p. 771.

89 *Documents diplomatiques. Les affaires balkaniques, 1912-1914*, III, pp. 122-3.

90 *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus*. Reihe 1, Bd. 2., p. 79.

91 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VII, p. 952.

with Berchtold. Considering it another means that could be detrimental to Serbia, Berchtold was sympathetic to this plan and offered the King a prospect of his mediation in Vatican to support the Bulgarian proposal.

It was almost a rule in Vienna to create difficulties for Serbia in every quarter and frustrate her consolidation. In the spring of 1914, during the negotiations of the Serbian government with Greece to obtain a free zone in the port of Salonica, Austria once more intervened to prevent it. Austria stated in Athens on 16 March that she could not allow Serbia to obtain any right in Salonica in excess of her own rights and she succeeded for a while to prevent the conclusion of the negotiations.

Looking for fresh pretexts for conflicts and pressure on Serbia, Vienna especially turned its attention to the question of unification between Serbia and Montenegro, which grew in prominence in late 1913 and early 1914. The principle of Vienna's policy since before the time of Andrassy had been to prevent by all means any closer contact between the two Serb states. After 1912 and the division of Sanjak between them, when there was no more any wedge between the Serbian and Montenegrin borders, the question of unification came to the forefront. Certain negotiations about customs, financial and military unification had already been underway. Vienna followed them, of course, with the utmost suspicion. In the autumn, on 10 November 1913, Count Berchtold sent a special message to the Italian government in this connection. Austria, he said, could not allow it. The merger of the two states would lead to Serbia's getting an outlet to the sea and upsetting the balance of power in the Adriatic through her possession of the coast. Vienna was hopeful that the Italian government would support the Austrian view in that matter as it had done a year earlier in the question of Serbian outlet to the sea. If the unification did come to pass, then Bar and Ulcinj would have to come under Albanian rule and Lovćen under Austrian so that a united Serb state would be left without its coast.⁹² This question had already been debated in the Austrian capital, because the Austrian Military Attaché in Cetinje had written in that vein as early as 14 October – he must have been informed somehow of those discussions. Baron Hötendorf was sincere in affirming that the Austrians would occupy the Montenegrin coast mostly in order to “establish so much wanted direct connection” with Albania;⁹³ in his view, it seems, that would not mean the disturbance of the balance of power on the Adriatic coast. Count Forgách said to the German Ambassador on 15 February 1914 that Austria would not ask for Lovćen because of Italian susceptibilities, but would perhaps cede it to Albania as well. An

92 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VII, p. 952.

93 Hötendorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, III, p. 471.

attempt would be also made to extract Debar and Djakovica from Serbia in favour of Albania as a price for unification with Montenegro.⁹⁴ A little later Berchtold added that in such case Štip and Kočane would also be demanded in order to cede them to Bulgarians.⁹⁵ This was also the view of Count Tisza, who expressed it to Emperor Wilhelm II himself on 23 March.⁹⁶ Only Emperor Franz Joseph still claimed, in the tradition of his perennial policy, that he was opposed to unification of Serbia and Montenegro altogether and he repeated that to Emperor Wilhelm II.⁹⁷

When Count Berchtold had a meeting with San Giuliano in Albania in mid-April 1914, he returned to the charge. He spoke on this occasion as well how Austria would do anything to prevent a Serbian outlet to the sea, extending eventually the borders of Albania. But he also put forward as his own the above mentioned Hötzendorf's explanation: with unification of Serbia and Montenegro, Austria's further path into the Balkans, i.e. her link with Albania would be closed.⁹⁸ Montenegro was clearly regarded as a "country of transit". In other words, Austria would, in fact, confront Serbia largely because she intended to continue her active expansionist policy in the Balkans and because self-conscious and strengthened Serbia was a main hindrance to this. Berchtold told the German Ambassador that the Emperor, Tisza and he himself were in full agreement that they should not allow Serbia, i.e. a "hostile Slav state" flank them in south-east as well, as if that had not occurred that moment when, even without a formal unification, the borders of Serbia and Montenegro became contiguous.⁹⁹ Rome realized at once what was going on. In a roundabout way, via the Italian Minister in Bucharest, Vienna was given to understand that Italy would not allow Austria, in case of any action against the Serbo-Montenegrin unification, to receive anything without Italy also acquiring an equal share.¹⁰⁰ Italy selfishly wanted to ensure its own share in any eventuality, but basically it mainly sought to stop Austria from doing what she intended. Emperor Wilhelm II was not opposed to unification of Serbia with Montenegro and considered Vienna's principled opposition "stupidity", but he accepted the idea that the Montenegrin coast eventually be ceded to Albania.¹⁰¹ But Italy did not agree to this and San Giuliano openly stated to

94 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXVIII, p. 327.

95 *Ibid.*, p. 345.

96 *Ibid.*, XXXIX, p. 335.

97 *Ibid.*, p. 337.

98 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VII, p. 1067.

99 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXVIII, p. 345.

100 *Ibid.*, p. 1098.

101 *Ibid.*, pp. 335, 337-8.

the German Ambassador that such solution would not be acceptable to Italy. Contiguous border between Austria and Albania would shift the balance of power to benefit the former country and to Italy's obvious detriment. That would be even more pronounced if Austria obtained Lovćen in one way or another. "Such attitude on the part of Austria would mean the worst crisis for the Triple Alliance; even the strongest government in Italy could not then remain on the side of Austria, but would rather be forced to seek assistance from Russia and other powers."¹⁰² Berchtold to whom Tschirschky told this Italian view found it childish and believed that Italian pretensions went too far,¹⁰³ but he admitted that he did not want to assume any treaty obligation with regards to Italy in that matter offered by San Giuliano, because he did not want to tie his and Austria's hands in respect to Lovćen.¹⁰⁴

Serbia certainly derived certain benefits from the fact that the openly expressed differences quickly emerged between Italy and Austria in their Albanian policies and because it quickly became clear that the aims of Austrian policy in Albania were far from being selfless.

In the Albanian question, Austria strove to have Europe officially entrust supreme control over the new administration in that country to her and Italy as the two "most interested" Powers, so that these two countries became for Albania what Russia and Britain were for Persia. On 12 July 1913, Berchtold sent word to London that he "could in no case allow" that international control be introduced in Albania as a permanent institution.¹⁰⁵ But Italy disagreed with such ambitions and constantly asked for control of all Great Powers. Italy was afraid to remain alone with Austria, which could one day provoke a conflict on any pretext as had been the case with Austria and Prussia in 1866 in the matter of Schleswig-Holstein, and because it was aware that this could be a source of further conflicts. After all, Austria made clear her intention to play the main role. Italy felt this especially in Austria's insisting to maintain the exclusive protectorate over the Catholic church in the liberated Albania and thus obtain an advantage over her ally to influence directly Albanian internal affairs. When on 23 March 1914 a mass was held in the Roman Catholic church in Durres, the Austrian Minister wanted to show up alone with the princely couple and he had it arranged with the church administrators not to invite other ministers, including the Italian one. The Austrian Minister wanted to stand out before the church and public as a representative of the Roman Catholic protecting Power

¹⁰² Ibid., pp. 339-40.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 345.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., XXXIX, p. 352.

¹⁰⁵ *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VII, p. 879.

and the most important person after the Prince. It was hardly surprising that his action led to dispute with the Italian Minister that very day.

Austria considered Albania her own piece of work and made combinations with that country in her own interest. Albania was created with a view, Baron Hötendorf wrote, to not just becoming a political counterweight to Serbia and Greece, but also because Austria wanted to have her as a military ally that would tie down some of Serbia's and Montenegro's forces.¹⁰⁶ It was mostly Austria that was concerned with the election of an Albanian Prince; when the choice finally fell on the German Prince Wied, without any prior consultation of the Albanian people, then Berchtold proposed to Rome on 20 October 1913 that Austria and Italy alone¹⁰⁷ pay the Prince from their disposition funds. Italian reservations concerning not money but rather the nature of this proposal made the factors in Vienna, which overlooked it in pursuit of their interests, aware of a delicate position in which the future ruler of Albania would be placed. Italy also declined Austria's offer that only those two countries guarantee a loan to Albania – the latter country would have to commit to placing its orders in Italy and Austria.¹⁰⁸ Other Great Powers made it clear, however, that they could not agree to being faced with accomplished facts by Italy and Austria, and that a new Prince could not approach them only after having come to an agreement with Vienna and Rome. The British reply of 24 December was perfectly clear in that respect.¹⁰⁹ Still, that did not stop the one-sided zeal of Vienna. Prince Wied came to Albania with Austrian and Italian money indeed. More importantly, these two states wanted to undertake the reorganization of the Albanian army with their own officers and other personnel. Austria especially insisted on getting infantry and Italy the other parts of the army. Not surprisingly, this question generated major disputes between them.¹¹⁰

When internal fighting in Albania broke out, Austria intervened almost openly. Her soldiers and officers took part in the fighting against the Albanian Army Minister Essad-pasha, who was brought to the Austrian war ship *Szigetvár* on 19 May as a prisoner of war, although he requested to be handed over to the Italians. Prince Wied explicitly stated that he did not give order to attack Essad. This took place largely at Austria's initiative. The German diplomatic representative reported to his government that his Austrian colleague behaved "very much as the master of situation".¹¹¹ The Russian Minister reported in the

106 Hötendorf, *Aus meiner Dienszeit*, III, p. 587.

107 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VII, p. 479.

108 *Ibid.*, p. 505.

109 *Ibid.*, p. 676; cf. pp. 701-2.

110 *Ibid.*, p. 681.

111 *Ibid.*, p. 679.

same vein on 23 June and pointed out the cooperation of Austrian officers during the fighting, which caused strong protest by the members of the Control Commission. The Austrian ship *Herzegovina* with Austrian officers and cannons took part publically in the fighting, although under the Albanian flag.¹¹² Dutch officers, who commanded the gendarmerie, as stipulated by the London Conference, came into open conflict with the Austrians, considering their participation in the conflict entirely illegal. The Italian government itself was simply surprised by such undiplomatic Austrian attitude and asked Vienna to explain the actions of its representatives.¹¹³ At Italian insistence, Essad-pasha was released as early as 20 May and he then immediately traveled to Italy. The conflict of interest between Austria and Italy in Albania became public knowledge and could compromise, to a large extent, the motivation for creating this state. The relations became rather tense for a while, especially when the public bureau for enlisting volunteers, which were meant to be dispatched to Albania and fight against the rebels there, was opened on 27 June. The German Minister himself found such an action to be an obvious violation of the commitments entered into and that it could cause far-reaching consequences, and it was only with his mediation that further public efforts in this sense were ceased, at least in part.¹¹⁴

For many reasons, Serbia tried to influence friendly powers not to leave the administration and internal consolidation of Albania to Austria and Italy alone. The Charge d'Affairs in Rome, Ljubomir Mihailović said on 30 January 1914 in the *Consulta* that Serbia feared the privileged position of Austria and Italy. "To allow Austria to have some special influence, even along with that of Italy, must concern us, because that would mean for us to replace the Sanjak of Novi Pazar with Austrian Albania." Austria systematically invested her capital in Albania, brought her people, took part in all branches of state life. In this way, she won the positions that she not just did not intend to abandon, but because of which she might bring into question even the independence of Albania. "One day Austria will intervene to protect material interests of her subjects due to the anarchy in Albania."¹¹⁵ Pašić had earlier expressed the same suspicion to

112 *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus. Dokumente aus den Archiven der Zarischen und der Provisorischen Regierung.* Edited by M. N. Pokrovsky, Authorized German translation by Otto Hoetzsch, Reihe 1, Bd. 3., 15. Mai bis 27. Juni 1914, Berlin 1933, p. 292.

113 *Öst-Ung. Ausßenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 58-9; *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXVI, pp. 649-51.

114 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXVI, p. 719.

115 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from Rome, 17 January, conf. no. 19.

Hartwig, believing that Austria even fomented unrest in Albania so that she would one day have ample reason to mediate.¹¹⁶

The Powers of the Triple Entente shared this view entirely. On 16 February 1914, Poincaré stated to the Austrian Ambassador that he could not agree with the stance of the Danubian Monarchy, which sought for privileged position in Albania, and that he did not consent to cooperate to establish the Bank of Albania without equal participation of all Powers.¹¹⁷ Eight days later, Sazonov said the same to the Austrian and Italian Ambassadors, especially stressing “that Russia could not profess to be in agreement with Austria’s and Italy’s getting a preponderant role there [in Albania]”.¹¹⁸ However, Austria was not much ruffled by all this. She created Albania for the sake of her own interests and, of course, was not willing to weaken her long-in-the-making positions because of other powers. She endeavoured to push Italy in the background as much as possible and certainly did not intend to bring other powers into the limelight.

Serbia rightly feared Austrian and Italian direct action in Albania. If Austria set foot in northern Albania under any excuse, it was highly doubtful that she would get out. It would not be difficult to find an excuse for staying in. For that reason, the Serbian government proposed in St. Petersburg that the troops of all Great Powers carry out the pacification of Albania. Austria wanted, Pašić was recorded to have said, along with Bulgaria, to produce in Albania a new danger for peace in the Balkans, organizing the Albanian army with her own people; “an international occupying army would maintain peace and prevent Austria from carrying out her plans through Albania and it would organize Albania for the sake of Albania and peace”.¹¹⁹ If Austria entered northern Albania on her own, that would, a Serbian message read, mean for Serbia the same thing as war. At the same time, around 8 June, Pašić tried to sound out what the attitude of Great Powers would be towards an eventual proposal, which had been known earlier: that Serbia and Greece be entrusted with establishing order in northern and southern Albania respectively, whereas central, Muslim part of Albania would remain free. Serbia would be prepared to guarantee never to build a Serbian fleet or a Serbian naval port. The German Ambassador in Constantinople drew attention of his Serbian colleague “that even playing with that idea could be very dangerous for Serbia and make conflict with Austria

116 *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus*. Reihe 1, Bd. 1., p. 34.

117 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 879.

118 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXVI, pp. 610-1.

119 Balugdžić Pašiću, Atina, 26.5.1914, Pov. Br. 1808, in: V. Dedijer and Ž. Anić, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije 1903-1914*, knj. VII, sv. 2, Beograd 1980, pp. 228-229.

inevitable”.¹²⁰ The idea itself did not come from Pašić this time, but was rather a Russian combination that aimed to satisfy the Bulgarians more easily in the east by extending the borders of Serbia in the west and thus assist the restoration of the Balkan alliance.

The main drawback for Austria was that Romania was becoming alienated from the summer of 1913 onwards – the latter country was getting closer to Russia and brimming with national dissatisfaction on account of Hungary’s treatment of Romanians that led to increasingly strong protests. “The rapprochement between Romania and Serbia”, Baron Musulin, one of the prominent officials in the Viennese Foreign Ministry, wrote, “was regarded in Vienna as a punch in the face.”¹²¹

The policy of relying on Austria was never popular in Romania, but it was pursued from 1878 onwards to spite Russia because of the insulted national egoism and because of Bessarabia. For that reason, Romania’s adherence to the Triple Alliance had never been announced, although Austria often wanted and demanded such announcement, especially of late. From 1913 onwards, Vienna’s diplomacy dealt with the Romanian question, along with the Serbian one. Just like Serbia, Romania had several million of her compatriots in Austria-Hungary and it was perfectly natural for those two countries to be solidary in their national policy. A common Serbo-Romanian front would spell a clear danger for Vienna and Pest. With joined forces, these two states would have more than a million soldiers and tie down almost a half of the Austrian army. All the plans of the Austrian General Staff about an offensive against Russia together with the Romanian army would come to nothing and instead of counting on Romania as an ally that country would have to be considered an enemy. Romania and Serbia, in alliance with Greece and Montenegro, would spoil all Austrian political combinations in the Balkans. Vienna could not easily bear such an unfavourable change in the political balance of power. Therefore, no effort should be spared either to have Romania break voluntarily the Serbo-Romanian connection – and she was influenced from more sides in that sense – or to destroy Serbia in time, before danger emerged.

It was necessary to clear the ground with Romania. In late autumn 1913, Count Ottokar Czernin, a confidant of Franz Ferdinand and a person who could count on certain sympathies in Bucharest because of his public defense of the nationalities in Hungary, was appointed minister and sent to Romania. Afterwards, in May 1914, the old and experienced Markgraf Pallavicini, the

120 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXVI, p. 675.

121 Musulin, *Das Haus am Ballplatz*, p. 188.

Minister in Constantinople, was sent to Bucharest to a special brief mission – he had already served there and had certain connections. Naturally, Pallavicini talked a lot about the Serbian question in the Romanian capital. He set forth the Austrian view of the problem in order to sound out the Romanians and try to influence them. He complained how the Serbs were constantly hostile to Austria and “pinprick every day”; he cited some Pašić’s statements on Bosnia and Herzegovina, and even spoke of a possibility that Serbia could attack Austria-Hungary. Austrian circles generally believed that Russia was working to reconcile Serbia with Bulgaria and restore the Balkan Alliance by guaranteeing Dobruja to Romania, channeling Serbia and Romania to the west against Austria-Hungary and securing compensation to Bulgaria, in case of Serbian success, in Macedonia. Against this Russian combination, Austria was preparing her own with Turkey, Bulgaria and Albania, along with which Romania was also supposed to be won over somehow. When speaking in Bucharest about the Serbian question, Pallavicini, who was otherwise a staid man, showed, according to the information given to the Serbian Minister by Take Ionescu, “unusual agitation” that worried people. He did not even conceal his anger at the fact that Serbia was so increased. Pašić wrote on a report of this mission his message to Ionescu: he tried “not to offend Austria-Hungary but to put it in a good mood, and that has been very difficult. It ceaselessly works against us on all sides.” “I have not said anything about Bosnia and Herzegovina and still less done”, he was explicit. “To put it [Austria-Hungary] in a good mood, all its spies, more than ten of them, have been pardoned – and we have not got a thank you. The thought of attacking Austria never crosses our mind. Relations with Bulgaria could not be worse. The proof is the fabrication of the story of the slaughter of conscripts in Serbia and the organizing of a detachment together with Albanians and Turks. But working to help Bulgaria to get Macedonia, Austria encourages that country to seek combinations. Austria thwarts us in the negotiations with Greece regarding the port of Salonica, in the negotiations with Vatican and in the matter of the Adriatic railway. She removed Essad because he did not want to pursue an Austro-Bulgarian policy in Albania.”¹²²

In other words, Austria was that Power which did not let the situation to settle down in the Balkans after the bloody Balkan Wars and the people to engage in constructive work. Serbia needed peace to consolidate herself and the Vienna government used all its diplomatic strength to prevent and disturb

122 Ristić Pašiću, Bukurešt, 26.5.1914, Pov. Br. 1829, in: Dedijer and Anić, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, knj. VII, sv. 2, pp. 230-232; Pašić Ristiću, Pov. Br. 1829, 26. 5. 1914, in: *Ibid.*, pp. 230-232.

that peace which would mean the strengthening of Serbia. This review of the events that took place in late 1913 and early 1914 makes it clear that it initiated a diplomatic offensive and that conspiratorial meetings and combinations of different adventurers met with understanding, support and perhaps even instigation among its people. Austria was least of all a peaceful neighbour that loyally guards her own house.

The Yugoslav Youth, “Narodna odbrana” and the Organization “Ujedinjenje ili smrt”

1

The enthusiasm because of the Serbian victories was indescribable among the Austro-Hungarian Yugoslavs. Stanoje Stanojević wrote accurately: “The strengthening of the national idea among the Serbian people and the causes that led to it considerably influenced the strengthening of the national idea among the Croats and Slovenes and the strengthening of the idea about the community of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. Both Croats and Slovenes felt that now they had stronger support in the Serbian people than they had felt before the Serbian-Turkish war.”¹²³ The most prominent Yugoslav writers, the subjects of Austria, glorified the Serbian victories, for example, Ivo Vojnović, Ante Tresić Pavičić and Aleksa Šantić, who published the entire poems or collections of poetry to honour the Serbian victories. The press breathlessly followed the movements and successes of the army, whereas the public not just grabbed the newspapers, but also subscribed to telegrams or sent telegrams in order to obtain information more rapidly. Raised in epic tradition and deeply national, the people was consumed by war psychosis. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the contribution for the Serbian Red Cross amounted to 700,000 golden kronen and even more in goods. Hundreds of young people, especially students, joined the Serbian and Montenegrin army as volunteers. Women made bandages and sewed underwear for the wounded – they embedded greetings celebrating the victory. This immense enthusiasm got hold of not just the Yugoslavs, but also the Czechs. The German Ambassador in Vienna reported on that to Berlin on 18 November as a clear sign of dissatisfaction with the official policy. “Intellectual people”, Baron Musulin, an official of the Viennese Foreign Ministry, reported after his journey in Croatia in 1913, “were under the impression of the great development that the national Serbdom achieved from across the Sava in a manner that was terrifying for an Austro-Hungarian patriot. I often came across the belief that national salvation could

* *Narodna odbrana* means People's Defense, while *Ujedinjenje ili smrt* means Unification or Death (the official name of the organisation much better known as the Black Hand, or *Crna ruka* in Serbian).

123 S. Stanojević, *Srpsko-turski rat 1912 godine*, Beograd 1928, p. 190.

come only from that quarter. It was believed that Serbia was even stronger than she really was and that the Monarchy was much less resilient than it later proved to be."¹²⁴

The Austro-Hungarian authorities believed that such enthusiasm could be suppressed forcefully. Although their representative said at a conference of the Great Powers as early as 1862 during the discussion about Turkish garrisons in Serbia that "any progress of the Serbs in the Principality [of Serbia] excites the Serbs in Austria as well",¹²⁵ they did not learn anything from these facts, or from history in general. They did not introduce in the struggle their own ideology against national enthusiasm, but rather resorted to brutal police force. Prosecution started everywhere in Bosnia and Herzegovina; people were punished for singing patriotic songs, for obtaining paintings that presented the Serbian victories in the Balkan Wars; some people were even prosecuted for collecting contributions for the Red Cross. On 20 November 1912, the town municipalities of Split and Šibenik were disbanded to punish them for their manifestations in favour of the Balkan allies. In response, an assembly of the members of Dalmatian diet, town mayors and representatives of all political parties took place in Zadar on 24 November. This assembly greeted with enthusiasm the victories of the Balkan Allies, and especially Serbia, and it was clearly stated that the dawn was expected to come from the Balkan sun on that side as well. On this occasion, the commissariat in Croatia was also condemned for insulting deeply the national sentiment of the Croats, especially at the moment when their compatriots were achieving such great successes. After the Turkish downfall, a Croatian member of the Austrian delegation, Josip Smodlaka said on 16 November, the breakdown of Hungarian terror in Croatia was inevitable. As late as February 1913, in an utter political blindness, S. Wekerle stated that they recognized in Hungary that there were the Hungarians who spoke Serbian, German and Romanian, but they did not recognize that there were Serbs, Germans and Romanians.¹²⁶ While Austria and Hungary endeavoured to obtain freedom and national self-determination for Albania, they deprived their own subjects from that freedom and national rights in the most brutal fashion. In their resolution of 15 November 1912, the Serbian members of the Bosnian Diet publically expressed their dissatisfaction with such policy as well as their "brotherly feelings and veneration" towards Serbia and Montenegro. The Serb and Croat element in the Danubian Monarchy could not make peace with the policy that aimed to deprive their compatriots of the fruits of their

124 Musulin, *Das Haus am Ballplatz*, pp. 208-9.

125 L. Ranke, *Srbija i Turska u XIX veku* [preveo S. Novaković], Beograd 1892, p. 483.

126 Baernreither, *Fragments eines politischen Tagebuches*, p. 203.

victories in favour of an alien element that was not under the Habsburg rule and to pursue in general a clear anti-Slav agenda in the Balkans.

To counter such feelings, the military order was published on 20 March 1913 that the language used in the railways in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in internal traffic, would be the language of the army, i.e. German. When the Scutari crisis reached its climax, the Austro-Hungarian government proclaimed on 2 May a state of emergency in Bosnia and Herzegovina which lasted until 16 May and it clamped down on all Serbian societies. The *Prosveta*, *Privreda*, *Savez dobrotvornih zadruga Srpkinja* had to cease all their activities. On that occasion, 122 Serbian societies were disbanded and the work of another 179 was suspended. At the same time, military courts were introduced. On the same day, the distribution of newspapers from Serbia and Montenegro was forbidden and all the books from these two countries were subjected to police control. When after the crisis the authorities refused to give the satisfaction to the offended Serbian people of Bosnia and Herzegovina, twelve Serbian members of the Bosnian Diet, who were willing to cooperate with the majority backing the government, renounced their mandates and the rest of them became a bitter opposition.

The responsible circles in Vienna regarded such an attitude of the Yugoslav element in Austria-Hungary as inimical towards their own country. The military circles viewed it as almost undiluted high treason and demanded harsh punishment. Without confidence in the courts in Dalmatia, the authorities, which had started prosecution, brought the mayor of Split before the court in Celovac. In doing so and showing distrust in their own judiciary, the authorities excited passions to the utmost extent. The chief of presidial of the Bosnian government, Baron Carl Collas, himself of Hungarian origin, wrote angrily that the courts in Bosnia and Herzegovina also made themselves “a state within a state”, that they used the “excuse of judicial independence” refusing unjustified prosecution and declining to protect the authority of the state by violence.¹²⁷ The courts were thus regarded as guilty both in Bosnia and Dalmatia because they refused to become a police tool.

One of the leaders in the Austrian House of Lords (*Herrenhaus*) said to the German Ambassador: “This is the end of the Germans in Austria”, and the Ambassador himself found somehow that this unjustified view was accurate.¹²⁸ Emperor Wilhelm II was also orientated in the same vein and he wrote on 15 December 1912, under the impression of such reports, to his friend Ballin

127 Baron Carl Collas, “Auf den bosnischen Wegspuren der Kriegsschuldigen”, *Die Kriegsschuldfrage, Berliner Monatshefte*, V – Nr. 1, 1927, p. 17.

128 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIII, p. 367.

that the Slav subjects of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy could be brought to heel by a decisive action against Serbia and that a war against Russia would turn into a war against the Slavs in general and their anti-German efforts. It was not just the future of the Danubian Monarchy that was in question, he told with tragic pathos, but also the very survival of the German race on the European continent.¹²⁹ In a conversation with Count Tisza on 23 March 1914, Emperor Wilhelm II himself stressed the system in which "German Austria and Hungarian Hungary would stand like two firm pillars of the Danubian Monarchy" as "the best guarantee" for the future of Austria-Hungary.¹³⁰ While Emperor Wilhelm II said so in private, Bethmann-Hollweg publicly discussed in the *Reichstag* on 7 April 1913, during his defense of a new military law, the possibility of a European conflict in which the Germans would be on the one side and the Slavs on the other. He thus created the mood from his responsible office that must have stirred the people and provoked resistance and which further increased the existing differences. More importantly, such an attitude must have been a heavy blow to the Slavs of the Danubian Monarchy, who were treated by the Germans and Hungarians as second-class citizens.

The Serbian victories of 1912-13 made the Yugoslav question even more pronounced than earlier. "Before [the liberation of] Kosovo [in 1912]", the young Croatian revolutionary Vladimir Čerina wrote, "we simply scraped through somehow, patched up our parties, pursue a state-legal policy, barren of fruit and partisan, the most damned kind, parliamentary, the most pointless and useless, especially in a non-parliamentary state." From Kosovo, from 1912 onwards, he saw a new spirit. "In those unseen attacks there, in those charges, slaughters and clashes, there was also that most proud Croat spirit that has been preserved. That was, in fact, the liberation of Old Croatia under the name of Old Serbia."¹³¹ From 1908 to 1912, when she herself made the Yugoslav question actual, Austria not only did nothing to improve matters, but rather alienated with her reactionary policy many of those who had hitherto made all their political combinations exclusively within the framework of the Habsburg Monarchy. The earlier intention to make Austria's Yugoslav provinces an attraction for Serbia and Montenegro came to nothing. But that was not the fault of Belgrade, but rather the fault of Vienna and Pest.¹³² "A master in Buda is a master in Zagreb", the former Hungarian Trade Minister, Baron Láng, said. "If

129 H. H. Asquith, *The Genesis of the War*, London 1923, p. 43.

130 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIX, p. 337.

131 *Književni sever*, V, 1929, pp. 348-9.

132 "Vienna was", Erich Brandenburg commented with much sympathy for Austria, "completely confused in the nationality question and it was therefore, despite all the love for peace, extraordinary nervous and restless, because it clearly felt the work of underground

the Croats knew that the regime in Pest was unshakable, they would subdue and all would be well." The chief editor of the official *Pester Lloyd* spoke in the same vein. When following the state of emergency the Bosnian Diet asked for a revision of the constitution and the responsible provincial government in a memorandum of 26 May, Vienna considered it a further sign of disobedience. In the spring of 1914, military circles prevented the establishment of a parliamentary government in Croatia at the last moment, openly expressing their doubts in the loyalty of the majority in the Croatian Diet, which belonged to the Serbo-Croat Coalition. "They still do not understand the importance of the Yugoslav question, even after the events in the Balkans!", J. Baernreither, who had an important conversation about this topic on 13 November 1913, recorded in his diary.¹³³ The French Ambassador in Vienna Dumaine was perfectly correct when he wrote during those days that the same methods were employed against the Yugoslavs as once in Lombardy and Venetia; such methods "prolong the rule, but also make revolt inevitable".¹³⁴

The rise of Serbia demonstrated in the Balkan War provided plenty of evidence for her vitality, which had hitherto been developed under extremely difficult conditions. It was thus understandable that her yet enslaved compatriots started to turn their eyes to the strengthened Serbia with increasing confidence and that she was assigned the role of Piedmont from many quarters. Serbia herself also became more aware of her strength and her mission after her successes. Only individuals had hitherto believed in her value as a leader in the work of national unification; from now on almost the entire people started to believe in her. From 1912 onwards, Austria saw a direct danger for herself in that apparent strengthening of Serbia and the rise of her prestige. Serbia did not directly endanger the possession of the Danubian Monarchy at that time, but the leading Austrian circles found that she endangered it indirectly with her development and that she could endanger it later, in the foreseeable or more distant future. The thought of a preventive war preached prior to and at the time of the Annexation Crisis won even more supporters and became a matter of public discussion. There were many people who thought along the lines of a report sent by the Austrian Minister in Belgrade Ugron on 1 December 1912: if Austria-Hungary made concessions to Serbia, that would be considered a sign of weakness and it would bring about further Serbian demands; if it did not make concessions, then it had to count with a long-term Serbian hostility. The

volcanic forces and close ties between internal opponents and Serbia and Russia." See *Die Ursachen des Weltkrieges*, p. 46.

133 Baernreither, *Fragmente eines politischen Tagebuches*, p. 174.

134 *Documents diplomatiques français*, 3ème série, V, p. 89.

way out of this situation could be found only in two directions: either in a war of annihilation or in an alliance with Serbia, which could be made through an alliance with Russia. Ugron did not see a third solution to the Serbian question.¹³⁵ Count Alexander von Hoyos, Berchtold's chief of the Cabinet, replied to Ugron that even with the resolution of the question of the Serbian port, "that would by no means extinguish the extent of differences that would still exist between us and the Sava Kingdom. We do not keep it secret that sooner or later these [differences] would have to be solved by radical means."¹³⁶

The confrontation between Austria-Hungary and Serbia seems to have been insurmountable. For Austria's foreign policy, the formation of a large Serbian state meant thwarting the Austro-German penetration in the Balkans and freeing the Balkans of Austrian diplomatic and economic pressure. In Austria-Hungary's internal policy, Serbia increasingly became a point of attraction for the former's Yugoslav subjects, who were presented with an obvious example of the strength and vigour of those of their fellow Yugoslavs who lived in full national freedom and of how much of their own energy was wasted just to constrain the demands of others and in the struggle to maintain basic national rights. The differences between the Danubian Monarchy and Serbia could only be removed if Serbia definitely renounced active national policy and enter herself in any form in the framework of Austria-Hungary, or become dependent on it; any other solution would be a half-measure and could not appease the responsible circles in Vienna and Pest. This could not be requested from Serbia, just as it could not have been requested from Germany before 1866 and from Italy before 1870. Besides, what did Vienna do to make such a union attractive to Serbia? Did the fate of the Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the commissariat in Croatia and the abolishment of religious autonomy of the Serbs in the Archbishopric of Karlovac make examples that would facilitate the agitation in this sense? And what nation would sacrifice voluntarily its freedom in the twentieth century?

The contours of certain inevitable historical conflict were visible in these differences. Serbia existed as a free organism and tended to grow in accordance with her vital needs and on the basis of her ethnic strength. Since her restoration in early nineteenth century, Serbia had been thinking of becoming the core of unification of the Serbian people, and, in time, she had embraced the thought of the need for Yugoslav unification. That was an essential thought and vital condition for the existence of tiny Serbia; without them, without a deep conviction in them, she could have hardly survived throughout all

135 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, V, pp. 1-4.

136 *Ibid.*, p. 29.

difficult crises that she had endured and her very existence would be hardly worth proper statehood if it remained permanently confined to her narrow and endangered borders. On the other hand, Austria, a dynastic conglomerate with nationally heterogeneous and dissatisfied elements, was not just content to keep her possessions, but also pursued, in the old tradition, the activist policy of a Great Power. The thrust of her policy in the Balkans was expansionist, in political and economic terms; her attitude in 1878, 1904, 1908 and 1912 provided plenty of evidence that her activist spirit was an aggressive one. Austria endangered others at that time more than she was endangered herself. And she caused, naturally, with such policy suspicions and reaction on the part of Serbian politicians and aggravated the situation to the point of a possible war. The leading circles of the Danubian Monarchy clearly felt that their country was starting to fall apart and sought for a remedy. Instead of trying to embark on an internal reorganization that could bring about certain regeneration, it seemed easier to annihilate Serbia, as if she was responsible for all problems from which the Danubian Empire suffered and as if the downfall of Serbia would mean the recovery of Austria and the end to all her difficulties. The illness of the Dual Monarchy had deeper and stronger causes and the fact that its statesmen could not observe them in time and sought solution in provoking a crisis that was designed to ruin the others but brought about Austria-Hungary's demise constituted their historical fatality.

It was maintained in Austria that the dissatisfaction of their Yugoslav subjects was an expression of systematic agitation from Serbia rather than of their own and spontaneous conviction. In that respect, the activities of *Narodna odbrana* were especially pointed out. This society was founded on 23 (10) October 1908 during the great excitement that gripped the Serbian society due to the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.¹³⁷ The representatives of all political parties entered this society with a view to quenching political passions for the sake of higher national interests and concentrating all national energies. Given the possibility of a war between Serbia and Austria-Hungary, the second goal was to make *Narodna odbrana* a center for collecting and organizing volunteer detachments. This organization was a major success during the early months; 223 sub-committees were formed in the country and around 5,000 men signed up for volunteers. After the Annexation Crisis, *Narodna odbrana* ceased its activities and, on 17 (4) July 1909, introduced new regulations for its work, which would have to correspond to new relations between Serbia and the Danubian Monarchy. The new leadership stated in its programmatic booklet *Narodna odbrana* (Belgrade, 1911): "The annexation was just

137 Cf. S. Stanojević, *Ubistvo austriskog prestolonaslednika Ferdinanda*, Beograd 1923, p. 39.

one blow against us dealt by our enemies, coming after many other blows and to be followed by many other. It is necessary to prepare – work – to prevent another attack from finding us equally unprepared. The unpreparedness that we showed during the annexation was not just “military”, but also general national one. The army is the people today. In order for the people to provide a good army, it is not enough just to give it rifles and cannons. To have success in a war, our people must know how to handle arms, must know that it should go (and why) to a war, must have a strong national (Serbian) consciousness, must be enlightened; [our people] must not bicker, must be healthy and economically strong. All this is also necessary for a war with a rifle and cannon. Besides, there is also this: what we call a peace is not a peace, but rather this peaceful time is also a war. There is never a peace between the nations that compete. A fighting with a rifle and cannon between them is just a moment when all is put on the line and a solution is sought. Until then the people fight with a school, a book, trade, economy, health and chivalry competition, working to ensure the progress of the people in every sense” (pp. 10–11). In Serbia, the renewed *Narodna odbrana* worked assiduously to strengthen chivalry spirit and physical regeneration by assisting gymnast organizations and shooting clubs, and in the regions outside Serbia it intended to develop the consciousness about national unity through lectures and different patriotic manifestations. Special care was devoted to concentrating all national energies and suppressing internal disputes in an effort to regenerate the society and create a new, better type of our man. The thought of unification of the Serbs was a guiding light in the entire work; it was going to be propagated by not just sentimental, but also the actual economic and cultural needs. It was a natural corollary that such propaganda involved the agitation against Austria, stemming from the motives that informed the existence of this society and its general conceptions. “Just like the Turks went against us from the south, Austria does so today from the north”, read the page 34 of their programmatic booklet; “Serbia must accept the struggle with the mighty neighbour, because that is a necessity for her freedom, self-preservation and general progress”.

The activity of *Narodna odbrana* was very intense, but rather limited in terms of its protagonists and the area in which it was felt. In Serbia herself, it was increasingly losing ground from 1912 onwards. Intellectuals gradually withdrew from its leadership, especially respected public figures, because of their dissatisfaction with certain individuals in the organization. They founded the new organization *Kulturna liga* (Cultural League) which soon became rather successful. The unanimity in the work of *Narodna odbrana* was dwindling in time. Some of its leaders were in favour of bringing its entire work in accordance with the spirit of new regulations and making it more of a cultural and

defensive nature, just as the name and the above mentioned programme of the organization suggested; the other, more combative leaders asked for more activities. The latter people soon separated themselves from the organization and founded another organization under the name of *Ujedinjenje ili smrt* (Unification or Death), more commonly known as *Crna ruka* (Black Hand). The latter organization used the name *Narodna odbrana*, although it disagreed with it, because, in the words of Čeda Popović, one of the most prominent Black Handers, the work of *Narodna odbrana* had gained certain popularity across the borders and because of fear that the people might be discouraged if they saw that there was no agreement between the two organizations, “or even worse, the splitting and dispute in the matter of setting up a national-revolutionary organization”.¹³⁸

When the Serbian General Staff established in 1911 the service of special border officers for work in direction of Turkey and Austria-Hungary in order to obtain “as much and as accurate information on our neighbours as possible” because of the troubled situation in the Balkans, Dragutin Dimitrijević, nicknamed Apis, head of the department for intelligence service in the General Staff and the main leader of the group dissatisfied with the work of *Narodna odbrana*, arranged that six officers (three on the Austrian and three on the Turkish border), the members of his organization, be assigned to that service. Along with their military service, Popović said, they were entrusted privately to “spread national-revolutionary organization in the regions specified as field of work across the border”. Their job was less complex than it might seem. Working under the guise of *Narodna odbrana*, they made contact with certain patriots from whom they could obtain much useful information – these patriots would otherwise not have been willing to undertake the role of common military informers; on the other hand, the officers spread their circle of connections and influence through those persons, thrilled and devoted to national cause, who did not need any special persuasion. Major Čeda Popović in Užice and Captain Kosta Todorović in Loznica were quite active in this respect. They were not without success, especially in the border counties where they could get into direct contact with people through “secret channels”, that is to say through confidential persons. And they needed these connections at that time not just for ideological, but also for practical purposes. From 1910 onwards, the situation in Turkey became precarious due to the Albanian uprising and after autumn 1911, the Turko-Italian war placed all the Balkan nations before formidable tasks. On the other side, in late October 1911, the negotiations started in Vienna between the Austrian and Hungarian government about the

138 *Nova Evropa*, XVI, 1927, pp. 143-4.

construction of new railways in Bosnia and Herzegovina largely for strategic purposes, as they had to do, in the words of the Chief of the General Staff himself, with the works designed to enable military concentration (*Aufmarsch*).¹³⁹ The question of these railways became a matter of public debate. Part of them was envisaged to come close to the Serbian border in Posavina and there was talk of a branch leading to Zvornik. The importance of these railways, both strategic and militarily, was obvious to anyone even without the explicit statement of Baron Hötendorf. Therefore, Serbia had much reason to watch carefully the course of works and to be well informed.

Čeda Popović, himself a border officer, wrote that the Black Handers concealed their work from the Serbian government for they "positively knew" that it would not be allowed, especially in respect of the revolutionary organization, because of "an excessive caution and timidity of our governments in their actions towards Austria-Hungary". Official circles were not aware that Popović was a member of the organization, since he hid it from them. As it is customary in such matters, this one was also, Popović said, carried out "in the utmost secrecy and with the utmost caution". The Black Handers only informed, according to Popović, the Foreign Minister Milovan Milovanović "towards the end of 1911 or in the beginning of 1912" about part of their activities, pointing out to him the necessity of working together with the Bulgarians in the regions under Turkey. On that occasion, Milovanović agreed to work with them in that sense in accordance with his earlier and well-known conviction that there was no prospect for any success in the Balkans without a Serbo-Bulgarian community.¹⁴⁰

The links between the Serbian border officers and a number of people in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which were revealed during the Great War when part of their archive fell into the hands of the Austrian authorities, provided the core of the incriminating material for the high treason trials in Banja Luka and Sarajevo in 1914-1917. Based in these trials and the material which was made available in the process and later became known, the following can be said

139 Hötendorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, II, p. 277.

140 *Nova Evropa*, XVI, pp. 142-3, 311-2. Baron Giesl's claim that Milovanović and even Stojan Protić were the members of the Black Hand – the latter was its most bitter opponent – was entirely made up. See *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, 'Weltgeschehen Juli 1914', the articles published in November 1933. Heyrowsky, *Neue Wege zu Klarung des Kriegsschuld*, p. 35 also advances false claims that Pašić was a member of *Narodna odbrana*'s leadership and that Gligorije Jeftanović and Vojislav Šola belonged to the organization in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This book brims with falsities and entirely lacks in critical method. A series of "documents" in this book is apocryphal. Based on inaccurate information of other authors, N. P. Poletika, *Saraevskoe ubiystvo*, Leningrad 1930, pp. 161-4 mentions Pašić and other persons as members of the Black Hand.

with certainty: 1) the intelligence links existed mostly until the Balkan War and entirely disappeared or considerably weakened after it. In late January 1914, the border officers were disbanded altogether. Kosta Todorović was transferred from Loznica to Ohrid and Čeda Popović from Šabac to Valjevo. The said officers assumed more pressing duties and turned all their attention to the south, where both during the war and afterwards they were given new and considerable tasks. 2) During their absence, their work was not resumed by civilians and that is an obvious evidence that the entire work was mostly of a military-intelligence nature, which uninstructed civilians could not easily perform. For that reason, the verdict meted out to the Sarajevo assassins spoke of “the organization for surveillance”. Since that organization was guided by military officers, civilian authorities did not interfere with it; therefore, civilian authorities knew almost nothing or very little about many things and the work of military personnel. 3) Austria-Hungary exaggerated the importance of *Narodna odbrana*, just like the importance of *Slovenski jug* earlier.

With certain naivety, or in order to blacken the *Narodna odbrana* as much as possible, Austria reduced in her accusations all national ideology and all national institutions created from 1908 onwards to the influence of that organization, although it was much less prominent than Austro-Hungarian circles claimed and although their claims belied the established facts. In its official file attached to the ultimatum to Serbia, the Austrian government stated that the *Narodna odbrana* maintained the closest ties with all sport societies, the *Sokols*, hunters and *Kulturna liga*, placed them all in its service, guided and assisted them. All these societies were “formally amalgamated”, “so that today they are but the limbs of a single body of *Narodna Odbrana*”.¹⁴¹ To anyone with the slightest knowledge of the facts, it was clear that such claim was far removed from the truth. The same was said from the Austrian side for the Serb societies in Bosnia and Herzegovina. As has been noted, the *Narodna odbrana* was founded in 1908 and the cultural society *Prosvjeta* in Sarajevo came into being in 1902. Nevertheless, despite such clear chronological facts, the indictment in the Banja Luka high treason trial stated that it was in accordance with the intentions of *Narodna odbrana* “that the activities of the Serb societies in Bosnia and Herzegovina were also arranged and that a headquarter was formed here [in Bosnia and Herzegovina] on the pattern of *Narodna Odbrana* and that is the “cultural” society *Prosvjeta* in Sarajevo”. Both the indictment and verdict also claimed that “it could not be believed that the efforts to have the “Serbian” language, “Serbian” religion and “Serbian” flag officially recognized aimed only at preserving the Serbian individuality or nationality, which was

141 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 669.

not denied from any quarter, but it must be regarded as a main means to realize broadly conceived and carefully calculated Greater Serbian propaganda". All these claims were either false or deliberately spun, because the court specially formed for this purpose in Banja Luka was completely placed under the thumb of policy. The name Serbian or Serbo-Croat for the language was denied in Bosnia until 1904 and the official name of the language was Bosnian. It was then understandable that the Serbs and Croats endeavoured to have this local, scholarly unjustified name replaced by its proper Serbo-Croat name. And that finally took place in 1904. Furthermore, it is not true that the Serbs struggled to have the name "Serbian" religion recognized. The Serbian-Orthodox religion had earlier been called officially "Greco-Eastern". The Serbs requested to have the latter name replaced by the former one and the authorities granted them that in 1905 when they granted them religious autonomy, that is to say three years before the formation of *Narodna odbrana* and its ideology. The question of "Serbian" flag in Bosnia and Herzegovina did not exist at all, because it was not banned until after the outbreak of war in 1914. The court and the Austrian public came up with as many claims as possible to present the influence of *Narodna odbrana* and Greater Serbian propaganda more formidable. We have pointed out, however, that there was no need for the influence from abroad, as the Serb people in Austria-Hungary had fully developed national consciousness and its national activities were more prompted by the pressure in Austria-Hungary itself and against Serbia than agitation from Serbia. In certain cases, Serbia even found the excessive enthusiasm of her fellow Serbs embarrassing in times of crises; she was blamed for it and, apart from moral support, she had nothing to gain from it. Therefore, the responsible circles in Belgrade often recommended moderation so that people would not be punished or subjected to prosecution for their statements and that Serbia be spared from difficulties with the Vienna government. "Their actions, almost revolutionary", Jovan Cvijić wrote of certain activist elements, "filled our peaceful people with major fears, because Serbia wanted a respite."¹⁴² The fact that the court in Banja Luka blamed all political processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina on the activities of *Narodna odbrana* was a clear confirmation that such fears were not unfounded. Mijo Radnić, a Croat and the editor of *Radnička odbrana*, an organ of the Croat Christian Socialists, was sentenced on 17 May 1909. The court found him a pro-Serb agitator only because of the name of his newspaper. Teodor Mijatović was sentenced on 24 October 1914 for complaining about the unsolved agrarian question, which was also interpreted in the verdict as an influence of *Narodna odbrana*. Even the writings of the Social Democratic organ in Sarajevo *Glas*

142 Cvijić, *Govori i članci*, II, p. 148.

slobode, a strong opponent of national movement, was put down to the influence of *Narodna odbrana*. When the Serb anti-alcoholic societies rightly stressed that their work was a means for improving the social environment and strengthening social morality, the court concluded from these words that this was, in fact, the work “for nurturing characters and morality, strengthening the will and discipline among the members of society, which are necessary preconditions for the fighters in which the brethren (anti-alcoholics) should turn into at that great moment when the freedom and national unification were to be realized”. In other words, the authorities seem not have wanted to see the strengthening of characters and morality, because those were conditions in which the strong-willed men were formed, who could become politically dangerous. An article was published in the newspaper *Prosvjeta* issued in Sarajevo that ended on this note: “When we organize national energies through a convenient division of work, we will be able to proceed separately but without internal division and with all our might, as the great German leader Helmut von Moltke used to say, and to defend ourselves in accordance with our position.” On the basis of this, the court recriminated: “The one who defends needs also to attack, there is also the offensive on the defensive.” Therefore, the court concluded that the *Prosvjeta* published this article in the spirit of *Narodna odbrana*, propagating the organization for the purpose of demonstrating that the people was the army and that this army needed to be prepared for an attack on Austria. With this sort of argumentation and logic, anything could be proven. Unfortunately, this was the logic of the special Austrian courts in which only foreigners adjudicated; therefore, there could never have been any confidence and agreement between them and their superiors, on the one hand, and the people in Bosnia and Herzegovina, on the other.

Certain writers and newspapers took the decisions of the Banja Luka court against the Serbs of Bosnia and Herzegovina as the facts established in court. However, in many instances they were far from being established facts; we have detailed them here. The judiciary in that country during the war was not, unfortunately, up to the task; besides, it could have hardly been otherwise in the situation in which the Foreign Ministry placed it in a difficult dilemma: either to deny the charges brought up publically against Serbia and *Narodna odbrana* without waiting for the investigation to be completed, or to deal heavy moral blows to the country in the midst of war. I made this statement publically during the trial in Banja Luka when I was accused as a secretary in the cultural society *Prosvjeta*.¹⁴³

143 For more details on this, see my *Crna knjiga*, Sarajevo 1920, pp. 200-8.

One writer, an Austrian officer, has recently claimed that the Banja Luka trial proved that the Serbian societies in Bosnia and Herzegovina had been assisted and subsidized from Serbia.¹⁴⁴ It should be noted here that the court never did or could establish this. It was a plain fabrication that even such a court could not uphold with a clear conscience.

In general, and that should be particularly stressed, the connections between the *Narodna odbrana* and intellectuals from Bosnia and Herzegovina were much weaker than it is often believed. Dr. Nikola Stojanović, one of the leaders of the main opposition group in these lands, which gathered around *Narod*, wrote on 7 January 1916 at Geneva: "I have been in Belgrade several times and I still do not know where the quarters of *Narodna odbrana* are; I have never read its statutes or any of its publications." Other members of his group, or the leading figures in other Serbian parties, or Petar Kočić, the most popular people's tribune, or Dušan Vasiljević, the leader of the deputation that protested against the annexation in 1908, or Dr. Milan Srškić, the main leader of the group around the *Srpska riječ* newspaper, or many others had nothing to do with *Narodna odbrana*.

Along with the above examples, another characteristic case showed how the court resorted to manipulation to read into certain words the meaning it intended to prove. The verdict took it for granted that the *Narodna odbrana* itself claimed in the above mentioned book, on page 90, that the following organizations struggled on its behalf in Bosnia and Herzegovina: "*Prosvjeta*, *Zemljoradničke zadruge*, *Čitaonice*, *Pobratimi* (anti-alcoholic societies), singing societies, *Privreda*". The verdict explicitly stated that the court concluded on this basis "that *Pobratimstvo* and *Sokolstvo* in Bosnia and Herzegovina have indeed worked in the sense of the society *Narodna odbrana* for the liberation and unification of the southern provinces of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy". This claim was reiterated three times in the verdict and that is a clear evidence how important it was to the court to underline its interpretation of this place in the book. However, this place cannot and must not be interpreted in such manner. The entire text of *Narodna odbrana*'s brochure and the logic speak against it. In the brochure, on pages 70-71, it is said: "While many people here, including some respected scholars, wondered how it was possible to call *Narodna odbrana* the work on national health, founding *Sokols*, lecturing etc., the notion and name of *Narodna odbrana* is understood and used by all others to denote similar work at their home: the Germans, Czechs, Polish, Slovenes etc. The words *Narodna odbrana*, the work of *Narodna odbrana*, the struggle in *Narodna odbrana* became something of an expert expression for the entire

144 Heyrowsky, *Neue Wege zur Klärung der Kriegsschuld*, p. 16.

struggle that private initiative of the people leads in peace for national survival, the strengthening of national economy and education, maintaining health, preserving the land, preserving native language etc.” On pages 70-87 of the same book, *narodna odbrana* of the Czechs, Slovenes, Germans, Polish, Croats is discussed in these terms. It is obvious that the statement on the work of Bosnian societies referred to *narodna odbrana* as a notion and not the Serbian society *Narodna odbrana*. Logically, it could not be understood differently. If those societies indeed worked for the organization *Narodna odbrana* from Belgrade, would the latter publish that in public in 1911 given the consequences?

None of this is to say that the Serbian societies in Bosnia and Herzegovina did not aspire to the liberation and unification with Serbia. On the contrary, that was a deep and irresistible desire of all the Serbs from those parts and no effort was spared in this respect. What we do state is the fact that the incriminating conclusions could not be based on such premises, and that anyone who referred to that kind of evidence was exposed to the charge of assessing the matter in a narrow-minded and unreliable manner. Speaking of Greater Serbian propaganda, the Austrian authorities had exaggerated earlier, as has been seen, the importance of the activities of *Slovenski jug*, just as they now exaggerated the importance of *Narodna odbrana*. The national consciousness in the parts across the Sava and Drina had been deep and strong long before the formation of these organizations and the spirit imputed to the Serbs there in the course of the trials did not need to be brought into life in early twentieth century when it had been alive and even contributed to the creation of a new Serbia of the nineteenth century. The *Narodna odbrana* did not awake the national consciousness of a Vasilj Grdjić or Vasa Stajić and their likes in Bosnia and Vojvodina, but they rather adhered to *Narodna odbrana* because they believed they would find in that organization what they desired and sought for. Čeda Popović admitted that their work in Bosnia and Herzegovina was facilitated by the fact that the Serb element in these lands had much confidence in Serbian officers and expected their liberation from them.¹⁴⁵ The Minister for Bosnia and Herzegovina Biliński himself wrote on one occasion: “Bosnia and Herzegovina are the only lands in the Monarchy, in which it has been allowed so far, in the Diet, in societies, in electoral assemblies, in the press and in schools, before the eyes of the authorities to give expression openly to dissatisfaction with the fact they belonged to the Monarchy and where the desire for unification with a foreign power was expressed overtly.”¹⁴⁶ Baron Hötzen-
dorf

145 *Nova Evropa*, XVI, pp. 142-3.

146 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 228.

forwarded on 7 July 1914 a letter to Berchtold which he had received from a reliable Austrian patriot about the situation in Bosnia. In that letter, Biliński was reproached for not clamping down on the Serbs and for allowing the visit of Crown Prince to Bosnia. The irredentism was open there. "The main centers and instigators of high treason tendencies are the Serb opposition club in the Diet, various Serb societies, autonomous high schools and, last but not least, the Serb rebellious priests." All people are the enemies of the Monarchy, from clerks to the most disheveled pupil. "Professors, often young people, just graduated from high schools, frustrated themselves, politicize more than advisable and necessary and bring high treason ideas in school." "60 per cent of the Serbs are the direct opponents and enemies of the state."¹⁴⁷ What was then there for the *Narodna odbrana* to propagate? Certain people, who took part in the work of *Narodna odbrana*, are keen on emphasizing their own role. It was no doubt a significant one, but certainly not that much and in that manner as they believed. Moreover, they did not sufficiently acknowledge the importance and role, in terms of ideology and practice, of the older generation that took part in various movements during the nineteenth century and created both the freedom-loving tradition in our race and the basis for cooperation in struggle between all our lands. A member of the "Unification or Death" organization went as far as claiming that Milovanović had concluded the Serbo-Bulgarian alliance under their influence,¹⁴⁸ although the latter had advocated it in every Serbian government from 1904 onwards, which had worked towards this goal with conviction even without him.

During the session of the Sarajevo *Prosvjeta* society on 22 September 1912, the Serbs from Bosnia and Herzegovina requested and proposed pan-Serb activities of all the Serb societies regardless of political boundaries, whereas the representatives of the *Kulturna liga* from Belgrade endeavoured to reduce the scope of this proposal and decline it, fearing certain political difficulties. The Czechs had similar problems. From the official correspondence of the Russian Consulate in Prague with the Vienna Embassy and the Foreign Ministry in St. Petersburg, it is clear that the Czechs, who had no organization on the pattern of *Narodna odbrana* or the Black Hand, sought for connections and support in Russia in their struggle against Austria – and their main leaders did so.¹⁴⁹ The Austrian regime forced them as well to break away from Vienna,

147 Ibid., pp. 240-1.

148 *Nova Evropa*, XVI, p. 340. For Serbo-Bulgarian relations, cf. Milovanović's conversation with the British Ambassador in St. Petersburg on 25 March 1910. See *British Documents*, IX, 1933, p. 157.

149 *Krasnii arhiv*, XXXIII, 1929, 4 ff.

with which they had been tied for centuries, and to seek help from a brotherly Slav state.

2

The rebellious spirit in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was the most restless of all our provinces, did not abate during the entire period of the Austrian occupation: the rebellion of 1881/2, the *hajdučija* in 1885, the autonomist movement that started in 1896, the agrarian uprising in 1910 provided convincing evidence.

The foundation of clandestine societies had long been a common matter among the youth of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 1896, the pupils of the Sarajevo grammar school founded the *Srpska svijest* society. The sessions of this society “started and ended with the *Bože pravde* hymn”,¹⁵⁰ i.e. the Serbian state hymn. The secret national pupils society was also founded in Mostar in 1898; it was restored after 1905 under the name *Sloboda* and it had largely political character. The first conflict with the school authorities took place in the Mostar grammar school in 1899 because of the lively national activity of certain pupils. On that occasion, several pupils were punished too harshly and unfair, because of which Professor Vinko Tripković demonstratively left public service in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The movement was growing stronger afterwards and it was mostly students who spread organizations – in 1905, they founded their society *Rad* in Vienna and prepared a large youth meeting in Sarajevo next year. Realizing anti-Austrian tendencies of its organizers, the authorities banned this meeting even before it was announced.

In more recent times, since the start of the struggle for civil rights, the press in Bosnia and Herzegovina also reflected that spirit of dissatisfaction and rebelliousness. Aleksa Šantić, a popular poet from Herzegovina, wrote as early as 1907 his famous poem *Mi znamo sudbu* that defied the Austrian regime.

These strong, manly words resonated in the entire province and were repeated as a prayer. The rebellious writings of Petar Kočić, a fine literate, who no doubt mostly influenced both the peasants and the youth in Bosnia, gave expression to an intense revolutionary mood. On 15 April 1898, this national fighter wrote to his father that his “sacred thing, above all, [is] the liberation of my homeland and the unification of torn-up Serbdom”.¹⁵¹ The writings of Risto Radulović in the *Narod*, founded in 1907, were exclusively in the “red” tone, both national and social. “Risto Radulović”, Borivoje Jevtić, one of the leaders of the Young Bosnia wrote rightly, “presents the type of a cold and extremely

150 *Spomenica prve gimnazije u Sarajevu*, Sarajevo 1929, pp. 51-2.

151 Branko Ćubrilović, *Petar Kočić i njegovo doba*, Banja Luka – Zagreb 1934, p. 22.

analytical and critical publicist, who would know how to 'put things in their place' and, leading a healthy and strong opposition to the regime, gather and nourish that young man who would, as early as 1910, declare a new national orientation with a gun shot."¹⁵² Vladimir Gaćinović, one of the main young revolutionaries, their leader in fact, whom certain people are keen to present as a spiritual product of the "Unification or Death" organization, started his work in the editorial board of *Narod* in Mostar in 1907 and received his revolutionary baptism there. He then went to Belgrade during the Annexation Crisis to join volunteers and find his comrades, just like Božidar Zečević, a young man from Nevesinje, left for Russia for the same reasons from Vienna, where the first youth secret revolutionary organization on the pattern of Russian *troikas* was founded in 1908. A few young men prepared for action on their own initiative. A science student Dragutin Kokanović was arrested when he tried to make bombs. A few hundred young men crossed over from Gacko and Bileća to Montenegro in 1908/9, together with two priests, to take part in an eventual fighting against Austria. As *Narodna odbrana* was an agency for assembling volunteers at the time of the arrival in Serbia of Gaćinović and his friends, he naturally turned to it and thus came into contact with certain persons from what would later become the Black Hand. They found themselves in the same work, inspired by the same ideas and feelings. But it is obvious that he sought for and found them and their likes, and not the other way around. There is no doubt that he and the people from that organization influenced each other to certain extent, but revolutionary inclinations in passionate and well-read Gaćinović had other sources as well. The influence of Russian revolutionaries was especially strong with whom he came into contact in Lausanne where he left to study. He especially frequented there the house of M. A. Natanson, one of the most prominent leaders of the Russian socialist-revolutionaries and one of those who recommended even the use of terrorist methods. There he immersed himself in the Russian revolutionary literature. "We are", he later wrote to his Russian friends, "your colony in terms of ideas."¹⁵³ On the Russian pattern, he formed among Serbian pupils small, secret groups with three to five members and enthused them, according to Russian example, to sacrifice for the good of nation and for the great ideas of liberation.¹⁵⁴ He exerted a powerful influence on his friends, because he was eloquent, sensitive, thrilled for the cause and because he knew to speak and write with suggestiveness that conquered and had no parallel in the youth circles. His role should not therefore

152 B. Jevtić, *Sarajevski atentat*, Sarajevo 1924, p. 5.

153 V. Lebedev, *Pregled*, X, 1934, pp. 360-6.

154 P. Slijepčević, "Mlada Bosna", in: Slijepčević, ed., *Napor Bosne i Hercegovine*, p. 193.

be reduced to that of a won-over organ of the Black Hand, but he should be rather seen as the honest, convinced apostle of an idea. The other main revolutionary in Bosnia, Danilo Ilić, an accomplice in the Sarajevo assassination, an anarchist in accordance with his difficult life experience and personal conviction, started his activity immediately after the annexation. His friend from school of education, a revolutionary himself, Kosta Krajšumović, told the story of how he introduced them into his secret society at one meeting. "He presented to us the tragedy of our race after the Annexation, a true misfortune, then the progress, culture and duty of us young people, us future teachers and us a tiny piece of an endless body of mankind. It all resulted in the foundation of a secret pupil society, the members of which would not be bound by regulations, committees, statements and such, but rather common love for the common cause and the inveterate hatred for tyrants."¹⁵⁵ He also went to Serbia as late as 1912, as a fully-fledged revolutionary, and came into contact with the Black Hand people. Nothing could be thus more inaccurate than F. Wiesner's claim that the Young Bosnia "received from Serbia the entire spiritual food for its revolutionary schooling; Russian revolutionary literature was sent to them from there via *Narodna odbrana* to educate them for practical revolutionary activity".¹⁵⁶ The third active young man, one of the leaders of the Dalmatian youth, Oskar Tartaglia, a member of the organization "Unification or Death", also arrived in Belgrade with a well-formed rebellious spirit. In 1908, he had translated the book of the Russian anarchist P. Kropotkin *To the Youth* in Split and he had contributed to the socialist journal *Glas maloga puka*, because, in his own words, social democracy was "vehemently anticlerical, revolutionary and anti-Austrian". From 1910 onwards, he stressed, together with a few of his friends, "the need for revolution and terror, anti-parliamentarism and atheism, nationalism and state and national unification of the Serbs and Croats", and he started the journal *Val*. When in August 1910 the Serbian Crown Prince Alexander sailed by Split, the youth led by Tartaglia received him with standing ovation, while the gendarmerie pushed them back from the shore with bayonets on their rifles and in front of all the passengers from Alexander's boat. On 1 February 1912, Tartaglia, then a law student, led demonstrations against the *Ban* – commissar Cuvaj – and soon organized, with a few of his friends, protests in all Yugoslav lands. On 18 April, he went to Belgrade with other young men. "All the youth groups from all the regions of what was then Austria-Hungary were represented. They went under the Croat, Serb and Slovene banner. Cuvaj got us to come together!..." It was only in Belgrade,

¹⁵⁵ *Spomenica Danila Ilića*, Sarajevo 1922, p. 83.

¹⁵⁶ *Die Kriegsschuldfrage*, VI, 1928, p. 347.

where he arrived with established principles, that Tartaglia met with a few members of the "Unification or Death" organization and joined their ranks on 27 April 1912.¹⁵⁷ A young teacher, Djuro Tomašević, revolutionary by instinct, worked in the school of education in the town of Pakrac and had a tremendous impact on the youth. He had no links with either *Narodna odbrana* or the Black Hand, but he was devoted to Serbia. Under his influence, a major strike of the pupils took place in Pakrac in the spring of 1914, which ended with twelve of them leaving from Croatia to Serbia.

Dr. Branko Čubrilo, himself an active young man born in a deeply national family, is right in claiming that the youth in Bosnia was largely influenced by the example of the assassination carried out by Bogdan Žerajić on his own initiative as an expression of a deep personal revolt and the most striking protest against the annexation. Žerajić was a close friend of Gaćinović and the former's example made a great impression on the latter and swayed him definitely to the path of a national revolutionary. "After Žerajić's assassination, a great number of rebellious groups emerged across the province. Sarajevo, Mostar, Tuzla, Banja Luka set the tone for that struggle. Russian nihilist brochures were read, national movements all over the world were studied – Mazzini, Fichte; people went to Serbia to make contacts there, some of them joined the irregular military units, some became journalists, some joined literary groups – in a word, all were inspired, strengthened for struggle."¹⁵⁸ This is confirmed by Pero Slijepčević, another active young man, who especially emphasized the spiritual influence of the Yugoslav ideology. Young men "read Skerlić, imbued with faith and courage by looking at the heroic deeds of Serbia. But that direct, intimate influence was present in their own pupil environment. The taste for attentat was given to them by Žerajić, to whose tomb they brought flowers."¹⁵⁹ "Žerajić became an idol", Tartaglia wrote.¹⁶⁰ "Gaćinović never missed to pay a visit to Žerajić's tomb during his mysterious travels to Sarajevo ... No demonstration ever took place without someone bringing flowers to this tomb, which became something of a pilgrimage and symbolic protest against Austria. Princip also came by with one of his friends, Dragutin Mraza, an intelligent and unfortunate young man who was killed on the Danube during the first fighting in 1914. Princip was there on the eve of the attentat and bid farewell to Žerajić with a large wrath."¹⁶¹

157 Dr O. Tartaglia, *Veleizdajnik*, Zagreb – Split 1928, pp. 13-27.

158 *Nova Evropa*, XI, 1925, p. 487.

159 *Ibid.*, p. 490.

160 Tartaglia, *Veleizdajnik*, p. 16.

161 Jevtić, *Sarajevski atentat*, pp. 20-1.

3

The first news about disputes in the leadership of *Narodna odbrana* broke out publically as early as summer 1911, when the talk was rife that a group of activist, largely young men, separated from the organization – they founded their own association on 26 (13) May 1911. The work on the formation of that society started earlier, mostly from February 1910 onwards, and the main initiators were the army officers Velimir Vemić and Vojislav Tankosić. The real leader of these dissatisfied people became a General Staff Major Dragutin Dimitrijević Apis, who had also been one of the main conspirators against the late King Alexander Obrenović. Most of his closest associates were also the former conspirators. The rebellious Ljubomir Jovanović nicknamed Čupa, whom friends called the Mazzini of Young Serbia, was the main figure among the non-conspirators. He had been an active young man from the *Slovenski jug*, dynamic, well spoken, deeply convinced in the need for more concordant and direct national movement. After his studies in Brussels, he returned to Serbia desirous of brave deeds. He was among the first founders of the new organization, well-known for his activism; he became the editor-in-chief of its new organ. “The entire Yugoslav youth knew him by his name, the legends of him spread in our circles”, Gaćinović wrote of him.¹⁶² The older people were, however, more reserved towards him as he had proven inept in his dealing with the agent-provocateur Nastić in 1907-1908 and because he was not always moderate enough in his writings and speeches. He died during the war with the Bulgarians in 1913.

Different news started to spread about the new, secret organization, which contained both accurate and made-up information, since its work was not a public matter. It was called “Unification or Death” and its name denoted the entire program; the public gave it a mysterious name the Black Hand. Article 1 of this organization proclaimed that it was formed “for the purpose of achieving national ideals – the unification of Serbdom”. According to its statutes, the organization preferred revolutionary work to that of spiritual nature, and it wanted to turn Serbia into a proper Piedmont. It intended to, along with lively national propaganda, undertake a national organization in all the provinces populated by Serbs in order to facilitate the process of national unification, on the one hand, and the fall of Serbian opponents, on the other. Čeda Popović said that the *Narodna odbrana* “renounced revolutionary work”, that it assumed the character of a public society and that its “chief activity consisted of gathering intelligence, informing the people, and preparing the ground for

162 L. T., *Sarajevski atentat*, Wien 1922, pp. 8-9.

the events that were presaged". The members of the Black Hand organization "mostly ... officers, took the view that they should play certain part in the work of liberating our co-nationals; that in this work of liberation that could only be resolved by war our army, outnumbered by the enemy it had to fight, should be strengthened by our element outside the borders of Serbia. That revolutionary work was not terrorist, as it has been often said tendentiously; it could not even be terrorist, because people could not be recruited by force for such work abroad, since that sort of recruitment would expose the entire work to the danger of being revealed to our enemies. On the contrary, the associates outside Serbia were only those people who enthusiastically joined the work out of the purest motives – their strongly developed national feelings.

From 3 September (21 August) 1911 onwards, the society started to publish its newspaper *Pijemont*, which stressed in the first two sentences of its programme: "Neither with such governments, nor with such oppositions. That is the first and decisive word of *Pijemont*." The publishing of a newspaper was in the spirit of the programme of the organization that envisaged in its statutes (Article 4a) "to influence all the official factors in Serbia as a Piedmont, and all the social layers and the entire social life in her [Serbia]". Embittered on account of political parties that it found immoral, uncultured and unpatriotic, the newspaper underscored the need for the formation of a new political organization. In its programme, in the issue no. 1, the group gathered around *Pijemont* requested the liberation and unification from foreign policy, because "Serbia has only one goal in her foreign policy". That group condemned the entire previous work as being carried out without a plan. "Efforts have been sporadic, without any anticipation, uncertain, indefinite, indecisive, and often it is not even clear what has been intended." In a way of its political means and aspirations, the *Pijemont* requested an alliance of the Balkan nations, especially the South Slavs. Serbia, Bulgaria and Montenegro had to work on "unification or alliance" with the Croats and Slovenes; the unification between Serbia and Montenegro would have to be completed as a precondition for that great undertaking. In internal affairs, the group favoured the reduction of civil liberties, which were considered compromised by demagoguery; "parliamentarism is not the last word of political wisdom", they stressed.

In foreign policy, the group's ideology was not innovative. Its ideas did not go beyond the constant national programme of the Serbian people throughout the nineteenth century. It was only the energetic attitude of these people that was new. But such an attitude that denied any credit both to predecessors and contemporaries and considered themselves the beginning of a national era provoked resistance in the society, and especially among political parties. They were insulted and regarded from the outset the group around the *Pijemont* as

an opponent, especially as it attacked not just some of their actions, but also parliamentarism in general. Today, in many parts of Europe, these opinions have their fervent supporters and certain governments have come into being due to such ideology, but then that was considered a heresy and attributed to military education of the main leaders of the group. The ruling Radical Party in Serbia with Pašić at its head was highly distrustful of the movement and regarded it as largely directed against itself. In this respect, it was correct, since the attacks on the main Radical leaders were exceptionally harsh and bitter.¹⁶³ From 1903 onwards, the Radical Party held power, with some small interruptions, and claimed for itself the main credit for the introduction of parliamentary regime. The Radicals thus reproached the new leaders that by attacking them they attacked, in fact, the state of affairs in Serbia in general and expected certain reaction. This combative attitude towards political parties, and especially towards Radicals, led to the split among the members of the new organization, “which later became unbridgable”, in the words of Čeda Popović.¹⁶⁴ This conflict caused the formation of a new organization, which the opponents considered a Radical creation and which was latter dubbed the White Hand. The “Unification or Death” as a purely patriotic organization would no doubt have had much more members than it actually had (517) had it not been hindered by the fact that it came into open conflict with the Radicals and, to some extent, other political parties. The conflict reached such proportions in the summer of 1912 that some friends of Dragutin Dimitrijević thought that he could fall in an ambush during his return from a reconnaissance trip in Sanjak and be killed “accidentally”.¹⁶⁵

163 Issue no. 32 wrote about Milovanović: “Why attack a man of whom no one in Serbia, who is an honest man and a Serb, thinks well? It is ridiculous even to criticize a man, who is being praised only by the enemies of Serbia.” In no. 93: “The Radical leaders have long abandoned any principled struggle. They pursue all their policy for personal interests.” In no. 90 of 1912: “Since the Old Radicals have been in office, every conscientious and impartial observer of our conditions, every loyal Serbian patriot must confess with much pain that things are very bad in our homeland.” No. 184 of 1912 wrote about Pašić as follows: “Mr. Pašić has sensed that power is getting out of his hands, he knows that he has lost the confidence of the Crown, he knows best how unpopular he is, and even hated in his own party, in which he maintains as a leader only by inertia. He knows that the younger members of his party, members of the current government, call him a demon of the Radical Party and Serbia.” No. 205 wrote of him as “one of the most corrupt and most avaricious and therefore one of the most fatal statesmen of Serbia.”

164 *Nova Evropa*, XVI, 308-10.

165 *Ibid.*, p. 333. Giesl falsely claimed that Stojan Protić was also a member of the organization. See *Berliner Monatshefte*, XI, 1933, p. 457. His assumption that Hartwig also agreed with the Black Hand's plans is equally unsubstantiated. On the contrary, there is strong evidence that he condemned some of their public doings.

Such an attitude of a new organization against the main figures and the policy of a large political party, which held office, made intimate cooperation in any matter impossible, including the questions of foreign policy. It is difficult to work with confidence with people in one matter, while there is friction and power struggle in another one. The Black Hand never disclosed its plans fully to the Radical government and the latter thus remained always mistrustful of it. The Radicals knew they had many opponents in the army; besides, it was in their tradition, ever since the time of King Milan, to oppose the interference of military circles with political affairs whether it was foreign or internal policy. But it should be noted that prominent members of other political parties did not belong to this new organization either in order to maintain their independence or avoid the criticism that they acquired influence in a dubious manner. Therefore, none of the leading politicians in Serbia was a member of the organization.¹⁶⁶

The Austro-Hungarian press and diplomacy had rather accurate information about the goals of this organization.¹⁶⁷ The first report by the Austrian Minister Ugron was dated 12 November 1911. It said that the organization essentially consisted of officers dissatisfied with their role in the society. Earlier, during the time of the Obrenovićs, they had been a powerful factor and now they had no influence even in military questions. Radicals with Pašić at their head, the report stated, monopolized the authority. The organization "assumed certain political colour and it was directed against the autarchy of Radicals".¹⁶⁸ Later reports provided many details and stressed that the movement was a nuisance for the government and that the latter conducted a secret, but thorough investigation.¹⁶⁹ The Military Attaché Gellinek wrote on 20 November that the programme of the organization named "Unification or Death" or the "Black Hand" "allegedly calls for removing all persons in the country who stand in the way of realizing the Greater Serbian idea – starting with the King".¹⁷⁰ Gellinek wrote in a report of 24 January 1912: "It is beyond doubt that national and political ambitions prevail in the Serbian officer corps, with which the government and [both] Radical parties disagree. In the opinion of the praetorians among the officers, Serbia could only make progress when the scores have

166 G. Jagow, *Deutschland freigesprochen*, Leipzig 1933, p. 18 stated the opposite, but he was incorrect.

167 *Berliner Monatshefte*, X, 1932, pp. 55 ff. provides the material on the Black Hand from the Viennese press archives.

168 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, III, p. 539.

169 *Ibid.*, pp. 545-6.

170 *Ibid.*, pp. 549-50.

been settled with the current regime – eventually by force.”¹⁷¹ Because of the fear that Austria-Hungary might enter Sanjak in 1912, exploiting the Turkish difficulties, that organization received strong national support. “Serbia would have to be prepared for defense in that case. An enthusiastic military-patriotic movement has not been unwelcome to the leading politicians – if and as long as they could steer it.” In that way, they intended to divert the activity of the Black Hand from internal to external questions.¹⁷² As the government then worked on the conclusion of an alliance with Bulgaria and, given the Albanian rebellion, faced major issues, they were prone not to undertake any measures against the organization for the sake of the greater part of the thrilled young partisans in it. And indeed, most of the members of that organization, which joined it for purely patriotic reasons, stopped to make difficulties to the government in their policy. A small faction, with great ambitions, continued as before. On 27 June 1912, Todor Stefanović Vilovski, the former chief of the Serbian press bureau, submitted to the Vienna government a thorough, confidential report on that faction and the entire Black Hand. He interpreted the entire organization as a product of the old conspirators, who felt neglected, and reported on their work not just against the Radical majority, but also against King and Crown Prince.

From a denunciation of the journalist Milan Plut made in August 1912 in Zemun, the Foreign Ministry found out that there were no close ties between the *Narodna odbrana* and the Black Hand. The *Narodna odbrana*, Plut said, was mostly concerned about working abroad, whereas the latter organization prepared for a coup in Serbia. In case of Austrian penetration of Old Serbia, the Black Hand would overthrow the government, introduce a military dictatorship and declare war. The Black Hand mostly consisted of the conspirators, while their opponent, General Boža Janković, headed the *Narodna odbrana*. Besides, there were a lot of republicans among the members of the Black Hand, who dreamt of a future federal Yugoslav state that would be a republic.¹⁷³ Based on these news, the Viennese Foreign Ministry came to the conclusion that the Black Hand was “some sort of a conspiracy that pursued its own goals independently or even against the government. The *Narodna odbrana* was, on the contrary, something of an expression of the popular will that had been steamrolling in certain direction for a few years; its generally popular goals are

171 Ibid., p. 790.

172 Ibid., pp. 812-4.

173 Ibid., IV, p. 322.

those of almost the entire intelligentsia in the country and its organization, if it exists, is available to serve any government."¹⁷⁴

Some Austrian writers, such as F. Wiesner, now want to present things as if the Serbian government knew all that the Black Hand was doing, its goals in foreign policy relating to Austria, as well as its means; and as if the Serbian government "materially and spiritually" helped its work.¹⁷⁵ But they do not provide and cannot provide any real evidence to support their suspicions. On the contrary, the entire development of relations between the government and the leading members of that organization was constantly conflicting and on one occasion led to a serious crisis. The members of the organization did not dare to reveal their plans to the government so that it did not thwart them and, moreover, they systematically concealed from the authorities and the public even their names and their personal connections in Serbia and abroad to prevent the difficulties that the officials could suffer because of them. The government could only be reproached on account of tolerating them at all. But this tolerance also stemmed from political troubles. From 1911 onwards, the Balkans was set on fire from several quarters and Serbia faced, as anyone clearly understood, major events. Was it possible for the government then to cause struggle and conflicts in the country when it was necessary to prepare the people for grand developments in Turkey and when every individual could be useful to the country?

The work of both the *Narodna odbrana* and the Black Hand was almost completely ceased in political terms from the autumn of 1912 to the end of 1913. The most active members of these organizations were engaged in the war and carried out their programme in the field. They could be satisfied with what was accomplished; a number of the members gave evidence of the strength and depth of their patriotic conviction and gave their blood and lives for their ideals. However, because the army had tremendous success, part of the officers, the members of the Black Hand, found that civil authorities, and especially the Radical Cabinet, was not up to the task. They did not consider Milovanović's and Pašić's sufferance an expression of political necessity, but rather a sign of weakness and, therefore, many wanted to see someone else, with more firmness, whose political success would match military one, taking the reins of the country. But this was now just the attitude of some of the leading figures, and

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 332. It should be noted that the Vienna government did not mention the Black Hand in the 1914 ultimatum. The reasons seem to have been: 1) because it was weary to speak of it on the basis of denunciations alone and 2) because it could not go public with the above mentioned confession. Cf. *Berliner Monatshefte*, X, 1932, pp. 558-61.

¹⁷⁵ *Die Kriegsschuldfrage*, VI, 19128, p. 355. Cf. Dr. W. Ziegler, *Bilddokumente zur Kriegsschuldfrage*, Berlin, 1924, p. 99.

not the entire leadership. Having lost many of its members in the wars, the organization did not manage to renew and rearrange itself, and it did not function as earlier.

An attempt was made in 1912 to establish closer connections between the *Narodna odbrana* and “Unification or Death”. The members of the latter organization intended, in their own words, to exploit the reputation of *Narodna odbrana*. Therefore, they sent Major Milan Vasić to join it and he became a secretary and took much of leadership in his own hands. When Major Vasić died in July 1913 in the battle of Bregalnica, no one from the organization replaced him and the connection was severed at the moment of a complete breakdown between the Black Hand and civil authorities.

The open conflict between the Radical government and the Black Hand emerged in the spring of 1914. On 17 January, Colonel Dušan Stefanović replaced the Army Minister Miloš Božanović, who had been reproached for his ties with the Black Handers or for being influenced by them. On the Easter, a conflict emerged in Skoplje regarding whether army representatives or civil servants had primary importance. The Cabinet favoured civil authorities and such attitude received support in the parliament. General Damjan Popović, commander-in-chief in southern Serbia, reacted by submitting a request to be retired on 12 April and his request was met. The supporters of the Black Hand endeavoured to present this event as denoting a principled attitude of the government against the army and made propaganda to that effect. Reporting to St. Petersburg, Hartwig condemned the Black Hand for interfering with internal policy and he fully supported Pašić,¹⁷⁶ whereas the Military Attaché, Colonel Artamonov, believed that the tactlessness of Minister for Internal Affairs Protić as well as the Radical Party’s own interests accounted, to a large measure, for the bitterness of the conflict.¹⁷⁷ When in late March the government removed the head of *Oficirska zadruga* and sent a commission to go through its work, the *Pijemont*, no. 90, wrote: “Stojan Protić tried with this affair to find a phantom of the Black Hand in [*Oficirska*] *Zadruga*, which haunts him even in his dream”. The conflict was very sharp and it spilled into the press and National Assembly and caused many difficulties, threatening for a while to turn into a conflict between the army and the government. There was even talk of military preparations for a coup d’état. Dissatisfied with the Radical majority in the parliament, the *Pijemont*, no. 115, wrote even this: “The parliament lost its ability to respect the reason. Set on the track of a poor political education, the National

176 *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus*. Reihe 1, Bd. 3., pp. 248-9; Bd. 4, p. 42.

177 *Ibid.*, pp. 350, 352 ff.

Assembly lost the power to snap out of it." Political opponents of the government also wanted to use these conflicts for their own purposes, although they disagreed with the group around the *Pijemont* in many matters; in the same way, certain officers joined the fray not because they belonged to the Black Hand, but rather out of solidarity with their friends.

4

The members of the "Unification or Death" organization, who were young people, mostly tried to influence the youth. "We believed," Čeda Popović wrote, "that only the youth was capable of taking a new, decisive path, since the older generations, and among them even those who were prominent in the national struggle, were tired and lost their faith in themselves, and they became less resistant, so they switched to making compromises and different bargains." They had most connections among young students, their older and younger friends, who possessed the "holy fires" of enthusiasm and who saw things, in their young imagination, without the notion of relativity and were always more or less absolute in their convictions. The cult of Serbia was boundless among them. In the spring of 1912, when a group of Bosnian pupils from Tuzla crossed over to Zvornik, the youngsters fell on their knees and started to kiss the free land like something of a sanctity as soon as they stepped on the Serbian soil. After the victorious wars of 1912-1913, this cult was growing further and encompassed not just the youth, but also other, older people.

The youth's activities were very lively. The agitation spread in the public, in the press and lectures, and directly among the people. Some of the older journals, such as *Sloboda* from Split and *Naprednjak* from Šibenik fell into the hands of young Oskar Tartaglia and Milostislav Bartulica from the autumn of 1912 onwards, and at the same time other journals for the youth were launched such as *Preporod* in Ljubljana, *Srpska omladina* in Sarajevo and *Novi Srbin* in Sombor. These journals had a short span of life, since they did not have sufficient funding, their editors and associates were mostly students who often moved from one place to another and often disagreed with each other on account of different ambitions and because a number of them was persecuted because of their articles. Nevertheless, although journals came and went, their activity was felt in every community they were published in. Their ideas spread and gained the increasing number of supporters. In some places, especially in Dalmatia, the youth had a powerful influence. On 16 March, during the most difficult period of the Scutari crisis, the delegates of the "United National Youth" secretly met in Split and concluded they would respond to the Austro-Hungarian pressure on the Serb kingdoms, with revolutionary propaganda

among the people and the army. Indeed, the mobilized young men were active in the army. "The general parole was: if it comes to war, disobey and cross over to the Serbs."¹⁷⁸ On 8 May 1913, the new journal *Ujedinjenje* was started in Split, but the authorities muzzled it as soon as the second issue went out. Not just its editors, but also its readers were imprisoned. From 1913 onwards, a similar journal for the youth named *Union* was launched as far away as in Geneva.

When Baron Ivan Skrelec replaced Cuvaj as a commissar for Croatia on 23 July 1913, the youth decided to receive him as an enemy for agreeing to accept that duty. Stjepan Dojčić arrived all the way from America and made an attempt on his life on 18 August – he shot Skerlec in the arm. The members of Serbo-Croat coalition condemned this attentat and expressed their regret to Skerlec, because they were informed that he had come for the purpose of putting an end to the commissariat. Contrary to older generations, the youth glorified the struggle of an individual. They mocked the previously praised "small work", as they found that it brought small results. The youth strove for great deeds and accomplishments. The successes of Serbia in the last two wars served to prove, in their view, that the greatness could be accomplished only then when great things were aimed at. Young people had enough of the sufferance under Austria and believed that the time had come for radical changes. If Austria would not make them herself, the youth, whose faith in their own mission became something of a national mythical fanaticism, would. Miloš Pjanić, a pupil, wrote to his friend Borivoje Jevtić these typical words: "I believe just like you in the liberation of [our] nation even without our cooperation, but that would not happen today, and we want either to die living or to live in death." A young Herzegovinian, Milorad Lečić, who was imprisoned as a member of the organized youth in 1914, at the age of fifteen, wrote in his notes just before his death: "My half-dead lips chuckle happily over the accomplished Yugoslavia, the birth of which I have paid honourably with my head."¹⁷⁹

The agitation of young spirits was extraordinary. For a while, almost any opportunity was sought to show a rebellious mood. Protests were often and embittered be it against the commissariat in Croatia, Italian attacks on the Slav institutions in Trieste, or against a German traveling theatre. Attacks by pupils on their teachers in the grammar schools in Sarajevo, Tuzla and Mostar were ripe. The warnings and condemnations of the elderly to the effect that such actions compromised the great ideals that should guide everyone fell on deaf ears. There was an uproar among the youth that needed to be indulged in. Along with true ideologues, there was a mass of people, as usual, who reduced

¹⁷⁸ Bartulović, *Od Revolucionarne Omladine do Orjune*, p. 29.

¹⁷⁹ *Nova književna revija Mlada Bosna*, IV, 1931, p. 208.

the rebellious ideology to petty personal showdowns and disorder for the sake of disorder.

From the autumn of 1912 onwards, the systematic organization of the youth became more intense. Its members joined the clubs of *Narodno ujedinjenje* (National Unification), "the fundamental and central task [of which was] the propaganda of the philosophy of national union in general and especially the propaganda of radical-democratic doctrines". The *Narodno ujedinjenje* considered, in accordance with its statutes, "that the unification of the Serbo-Croat people, together with the Slovene people, apart from all international and historical dispositions, was especially determined by the disposition of a national soul, the faith of the people in their strength and, above all, their consciousness of their national task. Therefore, the club will form an indestructible cult of the Serbo-Croat national energy, national religion and national optimism." "The ranks of national youth", Tartaglia wrote, "become bigger and thicker daily. Besides academic people, high school kids, workers and peasants join in masses, especially in Dalmatia. Split is the first one among the first ones, it carries a banner."¹⁸⁰ Their parole is: "To Liberation through Unification". The organization in Bosnia and Herzegovina was equally vibrant. All the more important places with high schools, Sarajevo, Mostar, Tuzla, Banja Luka, Trebinje had their own pupil organizations based on the programme of *Narodno ujedinjenje* and they were active. Their headquarter was in Sarajevo, but there was no proper youth organ, since the *Srpska omladina* was extinguished in 1913 due to the lack of financial means. Young people wrote their pieces in daily newspapers and in the *Bosanska vila*, and they sent their writings to other centers.

Prague was, apart from Split and Sarajevo, a very important center as well. In early 1914, all the youth associations of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes united in the national society *Yugoslavia*, which started publishing its organ under the same name. In its first issue of 1 May 1914, in an editorial article, Ljubo Leontić, a Dalmatian, pointed out: "Surrounded by a ring of great nations, culturally stronger and politically organized, we would have to, even if all the conditions to create a homogenous, strong Yugoslav whole did not exist, unite as heterogeneous elements to maintain our endangered existence." In Zagreb, from March 1914 onwards, the vigorous *Vihor*, a literary journal for the youth, and the political *Narodno jedinstvo*, edited by Milan Marjanović, were published, and a little later the more moderate *Nova revija*, the editors of which disagreed with the too impetuous Czernin. At the same time, the monthly journal *Glas*

¹⁸⁰ Tartaglia, *Veleizdajnik*, p. 66.

juga from Ljubljana requested “the creation of a free and entirely independent and united Yugoslav nation”.

The youth was preparing to be ready at a “certain moment”. In 1917, the Austro-Hungarian compromise would be revised and the youth did not want to be disorganized on that day. In this connection, it wanted the people to be prepared for separation from the Dual Monarchy and freed from the dual terror that constrained them so much. A congress that was supposed to elect a leadership for that purpose met in Vienna on 28 June 1914. It already started its deliberations and reached some conclusions when the news of the Sarajevo assassination came. P. Slijepčević, himself an active young man, described the state of spirits as follows: “The older generation of the youth, which had attended higher education institutions between 1903 and 1908 was entirely under the influence of Czech paroles, ‘a realistic small work’, among the people, systematic and wise preparation for that decisive struggle for which we have still not been up to the task (the opinion was bad about our national preparedness). The youngest generation which had attended high schools at the time of the Balkan Wars was, on the contrary, impatient, inclined to ‘direct action’, starting a conflict with Austria-Hungary. The middle generation which was caught up in higher education between 1908 and 1914 hesitated and drifted between these two tactics, discussed them lively on the eve of the St. Vitus Day in 1914. Some – and those were a large majority – stressed the need for cultural education of the masses and the education of individual characters, whereas the others, a relatively few, insisted on the conspiratorial action with attentats and rebellions.” A few days earlier, on 20 May 1914, Jakov Šefer had made an attempt on the life of *Ban* Skerlec and he was stopped at the last moment. The older generation did not approve of such an undertaking; the younger generation defended and greeted it. A compromise solution between these two views was formulated as follows: “Attentats are not approved, and the organization is important; but the organization should have a completely rebellious, anti-Austrian, integrally Yugoslav, and partially even clandestine, conspiratorial spirit.”

The indictment against the young men from Sarajevo, members of the “Serbo-Croat National Youth” stated that the purpose of their activities was “to agitate with a view to inducing contempt and hatred for the state-legal statutes and the belonging of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy with the particular emphasis on the need to create an independent Yugoslav state ... The programme is concerned with the goal of unifying the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes from Skoplje to Ljubljana and from Cetinje to Novi Sad in cultural and political terms on the basis of Serbo-Croat national union and radical democratism, pointing out the principles that national culture is

impossible without national society and national society is impossible without national state. The thrust of such national struggle lies in the strengthening of national consciousness, national stamina and the will to carry out national self-defense through work, sufferance and sacrifice ... The entire agitation among the high school youth in Sarajevo was, in fact, concerned with revolutionizing the spirits in order to prepare them for political revolution." The indictment against a Dalmatian Niko Bartulović, the editor of the *Sloboda*, and his young friends alleged that they were influenced by the propaganda from *Narodna odbrana*, i.e. the *Narodno ujedinjenje* club. "The main task of that propaganda was to influence the feelings and the mind through systematic attacks on the Austrian circumstances and institutions and praising the institutions and relations abroad, instigating hatred against the Austro-Hungarian state and its authorities and denouncing that state as the greatest enemy of the Croat people and as a state in which the Croat and Serb people is enslaved so it is necessary to liberate them. That poisonous seed ripened so much that several attentats took place and, finally, the atrocious Sarajevo assassination." A pupil, and Muslim one at that, even wrote how it was necessary "to deliberate what would be the easiest way to shake off the chains of slavery and drive out the German, the Turk and other oppressors of our people. What our earlier intelligentsia and our two free states [Serbia and Montenegro] were not able to do, we the Serb radical high school youth will do."¹⁸¹ "A group of the national youth in Zagreb was the strongest one in the university", Dr. A. Šumanović wrote.¹⁸² "Whoever knew, even most superficially, the situation in the South", Seton-Watson wrote, "knew that the atmosphere there was electrifying and that it could explode any moment. As far as I was concerned, I vividly remember how I vented my fear in such an overt manner, after I had spent four months in south-east Europe (between March and July 1913), speaking with my friends in Vienna, that one of them took me to Biliński himself and requested me to repeat my warnings in front of him to the effect that policy must be changed if revolutionary outbursts were to be avoided."¹⁸³

Dissatisfaction in Bosnia and Herzegovina was growing even outside the youth circles. "From 1906 to 1914, the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina were constantly nervous", one of the main opposition leaders, Dr. Nikola Stojanović,

181 B. Čerović, *Bosanski omladinci i sarajevski atentat*, Sarajevo, no year, pp. 19-20.

182 *Književni sever*, V, p. 359.

183 R. W. Seton-Watson, *Sarajevo: studija o uzrocima svetskoga rata*, Zagreb, 1926, p. 97.

noted accurately.¹⁸⁴ The refusal of the government to introduce the Serbo-Croat language instead of German in internal railway traffic embittered many people in *Sabor*, whereas the entire railway question led the Serb opposition to obstruction. Their exasperation was amplified by extraordinary measures carried out only against the Serbs and Serb societies during the Scutari crisis. Such measures libeled the entire Serb element in Bosnia and Herzegovina as being suspicious and it was perfectly natural that its attitude towards the government became irreconcilable and combative to the point of bitterness. Prior to Žerajić's assassination in 1910, not a single attentat or an act of terrorism had been committed in these lands. Why did the government then cease without any scruples the work of all Serbian institutions, even the most innocent ones such as charitable women associations, in the areas 200-300 kilometres far from the Montenegrin and Serbian borders? Bitterness was growing stronger in the autumn of 1913 when twelve Serbs were elected as members of the Bosnian *Sabor* (parliament) instead of the members of a previous Serb group which had attempted to cooperate with the government, but it had to resign demonstratively due to the disappointment caused by the government's disloyalty. In order to paralyze Serb votes in the first and separate house of parliament consisting of intelligentsia and landowners, according to the Bosnian election law, the government brought heavy pressure to bear on the Serb clerks to vote for governmental candidates and even instructed non-Orthodox Serbs to prevail with their votes over those of Orthodox Serbs. The government remained equally disloyal towards that new majority. To strengthen their influence among the ranks of the peasantry, Minister Biliński promised, and even pledged to the leader of that pro-government Serb group, lawyer Danilo Dimović, that the serf question in Bosnia and Herzegovina would finally be solved through the mandatory purchase of serfs from their *agas*. But Governor Potiorek opposed this out of fear that he might lose the support of Muslim landowners, who formed part of the government's majority, and Biliński's promise came to nothing. The promises given to Serbs were either insincere from the start or empty assurances without the real conviction that they should be carried out. It was then hardly surprising that dissatisfaction became widespread and pervaded all circles. A high official of the Bosnian government realized this and reported to Vienna that Bosnia and Herzegovina were a volcano that would soon erupt.¹⁸⁵

The responsible circles in the Danubian Monarchy were not fully aware of either the gravity of the Yugoslav question or true disposition among the

184 N. Stojanović, "Pogled na Bosansku Politiku od 1903. do 1914." in: Slijepčević, ed., *Napor Bosne i Hercegovine za oslobodjenje i ujedinjenje*, p. 180.

185 *Die Kriegsschuldfrage*, V, 1927, p. 21.

people until 1914. And a point was reached where the Yugoslav clerks had no qualms about presenting their uniforms in front of an foreigners as a "uniform of slavery", whereas reputed old people and scholars such as the well-known archeologist Frane Bulić spoke of intolerable situation of the Yugoslavs.¹⁸⁶ The responsible persons in Vienna and Pest acted as if they knew nothing. At a conference with Baernreither held on 3 July 1913, Dr. A. Wekerle, formerly Hungarian Prime Minister, said that the Yugoslav question was exaggerated and that the "Illyrian" idea was successful only when it was assisted from above; the Hungarians took exclusively historic, and not ethnographic, viewpoint and in no circumstances would agree to a trialist arrangement. He proposed that, in the spirit of dualism, Bosnia and Herzegovina be divided between Austria and Hungary; he declined the suggestion that these two provinces be represented in the Delegations with the offensive explanation that local people were not enough mature for such a thing.¹⁸⁷ Baron Collas, head of the presidial of the Bosnian government until 1914 and a Hungarian, wrote even after the war about the "fantastical idea of Yugoslavism", unable to ever come to terms with it.¹⁸⁸

5

All the Serbs and most of other Yugoslavs wanted their liberation from Austria-Hungary. They are today proud of their efforts to accomplish that goal. Since there has been history, such examples of the struggle for freedom have always been the most endearing. The struggles of nations and states against the pressure of the Habsburg dynasty have filled the most important pages of history from the Middle Ages to our time. The liberation of Switzerland, Holland, Belgium in more distant times and the unification of Germany and Italy have been carried out only at the expense of the Habsburgs and presented the most beautiful pages in the histories of these countries. The Serbs accepted their example and had no little enthusiasm for it. The Habsburg dynasty that taught nothing from history ruled in the twentieth century like it had ruled in earlier centuries. However, its state that comprised the nations of different races, feelings and aspirations did not correspond any more with that standard that it was used to shape and the conflict was therefore inevitable, as Vienna had no will, capabilities, or strength for a timely reorganization. The demise of

186 Poincaré, *L'Europe sous les armes*, p. 363.

187 Baernreither, *Fragmente eines politischen Tagebuches*, pp. 245-7.

188 Collas, "Auf den bosnischen Wegspuren der Kriegsschuldigen", *Die Kriegsschuldfrage, Berliner Monatshefte* V – Nr. 1, 1927, p. 16.

Austria-Hungary brought about a difficult crisis for Europe, but that only happened because those who wanted to maintain it did not appreciate how dangerous it was for themselves to waste their strength for the sake of such the sick organism. Germany needed a free road to the east and it wanted to secure it via Austria, not realizing that a road from Europe to Asia led over a large bridge the pillars of which had long decayed.

Certain German historians find themselves in a great difficulty when writing about the Serb question. The Serb aspirations and struggle for national unification had much in common, in many respects, with their own struggle which had been conducted with “blood and iron” and which they praise, for understandable reasons, as their greatest national accomplishment. Moltke and Bismarck are considered the two greatest personalities of the German history in the nineteenth century. One would expect that Serb aspirations would also have been received with the necessary understanding. But on the other hand, the Germans were the allies of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy against which, to some extent, the Serb aspirations were directed and which Germany fully backed in certain phases of diplomatic struggle and even contributed to Austria-Hungary’s decision for war in the latest stage. Hence certain German partiality and tendency to condemn Serbian actions and exonerate those of Austria. Most importantly, the Germans rarely want to present things in their full causal connection.

One of the most prominent German historians, Herman Oncken, professor at the Berlin University, essentially provided in his latest grand work *The German State and Prehistory of the World War*¹⁸⁹ the basic elements of the German view of the Serbo-Austrian problem. According to him, the root of the conflict was in the Serbian aspiration to form a single national state the basis of which had been provided by Austrians through their struggle against the Turks. From 1903 onwards, Serbia realized that constellation in the world was forming in such a way as to allow her to achieve her goals. Conflict between the Great Powers and their division in two camps created conditions for the Serbs to act, just like for the Italians in the 1850s. Relying on a group of Powers, to which Russia and Pan-Slavs belonged, Serbia set her programme and embarked on a policy that was “unheard of” for a small country in relation to a Great Power. The fateful importance of the Serbian problem was that it was linked organically with the Slav question in the Danubian Monarchy and its entire internal policy. For the most part, internal difficulties concerning the Yugoslav question stemmed from the chauvinist Hungarian policy towards the

189 H. Oncken, *Das Deutsche Reich und die Vorgeschichte des Weltkrieges*, II, Leipzig 1933, pp. 736 ff.

nationalities, especially the Croats, among whom it managed to "destroy the loyalty towards the House of Habsburg". In Oncken's view, Austria was a passive part of the Empire that was endangered by others and she did not know how to secure her survival. However, such a view is one-sided, inaccurate and entirely biased. Oncken fails to consider Austrian active policy in Old Serbia and Macedonia in 1902-8, the consequences that flowed from it, or appreciate the attitude of her diplomacy towards the Balkan nations – leaving aside the fact that he does not see the fatal policy of the Congress of Berlin and the cession of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy as a fundamental sin. With her policy, Austria gave rise to the combative national movement of the whole Serb tribe and made the Serbs gather against her rather than gravitate towards her.

Many German writers often generalize but there is little meaning behind their big words. Count E. Reventlow, for example, has claimed that "the Bosnian question was a vital question for Austria-Hungary".¹⁹⁰ How come? How could Austria have existed without that vital question prior to 1878 and have been a Great Power for centuries? We have seen that Sanjak, Scutari and an autonomous Albania, or whatever else was needed to justify certain aspirations that went beyond her present borders, were announced as Austria's "vital questions". Even moderate and otherwise sensible Josef Redlich, the best biographer of Franz Joseph, could write, along these lines, that the outcome of the Balkan Wars was but "the unconcealed humiliation and considerable weakening of Austria-Hungary".¹⁹¹ For an imperialist policy, any question can be easily construed as vital when there is a firm decision to attain some new object. We understand that Austria's life and death matter was to sustain herself, but clearly it could have not be vital for her survival to conquer other people's ethnic areas and endanger the existence of others. Austria was by no means a passive sufferer to whom others set the house to fire. Was it not Count Berchtold who, raising the question of Albanian privileges, said and wrote on 13 August 1912 that Austria wanted "to take the leading part in the Eastern Question"? Whoever wants to embark on an activist, "leading" policy provokes resistance against themselves and must come into conflict in different directions. Conservative in her whole nature, Austria wanted to be radical in certain moves of her foreign policy. And that backfired. The Serb race, resilient, persistent and nationally conscious, sensing that Austria was a full-scale enemy, developed its whole energy to organize resistance against her and to enter the fray as much prepared and with as many friends as possible. There was

190 *Deutschlands auswärtige Politik 1898-1914*, Berlin 1918, p. 365.

191 Redlich, *Kaiser Franz Joseph von Österreich*, p. 435.

not a single politician or statesman in Serbia who believed that their national struggle would lead so quickly to such full and definite results; it was not just Serbia's activity, which was unusual, that brought them about but rather the impatience and evil intentions of her powerful opponent.

Professor Werner Näf argues – correctly in theory but dubiously in reality – that states do not get old. Austria was indeed outdated, but she believed in herself. She wanted to prove her vitality with her foreign policy. “Foreign policy is a vital element of that state. In terms of means, her policy vacillated between defense and defense through offensive. Basically, when all is considered, the entire century and the entire situation of Austria-Hungary were defensive.”¹⁹² However, such a view is only partially correct. Austrian policy became defensive only at the northern and western borders, whereas it was entirely aggressive in the southeast. That aggressiveness had been fully exposed not just in 1875-8 when it had been poised, at the cost of a conflict with Russia if necessary, to get Bosnia and Herzegovina, and indeed had acquired these lands, and when it had then brought to the Bulgarian throne her own candidate, but also in many actions Austrian policy had taken in Turkey between 1902 and 1914. Erroneously considering that its vitality lay not in a good internal but in an active foreign policy, Austria-Hungary got to the point where two Great Powers, Russia and Italy, were engaged in a lively diplomatic struggle against it, as well as almost all the Balkan states, at intervals, and where stabilization in Europe was not expected before it had been suppressed.

German historians, together with Oncken, say nothing of the intransigent attitude of the Germans in the Austrian part of the country, although they condemn the intransigence of the Hungarians. However, it is well-known that the Germans in the Austrian part wanted to maintain their power at any cost and that they viewed the Slavs as an inferior race, having no qualms about putting that in writing. The struggles of the Czechs and Yugoslavs for equality and their national rights filled the entire parliamentary history of the Viennese *Reichstag* in the latter half of the nineteenth and in early twentieth century, and did not end until the breakdown of Austria. In particular, the Slavs, with the exception of the Poles, had no influence on foreign policy. Their matters were decided on without their participation and even against them. From 1912 onwards, German circles had no qualms about saying that a great conflict in the world to come was turning into conflict between the Slavdom and Germandom. The Slavs of Austria-Hungary were counted upon with some cynicism to serve in that decisive struggle as a tool against their own brethren. One of the Austrian commissars for delimitation in northern Albania enlarged on his view to his

192 V. Näf, *Kriegsursachen und Kriegsschuldfrage*, Bern und Leipzig 1932, p. 84.

German colleague as follows: Austria would disintegrate after some, not very long, period of time. It was the army alone that kept her together for the time being. "Therefore, this time must be used to throw all Austria's Slavs into the fire for [the sake of] the Germans once again, perhaps for the last time."¹⁹³ The parole that a conflict between Austria, on the one side, and Russia and Serbia, on the other, would be a fight between the German and Slav races had long been aired in Germany. German General, Count Waldersee, used that catchword as early as 24 January 1913 in a conversation with Baron Hötendorf¹⁹⁴ and the Chief of the General Staff Moltke repeated it himself on 12 February in a letter to Baron Hötendorf.¹⁹⁵

General belief among friends and enemies alike was that Austria-Hungary was facing a breakdown. Several nationalities, the main ones, were struggling against each other: the Czechs and Slovenes with the Germans; the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes with the Hungarians; the Poles with the Ruthenes; the Italians with the Germans, Croats and Slovenes. It was boiling within the country. Several provincial parliaments had to cease their work and the central parliament was often adjourned because of the Czech obstruction. There was a bitter struggle among the Hungarians themselves between the Tisza government and their opposition and the newly formed parliamentary guard expelled the MPs from the parliament, including the party chiefs. On 22 June 1914, Count Czernin wrote accurately that the conviction was growing in Romania and the rest of Europe that Austria was a decaying body and that, on the occasion of Turkey's division, she had only inherited its fate.¹⁹⁶ A Romanian politician told the German Minister in Bucharest that Austria-Hungary would fall apart in five or ten years and that the Germans would take the German provinces, Serbia would get Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Romania would receive Transylvania.¹⁹⁷ King Carol himself believed this.¹⁹⁸ A month earlier, on 22 May, the German Ambassador in Vienna Tschirschky had written to Berlin under the impression of his observations in Austria-Hungary: "I often ask myself if it is really worthwhile for us to be so firmly attached to this state formation, which tears apart on all sides, and further to continue hard work to tag it along." He even thought of a division of Austria and Germany's absorbing the German regions. "Time will be the best judge if someone will

193 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXVI, 187; Bornhak, *Die Kriegsschuld Deutschlands*, p. 550 is inaccurate.

194 Hötendorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, III, p. 87.

195 *Ibid.*, pp. 146-7.

196 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 174.

197 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIX, p. 514.

198 Marghiloman, *Note Politice*, I, p. 227.

succeed to strengthen and link the disparate forces of the Monarchy's lands. If that attempt also fails, then dissolution will take place very quickly and we will then have to set our policy accordingly."¹⁹⁹ The wise Prince Lichnowsky wrote about Austria-Hungary on 16 July 1914: "The aspiration to maintain at any cost the sacred *status quo* for the sake of convenience has often brought about, and recently in the last Balkan crisis, the complete breakdown of a political house of cards built on these foundations."²⁰⁰ The German Ambassador in Rome Flotow wrote to his government on 3 August 1914 that San Giuliano himself had told him without any hesitation that Austria was "a corpse that was no longer capable of life".²⁰¹

The hostile feelings among the officer circles and the youth, and the people as a whole, against the Danubian Monarchy, in which their compatriots were oppressed, did not just exist in Serbia, but also in Austria's allied countries, Italy and Romania. San Giuliano overtly professed to the German Ambassador in April 1914 as follows: "Austria, i.e. the Austrian government is a creation from the earlier times which cannot understand that in the countries such as Romania and Italy no government could permanently orientate their policy against popular sentiments."²⁰² And those were becoming increasingly hostile. On 1 November 1913, a counselor of the Bucharest Legation, Baron F. Haymerle, wrote of Romania, whose attitude had increasingly worried Vienna since 1913 and considerably, perhaps mostly, contributed to Austria's decision to go to war in 1914, that her officers were ever more anti-Austrian and talked of a future liberation war against her. "Military circles here openly speak about that future war and it is even approved of ... Great animosity against us, and particularly against the Hungarians, which lay dormant in every Romanian ... broke out now in its most boisterous form."²⁰³ If the Romanians in Hungary were not given concessions, he predicted, a "vehement irredentist agitation" would soon take place. King Carol himself said to the Austrian Minister on 30 November that Hungarian treatment of the Romanians stirred "in the wide masses of Romania a strong feeling of solidarity" with their compatriots, which was turning against Austria-Hungary.²⁰⁴ He told the German Minister with even more sincerity that anti-Austrian feeling gripped the entire country, that

199 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIX, p. 364.

200 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1., Vom Attentat in Sarajevo bis zum Eintreffen der Serbischen Antwortnote in Berlin nebst einigen Dokumenten aus den vorhergehenden Wochen, Berlin 1927, pp. 82-3.

201 *Ibid.*, IV, p. 6.

202 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIX, p. 356.

203 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VII, pp. 523-4.

204 *Ibid.*, p. 598.

it penetrated even the army and that junior officers started to talk that it was now Transylvania's turn.²⁰⁵ In an extraordinary wise and statesmanlike memoir, Count Czernin wrote himself to Vienna on 5 December 1913 that he considered such a sentiment entirely "natural and humane": "after all, we live at the time of national brotherhood and national spirit pervades our whole political life ... That what is being done on the Romanian border today is the same sight which has been created on the Serbian border ..." Every nation has its natural right to seek for as good conditions as possible for itself and to rise against the oppression. External relations and internal affairs of a state, he said, should not be confused. But can this theory of the haves survive? Do nations themselves think so? "Are there still people who believe the Romanians of Hungary can be ruled over with Apponyi's school laws and with gendarmerie?" Austria did not live on an island, separated from the world, but in the middle of Europe.²⁰⁶

Relations were later further aggravated. An attempt of the Romanians to come to an agreement with Count Tisza fell through because of Hungarian intransigence. On 18 February 1914, the negotiations were ended. Six days later, on 24 February, an attempt was made on the life of the loyal-to-the Hungarians Bishop Istvan Miklosy in Debrecen. Six people were wounded from a hand grenade. The spilled blood made furious people on both sides. The attentat was executed by a Romanian from Bessarabia Ilie Catarau. In Romania, there was then public outburst against Austria-Hungary and the latter country's near demise was counted upon with certainty. In the winter 1913/14, some garrisons were given war tasks in the form of plans for offensive in the direction of Transylvania and the Banat.²⁰⁷ On 9 March, bitter public demonstrations took place in the Romanian national theatre in connection with a patriotic play. The mood was, the Austrian Military Attaché wrote, "close to that point from which there is only a small step to open hostility".²⁰⁸

When Count Czernin was about to depart for Bucharest as a minister, Berchtold sent him on 26 November 1913 lengthy instructions concerning the policy of the Danubian Monarchy towards Romania. Austria was deeply dissatisfied with Romania's attitude and, with a view to future, intended to explain to King Carol's government why she demanded a change in their attitude. The cornerstone was, of course, the Serbian question. Berchtold found that Bucharest did not appreciate the importance and the extent of Austro-Serbian differences. "Between us and the current Serbian state stands the great

205 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIX, pp. 464-5.

206 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VII, pp. 609-14.

207 Hötzenndorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, III, p. 558.

208 *Ibid.*, p. 559.

Yugoslav problem, which requires a final solution and which will require it with greater urgency. Its solution – it could be only forcible given the persistence, consistency and self-assuredness with which Serbia acts to realize the Greater Serbian idea – will either preserve small traces of Serbia's current state form or shake Austria-Hungary in its foundations." Romania was in obligation to the Triple Alliance in case of a war with Russia. Serbia was certain to side with Russia in a first favourable European situation. Romania would thus get herself in a position to come into conflict with her new friend or to break with the old one. But it would be even more difficult case if Bulgaria decided to exploit Serbia's military engagement against Austria and attack Serbia. Would Romania then attack Bulgaria, an ally of her ally, in order to honour the Treaty of Bucharest and support an enemy of her ally? If Romania continued her policy of close friendship with Serbia, she would lose her value for Austria. The latter would have to "make sacrifices for a long time" for the sake of Romania, to decline other friends, to allow the strengthening of her opponent and to receive no benefits in return in the end. Neither the people nor the army in Romania cared much for Austria and the King himself was not sufficient to side Romania with Austria at a decisive moment. Berchtold therefore demanded, in order to force Romania publically to follow his lead, to have the secret agreement on Romania's adherence to the Triple Alliance published.²⁰⁹

Such messages were not received favourably in Bucharest. King Carol replied, in essence, that Romania pursued a policy that corresponded with her interests. He found Austria's fears in respect to Serbia unjustified. Preoccupied with her internal matters, Serbia would be concerned with consolidating her situation for years to come and that was a sufficient guarantee for peace.²¹⁰ Therefore, he did not accept other Austrian suggestions, which were a natural corollary of their differing understanding of the entire political situation. A rift between them was increasingly deep. The King did not conceal from the Austrian representatives that popular feeling, among the vast majority of the population, was completely hostile and he admitted that, because of that feeling, he could not even think of announcing Romania's siding with the Danubian Monarchy in case of any conflict. The Romanian Minister in Sofia told his French colleague that Romania's friendship with Austria had become but a "shadow" and that the fate of the Romanians in Transylvania constituted main concern for Romanian public opinion.²¹¹ "Every Romanian, even the King included, yearns to have Transylvania and Bukovina", the old and

209 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VII, pp. 592-4.

210 *Ibid.*, p. 600.

211 *Documents diplomatiques*, III, p. 74.

experienced Markgraf Pallavicini, Austrian Ambassador in Constantinople, wrote on 2 March 1914.²¹² The Austrian Vice Consul wrote on 16 February from Craiova that he found out from reliable source that "the General Staff map of Transylvania and the Banat was a subject of serious study on the part of officers of all ranks".²¹³ When Sazonov arrived in Bucharest, the Romanian Prime Minister Brătianu took him to Transylvania himself on 16 June 1914, at Vienna's and Pest's great surprise, making the most unusual demonstration in diplomatic world, regardless of the fact that he had the consent of the Austrian Minister.

In late January 1914, Pašić and Venizelos left for St. Petersburg, then went to Bucharest and, finally, arrived in Belgrade together, which made a particularly strong impression on Vienna. It was clear to the whole world that Serbia, Romania and Greece were forging increasingly close ties on the basis of maintaining the status created by the Treaty of Bucharest. The above mentioned visit indicated that St. Petersburg was a patron of such policy. On the other side, Vienna appeared to have been defeated and made no effort to assuage that impression in any way.

A report of the German Major Laffert on his colleagues from the commission for delimitation of Albania's borders was very outspoken about the feelings of Austro-Hungarian officers of German nationality: "It is just touching and uplifting for the spirit of a German from the Reich when he sees and feels how these Austrians, whose Germandom is neglected everywhere, see our Emperor as a hope and pride of Germandom, who will fulfil their most tender dream of a greater and almighty Germany."²¹⁴ Is it strange then that much more depressed Serbs had the same feelings for Serbia and her king? Or the Romanians for Romania?

At that time, there was national activism among other nationalities in Austria-Hungary. In the winter and spring of 1914, important high treason trials were underway against the Russians in Marmaros Sziget and Lviv. These trials were much publicized because Count V. Bobrinsky turned up courageously at the former trial as a witness, although the Hungarian authorities accused him of being a spiritual instigator of anti-Hungarian, Russophile propaganda; five members of the Russian *Duma* also appeared at the latter trial as witnesses. They kissed the hands of the indicted priests in the court, expressing in this way their respect and recognition. After the trial, Emperor Nicholas II made

²¹² *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VII, p. 934.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 958.

²¹⁴ *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXVI, p. 187.

the point of decorating Count Bobrinsky, and the latter was greeted in Romania by the most important figures, together with the King.²¹⁵

Besides, Austria had little right to complain about the agitation from across the border, because she extensively used this means in the Balkans, especially in Albania, and in Russia. Is it not true that Austria exclusively based all her efforts to win over Romania for the cause of the Triple Alliance on assisting Romanian aspirations to get Bessarabia from Russia? The movement of the Ukrainians against Russia had its headquarters in Vienna and fostered activities that were revolutionary in nature in respect to Russia. The same thing was taking place in Poland. The ground was prepared to win over the Poles to liberate themselves from Russia by unification with the Poles under Austria; agitation was fostered in the Russian part of Poland and people were sought for to start rebellions and assist the Austrian army in case of war. In his diary, the former Austrian minister Baernreither himself mentioned that agitation and referred to the intended movement in Russia as an "I. and R. uprising". Baron Hötendorf also mentioned propaganda to "annex the entire Poland to the Habsburg Monarchy".²¹⁶ The Austrian Ambassador in St. Petersburg, Count Szapáry, admitted the existence of such propaganda in his report on 23 February 1914, which was, he claimed, designed to be "a means to bring pressure to bear and counterstrike against Russia".²¹⁷

In respect to Serbia, the Austrian authorities did not take the position of a peaceful observer. Recently published British collection of documents reveals that an Austrian agent went to Sofia in the summer of 1911, at the time when relations with Serbia were correct, with the offers clearly directed against Serbia. He offered the Bulgarians not just a lion share of Macedonia in return for an eventual cooperation in the creation of as large Albania as possible, but also part of Serbia's territory stretching from the town of Piro to the Morava river.²¹⁸ Certain conspiracies against Serbia and the Serb lands prepared by some Albanian and Bulgarian revolutionaries were conjured practically before the eyes of Austrian diplomats, especially in the course of 1913. In early March 1914, an Austrian battalion raided the Montenegrin territory in the Sanjak area, occupied the Sjenokos high ground, killing and scattering a small Montenegrin garrison. Although carried out by a regular army unit, this was a classic *chetnik* action on account of its method and, given the time of the year, almost presented a signal for action to revolutionary elements.

215 Cf. M. Grabec, *K istorii marmaroshskogo processa*, Užgorod 1934.

216 Hötendorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, III, p. 79.

217 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VII, p. 914.

218 *British Documents*, IX. The Balkan Wars, London 1933, pp. 492-3.

From 1903 onwards, the connections between the Austrian diplomatic and military representatives, on the one hand, and Bulgarian *chetniks*, on the other, were well-known in Serbia – these have been pointed out in this book. The prodding of the Albanian insurgency and dispatching ammunition to Albania in 1913, of which Baron Hötzenndorf, the Chief of the Austrian General Staff, spoke himself, were solely directed against Serbia. The intention was to set the Serbian house on fire. The Austrian official collection of documents contain a few which clearly show how official Austrian representatives entered into negotiations with Albanian and Bulgarian revolutionaries against the Serbs, how they recommended them to each other and accepted their suggestions. Besides, there is other information, especially from confidential French reports. The Serbian intelligence service functioned well and was aware of many of these developments. Unfortunately, some Great Powers had long not been above using suspicious methods of working with revolutionary and problematic elements in the Balkans, and Austria was in the forefront in this respect. She had made revolutionary work against the existing situation a common feature in Serbia and the Balkans and perfected it in the period from 1872, prior to the war against Turkey, to the Albanian raid into Serbia in 1913. There are lots of the most authentic reports on this score, many of which have already become the subject of scholarly studies. The whole groups of Austrian officers secretly crossed over the Serbian border to reconnaissance and organize rebellions. A large number of Serbs came into contact with them, got in touch with more important individuals through them and became familiar with all their methods. Austria maintained such activities until the Great War; her meddling in Albania, Bulgaria and the newly acquired Serbian provinces was hardly motivated by her own defense, but rather aimed at poisoning the Balkan atmosphere. On 28 July, the day the war was declared, Austria sent to Albania, in accordance with previous agreements and preparations, 2,000 rifles, 100,000 rounds of ammunition and 50,000 crowns for the purpose of instigating a rebellion of the population in southern Serbia.²¹⁹ Austrian accusations against the activities of Serb revolutionaries could have been justified if she had remained an absolutely loyal neighbour; this way, Austria complained against subversive methods she had used herself frequently.

219 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 837.

The Sarajevo Attentat

1

In their struggle, our young people followed the examples of the Italian people in their struggle for national liberation and unification, of which they read and listened to. Mazzini and his *Young Italia* became the ideal of our youth. Their writings were translated, read and explained both publically and in private gatherings. “Our most favourite literature was Russian revolutionary writers and the apostles of the Italian Risorgimento”, a young man wrote then.²²⁰ In Italy, various attentats had been prepared, secret societies had been formed, and conspirators had been organized. On 9 January 1912, a monument was erected in Venetia in honour of Oberdan, the man who had attempted to assassinate Franz Joseph and had been punished by death in 1882; he became the subject of a cult of personality. Streets were named after him and even a hymn was sung in his honour. When Mario Sterle published a piece in which he extolled Oberdan and was sentenced to five years in prison in Vienna in April 1913, large demonstrations against Austria took place across Italy. The University of Rome had to be closed down on that account and a member of parliament offended the Austrian Emperor himself. Felice Orsini had thrown a bomb on Napoleon III just because he had come to believe that he had abandoned Italian ideals. The activities of Italian national, anti-Austrian societies did not cease even after the conclusion of an agreement with Austria-Hungary. The *Dante Alighieri* and *Trento e Trieste* particularly developed their activities after 1866 and 1882 respectively. From the beginning of the twentieth century onwards, activist national propaganda grew stronger. The journals *Idea nazionale*, *Mare nostrum*, *Tricolore*, *Preparazione* and others publically clamoured for more efforts to effect national unification. It was then that D’Annunzio wrote his drama *La nave* and stirred agitation against Austria.²²¹ In 1914, Italian representatives in Trento embarked on obstruction to show publically their utter dissatisfaction with Austrian policy.

220 D. Jevdjević, *Sarajevski atentatori*, Zagreb 1934, p. 18.

221 Some Italian authors who write about the Sarajevo assassination influenced by certain present-day political views among certain circles in Italy had no necessary objectivity in assessing events. Cf. G. Stefani, *Il drama di Sarajevo e la responsabilità serbe*, Roma 1930; M. Claar, *Tomaso Tittoni und die Dreibundpolitik Italiens. Berliner Monatshefte*, IX, 5, 1931; G. Gallavresi, *Italia e Austria*, Milano 1922.

These Italian examples were complemented by Russian ones. All young pupils in Bosnia read Russian revolutionary writers and were thrilled with their self-sacrifice. One of them wrote that Rakhmetov from Nikolay Chernyshevsky's novel *What is to be done?* "became a role model". Jovan Živanović invited in 1914 his friend Vladimir Gaćinović by telling him: "If you think to travel with me to Serbia, come here at once. Or, if that is impossible, we will join the French army as volunteers to fight against those whom our teacher Bakunin hated most."²²² Slijepčević pointed out several examples of direct Russian influence on the Bosnian revolutionary youth. The newspaper *Zvono* published in Sarajevo in 1913 was named after Alexander Herzen's *Kolokol*; Gaćinović's *Krik očajnika* was also influenced. In Sergey Stepnyak-Kravchinsky's book *Underground Russia*, "individualist action, martyrdom, character are glorified and the whole gallery of role models passes by. The same is true for the stories of Gorky and Andreyev ... There can also be found the motives of sowing "red seeds of liberty" and the apostles of humankind liberation. That atheism and republicanism is also Russian." In Lausanne, Gaćinović made contact with the famous Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky and wrote him: "We know the history of your ideas and love it, [and] for the large part we carry it out anew in our midst. We count Chernyshevsky, Herzen, Lavrov and Bakunin among our closest teachers." "Because of Rakhmetov, we have loved dearly Young Russia."²²³ "Directly influenced by Russian social-revolutionary literature", another young man B. Jevtić wrote, "it was natural that Young Bosnia was orientated, in pursuit of the goal of national liberation, along the lines of Russian revolutionary thought rather than along the lines of the examples from Italian and German history of liberation ... Young Bosnia turned up after Marx and Engels, after the 1906 Russian revolution; some of its members were schooled in Masaryk's socialism and many saw the bloody workers riots in Sarajevo in 1906."²²⁴

Finally, the atmosphere in which settling scores through attentats was possible was created elsewhere as well. On 7 June 1912, a member of parliament, Gyula Kovács, made an attempt on the life of Count Tisza in the Hungarian parliament, whereas Romanian nationalists carried out attentat with a hand grenade in Debrecen on 24 February 1913. A few months later, on 18 August 1913, Stevan Dojčić made an attempt on the life of commissar Skerlec in Zagreb, while Jakov Šefer tried to assassinate the same person in the Zagreb theatre on 20 May 1914.

²²² L. T., *Sarajevski atentat. Pod Kotorom*, p. 17.

²²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 4, 12.

²²⁴ Jevtić, *Sarajevski atentat*, p. 11.

The case of Oskar Tartaglia demonstrated the extent of excitement. When the Serbo-Croat coalition sent a deputation to Baron Skerlec to congratulate him on surviving an attentat, Tartaglia wrote an article in the Split-based *Sloboda* in which he condemned the coalition because of its action. The leadership of the Progressive Democratic Party (*Napredna demokratska stranka*) in Dalmatia, which owned that newspaper, denounced that article, and Tartaglia left the editorial board of *Sloboda* and started his own newspaper *Zastava*. The latter was, of course, uncompromising and put forward the motto: "Let us be an enemy of our enemies", writing in the most radical Yugoslav sense, with absolute orientation towards Belgrade and Serbia.

Some high school pupils from Bosnia and Herzegovina, under the influence of all these examples, literature and the cult of Žerajić, thought only of gaining prominence themselves by emulating such examples. Ivo Andrić, a Croat, then a grammar school pupil and a poet, made the following entry in his diary on 8 June 1912: "Let those live who, diffident, taciturn, prepare a rebellion in dark rooms and come up with ever new deceptions." A graduate pupil, Branko Čubrilović from Tuzla approached in 1913 Jovan Zubović, a student in Vienna, asking him for arms to carry out an attentat that his friends from high school decided to undertake. The young Gavrilo Princip wanted to assassinate the Bosnian Governor, General Potiorek, in October or November 1913, just like Žerajić had made an attempt on the life of Varešanin. But on that occasion, Danilo Ilić, the above mentioned revolutionary and later his associate in the preparation of attentat on Franz Ferdinand, dissuaded him from doing so. He found that individual attentats made little sense unless a systematic revolutionary organization had been established beforehand.²²⁵ An accomplice in the assassination of Franz Ferdinand, then high school pupil, Cvetko Popović, described the mood of his friends as follows: "There was a general conviction among us that attentats were the fastest way for us to influence people to revolutionize. At our smaller and larger gatherings, the need for individual terrorist actions was ceaselessly discussed as the best way of struggle in the present circumstances. The thought of assassinating the Governor of the land, General Potiorek, had been fully matured. We imagined that he should pay with his head on that same bridge on which Bogdan Žerajić said dying: "I leave my revenge to the Serbdom." It can be claimed with certainty that an attentat on Potiorek would have been carried out in the course of the year if Crown Prince

225 Slijepčević, "Mlada Bosna", in: Slijepčević, ed., *Napor Bosne i Hercegovine*, p. 195.

had not arrived in Bosnia in 1914. Because it was not just one, but hundreds of young men who thought of that attentat." Jevdjević has mentioned a number of his friends who thought that attentat should be carried out this way or the other. "Dragutin Mras, a poet and an idealist, wanted to throw himself from the gallery of the Bosnian Diet on the Governor and kill him in this way, so that the horror of such an act would present to the world the horror of our suffering."²²⁶ In August 1913, a lengthy investigation was carried out in Zagreb about the wandering pupil Luka Aljinović, a Dalmatian, who had claimed in front of his friends and the police that Franz Ferdinand should be killed. Borivoje Jevtić, a friend of would-be assassins of Franz Ferdinand and an active nationalist himself, said that the mood among the youth was such that they were prepared to carry out the intended attentat at any price. "It would be carried out, with or without success, no doubt about it. And it would be carried out by any member of Young Bosnia ... The attentat is an act of the entire youth in Bosnia and no one could prevent its execution, just like the initiative for it did not come from abroad."²²⁷

Slijepčević even wrote: "The youth in the Sarajevo streets talked so much of attentats that it did not seem serious any more."²²⁸ Even in Innsbruck, in early 1913, a medical student, Miloš Stanković, was arrested after having said in a pub, in front of a waiter, that he belonged to a clandestine society and that he had sworn to assassinate in Vienna a person closest to the Emperor with the bombs he prepared himself in case of Austria's declaration of war on Serbia. The matter ended up before the police and the court. Crown Prince was considered the person closest to the Emperor. The court did not take seriously such an unusual statement, which was regarded as bragging before a girl, and set Stanković free; the Viennese Court of Cassation confirmed that decision.²²⁹ The Austrian Ministry for Internal Affairs informed of this the Hungarian government during the investigation, on 7 February.

There was another example of how rife was the talk of attentats. On 3 November 1913, the Ministry for Internal Affairs forwarded a report of the county perfect from Pljevlje to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. A young man from Bosanska Krupa, Simo Ceranić, arrived in that town, allegedly as a *chetnik* from the group of Major Vojin Popović. He called on the prefect, presenting

²²⁶ Jevdjević, *Sarajevski atentatori*, p. 21.

²²⁷ Jevtić, *Sarajevski atentat*, pp. 28-9.

²²⁸ N. Stojanović, "Pogled na Bosansku Politiku od 1903. do 1914. god.", in: Slijepčević, ed., *Napor Bosne i Hercegovine*, pp. 167-9.

²²⁹ *Neue Freie Presse*, no. 17580, 13 June 1913.

himself as a jurist who had been discharged from civil service in Bosnia, because he had revealed some military secrets to the editors of the Sarajevo *Narod* and then crossed over to Montenegro and Serbia and fought as a *komita*. “Because the Austrian-Hungarian Crown Prince [Franz] Ferdinand insulted him in a conversation with his mother by calling him a dog, he decided to cross over secretly to Bosnia and carry out attentat on Crown Prince [Franz] Ferdinand with a bomb he carried with him.” The prefect replied him immediately “to drop such intention which is impossible to achieve not least because I will not allow him [to cross] over the border”, and he disarmed him. Further investigation showed that Ceranić’s statements were entirely false, that he was a problematic adventurer, that he was not a fighter at all and that he was even in touch with certain persons from Austria. He wanted to cheat people on both sides.

Gaćinović, in particular, underscored the thought that attentats should be carried out in Bosnia and that “the head of one of the greatest” should fall down. In late 1913, he sent Danilo Ilić back from Lausanne with that message. Slijepčević told some things about that. Since no news of any attentat arrived from Sarajevo, Bosnian students in Switzerland and France decided to take the initiative themselves. On the eve of the Orthodox Christian New Year in 1914, Mehmed Mehmedbašić received a message in Stoce from his fellow countryman Mustafa Golubić to the effect that he should come to Toulouse at once to confer. The former was not chosen by chance. Mehmedbašić was a carpenter, a Muslim Serb with strong awareness of his national identity, and very clever, whereas Golubić was a student from his home town and impressed by him. The two men had already met in 1912 in Belgrade where Golubić had studied and been a volunteer in the Balkan War. Mehmedbašić quickly made a decision, borrowed some money for travel purpose and went to Toulouse. “Golubić, Gaćinović, [Jovan] Živanović and a Pole who was later killed in Serbia as a volunteer met him there. They agreed that Potiorek should be killed. Mehmedbašić was given a knife coated with cyanide ... Having returned via Dubrovnik, he noticed that a search was being carried out in a train – it concerned some fugitive – and, as he said himself, became frightened that they were looking for him, and he threw his weapon out of the window. Still thinking of an attentat, he conferred with some friends in Stoce and Sarajevo and decided on 27 March when Potiorek was supposed to be present at the appointment of a new Grand Mufti. Danilo Ilić heard of it – Mehmedbašić asked him for help to find a way of escaping after the attentat. At that time, in March 1914, with Ilić’s knowledge, Mihailo Pušara had already cut out the press news announcing the arrival of Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo, and he had sent it to his friends in Belgrade; therefore, the preparations for an attentat on a more important person than

Potiorek had been underway. Ilić persuaded Mehmedbašić to give up his plan and wait for something much more important, if he was prepared to do so.”²³⁰

A press clipping concerning the arrival of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo, which Pušara sent to N. Čabrinović in Belgrade, was taken from the Zagreb *Srbobran*.²³¹ Indeed, that newspaper published the first news about the arrival, in no. 52 of 17 (4) March. It was published as a news from Sarajevo and revealed that the Crown Prince would come with his wife to attend military maneuvers and that he would pay visit to the capital, while being lodged in Ilidža.

Nedeljko Čabrinović, whose father was a small innkeeper in Sarajevo and, it was general belief, acted as an agent of the Austrian authorities, was a typographer and a socialist. He joined the national movement through his friendship with combative young men and because of the need to clear the family name, since the role of his father was more-less a public secret. He was rebellious by nature and a convinced terrorist, and, as such, he was excluded from the Socialist Party. He drew attention to himself as an eighteen-year-old on the occasion of a typographers strike in Sarajevo in 1912. Jevdjević said he was “politically the most developed of the conspirators”.²³² After that strike, he was banished from Sarajevo, but he returned soon. He moved from one place to another, not being able to settle down. In late 1913, he came to Belgrade. He was considered suspicious there. Therefore, the police turned to the Austrian Consulate, looking for information. The Chief of Police in Sarajevo, Dr Edmund Gerde replied to the Consulate on 25 November that the personal information that Čabrinović had provided was accurate and that he was not guilty of anything. The Consulate then expressed its favourable opinion of Čabrinović on 3 December.²³³ He was then given a job as a typesetter in the state-owned printing house. In Belgrade, he was mostly socializing with his fellow countrymen, meeting with them in dirty little pubs such as *Zlatna moruna* and *Žirovni venac*. In early October 1913, before he arrived in Belgrade, he talked with young Ivo Orlić in Voloska, on the road to Zagreb, and as early as then expressed his thought about being prepared to kill Franz Ferdinand. With such thought, which was widespread, as has been seen, he arrived in Belgrade.

230 Slijepčević, “Mlada Bosna”, in: Slijepčević, ed., *Napor Bosne i Hercegovine*, pp. 209-10. Cf. Jevtić, *Sarajevski atentat*, p. 25. All stories about Grabež's and Princip's travel to France are pure fantasies. For them, see Poletika, *Saraevskoe ubijstvo*, pp. 213-6.

231 N. Čabrinović claimed inaccurately at the court that the article had been printed in Latin script either because he did not remember well or because he wanted to spare the people around the *Srbobran* trouble.

232 Jevdjević, *Sarajevski atentatori*, p. 55.

233 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 316-9.

There he met with Gavriilo Princip. That young man, born in the village of Obljaj near Grahovo, who received a small stipend from the Sarajevo society *Prosvjeta*, attended the commercial school and grammar school in Sarajevo, and later in Belgrade, but he was not always present in the classroom. He had been expelled, together with ten of his friends, from the sixth grade in Sarajevo because of his “resistance to the authorities” and taking part in demonstrations. Princip was a revolutionary according to his deepest convictions. Long before the attentat, a friend of his enquired of what was going on with him in a private letter: “How is Gavro, does he shout: Long live revolution?”²³⁴ In 1910, Princip angrily said to another of his friends upon seeing a Tolstoy’s work in his hands: “The entire Tolstoy’s works should be burnt, he is a preacher of peaceful enduring of the evil.”²³⁵ He wanted to join the volunteers detachment of Major Tankosić in 1912, but the latter refused him on account of his physical under-development, adding a few ironical words, which deeply hurt him. “One of the causes”, his friend Jevtić said, “which influenced him later to show ‘his value’ was no doubt this rejection.”²³⁶ He came back to Belgrade afterwards to continue his grammar school education, just like a number of pupils from the Tuzla grammar school, who had been expelled like him or had left it because of different conflicts. Trifko Grabež, the son of a priest from Pale near Sarajevo, stood out among these pupils. A restless spirit, he left the grammar school in Sarajevo to attend that in Tuzla, and he was expelled from the latter on 18 November 1912 because he had attacked a professor. He also intended to complete grammar school in Belgrade. On 9 June 1913, the authorities granted him a passport in Sarajevo to go to Serbia, although there was the order no. 6008 of 18 December 1912 issued by the provincial government to the effect that passports must not be given to men aged between 17 and 24 liable to military service.

The company of Bosnians and Herzegovinians that gathered together in the above mentioned pubs mostly consisted of young men. The guests included students, among whom Risto Milićević, a jurist, the son of a respected trader from Mostar, former *chetnik* and volunteer, a great singer, was especially prominent; also Milan Ciganović, a Bosnian from Petrovac, a customs clerk, former *chetnik*, who had left his job in Bosnia in 1908 and crossed over to Serbia and who much impressed the others as he had been decorated with golden medal for his courage in the wars; a student Djulaga Bukovac, a Muslim; as well as high school pupils, more intelligent workers and others. A friend of theirs

²³⁴ B. Čerović, *Bosanski omladinci i sarajevski atentat*, pp. 47, 125.

²³⁵ Jevdjević, *Sarajevski atentatori*, p. 29.

²³⁶ Jevtić, *Sarajevski atentat*, p. 13.

rightly wrote: "Heads full of ideals, empty pockets. (Contributions were collected for Princip in Hadžići where his brother moved.)"²³⁷ In such conditions of material degradation, that spasm of pride is born in the heroes in order to show their internal value."²³⁸

When he received the above mentioned press clipping from Sarajevo, Čabrinović immediately understood what was intended. It was a friendly warning, or rather an invitation to act. The opportunity arose, in their view, to do something great, something that seemed exceptionally important in their young imagination. They had spoken so much about these things that they now felt something of a moral obligation to embark on action or they would be embarrassed to look each other in the eye. Čabrinović let Princip know what was going on. They rapidly came to an agreement. Seton-Watson's conclusion is correct: "Their heads were already so full of terrorist thoughts that a simple prodding on the part of their friends at home was sufficient to make them act. At the same time, this is the best evidence that the initiative came from Bosnia, and not from Serbia."²³⁹ And that was without doubt the whole truth in this matter.

Princip claimed at the trial in Sarajevo that it was himself who "immediately decided on the attentat as soon as he had found out from the newspapers that the Crown Prince would visit Bosnia, and that he had still not come to an agreement with Nedjeljko Čabrinović".²⁴⁰ He then stressed, "he always had before his eyes [the aim of] political unification of the Yugoslavs and that was his fundamental idea, for which the Yugoslavs needed to be liberated from the Germans and Austria in the first place". "It was my opinion that anyone who had a soul and the feelings for the suffering people should protest and do something because revenge is sweet and bloody." He said the same later to his doctor in the prison in Theresienstadt, Dr. M. Pappenheim, just before his death, seriously ill, setting much store in the knowledge and remembrance that the idea of the attentat was his alone. He first thought of the assassination of General Potiorek and then Franz Ferdinand.²⁴¹

Jevdjević has recently stated that it was Gaćinović, in particular, who instigated the assassination of Franz Ferdinand – he arrived in Belgrade one day, before that clipping from the press appeared, among his young friends from Sarajevo.²⁴² He hastened the action and did all in his power to make it happen.

²³⁷ He lost his scholarship because of his failure in school.

²³⁸ Slijepčević, "Mlada Bosna", in: Slijepčević, ed., *Napor Bosne i Hercegovine*, p. 211.

²³⁹ Seton-Watson, *Sarajevo*, p. 48.

²⁴⁰ *Osuda sarajevskog Okružnog suda*, no. 7471.

²⁴¹ R. P., *Gavrilo Princip's Bekenntnisse*, Wien 1926, p. 15.

²⁴² Jevdjević, *Sarajevski atentatori*, p. 40 ff.

This is an entirely new moment, of which there has been no mention so far in the statements given by either the conspirators or their other friends. We find it impossible to check and verify it now, but it does not seem likely, especially in view of Princip's clear testimony which openly, without any reluctance, admitted the crime and the motives. If there had been any Gaćinović's influence in the final instance, they would certainly not have kept it secret, because they had no reason to hide it as he was safe from Austria, waging war against her, and because they were honest enough not to take credit for the deeds of others.

Franz Ferdinand, who was known to have brought and maintained the bellicose and extremely Serbophobe Baron Hötendorf as Chief of the General Staff and who was thus considered a head of the military faction, was supposed to be welcomed in Sarajevo with a bomb or revolver. Hitting him, they wanted to hit the main representative of the army and those circles that overtly and on every occasion from 1908 to 1913 demanded a war against Serbia and the suppression of the Serb national movement. The maneuvers in Bosnia that the Crown Prince was going to attend were considered something of a demonstration of those circles towards the Serb element of Bosnia and Herzegovina and a direct threat to Serbia. Why shoot then at commissars and various generals, at Varešanin, Cuvaj, Skerlec or Potiorek, who were mere organs of a will, and not hit at that will itself? These young people were not informed of the real state of affairs, just like the most of the public. They did not know that Franz Ferdinand, although he had displayed a bellicose mood on the occasion, disagreed with the Chief of the General Staff on many issues and that he had grown considerably cold to him after the summer of 1913; that he had raised his voice against the war on two or three decisive occasions and that he was especially opposed to conquest in Serbia. In a letter to Emperor Wilhelm II from September 1913, he professed his full support for the peaceful policy conducted by the Emperor that summer.²⁴³ The attitude of Franz Ferdinand on whom certain reservations were imposed because of the old Emperor, who did not see eye to eye with him in many matters, became known to sufficient extent only after the war; at the time, he was said to have been not just personally bloodthirsty, but also to have set the tone for the whole action of military and clerical circles against Serbia. That was believed in Italy, Serbia and among the other Yugoslavs. It was also believed in Russia that he was hostile, and even "aggressively" disposed, to that country.²⁴⁴

243 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIX, p. 325.

244 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VII, p. 1091.

Military and clerical circles spread the following claims: Franz Ferdinand was not murdered because he was considered an obstacle that threatened the peace of the world by satisfying the Habsburg Monarchy, but rather because he was possessed of firm will and capability to resolve with success the Austrian problem and thus cut the ground from the feet of Serb irredentism, along with other irredentist aspirations.²⁴⁵ The court in Sarajevo dwelled on that thought in its sentence to the assassins. Borivoje Jevtić also claims in his book on the Sarajevo attentat that his friends were convinced that Austria would try to break the ranks of the Serbs and Croats through trialism and thus smash the ideology of the national youth.²⁴⁶ According to our deep conviction and to the best of our knowledge, such appreciation was highly unlikely among the most of the youth, mostly because these young people did not make such far-reaching combinations, but rather sought, in their effervescence and attentomania, for the first possible object of greater significance. They were in a hurry to accomplish some "great" deed themselves at that time of exaltation and celebration of different victories. They more-less believed that the assassination of the Crown Prince would deprive the Danubian Monarchy of leadership and the army of its most active representative and thus made it more passive for some time to come. Truly convinced that national ideals should be accomplished as soon as possible, they wanted to remove all obstacles to working in that sense and to "hasten" the process of national activity. It could be said that young people were, unless they were clear in their mind as to the gravity of their deed, only executioners of the intentions of the older ones. But that is also highly unlikely. The vast majority of our people saw clearly that Franz Ferdinand's aspirations to trialism, and perhaps some sort of federalism, were far removed from the likelihood of realization. The resistance of the Hungarians to trialism was unbreakable until the demise of the Danubian Monarchy. Franz Ferdinand could only realize his ideas if he suppressed the Hungarians to the point of being unable to resist. It remains a big question if he would have attempted that experiment and if that experiment would have succeeded. Well-informed friends of Austria-Hungary within the ranks of German diplomacy were much concerned on this account.²⁴⁷ If some Yugoslavs believed in its realization, they looked forward to it rather than being afraid of it. For the struggle against the Hungarians would no doubt weaken the strength of the Monarchy and perhaps provide the Yugoslavs with the welcome

245 E. Glaise-Horstenau, *Die Katastrophe*, Amalthea Verlag, p. 21; Giesl, *Zwei Jahrzehnte*, p. 190; U. Übersberger, *Kärntner Tagblatt*, no. 67, 1931.

246 Jevtić, *Sarajevski atentat*, p. 16.

247 Cf. *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIX, pp. 358-60.

opportunity to accomplish their aspirations more easily. It has been seen that our young people counted, with a view to opportunities in the near future, on 1917 as a year in which revision of the Austro-Hungarian Compromise and the eventual conflicts in that connection would take place. Also, the entire Monarchy knew that Franz Ferdinand was a pathologically impulsive man and that he suffered from the bouts of rage. Such a ruler would be able to undertake measures that could easily cause conflicts and foster, on the one hand, hostility to the throne and, on the other, facilitate the breakdown of the Monarchy. The old organism of Austria-Hungary could not endure dangerous, radical operations without a crisis. Finally, the Crown Prince's hatred for Italy was also well-known in the Monarchy. He did not trust his southern ally at all and had long wanted a showdown with it. For all those reasons, the sober Serbs could only have wished to see Franz Ferdinand take over the government one day and attempt his reforms. On the other hand, all thinking people knew too well that assassinating such high-placed personalities could create further complications rather than remove the existing difficulties. It was safe to assume that the assassination of Crown Prince would bring about, if anything, dire consequences for the Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina and perhaps for the Serbs in the Danubian Monarchy in general.

Čabrinović and Princip let Grabež know about their intentions. In order to obtain arms, they approached Milan Ciganović through the agency of Djulaga Bukovac. As a former *chetnik*, he was in touch with Major Vojislav Tankosić, who had been his commander.²⁴⁸ During the trial, both assassins confessed that they had revealed their intentions to Ciganović and that he had only strengthened their resolve. Both the thought and the initiative were theirs. Through Ciganović's mediation, they came into contact with Tankosić – Grabež was the first to meet him as the most eloquent among them. Princip did not go to meet him at all, probably because of his earlier unpleasant encounter with him. Tankosić had led his detachment in Turkey; in 1908, he had become an organizer of volunteer courses for an eventual fighting against Austria-Hungary and he was a sworn enemy to that country. An adventurer by nature, agile and bellicose, he had been in favour of terrorist actions from 1908 onwards; his views in this respect had not changed after the heavy casualties suffered in 1912-1913. After the meeting with Grabež, Tankosić gave his friends four revolvers and six bombs, as well as cyanide, just in case. Ciganović and a

248 F. Wiesner claims that Ciganović was even then the government's informer on the work of the Black Hand. See *Die Kriegsschuldfrage*, V, 1927, p. 1048. But his statement is a pure speculation without any evidence. Ciganović fell out with the Black Hand people after the death of Tankosić, but he was always loyal to the latter.

Herzegovinian Milan Mojić, also a former *chetnik*, trained these young men in handling weapons, in which they had not been skilled previously. After a while, when they were about to go to Bosnia, Tankosić told them not to get in contact with the Serbian police authorities and, moreover, to avoid them. He handed them a card for Major Popović in Šabac on which only two letters were written.

The Austrian authorities, as well as the Sarajevo court, unfamiliar with the undisciplined nature of Tankosić, believed that he “must not have involved himself in such an enterprise” without the consent of his superiors, “and especially without the approval of the central committee of *Narodna Odbrana*”. Nevertheless, Tankosić acted differently. He informed neither *Narodna odbrana* nor its committee of his new acquaintances; all that has been said about it on the Austrian side is either speculation or pure fabrication. The one person whom Tankosić did inform was Dragutin Dimitrijević.

Dimitrijević was no doubt a capable individual, but he was authoritative by nature and conspirator by instinct. According to different accounts of him, he strongly influenced people in personal contact and, being aware of and using this quality, he tried to have his way. When Tankosić told him about the decision of young Bosnians, Dimitrijević agreed to their plan, but he did not make any contact with them. A version relating to his participation in the attentat provided by Stanoje Stanojević is not entirely accurate. Stanojević recounts that, after the visit of Emperor Wilhelm II to Konopiště, Dimitrijević received a confidential report from the Russian General Staff to the effect that Emperor Wilhem had agreed on that occasion that Austria could attack and subdue Serbia. The reports that came in afterwards further fed such suspicions. This news, together with the maneuvers in Bosnia, which were going to be carried out in the presence of Franz Ferdinand, convinced Dimitrijević that an attack on Serbia was very probable. In order to prevent it, he thought the best means would be to kill Franz Ferdinand as the main instigator of an action against the Serbs. When “just about at that time” Tankosić told him about the Bosnian conspirators, Dimitrijević consented at once and, after some ten days, these young people left for Bosnia. Čeda Popović presents the events like Stanojević, but he does not link them only for the Konopiště affair. “To tell you the truth”, Popović relays Dimitrijević’s own words, “that moment [when he agreed their action] I thought that it was impossible for such an attentat to succeed and that perhaps it would not even take place. I assumed that the Austrian Crown Prince would be so guarded and secured that nothing could happen to him; in the best case, that some incident might occur, which would be a memento for him [Franz Ferdinand] and his entourage, so that they realized it was dangerous to attack Serbia ... Still, after a while, when I thought it over, I decided to attempt to return the young men who had crossed over [the border] and to prevent the

attentat by all means. That attempt was made through the *chetnik* Djura Šarac. It was too late. The assassins, those two who left from Serbia as well as those who found themselves in Sarajevo, would have none of it.”²⁴⁹

Bernadotte Schmitt has already established that the link between the decision to carry out the attentat and the visit to Konopišće was chronologically impossible. The assassins left Belgrade on 28 May, whereas the visit to Konopišće was ended on 14 June. The Russian Military Attaché in Belgrade, Colonel Artamonov, claimed that he had never received such information from his superiors and that he had left Belgrade on 19 June and taken leave of absence. His deputy, Captain Verkhovsky, also neither received nor made any statement of that kind.²⁵⁰ However, a version of events has survived in Austrian circles that not just Artamonov, but also Hartwig himself knew about the attentat and, moreover, that Artamonov, after having received an encouraging message from the Russian government, even told Dimitrijević: “Just go ahead. If they attack you, you will not be alone.”²⁵¹ To be true, there are some indications that Verkhovsky said something to the effect that Artamonov and he had been familiar with the initiative and the preparations for the attentat, but this is a second- and third-hand statement, not verified and without any more reliable details.²⁵² There is absolutely no trace of this story in the documents published by the Russian Bolshevik authorities, and they did not, as it is well-known, conceal any clue that might help to shed light on such things. Instead of hard facts, people resorted, more often than not, to whispering from suspicious sources or even pure fabrications.

The truth is this. The trip of Crown Prince caused great fears. There is no doubt that the military maneuvers had to do with a show of force, but the suspiciousness went too far. Both then and afterwards, it has been alleged that Austria prepared the maneuvers as something of a secret mobilization and that the arrival of Franz Ferdinand had to do with the inspection of the army that was getting prepared for a near-approaching action in the Sanjak of Novi Pazar. Such news were spread even among Austrian members of the Delegations. Some people said that he intended to go with the army to Albania

249 *Nova Evropa*, XXXV, 1932, p. 408.

250 B. Schmitt, *The Coming of the War 1914*, I, pp. 222-3. Cf. J. M. Jovanović, *Politika*, no. 8296, 1931.

251 A. Polzer-Hoditz, *Kaiser Karl*, Amalthea Verlag 1929, pp. 236-7; Dr. E. Fischer, *Die kritischen 39 Tage*, Berlin 1928, pp. 30-1. The information originated with the political emigrant, Colonel Božin Simić, who is not a reliable source.

252 Cf. Graf von Cartagena, *Erinnerungen an meine Botschafterzeit in Russland 1914*, Berlin 1934, pp. 113-4.

via Sanjak.²⁵³ That suspicion was, as has been seen, fed by the news that the Austrian Crown Prince asked for and was granted the consent of the German Emperor for more active policy in the Balkans at their meeting in Konopiště. But these suspicions and information were on this occasion, as far as we know from the German and Austrian sources, far removed from the truth.

Emperor Wilhelm II met twice with Franz Ferdinand in the spring of 1914. At their first meeting, on 27 March, in Miramare Castle, there was talk of both foreign and internal policy. The Crown Prince made combinations to win over Romania, Greece and, if possible, Turkey for the Triple Alliance as a "wall against the Slavs" in the Balkans. He condemned Berchtold's policy towards the Romanians, regretting that he had not negotiated with Sofia via Bucharest. Emperor Wilhelm II recommended him a policy that would draw the Romanians closer and told him about his conversations with Count Tisza. The latter promised that he would pursue a conciliatory policy towards the Romanians in Hungary and thus try to assuage dissatisfaction in Romania. When they addressed internal policy, Franz Ferdinand complained "with excitement" that the Slavs became provokers and too insolent, and that he considered that "great danger". Emperor Wilhelm II suggested him to conduct Austria's internal policy in German spirit. The Crown Prince stated that he intended to put internal policy in general on an entirely different basis, more independent of parliamentarians and their attitude.²⁵⁴ The second meeting between Emperor Wilhelm II and Franz Ferdinand took place on the Crown Prince's estate in Konopiště on 12-14 June. During that meeting, there was much talk about Count Tisza. Emperor Wilhelm II had met him that spring and he had made a strong impression on him. In Castle Miramare, he recommended Tisza to the Crown Prince as "the only statesman" of the Monarchy. In Konopiště, Franz Ferdinand returned to that subject and said that he refused cooperation with Tisza on account of his intransigent attitude towards the nationalities in Hungary, and especially the Romanians. He saw only harm from such policy, which was detrimental to the interests of the Triple Alliance. He called the situation in Hungary "anachronistic and medieval". "The oligarchic form of government almost amounts to subjugation of all non-Hungarian elements, which make up for much more than 50 per cent of the entire population." Further conversation concerned the danger of a Greco-Turkish conflict that could set the Balkans on fire again. The two men agreed that the King of Romania should be asked for his opinion and found that his mediation for the maintenance of the Peace of Bucharest would suit their interests.

253 D. Dimović, *Pogledi*, I, Zagreb 1934, pp. 13-4.

254 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIX, pp. 342-3.

Such attitude on the part of Franz Ferdinand, so much opposed to the policy of Count Berchtold, did not just result from Emperor Wilhelm II's suggestions, but mostly stemmed from personal conviction. Franz Ferdinand was personally always favourable to a policy of agreement with Romania²⁵⁵ and, just like Emperor Wilhelm II, he did not care at all for the Bulgarian King Ferdinand. They both even considered it necessary to stress that on this occasion in front of Treutler, a counselor in Emperor Wilhelm II's entourage, who recorded these conversations. Franz Ferdinand bitterly complained about Italy because of its hostile-to-Austria policy in Albania and its attitude towards the Italians in the Danubian Monarchy. He thought that Russia should not be feared: "internal difficulties are too great to allow that country an aggressive foreign policy".²⁵⁶ According to this report, there was no talk of Serbia, at least no such that should be recorded. But Baron Hötendorf said, according to reliable statements, that there was some talk in Konopiště about the attitude of Germany in case of Austria's more active policy. Emperor Wilhelm II said: "If you do not start with an action (*wenn wir nicht losgingen*), the position will worsen",²⁵⁷ which means that he encouraged Franz Ferdinand in certain direction.

F. Wiesner finds, however, that Stanojević's account of what passed in Konopiště is correct, but it does not relate to the second visit of Emperor Wilhelm II to Franz Ferdinand, but rather to that which took place on 23-25 October 1913. Wiesner, together with M. Bogićević, makes connection between the meeting of the revolutionaries from Bosnia and Herzegovina in Toulouse, in January 1914, mentioned above, with the decision of Dimitrijević and Tankosić, that is to say the Black Hand, to carry out an attentat on Franz Ferdinand.²⁵⁸ Many Austrian and German writers generally manifest a thinly veiled tendency to ascribe as substantial a role to Dimitrijević as possible and to make him appear as an initiator of the whole affair. We have detailed, according to the account of one of the most intimate Gaćinović's friends, how things were taking shape in Toulouse and afterwards. The Bosnian plan about the assassination of Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo did not emerge before the spring of 1914, when his arrival in Bosnia became a public matter. As has been seen, the intentions to kill him and the information to that effect cropped up

255 Ibid., p. 440.

256 Treutler's report has been published again in the second edition of K. Kautsky's collection: *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1, 1927, pp. 5-8.

257 Hötendorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, IV, p. 39. There is no evidence whatever for Wickham Steed's account of the conversations in Konopiště, which allegedly went even further and anticipated a new division and relations within the state after a victorious war.

258 *Die Kriegsschuldfrage*, VI, 1928, pp. 321-7. Cf. a review of Dr. E. Fischer, *Die kritischen 39 Tage*, pp. 27-9.

from several sides and entirely independently of the conspiratorial circle. This had been the case long before the visit to Konopiště and long before the meeting in Toulouse. There is absolutely no evidence for Dimitrijević's taking part in the Toulouse decisions, and it was highly unlikely according to an account of Čeda Popović, his close friend.

The entire conspiracy was an act of the Bosnian youth. In the difficult Bosnian atmosphere, the thought of the necessary sacrifices and political attentats was begotten; the youth much discussed it and almost uttered it in the streets; supported by the examples from Italy and Russia, the thought matured among the youth and they decided to act on it. Those are hard facts which have been clearly confirmed by all the examinations so far. Tankosić and Dimitrijević played their part afterwards, when the decision had already been made.

In the *Radikal*, the newspaper owned by Stojan Protić, the claim was made on two occasions, in nos. 135 and 294 of 1922, that there was Dimitrijević's confession, even in writing, to the effect that he had "organized the attentat in Sarajevo". These claims were not advanced by Protić himself; one was signed by Dr. M. Ivanić (R) and the other was anonymous but probably from the same person who wrote that column. Unfortunately, we did not have the opportunity to access that document, and we do not know if it exists at all, so that we could establish what its content is and what can be concluded from it. But as far as we know and from what we could establish so far on the basis of all the reliable sources regarding this matter, we can say nothing else than what we have said about Dimitrijević's participation in the attentat.

All statements about the attentat agree on the fact that Dimitrijević and Tankosić did not speak to anyone about the matter. It was only on 15 June, Stanojević has recounted, that Dimitrijević told it at a meeting of the main committee of the "Unification or Death" organization. All the members were resolutely against the intention, and Dimitrijević, seeing such mood, decided to send a word himself to Sarajevo that the intended action be abandoned. "He seems to have indeed attempted something in this sense, but it was either too late or the assassins in Sarajevo did not want to listen to him."²⁵⁹ It is established, from several sides, that his message indeed arrived in Sarajevo, and that some assassins started to hesitate, fearing that their deed could damage the general cause, but Princip and Čabrinović refused all suggestions and stuck with their decision, reproaching others for being opportunist and not brave enough. Colonel Grgur M. Milovanović, with whom I had two conversations about this matter and who was a respected member of the "Unification

259 Stanojević, *Ubistvo austriskog prestolonaslednika Ferdinanda*, p. 46.

or Death” organization and a member of its committee, stressed that the leadership of that organization, as such, played no part in that affair, that it never discussed it as something to be carried out and that it was faced with an accomplished fact. From these statements and all other material known so far, it is perfectly clear that not just *Narodna odbrana*, for which that has been long established,²⁶⁰ but also the “Unification or Death” organization was not an accomplice in the attentat. Tankosić and Dimitrijević entirely acted on their own and the responsibility was and remains their alone.

2

Sometime around the Easter in 1914, Princip let Danilo Ilić in Sarajevo know that he thought of an attentat, that he had friends and that Ilić should arrange the matter further and find associates.

Ilić organized a new group in Sarajevo. Apart from Mehmedbašić, an old conspirator, he involved Lazar Djukić, a pupil from the training school. But the latter did not feel strong enough for such an act and he found as his replacement a grammar school pupil Vasa Čubrilović. Čubrilović then found Cvetko Popović, also a training school pupil. Čubrilović also informed of the plan some of his colleagues – I. Kranjčević, N. Forkapić and M. Perin.

During that time, Princip, Čabrinović and Grabež left for Bosnia on 28 May, taking a boat to the town of Šabac. Through mediation of Major Popović, they received there passports with false names – one was presented as a customs official and the other two as his associates. This was obviously designed to divert any attention and suspicion of the Serbian authorities from these persons, because the passports were not intended for or valid in Bosnia. Popović sent the young men from Šabac to Captain Prvanović in Loznica. The chief investigator in the trial against the assassins, Leo Pfeffer, himself pointed out the fact that they “concealed their intentions and preparations for the attentat from the official Serbia, that they traveled through Serbia with false passports as financial clerks, and they appeared under their real names as soon as they arrived in Bosnia, in [the town of] Tuzla.”²⁶¹ Neither Major Popović nor Captain Prvanović spoke to the young men about the purpose of their crossing over. All three of the assassins claimed so – and they generally confessed all – and the

260 When *Narodna odbrana* received the information in 1913 that some young men asked Professor Vasa Stajić for weapons to carry out an attentat, it immediately sent a message to the latter: “Do not move, cease agitation, abolish the newspaper! We need peace and consolidation!” See Slijepčević, “Mlada Bosna”, in: Slijepčević. ed., *Napor Bosne i Hercegovine*, p. 199.

261 *Obzor*, LXVII, no. 193.

Sarajevo court took it for granted. Prvanović passed the young men on to the financial guard Radivoje Grbić to enable them to cross the Drina. Čabrinović crossed the border in Zvornik with Grabež's passport, because that passport issued by the Austrian authorities in Sarajevo on 9 July 1913 (no. 13156 P. P. 51) was entirely valid. Grabež gave him his passport, because he believed that he would cross the border more easily, being a pupil, than Čabrinović, who was a worker. There are reliable statements that Princip did not place much trust in Čabrinović's firmness; he said to his fiancée before the attentat that he was worried lest his comrade "will not be dexterous enough, that he will lose his self-possession".²⁶² Princip and Grabež crossed the border at the Isaković isle with the help of a Bosnian peasant Jakov Milović and then headed to Priboj to find the teacher Veljko Čubrilović, a well-known national activist, whose brother was their friend from the grammar school in Tuzla. On 2 June, Čubrilović accidentally bumped into the young men at Tobut, who were accompanied by two peasants who carried their arms, and after a short explanation, he took them to the house of his friend, a peasant named Mitar Kerović. The assassins left Tobut for Tuzla in Kerović's cart to meet the tradesman Miško Jovanović for whom they had a short letter of recommendation written by Čubrilović. Just before Tuzla, the pupils took off the cart in order to be less conspicuous and to avoid the possibility of them and their companions being searched. They gave their arms to Miško Jovanović and left to join their comrades. They left Tuzla for Sarajevo on a train on 5 June, but they did not dare to bring their arms with them. They agreed to have one of them or some of their friends come back later to take the arms – that person would have a pack of Stefanija cigarettes as a sign of identification.

Čabrinović went, however, from Mali Zvornik in Serbia to Veliki Zvornik in Bosnia and presented himself duly to the Austrian gendarmerie, which let him proceed with his journey. He stated that he would go to Sarajevo via Vlasenica on foot because he had no money. The authorities in Zvornik warned the gendarmerie in Vlasenica about him and certain Franz Kopecki from Bijeljina, who wanted to join Čabrinović. But they did not themselves pay the necessary attention to Čabrinović when he headed to Tuzla rather than Vlasenica in a military post office coach. There, in Tuzla, Čabrinović even spoke with a police detective and arrived in Sarajevo together with him. He was brave to the point of being foolhardy. On the day of the attentat, just before he would throw a bomb, he asked a policeman to tell him in which car the Crown Prince was driven. It should be noted that the police in Tuzla paid no attention to Grabež and Čabrinović's checking in a hotel under his name (he stayed in

262 *Novi život*, XXII, p. 266.

Pajko Marković's hotel), although it knew that he had been expelled from that place a year and a half earlier at the request of the provincial government and that he was known as one of the revolutionary-minded young men.

When he arrived in Sarajevo, Princip stayed with Danilo Ilić. Through Lazar Djukić, the latter had already persuaded another three men to take part in the attentat. Ilić took it upon himself to bring the arms from Tuzla. He went there, identified himself in accordance with the agreed sign and then, on 17 June, received from Jovanović a box with the bombs and the revolvers. He brought the arms to Sarajevo and kept it in his home.²⁶³ He handed it to the assassins partly before 28 June and partly on that very day in a candy shop. For several days, the young men talked to a few of their friends about the intended attentat; one of them even let his friends on the eve of the attentat to feel up a revolver and a bomb in his pocket. A week before the attentat, Princip told his girlfriend what he intended to do and even invited her to stand by him on the St. Vitus Day. Despite all the discretion among friends, it would seem incredible that the Sarajevo police found out nothing about all this and the arrival of so many pupils from Serbia – if we do not assume that many people believed that the possibility of such a major decision was highly unlikely and that almost public talk of attentats seemed like a childishly foolish matter. It was not before the action had been carried out that the authorities realized that it should have been considered much more seriously, especially among the easily excitable pupils, after so many attentats had taken place in 1910–1913. The Chief of the Zemun commissariat Vuković reported as early as 11 May 1914 about the rumours of possible attentats that had somehow reached the police authorities in Zemun. A number of pupils of the Serb confessional school in Pakrac, which were expelled from the school on account of a strike against the director (18 pupils were expelled) or left the school on their own volition, crossed over to Serbia in late March 1914 to complete their education or to find a job. One of them, Janko Pokrajac, used to say “that he and his people take account of when his imperial and royal Highness the Crown Prince travels to Bosnia; they will then give proof that Bosnia is a Serb land”. He presented himself as a revolutionary, who would operate with bombs everywhere in the moment of need. Therefore, Vuković suggested that he and his reliable detectives be utilized for the purpose of securing the railway up to Bosanski Brod during the Crown

263 It is entirely inaccurate that, after the arrival in Tuzla, he went again to Serbia and met with Dimitrijević, just like it is inaccurate that Princip was sent to Toulouse. H. Bauer has collected many similar, but completely unverified, news in his book *Sarajewo*, Stuttgart 1930, pp. 41, 44.

Prince's journey.²⁶⁴ On 19 May, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs informed the Joint Finance Ministry, which was responsible for handling the administration of Bosnia and Herzegovina, of Vuković's report, requesting that this information be checked and that special attention be paid to possible demonstrations against the Crown Prince.²⁶⁵ The Bosnian government accordingly warned on 27 May (no. 4034/Präs.) all district offices and recommended them to observe carefully the movement of foreigners and their entries into Bosnia and to lock up these young men if they crossed the border. The district authorities in Zvornik were especially urged to be careful in this respect. The Chief of the Bosnian government, General Potiorek, issued on 10 June strict orders about the protection of railways and keeping people away from the route which the Crown Prince would traverse; he ordered that from 15 June onwards the most thorough search of all foreigners be carried out, especially those "from Serbia, Montenegro, Russia and Italy"; but he did nothing in respect of Sarajevo besides adding another 50 gendarmes to the local police. In addition, 18 agents arrived from Vienna and Pest to be dispersed across the entire province. In connection with this order, the head of police in Zvornik Dr. Berger instructed gendarmes in Palator on 18 June that they should keep a strict watch on every person that attempted to cross over from Serbia to Bosnia on that crossing and to control their movements, whereas suspicious people should not be allowed to cross the border at all. This was all the more important because six of the expelled pupils were from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

It was not before 27 June that Berchtold ordered the Belgrade Legation to find out, but with discretion, what was going on with those pupils and to keep a watchful eye on them.²⁶⁶ The Austrian Consul in Belgrade, Radimsky, wrote, however, on 25 June in reply to the inquiry of the Bosnian government that he had investigated into the pupils from Pakrac and found out that one of them had said how the moment was now convenient for an attentat, but that his "statement was devoid of any serious basis".²⁶⁷ And still, despite this and many other warnings and information that came from various sources and that could have given reasons for thorough security measures,²⁶⁸ the Sarajevo

264 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 31-2.

265 *Ibid.*, pp. 53-4.

266 *Ibid.*, pp. 53-4.

267 *Ibid.*, VIII, p. 210. Cf. pp. 204-5.

268 Cf. Polzer-Hoditz, *Kaiser Karl*, p. 242. Countess Henrietta Chotek wrote that the Archbishop of Sarajevo Štadler had pointed out the danger and tried to dissuade the Crown Prince and his wife from their trip in his dispatches sent to Belvedere. (I have received from the Central press bureau of the Yugoslav Foreign Ministry this statement published in *Ujsag* on 28 August 1932).

police proved to be utterly incapable. Count Tisza himself claimed, with a good reason, that “the most indescribable circumstances” must have prevailed in the Sarajevo police “when it was possible for 6 or 7 persons known to police to place themselves on the day of the attentat armed with bombs and revolvers in the way of the murdered Crown Prince, and that police did not watch or remove a single one of them”.²⁶⁹ The Viennese *Neue Freie Presse* rightly posed the question on 30 June: “Could it be really that difficult to identify fanatics among the irate youth; would it be impossible to keep under watch these political migratory birds? We do not believe that, and that is exactly what police have to do in the dangerous neighbourhood of the Balkans, if it wants to perform at least its pettiest duty ... The Sarajevo police failed completely.”

The Chief of the Sarajevo police, Dr. Edmund Gerde, and the county prefect, Dr. Ibrahim Defterdarović, who were members of the military committee for the reception of Crown Prince, feared some incident largely because of the youth's frame of mind. Gerde especially pleaded with T. Zurunić, chief of the department for internal affairs in the Bosnian government, that the reception not take place on the St. Vitus Day. The latter urged them to express their fear at the meeting of the committee. When they did so, the officers laughed at them and replied: “Well, that scum could not dare to do something.”²⁷⁰ The Chief of Staff told Gerde with irony: “You see apparitions.” “Dr. Gerde insisted on the inclusion of his demands in the protocol, which was done while the officers were grinning ironically.”²⁷¹

Franz Ferdinand decided in late summer 1913 to attend the maneuvers in Bosnia. On 16 September 1913, he informed Baron Hötzenndorf of his intention. During the Albanian crisis, when the Bosnian Governor, General Potiorek, arrived in Vienna, certain details of the programme had already been

269 From 1912 onwards, Austria much increased the number of her guards on the Serbian border. By the Emperor's decision of 28 May 1912, six detachments of the so-called “border hunters” were established, among which only a third of local people could serve and which were supposed to present an “elite corps” “which the enemy fears and which, if needed, would act without scruples”. These hunters were especially intended, along with gendarmes and financial guards, to protect the border. But their role was, to a large extent, hampered by their inability to speak Serbo-Croat. Native element was not trusted. Therefore, the service on the border was rather mechanist and poor, because those who could not speak the language of the people among which they served lacked the main condition to communicate. And for that reason, smuggling flourished on both sides of the border and illegal crossings over the border were carried out without much difficulty. See *Berliner Monatshefte*, XII, 1934, p. 960.

270 T. Zurunić's article in the *Vrbaske novine*, 28 June 1934.

271 V. Glik, formerly a member of the Sarajevo police in 1914, *Politika*, no. 9165, 1933.

established.²⁷² All later arrangements were conducted between the Crown Prince's military office and Potiorek himself. The visit was intended to be given solely military character. Cooperation from the civil authorities was not just overlooked, but rather deliberately eschewed. Even Biliński, the Minister charged with Bosnia and Herzegovina, was not kept informed. "Any influence I might have had in that project", he wrote, "was excluded to such extent that none of the officials in my Ministry was familiar with the matter." He distanced himself from the fact that a purely military programme had been turned into a political visit to Sarajevo. "If I could have seen from the report of Your Highness", he wrote to Potiorek, "that police department had not been up to its task, we would have considered it our obvious duty to prevent that journey at any cost. I was terrified with the news, which was published semi-officially in newspapers, that barely 120 policemen had been put at [our] disposal. If it had been about a credit to strengthen the guards, it goes without saying that it would have been granted at once. I also believe that gendarmerie could have been deployed usefully as guards."²⁷³ Dr. T. Zurunić also claimed that he had suggested to Potiorek, on the basis of confidential information on the excitement among the youth, to organize some sort of civil guards, just like it had been done on the occasion of the arrival of Emperor Franz Joseph in Sarajevo in 1910. He also warned how inconvenient it was for the Crown Prince to visit Sarajevo on no other than St. Vitus Day, because that "was considered a provocation on the part of many, and especially extreme, elements". But Potiorek dismissed him with the comment that the reception was a concern of military authorities alone.²⁷⁴

The attentat was carried out on St. Vitus Day before noon. As much as the Serb population was incensed by the execution of large-scale maneuvers in Bosnia, as an apparent show of force against Serbia, it was equally infuriated on account of the fact that St. Vitus Day was chosen for the Crown Prince's triumphal descend on Sarajevo. St. Vitus Day is one of the most important days in the Serb national calendar. The entire Kosovo legend, which had shaped the education of the Serb people for centuries through extraordinary popular epic poems, is related to that day. During the tragic fighting in Kosovo on that day in 1389, Miloš Obilić killed the Turkish Sultan Murad I and became a national hero. On that day, all the Serb churches and the entire society have kept a vigil to this day and nourished the cult of Kosovo struggle, in which

272 Hötendorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, III, p. 445.

273 A translation of this letter is published in *Nova Evropa*, I, 1920, pp. 35-6.

274 Jovanović, *Stvaranje zajedničke države Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca*, p. 201; *Vrbaske novine*, no. 440, 1934.

both the opposing rulers were killed and which signified to Serbs the date of Turkish predominance and the breakdown of their own old state. Since Franz Ferdinand was going to be taken down the Sarajevo streets on that very day, accompanied by Austrian generals after the completed maneuvers, like some sort of a triumph, the Serbs believed that that day was deliberately chosen to offend them. The younger people were deeply embittered. They considered the Austrian Crown Prince a new danger, which threatened them with new slavery, instead of the crushed Turkish opponent who had enslaved their people for centuries. All that Austria had undertaken against the Serbs, especially in 1912-1913, was interpreted as a preparation for further struggles and that new slavery. In particular, the abolishment of all Serb societies in Bosnia during the Scutari crisis and the state of siege left a deep mark of hatred and bitterness. In such mood, it was not difficult for young men to remain firm in their decision to carry out the attentat; rather, their determination was growing stronger.

Čabrinović carried out the first assassination attempt. When a column of cars passed along the Miljacka embankment towards the building of the Town Hall, Čabrinović asked one of the present policemen to tell him in which car the Crown Prince was seated. The guard did not find such question suspicious at all and he provided a correct answer. Čabrinović then leapt forward, threw a bomb on Crown Prince's car and jumped to Miljacka himself. Having jumped into shallow water, he took a cyanide, but it did not have any effect. The bomb hit the side of the car, rolled down and exploded behind the next car, in which Prof. A. Boos-Waldeck and Lieutenant-Colonel E. Merizzi were driven with some other people. The two of them were slightly wounded from that bomb, whereas six other people, who stood in the street, sustained more serious wounds. Apart from the said aide-de-camps, there were another nine persons with less dangerous wounds. The chief of the Crown Prince's office, Colonel Dr. Bardolff, wrote that a bomb splinter touched the neck of Crown Prince's wife. The Crown Prince arrived in the Town Hall, where all the members of the municipal administration waited for the visitors, in an extremely agitated mood. Just as the mayor addressed him with a welcome, he interrupted him angrily: "You receive guests with bombs here." It was only after these words and the look from his wife that he calmed down. The reception carried on afterwards in accordance with the plan, but with discomfort and certain confusion of all those who participated. After visiting the Town Hall, the Crown Prince was supposed officially to open and have a tour of a new museum. All the members of the Bosnian government waited for him there, except Governor Potiorek who accompanied him. The writer of this book was also among the museum clerks, who were assembled to welcome the guest. But before he left for the museum, the Crown Prince insisted to pay a visit first to the wounded

Merizzi in the Military Hospital. They went again along the embankment. The first two cars turned, according to the programme of visit, to the then Franz Joseph street, not realizing that the original plan was somewhat changed. When the third car with Crown Prince, his wife and General Potiorek followed the first two, Potiorek turned to the chauffeur and ordered him to turn the car back and continue the ride down the embankment. In that moment, the car nearly stopped. Then the second assassin, Gavrilo Princip, shot two deadly bullets from the close range. The first was aimed at Crown Prince, the second at Potiorek. The first hit its target, while the second one hit Crown Prince's wife. Franz Ferdinand was hit in the right side of his neck and his wife in the loins. The wounds were fatal. Their death was facilitated by the fact that the car was immediately driven full speed to *Konak* and the hemorrhage seems to have been stronger that it might have been otherwise. When Princip started to shoot, a police officer tried to grab his hand, but Princip's friend, Mihailo Pušara, a journalist, punched the police officer in the knee with his leg, so he stumbled down and the moment to prevent the attentat was gone.

The initial statements of the assassins, which Potiorek reported to Vienna as soon as 28 June ran as follows: Čabrinović confessed that he had been given a bomb in Belgrade from an anarchist "partly from national, partly from anarchist motives". Princip stated "that he has long wanted to kill some high-placed person for national motives". He murdered Crown Prince, "because he saw in that high-placed person an incarnation of that force that oppresses the Yugoslavs".²⁷⁵ After that, other confessions were made. All the arrested assassins, who had been in Belgrade, confessed until 2 July their connections with Ciganović, who had given them bombs, revolvers, ammunition and, for the three of them – Princip, Grabež and Čabrinović – 150 dinars for travel expenses.²⁷⁶ Princip confessed that Grabež was the only assassin who communicated with Major Tankosić and none of them had contacts with other persons in Serbia. The others confirmed that. Reporting this, Potiorek himself added that Tankosić belonged to Pašić's and the government's opponents.²⁷⁷

Apart from that, Potiorek's reporting was sometimes rife with falsehoods. Feeling his great personal responsibility for the inadequate organization of security measures, he tended to present the situation as resulting from the state of affairs that practically bordered on revolution. For example, he reported to Vienna on 29 June that demonstrations against the Serbs had broken out in

275 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 208-9.

276 *Ibid.*, pp. 213, 266.

277 *Ibid.*, pp. 366-7.

Sarajevo, “but also Serb [demonstrations] against the [Roman] Catholics,”²⁷⁸ which was, as it is well-known, a sheer fabrication. A day after the attentat, the Serbs were attacked in Sarajevo by well-organized mob, among which I saw officers with my own eyes; nowhere the Serbs attacked anyone. In general, these attacks on the Serbs, which turned into virtual pogroms and which were first carried out in the middle of the capital, in front of the authorities, and then repeated in many places in the interior, constituted a disgrace for a law-abiding state. The mobs which were joined by governmental clerks, with the passive assistance from the authorities, demolished almost all Serb shops and abodes, threw things out in the street, smashed or robbed them, and that nearly lasted for a whole day, from 9-10.00 am to 5-6.00 pm.²⁷⁹ The attacks were then carried out in various places in the interior on 30 June and 1 July and even the Orthodox churches were not spared on that occasion, for example in Mostar or in Klepci near Gabela, where the mob desecrated in the most hideous manner the most sacred church objects. If the Serbs in Bosnia had been guilty for the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, they atoned for their sins through these pogroms. But whereas the attentat on the Crown Prince was carried out by individuals, the authorities themselves were responsible for the pogroms, for they were taking place, if not with the secret participation of some organs, then certainly due to their public and apparent passivity. Moreover, the reports of the Bosnian Governor make it clear that he manipulated the truth in order to whitewash the demonstrations, to some extent, if not to justify them. The Austrian diplomatic representatives also tried to present the pogroms as a “perfectly understandable” bitterness of the loyal elements; but when such proceedings were exposed to equally “perfectly understandable” criticism, as Sazonov did on 6 July, then the reservations followed, stemming from unclear conscience. For example, the Austrian representative in St. Petersburg refused “to speak officially about the internal developments in the Monarchy”.²⁸⁰ While the demonstrations could be interpreted as being directed against the Serbs, he spoke about them confidently;

278 Ibid., p. 214.

279 Cf. A. Gauvain, *Les Origines de la guerre européenne*, Paris 1915, pp. 208-10.

280 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 337. Sazonov also spoke with bitterness of these pogroms to the German Ambassador. See *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, I, pp. 74-5. Cf. a thorough report from Sarajevo sent by Gagarin, the secretary of the Russian Embassy in Vienna. See *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus. Dokumente aus den Archiven der Zarischen und der Provisorischen Regierung*. Edited by M. N. Pokrovsky, Authorized German translation by Otto Hoetzsch, Reihe 1, Bd. 4., 28. Juni bis 22. Juli 1914, Berlin 1932, pp. 228-37. Cf. the reports of British Vice-Consul Jones in *British Documents*, XI, pp. 20, 27. Count M. Montgelas concluded from these demonstrations, in which the participation of Austrian officers and clerks was apparent, that

but as soon as they had to be interpreted in the light unfavourable to Austria, it was necessary to put an end to discussion. There is no evidence whatever that the Serbian government was aware of, or prepared, the attentat. The Bosnian government allowed the pogroms to take place before their eyes for nearly the whole day, if they did not know about them in advance. With these pogroms, Austria-Hungary started the persecution against the Serbs, which were its own subjects, and soon extended it to Serbia.

“anti-Austrian agitation in the Yugoslav provinces” was a matter of the Orthodox minority. See *Berliner Monatshefte*, IX, 1931, p. 665.

Austria Accuses Serbia

Austria presented the Serbian danger to her territory as being direct. Serbia was about to set on fire her Yugoslav regions and provoke a revolution. However, the Serbian government thought of this least of all. It is a well-established fact today on the basis of both Serbian and Russian diplomatic correspondence that Serbia was reluctant because of Austria-Hungary alone to carry out financial and diplomatic unification with Montenegro, which was offered by King Nicholas himself on 15 (2) March 1914 in a private letter to King Peter, and that she also hesitated to send her military instructors to Montenegro. When she was reluctant because of the Austrian danger to carry out what was offered to her under very favourable conditions, would Serbia at the same time provoke Austria in another matter to which the latter was even more sensitive? This is confirmed in Hartwig's report of 7 April 1914: "Pašić finds it desirable to leave aside now all concerns for 'the still not liberated Serb brethren and the whole Yugoslavdom', and to think of measures that could really strengthen the ties between the people of the same blood", i.e. between Serbia and Montenegro. Another report from Cetinje stressed that Pašić was aware of "all the difficulties and complications with Austria, which could be caused by the participation of Serbs in the education and the supplying of Montenegrin troops". "Pašić", Hartwig wrote, "not just fully realizes the danger of hastening artificially a normal course of events, but also consider it necessary to observe extreme caution in the negotiations with Montenegro even in innocent matters, which do not concern directly the field of foreign policy."¹

The thought that the Serbian government could have had any connection with the preparation of the attentat is more than absurd. No one will ever be able to provide any evidence in this sense. All the accusations from the Austrian side, as far as they were made by the responsible factors, concerned the tolerance of the Serbian government towards the activities of the press and the societies directed against Austria-Hungary and the fact that it remained passive, or took certain favourable view of those activities, rather than the active role of Serbia. In fact, the Serbian government was both in principle and in reality against any action that could cause further difficulties and impede the consolidation of the country and that could diminish Serbia's

1 *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus*. Reihe 1, Bd. 2., pp. 157, 167, 170-1.

reputation, which was acquired at heavy cost, in the eyes of the entire cultured world, which condemned the use of attentats as a means of political struggle. Even the members of *Narodna odbrana* were much dissatisfied with what had been done. When after the attentat and fearing the consequences the peasant Milović ran away to Serbia and went to Šabac to see Boža Milanović, a tradesman and the local president of *Narodna odbrana*, the latter greeted him with reproaches and sent him back, refusing to take care of him and take responsibility for an accomplished fact, especially since Milović had not come to him before he had acted.²

Serbia was indeed exhausted after two wars and the Albanian uprising. "Serbia yearns for peace", Hartwig wrote on 18 October 1913, "and she is prepared to establish friendly relations with all her neighbours."³ The Austrian Military Attaché, Lieutenant-Colonel Gellinek, reported on 25 November 1913 to the Chief of the General Staff that Serbia "fell into the state of weakness" in terms of both finance and equipment. Rifles and clothing had to be replenished, as the existing ones had been dilapidated.⁴ He repeated that in his report sent on 26 January 1914. "The country requires undisturbed peace in years to come. The intended build-up of the Serbian military organization has only started."⁵ Baron Giesl also wrote on 24 February that "military and financial circumstances in the Kingdom are such that would stop automatically the pursuit of an adventurous policy".⁶ On 10 April, he repeated that in Serbia "a true love of peace prevails among the entire population and the army – Serbia wants peace, because she cannot wage war now; this fact and Serbia's weakening through territorial gain, in military and economic terms, in short in political respect, which will last for years, and the engagement of the best military and financial forces in Old Serbia to maintain the new areas are the assuaging moments when estimating the current position of Serbia".⁷

Serbia's military preparedness, after two wars, was almost completely exhausted. Of course, the government was well aware of this. And which government could dare to agree to such an adventure, or facilitate it in any way, when it realized its unpreparedness? Crown Prince Alexander himself told a Russian representative on 19 July 1914 that the whole Serbian army had barely

2 A statement made by V. Čubrilović. Cf. Seton-Watson, *Sarajevo*, p. 101.

3 *Der diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, III, p. 315.

4 Hötendorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, III, p. 492.

5 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VII, p. 779.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 917.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 1041.

100,000 rifles in working order and he feared that this circumstance might be a “great temptation” for Serbian enemies.⁸

During the negotiations with France for the conclusion of a loan, the Serbian government authorized its Minister in Paris on 12 January 1914 to state that Serbia needed 400,000 rifles to arm her troops. “In view of political circumstances prevailing in the Balkans and in Europe, it is required to have at least 250,000 rifles within two years and the rest, i.e. 150,000 in the course of the third year.” Familiar with the situation in Serbia, Gellinek claimed, just before the war, that the Serbs would not be able to place more than 100,000 soldiers in the field. “With six Austro-Hungarian corps, we will crush Serbia in four weeks and occupy her entire territory.”⁹ At the outbreak of the war, the Serbian army indeed lacked the most basic supplies. The War Minister in 1914, Dušan Stefanović, said that military equipment “was in the most sorrowful condition”. There was not enough pontoon materiel to cross over the river, and the offensive across the Danube, Sava and Drina could not be contemplated without it. Apart from rifles, the army also lacked ammunition, especially artillery ammunition. “We did not have heavy artillery (short and long-range)”, General Živko Pavlović, then head of the operational department of the Supreme Command, noted.¹⁰ The army did not even have clothing. “Naked and barefoot the soldiers are camping without tents on the open ground, in mud and snow”, the Supreme Command reported to the War Minister on 10 October 1914. The commander of the Second Army, Stepa Stepanović, soon recorded in an agitated state of mind: “The enemy ruins the trenches and buries the soldiers under the ground with superior artillery, and I have no ammunition to prevent him from doing so.”¹¹ It was not before 18 (5) June, ten days before the attentat that the National Assembly granted credits to purchase military equipment; the orders barely reached factories before the war. Many regiments had enough arms only for three battalions, while the fourth one was in reserve without rifles. “With this in view, everyone, and especially soldiers, can appreciate if anyone in Serbia then could have even thought of a war, particularly against the mighty and militarily well-prepared Austria.”¹²

There are other, equally reliable facts that explain why the Serbian government could not have contemplated to cause any complications. Relations

8 *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus*. Reihe 1, Bd. 4., p. 259. He spoke in a similar strain to the old soldier A. Kutschbach. See *Der Brandherd Europas*, Leipzig 1929, p. 156.

9 A. Frh. V. Margutti, *Kaiser Franz Joseph*, Wien – Leipzig 1924, p. 423.

10 Ž. Pavlović, *Bitka na Jadru*, Beograd 1924, p. 54.

11 *Veliki rat Srbije*, Izdanje Glavnog Djeneralštaba, III, Beograd 1925, pp. 77, 145.

12 D. Stefanović, *Politika*, nos. 85, 34, 35, 1931.

between Turkey and Greece became so tense on account of Turkish treatment of the Greeks and the sovereignty over the Aegean islands that a war between them seemed to be inevitable in spring 1914, especially in May and early June. In close relations with the Turks, Bulgaria could easily be tempted to assist them either actively or passively by letting the Turks pass over her territory in order to benefit herself later. The danger of a new conflict with Bulgaria seemed highly likely. How could Serbia uncertain about Bulgarian attitude think of provoking a conflict with Austria? On 14 June, Pašić told Hartwig that he would send a strong message to the Greek government. "After two exhausting wars and a large-scale clash with Albania, Serbia was not prepared for further military actions either in financial or military terms. He cannot call upon the people to engage in a fight that would surpass their strength without a risk of serious internal complications, and a fight at that which revolves around a secondary question."¹³ On 8 July (25 June), he wrote in relation to a report from Athens: "We said that a conflict with Turkey should be avoided, because we are not prepared and, besides, the [Aegean] islands question is subject to the decision of Great Powers ... But just in case, we need to take into serious consideration Greek insistence to start a war before Turkey will have been ready and to clear our minds and decide what we need to do, if Greece indeed embarks on a war with Turkey without our consent. In that case, Bulgaria would wait for a favourable opportunity during the conflict and get involved as soon as she has become convinced that she could overpower us. Our Chief General Staff needs to bear in mind that possible conflict and to plan the distribution of our military forces accordingly in order to repel an attack on the part of Bulgaria, if it comes to pass. It is necessary to prepare now in peace, because it will be more difficult later."¹⁴

Moreover, conflicts between Italy and Austria in Albania, where the struggle had erupted in mid-May between Prince Wied and Essad-pasha, in which Austria supported the former and Italy backed the latter, assumed such proportions that Germany warned about the "direct endangering of the Triple Alliance" and certain Austrian messages to Rome, which "were almost in the nature of an ultimatum".¹⁵ For Serbia, the situation would be much more favourable if she waited for intensification of the conflict between the two allied powers and to exploit it to her benefit rather than to expose herself alone to the built-up ire and bellicose mood of the Viennese military circles. And

13 *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus*. Reihe 1, Bd. 3., p. 219.

14 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from Athens, 24 June 1914, conf. no. 2492.

15 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXVI, pp. 716, 718-9.

Serbia could wait. General development of political situation in Europe and in the neighbouring Danubian Monarchy was favourable to her.

Besides external difficulties, there were no lesser internal ones. The Radical Cabinet was absorbed in its conflict with the opposition, which was unified against it. After prolonged and futile negotiations, the Cabinet was authorized on 24 June to dissolve the parliament and call for the general elections scheduled on 14 (1) August. The election campaign was fiery and the Cabinet was much concerned with the outcome of the elections. On the same day, 24 June, King Peter relinquished his duties on account of ill-health and fatigue, and Crown Prince Alexander became the Regent.

The attentat certainly brought about the greatest difficulties for the Serbian government. On 19 July, Pašić complained to the Russian representative how detrimental it was to the government and Serbia. He told him – and not the Austrian or German Minister – that “inspired by the sincere desire to improve relations with the neighbouring monarchy” he would treat in the harshest manner anyone, if the Austrian government provided him with evidence that Serbian institutions were guilty. A rigorous control would be exercised over those societies of which Austria complained and they would be required to confine their work to Serbia alone.¹⁶ The Russian Charge d’Affairs saw clearly that the attentat struck Serbia at the least favourable moment and “foiled all her plans”.¹⁷

Certain circles derived the responsibility of the Serbian government for the attentat from the fact that, after having learnt that something had been going on and that certain persons had crossed the border, it had not warned the Vienna government and, in doing so, helped to either postpone Crown Prince’s journey or carry it out with more caution.

The Serbian side replied mostly along the following lines: it was impossible to state officially anything concrete, because nothing concrete was known. If just general hints had been made, that could have been considered, in keeping with the not friendly relations between Serbia and Austria, an attempt on the part of the former country to undermine the Crown Prince’s trip to Bosnia with vague warnings and to interfere with relations between Crown Prince and his subjects. When this was considered after the attentat, such view could seem problematic, but at the time, before the attentat, it must indeed have had much force to any Serbian statesman. If the attentat had not taken place, as it could have easily been the case, and the Serbian government had sent a warning based on hints that it could take place, what would have been its position

¹⁶ *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus*. Reihe 1, Bd. 4., p. 260.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, V, p. 5.

in respect to Vienna and how it would have been interpreted and discussed by the inimical public opinion? A government could proceed with providing such an information only then when it could supply authentic information on certain persons and preparations, and the Serbian government was neither in possession of such information nor it could have it, judging by its relations with Dimitrijević and his men.

Nevertheless, the Serbian Minister in Vienna, Jovan M. Jovanović, believed it to be necessary, given the agitated frame of mind among the youth, to draw the attention of Viennese responsible factors, with a few general remarks, to dangers to which the Crown Prince was exposed on his journey.

Jovanović recounts that "in late May 1914, he drew the attention of the Minister for Bosnia and Herzegovina that it was inconvenient to have Franz Ferdinand carry out maneuvers in Bosnia on none other than St. Vitus Day. He told him that the maneuvers held on St. Vitus Day, the first one to be celebrated after the Kosovo battle, could be regarded as provoking the Serbs. A rifle could be fired from among the Serb soldiers and shot someone who should not be shot. The Minister replied him that the maneuvers were a military matter."¹⁸ "Late May" Jovanović referred to was probably dated according to the old calendar, because he claimed to others that the exact date of his visit had been 5 June.¹⁹ He warned Biliński on his own initiative, without seeking for approval of his government and without informing it about that, even after the attentat. Jovanović explains his step as follows: "When one state wants to carry out political police work for another state, it is normal that its statements are concrete and authentic. In this case, there was nothing authentic and concrete, and the statement, the warning, could have been such as it had been made ... Any political conversation between a foreign representative and any high official of a state he is accredited to is considered an official conversation – even then when it takes the form of a most private conversation. And the form of a conversation between Serbian Minister and Dr. Biliński is not important here, but rather the fact that such conversation did take place ... The warning was there and it was given to the most relevant official, the Minister for Bosnia and Herzegovina, from the official Serbian quarters and just before the attentat at that."²⁰

18 Jovanović, *Stvaranje zajedničke države Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca*, p. 86.

19 Cf. Muret, *L'archiduc François Ferdinand*, p. 275; J. Isaac, *Un débat historique. Le problème des origines de la guerre*, Paris 1933, pp. 249-50; L. Savadjian, *Les origines et les responsabilités de la guerre Mondiale*, Paris: "Revue des Balkans", 1933, pp. 43-4.

20 *Politika*, nos. 7979-80, 1930. There is a version according to which Djordje Josimović, a clerk from the Serbian Legation in Vienna, claimed that Jovanović had spoken to Biliński on 21 June about that matter based on the instructions that Pašić had sent to him three

Paul Flandrak, a secretary in the Ministry for Bosnia and Herzegovina, confirmed the close ties between Biliński and the Serbian Minister in Vienna, which had lasted for nearly two years. The Ballplatz did not care much for Jovanović, who was known to have been an opponent of their policy in Macedonia, in Cetinje and during the time he was the head of the Education department in the Foreign Ministry in Belgrade. Biliński maintained contact with Jovanović both directly and through Dr. B. Čerović, an official of the Joint Finance Ministry, on the one hand, he hoped that Jovanović would influence the Serbs in Bosnia not to make difficulties for him in the execution of his programme and, on the other, he wanted to discuss with him financial-economic matters, since he was the joint Finance Minister in Austria-Hungary. Biliński's contacts were known in Vienna. They were approved by both the Court and Count Berchtold. In Flandrak's account, which brims with inaccuracies and is unreliable, there is some information that has certain importance for this question. After having learnt about the Crown Prince's trip, the Serbian Minister called upon Biliński and had a conversation with him about the intended maneuvers. "He expressed fear that the Serbian government could see in it a threat to itself. Besides, he made Biliński think whether the inevitable patriotic manifestations in Bosnia on the arrival of the future ruler of the Monarchy might cause dissatisfaction on both sides of the border. He pleaded Biliński not to regard his statements as some official communication. He only wanted to eschew anything that could, even temporarily, interfere with the planned negotiations with a view to improving mutual relations."²¹ Leopold Mandl was also aware that Biliński held official conversations with the Serbian Minister, after having received the Emperor's approval and Berchtold's consent.²² The fact that Jovanović talked to Biliński about the Crown Prince's trip and that he voiced his fears seems to have been established, although Biliński did not make use of and forward it and although he did not mention it in his *Memoirs*. Perhaps Jovanović's general warning did not seem to him suitable to act upon it, or perhaps he restrained himself from further steps because he was side-tracked in the preparations for the journey and he thought that forwarding

days earlier. But Josimović denied this, stating that he was not the author of the article in which that fact is put forward. See H. Wendel, *Aus der Welt der Südslaven*, Berlin 1926, p. 141. Cf. Schmitt, *The Coming of the War 1914*, I, p. 243.

21 This is quoted according to the translation published in *Novi život*, VI, 1925, 36 and the article published in *Neues Wiener Journal* of 26 April 1925. Cf. *Die Kriegsschuldfrage*, VI, 1928, pp. 1153-4. For mistrust in Jovanović see A. Dumaine, *La dernière ambassade de France en Autriche*, Paris 1921, p. 80.

22 *Die Kriegsschuldfrage*, II, 1923, p. 108 ff.

such vague information might create the impression that he was deliberately, but without authorization, interfering with military matters.²³

Some authors find that Jovanović's warning, if it was given,²⁴ was not sufficient in its Sibylla-like form and that it did not diminish the Serb responsibility in the slightest. However, the main thing was that the Serbian side drew attention to the restlessness in Bosnia and the possible dangers; it was difficult to say more than this when nothing else or more reliable was known.

Some authors drew the conclusion about the responsibility of the Serbian government from a statement made by Ljubomir Jovanović, Minister of Education in the Pašić Cabinet in 1914. In one of his articles, Lj. Jovanović wrote that Pašić had told the members of Cabinet in late May or early June "that some people prepare to go to Sarajevo and kill Franz Ferdinand". All the Cabinet members agreed, he further said, that the Minister for Interior Affairs issue an order to the authorities on the Drina to prevent young men, who left for Bosnia with that intention, from crossing over. The officials on the border, who were "themselves part of the organization", did not carry out that order, but rather made an excuse for themselves to the effect that the order had reached them too late. "That is how an attempt on the part of the government to prevent the execution of the planned attentat failed, just like an attempt made by our Minister in Vienna, Mr. Joca Jovanović, on his own initiative, to approach Minister Biliński in order to dissuade Archduke from the intended fatal trip also failed."²⁵

Much has been written on that article by Lj. Jovanović here and abroad.²⁶ Lj. Jovanović was the only person in Serbia to claim such a thing. The other members of the Cabinet, who were still alive when the article was published – Pašić, War Minister Dušan Stefanović, Justice Minister Marko Djuričić and Minister of Economy Velizar Janković – denied it vehemently. Pašić denied that he had ever said that.²⁷ Stefanović claimed that "I did not hear or know anything about the preparations for the attentat in Sarajevo. I heard of the attentat on St. Vitus Day when it had been carried out from the mouth of the

23 A cousin of Biliński has recently claimed that Biliński did advise against Crown Prince's visiting Sarajevo, but he was unsuccessful. This is still unverified. Cf. *Revue d'Histoire de la Guerre Mondiale*, XII, 1934, p. 397.

24 Their doubts were founded on the following: 1) Jovanović did not reveal this immediately after the event; 2) there is no his report to the Serbian government on this in the *Plava knjiga* [Blue Book], which he edited himself in Niš in 1914; 3) there is no trace of this in Austrian official documents or in Biliński's memoirs for that matter.

25 Lj. Jovanović, *Krv Slovenstva*, Beograd 1924, pp. 9-10.

26 E. Durham, *The Sarajevo Crime*, London 1925, pp. 127-47 seized upon it in particular to accuse the Serbs.

27 *Politika*, no. 6468, 1926.

late Stojan Protić.”²⁸ Stefanović also added this important statement made to him by Pašić: “On the basis of certain private tips, I had a hunch that something was going to happen in Sarajevo and I talked with Stojan about this, and he produced a circular note for the police authorities, which ordered that the border – the Drina – be watched carefully so that suspicious people could not cross over from our country into Bosnia. If I am not mistaken, that circular was found on the border line. But I did not think much of those rumours and I was, least of all, privy to that matter as Prime Minister, together with the Cabinet, or even assist it.”

Velizar Janković, Minister of Economy in the Pašić Cabinet, has told that during a meeting in May (he has not given the exact date), Protić said that “there is information that some young men from Bosnia and Herzegovina have crossed the Drina into Serbia without a passport and that they have returned these days in the same way under the protection of some of our border officers”. Protić was angry because certain military people interfered with the work of his own officials, whereas Pašić pointed out the difficulties that such secret crossings might cause with the Austrian authorities. “Such liaisons of our officers from the ‘Black Hand’ group who have monopolized patriotism, with the exalted young men enthralled by Greater Serbian propaganda were not to our liking.” The following was decided at that meeting: “1) that Minister for Interior Affairs undertakes the strictest measures to prevent these uncontrolled and forbidden crossing over our and the Austro-Hungarian border and to take lively action to remove the Black Handers from more important positions in the army. 2) that Pašić informs in the most convenient manner whoever needs [to be informed] in Vienna and to pay more attention to Bosnian young men so that they would not make, enthralled by Greater Serbian propaganda, some disagreeable demonstration and [embark on an] adventure on the occasion of the large-scale maneuvers in Sarajevo, which the Austro-Hungarian army has organized, with an immense number of 250,000 soldiers and headed by the Austro-Hungarian Crown Prince [Franz] Ferdinand, on our western border with a view to making a show of force.”

“We in the Cabinet, I claim that adamantly, could not anticipate the attentat on the Austro-Hungarian Crown Prince, or predict it. We just feared some other unrestrained steps that could be made by our youth either from Serbia or from Austria-Hungary elevated by the lofty idea of unification after the successful Balkan Wars and indignant because of all those humiliating measures and acts on the part of Austro-Hungarian diplomacy in respect of Serbia. This fear was all the more justified because the Greater Serbian and the Yugoslav

28 *Politika*, no. 8554, 1931.

movement had grown in prominence not just in Serbia, but also in Austria-Hungary, because that revolutionary spirit among the youth caused great difficulties to us in the Cabinet and, on several occasions, it was opposed to our moderate, realistic and statesmanlike policy. And for that reason, we made the above mentioned important decisions in May 1914, that is to say a whole month before the Sarajevo attentat.”

“The late Stojan Protić, with whom I had very cordial relations, showed me soon after that meeting his strongly-worded and energetic circular – an order – relating to this crossing over the Drina. According to my notes, that circular, that order, which was also dated in May, I think, right after our meeting, was signed by then head of the civil servants in the Ministry for Interior Affairs, Mr. Milorad Vujičić, who is today a retired minister.”²⁹

The account of Lj. Jovanović has been the subject of numerous studies so far. Was that what he said really true, or memory blurred with later events, or tendency to attach his party and himself to the event that was often considered a heroic deed that made a turnabout in our history? Many took the first interpretation to be closest to the truth; the second was considered possible, but less likely; Seton-Watson and Carlo Sforza mostly advocated the third. The third interpretation was least believed. If Lj. Jovanović wanted, B. Schmitt has argued, to somehow give credit to the Radical Party for the Sarajevo attentat in order to increase the number of its supporters in Bosnia, why did he not publish his article in a book or a journal with larger readership than Ksjunin's edited volume?³⁰ We believe that Jovanović's account was a mixture of all three elements: it is highly likely that he had indeed heard and known something about the smuggling of arms and people across the border and the measures undertaken by the Ministry for Interior Affairs to prevent it, and, writing from memory ten years after the event, he confused things that he had known before and after the attentat. There is no doubt that he was also bragging. For example, I cannot believe that he ever saw and spoke with Princip in the Education Ministry, as he claims in that article. It has never been customary for an education minister to receive personally pupils who need permission to take some exams in a grammar school; a head of the department for high school education would barely do so. When Jovanović was required officially to state the whereabouts of the pupils from Pakrac, who had come to Serbia and who had been given teaching positions partly by him, he was, not surprisingly, unable to reply immediately, although those pupils had become the matter of

29 *Politika*, no. 8319, 1931.

30 A. Ksjunin, *Krv slovenstva: spomenica desetogodišnjice svetskog rata: 1914-1924*, Beograd 1924.

a major diplomatic investigation. How could he then remember a small grammar school pupil from Bosnia, who had spoken with him (if he had spoken at all) just about getting permission to take his exam? It is obvious that Jovanović wanted to use this story for bragging. For all those reasons, his story cannot serve as a reliable source for historical investigation; it is nothing more than a story.

On the day of the attentat, Janković traveled with his whole family from Belgrade to Rijeka (then Fiume) and heard the news of the attentat on the road. He puts this forward rightfully as one of the strong reasons that bellies the claims that the Serbian government was familiar with the preparations for the attentat. Indeed, would a member of Cabinet expose himself to the dangers of being in a country whose Crown Prince was going to be murdered with his knowledge? If nothing else, he would probably not have done so on account of discomfiture that either he or his family could be exposed to on the part of the mob.

Searching for documents, I have found this paper produced by the administration of the Drina county, issued in Šabac, conf. no. 85, 16 (3) June, in the archives of the Supreme Court in Sarajevo, among the documents which the Austrian military authorities found in Loznica and used as an incriminating material at the high treason trial in Banja Luka:

“To the Commander of 5. Company of the border troops, Loznica.

I have found out that financial police on the Bosnian border transport from Serbia to Bosnia arms, ammunition and other explosives through our people and people from Bosnia. After having investigated into this, I have established that some ten days ago 4 revolvers and 400 bullets were passed over into Bosnia through Rajko Stepanović, a sergeant of the border troops on our side, and Jevta Jevtić from Medjaši, on the Austrian side, and then the same Stepanović and Milan Aničić from Badinovci brought a suitcase in a hut that belongs to Milan Vračarić from Badinovci, in which arms and bombs were placed, for the purpose of passing them over into Bosnia and handing them to Rade Malobabić. On that occasion, Sergeant Stepanović showed to Vračarić Your written order, on the basis of which he was undertaking this work. It is not necessary to mention You what consequences, and how bad, could follow, if the Austro-Hungarian authorities found out about this transport of arms and ammunition, and not just because of the manner and the moment in which this was done, but also because of the persons who are engaged in this venture. Reporting You the above, I recommend You to put an end to this activity immediately and prevent any attempt to bring arms and ammunition from Serbia to Bosnia; in the contrary case, I will make You personally responsible before the

relevant Minister. You will let me know at once that you have acknowledged the above and report to me: Did you do this and with whose knowledge and approval, as well as what was in this suitcase? At the same time, you will send Sergeant Rajko Stepanović to me so that I can question him about this matter.”

County Prefect, Kosta Jezdić

This document was known to the Austrian authorities, but they did not want to make it public. It is clear from its energetic tone: 1) that the Serbian authorities did not know the names of the assassins or about their crossing over into Bosnia; 2) that they only found out about the smuggling of arms on the border, but not who brought it over and why; and 3) that someone included among the smugglers the name of Rade Malobabić, an agent of Dimitrijević, although he had nothing to do with this matter, as far as it could have been established, apparently to confuse civil authorities. The document from the office of the Drina county prefect further suggests that the Belgrade government could not have known more than it was known “on the spot” about the crossing over of some people and who and how brought arms over the border. It is, therefore, understandable that the government, which had no information itself, could not have sent more concrete messages to Vienna, especially about the persons whose identity remained unknown to the government.

Unfortunately, the archives of the local authorities in Loznica and Šabac suffered destruction during the war, just like the archive of the Ministry for Interior Affairs, and we cannot establish today if some document from that Ministry reached them and what its content was. But it is likely that the energetic attitude of the county prefect office on the Drina resulted from a request from Belgrade or some stern message from the relevant minister, as mentioned by Janković and Jovanović. Unfortunately, we also do not know what the reply of the local authorities was.

That civil police authorities paid special attention to the border after this incident, in accordance with the orders issued by their superiors, is clear from the report conf. no. 17, which the border Captain Jovan Prvanović sent on 27 June in Loznica to the commander of the fifth section of the border troops. In it, he said:³¹ “It has often been brought to my attention lately that the district police authorities, acting upon an order, as well as the customs authorities, exercise certain control over the guards of this company. The prefect of the Jadar district received 2 confidential letters in that sense, from the prefect of the Drina county to the effect that he had to observe strictly the work of the

31 This document is also kept in the archive of the Supreme Court in Sarajevo.

guards from this company and to deliver in the confidential manner whatever he might found out. The former already asked some questions to the head of the customhouse in Šepačka Ada. The prefect of the Azbukovac district issued an order to municipal authorities and the head of the customhouse in Ljubovija to be informed of the work of the guards. All this takes place without the knowledge of the signatory below as their immediate superior, and the signatory below is convinced that this is true, because he has been told by some mayors in the border area.”

But all this attention was in vain. The three young men from Bosnia had long crossed the border and arrived in Sarajevo.

Despite all these clear and obvious arguments, there are certain authors, such as F. Wiesner, formerly a legal expert in the Viennese Foreign Ministry, who now claims that the Serbian government was aware of the attentat, that the Radicals reconciled with the Black Hand because they were expecting that event and preparing the ground to meet it, “gathering all patriotic forces”, and that even the change on the throne was carried out for that reason.³² Those in Austria who write and talk like that have not bothered to consult Serbian press to study the situation in Serbia in May and June 1914 or even the reports of their diplomatic representatives from which they could learn the whole truth. Apart from that, without sufficient knowledge of the leading figures in Serbia, they also make major mistakes in assessing events. It did not take much wisdom even for statesmen less cautious and experienced than the old Pašić to realize that such an act, regardless of how it would be done, could cause difficulties for the Serbdom in general, if not for Serbia herself. No government in Serbia would have had any truck with such an act, least of all Pašić’s Radical Cabinet, which hoped to remain in office and settle a series of outstanding questions with Austria-Hungary. That Pašić fully realized the importance of the attentat from the day it took place is clear from his circular dispatch to legations sent on 1 July, in which he refuted the “absurd” suspicions of the Austro-Hungarian press and stated that all the responsible Serbs were aware that the attentat would “have the most harmful effect on both the good neighbourly relations [between Serbia and Austria-Hungary] and on our compatriots in Austria-Hungary”.³³ In his frequent conversations with Count Sforza, Pašić “did not exclude the possibility that the people from the Black Hand were involved in the conspiracy. But he always assured me that the government knew nothing of it.”³⁴

32 *Die Kriegsschuldfrage*, VI, 1928, p. 364.

33 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Circular dispatch, 18 June 1914.

34 Carlo Sforza, *Neimari Savremene Evrope*, Beograd 1932, pp. 149–50.

A. Wegerer who, just like Wiesner, argues that the Serbian government was aware of the attentat, but who writes with more critical approach, states in one of his articles that it is now difficult to gauge Pašić's attitude. Pašić could have done, he thinks, nothing in particular, because he was "certainly" afraid of the movement in Serbia herself, and he could have let the things to take their course in an oriental manner.³⁵ Wegerer's speculation is entirely erroneous. Pašić took on the struggle with the Black Handers in the matters less important that this one and in which he affected not just them, but also the whole officer corps and large part of civil public opinion. In this question, in which all the reasonable elements both in the army and among civilians would certainly be on his side, he would not have hesitated to intercede, if he had had evidence about what was in the making. Regardless of this matter, it was well-known, and a member of his Cabinet, Velizar Janković, is explicit in this respect,³⁶ that he prepared the ground to settle scores after the elections with that group, which illegally interfered with his prerogatives and internal policy in general. It is too much to explain his reluctance with oriental habits. The more one studies Pašić's mentality and his *modus* of working, the conviction is growing stronger that he was anything but an example of oriental negligence. The truth is only that he was, to a large extent, absorbed by the Cabinet crisis, which lasted from 15 to 23 June and became extremely tense, and he did not pay due attention to what occurred on the border.

Hörmann Lutz wrote most critically about this among the Germans.³⁷ Having studied all these moments, he reached the only correct conclusion: that the attentat caused only premature difficulties and inconvenience to the Serbian government; but he was not right in claiming that Pašić "did not dare" to deal with the Black Hand energetically and that he felt sufficiently protected by Russia. The government therefore, he thinks, let the things take their course, without informing the Austrian authorities, after "insufficient attempt" to stop the calamity. We have said about these things all that we have to say and we do not want to repeat it. But attention must be drawn to one thing. That is an entirely erroneous assumption that Serbia was certain in advance of Russian protection. Serbia was certain of that just in case that Austria attacked her because of some clear-cut political conflicts, but she could not be certain of Russian protection at any cost, even if her attitude provided a cause for the attack. To what extent Serbia was uncertain is best seen from the supplication

35 *Die Kriegsschuldfrage*, VIII, 1930, p. 453.

36 *Politika*, no. 8319, 1931.

37 H. Lutz, *Die europäische Politik in der Julikrise 1914. Die Vorgeschichte des Weltkrieges*, XI, Berlin 1930, pp. 17-23.

to St. Petersburg once the Austrian danger had become imminent. Later Russian agreement to some sort of punishment for Serbia, but short of war and the manner in which Austria-Hungary demanded it also militates against this assumption.

The example laid out by Professor H. Uebersberger of the Vienna University based on the documents that the Austrian authorities captured in Serbia during the war shows how circumspect Pašić was not to provoke Austria. The Serbian Minister in Cetinje, Milan Gavrilović, enquired of Pašić in December 1912: the volunteers from Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Montenegrin army heard that Austria was mobilizing and thus wanted to return to their homeland in order to be more useful there, and they asked confidentially whether they should do so. As has been known, that was the time of great tension between Serbia and Austria. The cautious Pašić replied on 16 December to the effect that those people should stay where they were, because they could suffer themselves and because Montenegro could be blamed from Vienna for stirring revolt. Uebersberger sees this as evidence that the Serbian government influenced those people.³⁸ Obviously, one does not have to be very wise to note that influence. On the contrary, it would have been very unusual if there had been no such influence on the volunteers, who came from their homeland on their own volition and put themselves at the disposal of Serbia and Montenegro for the sake of national cause. But apart from that, how was that influence used? The answer is clear: not to do anything in Austria in order not to provoke her. Pašić's attitude in the spring and summer of 1914 was the same as it had been in late 1912. When he had then discouraged young people to go to their homeland and give cause to Austria for recriminations, at the time when many regarded a war against her as imminent, it is more than certain that he would have done the same in 1914 had he been familiar with the intentions of young men from Bosnia.

The Foreign Ministry in Vienna was overflowed with the news from all possible sources about various Serbian statements, actions and plans, which Austrian diplomatic representatives gathered and sent from all sides. The imagination ran wild and the Austrians forwarded all the news to Vienna, partly because of over-zeal and partly because they sensed the mood in Vienna, and we can read them today in their official collection of documents, not without astonishment on account of their complete lack of critical facilities. The German dragoman in Belgrade told, for example, that he had heard from a group of Serbian officers that nine persons had crossed the border and how all of them had been

38 *Die Kriegsschuldfrage*, VI, 1928, p. 635.

died in blue so that they would not be recognized. And the German Minister relayed such comically incredible information to Storck, and he forwarded it to Vienna. The Ambassador in Constantinople reported that the Serbs were setting up a printing house in Skoplje for the purpose of printing propagandistic articles and books against Austria written with "Turkish alphabet" and championing the suppressed "Turkish language" in Bosnia. For that reason, they entrusted Professor from the Great school (*Velika škola*) in Belgrade, Gözitep Abdullah Izzet, with making propaganda.³⁹ It seems incredible that Austrian representatives in such responsible positions were so ill-informed and barely felt any need to verify what they wrote. A highly placed Austrian official could be expected to know that Turkish language was never spoken in Bosnia; he could also be expected to make enquiries if that professor in Belgrade really existed and to establish that both that man and his department were a sheer fabrication. The headquarters of the fourth corps from Pest reported that fifty people from Serbia had crossed into the Danubian Monarchy with bombs, some in Hungary and others in Bosnia, a number of them dressed like Turks, to set the assassins free.⁴⁰ Such news were rife and all of them came from moreless murky and unreliable sources. Of course, these were spread and repeated, and they considerably contributed to further poisoning of an already bad atmosphere. Unfortunately, some authors in Austria and Germany continue to this day to use suspicious sources and statements of people with questionable moral qualities (Dragan Publić and others) or bitter opponents of the Radical government, which either punished or cast them away (Božin Simić, Miloš Bogićević and others), prone to apparent exaggerations or sometimes fabrications.⁴¹

After the attentat, on 2 July, Berchtold himself informed the Belgrade Legation of the information supplied by police in Zemun to the effect that twelve young men from Belgrade, including Janko Pokrajac, were preparing to go to Vienna in order to carry out further attentats on the occasion of the funeral of Franz Ferdinand and his wife or immediately afterwards. These youngsters mostly belonged to that group of pupils from the school of education in Pakrac, who had escaped to Serbia in spring 1914 because of their conflict with the school administration and had become teachers or continued their studies in Serbia. Berchtold requested from the Legation to start an

39 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 330-1, 333-4. Cf. p. 365 with the statements of some Croat woman from Sofia about the Young Turk named Mehmed Necid, who allegedly learned important things in Belgrade and had a mistress in the Osmanska street 27. There was no such street in Belgrade.

40 Hötzenndorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, IV, p. 35.

41 Cf. F. Wiesner, *Die Kriegsschuldfrage*, VI, 1928, pp. 356-6.

immediate and official enquiry into their whereabouts.⁴² On the same day, Austrian chargé d'affaires, Ritter von Storck, went to the Belgrade municipality (*Uprava grada*), together with two witnesses, and submitted a request that investigation be opened. As soon as the next day, the Serbian Foreign Minister provided him information on the place of residence for each person – he stated that Pokrajac was a teacher in Belica and that he was still there. Apart from the Austrian Charge d’Affaires, hasty, nervous and hostile-to-Serbs Storck, the Foreign Ministry in Vienna also demanded to have as full information as possible. Believing the veracity of the received information, the Foreign Ministry, just like the German Consulate, feared for the life of Emperor Wilhelm II, who was supposed to attend the funeral in Vienna. Therefore, the German Consul in Sarajevo was adamant in his advice to Berlin against the Emperor’s leaving for Vienna, and the visit did not take place indeed.⁴³

It was not difficult to establish the whereabouts of the suspected propagandists who worked as teachers, but that was not the case with those who had left the places in which they had studied in late June, after the end of academic year, and had gone in different directions. The Serbian government provided the Austrian Legation with all the information it could gather – the last instance was on 18 July. However, the Austrian Minister was ordered from Vienna on that day to cease further enquiries of the Serbian government,⁴⁴ with the intention to use this matter as well to make a case against it.

The atentat was also linked with free masons. Count Boni de Castellane in Paris, described by the Austrian Ambassador as someone “never to be taken seriously”, told a secretary of the Austrian Embassy on 17 July 1914 that he had information from a reliable British source that the Sarajevo attentat was but a beginning of a series of attentats directed against the Austrian dynasty – this was prepared by masonic lodges of those states which hoped to benefit from the division of Austria and the strings of conspiracy led to the Russian

42 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 249. The German Consul in Sarajevo also reported a similar news from the same source in Zemun on 1 July. See *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, p. 11.

43 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, pp. 11–2.

44 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 500. Some facts are worth noting. When these pupils went to Serbia, the Serbian authorities asked the Austrian authorities whether five of the ringleaders, including Pokrajac, were guilty of anything. On 2 May, Belgrade City Administration received information from the Austro-Hungarian Consulate (nos. 10044–5, 10047, 10049 and 10926) that these pupils committed no felony and that their statements about their crossing the border were true. See Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, *Uprava grada*, conf., 26 June 1914.

Embassy.⁴⁵ It is interesting to note that Franz Ferdinand himself told Count Czernin in 1913 that free masons had decided that he should be killed.⁴⁶ It is strange that both Čabrinović and Princip claimed at their trial that Tankosić and Ciganović were free masons, although that is not true for either of them. Tankosić could not have been one, if nothing else, because of the principle of the Belgrade lodges not to accept active officers into their membership. It has also long been established that Ciganović was not a member.⁴⁷ Ciganović might have said so to Princip and Čabrinović in order to appear more mysterious and connected, or they might have said it to make the investigation more difficult. They said that free masons, according to what Ciganović had told them, had sentenced Franz Ferdinand to death two years before the attentat, but they had heard of that only after they had made a decision to carry out an attentat. According to them, one of the main leaders of free masons was Dr. Radovan Kazimirović, who was also aware of the conspiracy. Kazimirović was never a free mason and he said so himself.⁴⁸ The judges did not believe that statement about the participation of free masons at all, but rather thought that it was an attempt to hide the trace of *Narodna odbrana*.⁴⁹

The claim of H. van Linton in the London-based newspaper *John Bull* of 11 July that the Serbian Legation in London was involved in the conspiracy leading to the Sarajevo attentat is not deserving of any comment. The Austrian Ambassador himself considered that statement "apocryphal to the greatest degree" and he saw Linton as "anything else than a trustworthy man".⁵⁰ For that reason, he refused to have anything to do with him. The editor of the newspaper, Horatio Bottomley, who published that article, was a criminal

45 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 490-1. Cf. *Hrvatska straža*, no. 59, 1932; Schmitt, *The Coming of the War 1914*, I, pp. 228-9.

46 *Im Weltkriege*, Berlin und Wien 1919, p. 58.

47 M. Muret, *L'archiduc François Ferdinand*, p. 308 states that the three conspirators-assassins were free masons, although he rejects the participation of free masons in the conspiracy. But even that is entirely inaccurate: none of the conspirators was a free mason. None could have been for the simple reason that they were underage. Poletika, *Saraevskoe ubijstvo*, p. 75 writes that Tankosić was a "co-opted" member of the Serbian free masonry. But that is also inaccurate, because there are no co-opted members in the Serbian free masonry.

48 F. Wiesner agrees with this view, to some extent, but he is nevertheless prone to believe that there were closer ties between the *Narodna odbrana*, the Black Hand and free masons. The extent of phantasy and fallacies in his account is best seen from the fact that he regards Djordje Vajfert and Svetomir Nikolajević, the most loyal citizens, as people who had some connections with revolutionary elements. See *Die Kriegsschuldfrage*, VI, 1928, pp. 330-1. Cf. J. M. Jovanović, *Politika*, no. 8532, 1932.

49 *Politika*, 26 February 1932.

50 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 364.

type and he had been convicted for fraud.⁵¹ Sir Arthur Nicolson professed to the Serbian Minister that that newspaper was “without any significance and known as completely scandalous”.⁵² This would be enough to assess the credibility of that source. But one journalist, K. Norman, has recently revived this matter, linking it with free masons, but without providing any evidence apart from his “hunch”. And the reliability of this and his other claims is best demonstrated from the fact that he has established “undoubtedly” that Princip was in London “a few weeks before the murder”.

There are also versions according to which Franz Ferdinand fell victim to not just Serb conspirators, but also to deliberate passivity of the Hungarian authorities. Rudolf Bartulić claimed that the chief of the Zagreb police Klobučarić had told him in confidence that two tips had reached Zagreb from two sides, one of them from Belgrade, about a conspiracy against the Crown Prince and that he had forwarded these tips, on the instructions of the local authorities in Croatia, to Pest. The matter then lay dormant in Pest. This gave rise to interpretations according to which the Hungarian government did not try to prevent the attentat deliberately.⁵³ But Bartulić’s account – he was an agent of the Austro-Hungarian army until 1915 – could not be confirmed from other sources and it could be hardly believed. However, some authors still suspect the deliberately passive attitude of certain Hungarian influential figures, despite the warnings of the possibility of an attentat.⁵⁴

The death of Franz Ferdinand was not received with much mourning everywhere in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. The murdered Crown Prince did not have many friends. Snappy, mistrustful of people, persistent, one-sided, he was a difficult man to come to terms with. The old emperor, it has been well-known, did not like him at all. After being told about his assassination, the Emperor only said: “Terrible. The Almighty must not be provoked. The higher power has created again that order of things that, unfortunately, I have been unable to keep!”⁵⁵ Count Szögyény-Marich, Ambassador in Berlin, told Prince Bülow that he personally regretted the tragedy of Franz Ferdinand and his wife, but politically his assassination was, in the Emperor’s words, “a merciful decision

51 Jovanović, *Stvaranje zajedničke države Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca*, p. 119.

52 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from London, 27 June 1914, conf. no. 76. Cf. *British Documents*, XI, p. 38.

53 G. Beck, *Ungarns Rolle in Weltkrieg*, Lausanne 1917, pp. 216-8; E. Lilek, *Über die deutsch-österreichische Anschluss und über die Kriegsschuldfrage*, Celje 1927, pp. 18-30.

54 Polzer-Hoditz, *Kaiser Karl*, pp. 239-42. Less serious are the accusations of R. Šelar, which are cited in M. Mire. Cf. *La Revue de Paris*, no. 1, 1932, p. 118.

55 Margutti, *Kaiser Franz Joseph*, pp. 138-9.

of divine providence".⁵⁶ Among the Hungarians to whom Franz Ferdinand was not well disposed and at against whom his state reform would mostly be directed, his death even brought certain relief. The British Consul in Pest was surprised by the lack of true sympathy after his death; Hungarian aristocracy was conspicuous by its absence even at his funeral service.⁵⁷

56 *Denkwürdigkeiten*, III, p. 138.

57 *British Documents*, XI, pp. 55-6.

Austria Prepares for War

1

From the first day, Austrian circles condemned Serbia according to the established plan. The Chief of Berchtold's cabinet, Count Hoyos, told V. Naumann immediately after the attentat that the Serbian government was to be blamed. If it had not actually instigated the attentat, it had been carried out with the government's tacit tolerance.⁵⁸ A day after the attentat, the counselor in the Belgrade Legation Storck wrote that he had received in a "very reserved" manner condolences from the Court Marshal and the secretary of Cabinet on behalf of the King and Crown Prince and from the Justice Minister and the chief official of the Foreign Ministry on behalf of the Cabinet and the absent Prime Minister. "Greater Serbian propaganda, which has been assisted here, and the outcry of the press, which the government have been tolerating for years, are the true culprits for this catastrophe", he wrote. "The cult of Obilić as a national hero from Kosovo, who killed Sultan Murad with his two friends, probably also served as an ideal to the Sarajevo assassins, raised in the ideas of Greater Serbian propaganda. Along with them, Serbian professors and the Department for the press and propaganda of the Serbian Foreign Ministry were indirectly responsible for the attentat."⁵⁹ The head of the Bosnian government, General Potiorek, wrote on the same day for reasons easily understood "that the true causes of the unfortunate event, which is perhaps only the first outbreak of turmoil to come, should be sought for in Serbia",⁶⁰ and he therefore immediately requested, together with the Bosnian government, the most energetic measures against her.⁶¹ Berchtold also told Baron Tschirschky with bitterness on 30 June that the threads of the conspiracy led to Belgrade and that it was deliberately designed to have the attentat carried out by young men, who would be punished less severely.⁶² Therefore, the entire matter was from the outset channeled in such a direction as to make a political issue of the conflict between the two states, Serbia and Austria-Hungary. The attentat was

⁵⁸ *Dokumente und Argumente*, Berlin 1928, p. 6.

⁵⁹ *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 210-1.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 214.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 241.

⁶² *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, pp. 12-3.

supposed to be used for the purpose of political and military showdown with Serbia, which represented the Serb idea in its broadest meaning, being active and victorious. Realizing such atmosphere, the French Ambassador in Vienna reported to his government on 2 July that Vienna would make demands to the Serbian government "unbearable to its dignity" and that the refusal of these would be utilized as an excuse for war.⁶³

On 30 June, Storck returned the visit to the Foreign Ministry and asked Dr. Slavko Grujić, the most senior official, "what measures have been undertaken by the royal police, i.e. what measures it intends to undertake to get hold of the threads of the attentat which notoriously lead to Serbia." Grujić replied that the Serbian police had not yet dealt with this and asked himself whether the Austrian authorities would submit a formal request with the material to investigate. "In fervid excitement, Storck wrote, he had replied that he had not spoken on behalf of the government, but he had not hesitated to ask these questions, since he was aware that that would be a fundamental police duty. Of course, Grujić did not deny this, but he rightfully asked for a point of departure. Storck wrote, however, on the same day: "It is possible, and even probable, that the attentat little suits the concept of Serbia's leaders and that the spirits, which they have summoned for years, made the government uncomfortable with the timing."⁶⁴ That did not stop him, of course, to consider that government especially responsible and to suggest Vienna to resort to the method of thumbing on the table in treating Serbia. Just like military circles, he found that Serbia should be invaded then "before she has become a military factor in European sense". "The old Danubian Empire has existed for 650 years and it has survived stronger storms than the complications that might stem from a punitive expedition against Serbia."⁶⁵ Realizing that he could not find sufficient material to accuse the Serbian government of the attentat and considering that war should be declared anyway, he wrote to Vienna on 5 July that "Serbian-Montenegrin plans for unification could perhaps provide us with a suitable cause for showdown".⁶⁶ The war was, in fact, the main thing and it should be started as soon as possible; diplomacy could construe the reasons for war as it saw fit.

After the attentat, Emperor Franz Joseph's letter to Emperor Wilhelm II was completed, although it had been mostly produced before the Sarajevo tragedy, according to an official Austrian statement. The writing of that letter had

63 *Documents diplomatiques*. 1914. *La guerre européenne*, Paris 1914, p. 25.

64 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 218-9.

65 *Ibid.*, p. 232.

66 *Ibid.*, p. 306. For more on Storck, see Lončarević, *Jugoslaviens Entstehung*, pp. 512-3.

started earlier and it had been written under the immediate impression of the visit made by the Russian Emperor to the Romanian King in Constanța on 14 June. Intent on using any means, Austrian diplomacy decided to utilize the visit in order to bring about the change in opinion and the attitude of the Berlin government in the matter of Balkan policy. The authority of the old Emperor was supposed to be invested to make Berlin, including the Court, realize to what extent the leading figures of Austro-Hungarian diplomacy considered their Balkan policy the central nerve of not only their whole foreign policy, but also, to a large degree, their internal policy. The impulse for that letter came after the consultations that German diplomats had, at the initiative of Emperor Wilhelm II, with Berchtold. On 21 April, Bethmann Hollweg reported from Corfu to Berlin that the Emperor was rather excited about Austrian policy towards Romania and her attitude against unification between Serbia and Montenegro and ordered him to make a stop in Vienna on return home and contact the leading persons of the Dual Monarchy. The Emperor wanted him, in particular, to talk with the Crown Prince. Bethmann discussed this with Jagow. The latter replied on 22 April that the center of gravity in relations with Romania was Pest rather than Vienna. Besides, "Romanian irredentism, which has been latent so far, would strengthen without Austria's mistakes due to Romania's political strengthening. The increasing opposition between the Danubian Monarchy and the neighbouring Romanian national state thus lay, to some extent, in the natural order of things." Both Jagow and Bethmann agreed that Vienna needed to be more moderate and strayed from the road that led to conflicts on all sides, not just with Serbia and Russia but also with Italy and Romania. Bethmann angrily wrote to Jagow on 8 May that he believed "a plain speaking was urgently necessary in Vienna. Vienna has started to emancipate from us increasingly in its whole policy and must be *meo voto* kept on the leash in good time."⁶⁷ Count Czernin believed that Romania was lost for the Triple Alliance and that this fact had to be brought home to Berlin, where it was still not believed, and then try to find together a way out of this situation. In May, Baron Flotow, who had long served in Berlin as a counselor of the Embassy, was entrusted in Vienna with producing a memoir about policy to be adopted towards Serbia and Romania. Baron Macheko took that memoir in mid-June, on Berchtold's order, to write a new memorandum for the German Emperor and the government.

67 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXVIII, pp. 342-3, 349. Passing through Vienna, on 23 March, Emperor Wilhelm II had a conversation with Emperor Franz Joseph and Berchtold, and he found that "both of them showed much concern in respect of Romania and Russia". See *ibid.*, XXXIX, p. 333.

Franz Joseph's letter that explained the Austrian point of view was completed on 2 July. In it, the Emperor proclaimed the Sarajevo attentat as a "direct consequence" of the agitation carried out by Russian and Serbian Panslavists "for the sole purpose of weakening the Triple Alliance and destroying my state". "According to all the investigations made so far, it was not the crime of a single man that took place in Sarajevo, but rather a well-organized conspiracy, the threads of which lead to Belgrade, and although in all probability it would not be possible to prove the complicity of the Serbian government, there is no doubt that its policy to unify all Yugoslavs under the Serbian banner has assisted such crimes and that further existence of such state of affairs presents a permanent danger to my House and my lands. This danger is further increased by the fact that Romania has become close friends with Serbia, despite the existing alliance with us, and tolerates on her soil agitation with as much hatred for us as that carried out by Serbia." Therefore, it was necessary to clear the ground. King Carol stated twice to the Austrian Minister in recent months that he would not be able, with a view to agitated and hostile feeling in Romania for Austria, to meet his allied duties in a moment of serious danger. The Romanian government overtly assisted the anti-Austrian Cultural League and, with the Russian help, aspired to make a new Balkan alliance, "which could be directed against my country alone". Such feeling had existed in Romania earlier, in the beginning of King Carol's reign, but Wilhelm II diverted Romania from that road with his powerful influence. It was, therefore, necessary to emulate the old example. It would not be possible to achieve much now, the Emperor mused, with counsels alone. Romania would be maintained in the Triple Alliance under certain conditions: 1) if Bulgaria adhered to the Triple Alliance and thus prevented the formation of a new Balkan alliance under the Russian patronage; 2) if it was said in Bucharest "clearly and openly that friends of Serbia could not be our friends"; and 3) if Romania also started to suppress anti-Austrian agitation. "The efforts of my government must be geared in the future towards isolating and decreasing [the size of] Serbia." The first phase on that road would be to help Bulgaria. Then an attempt would be made to reconcile Greece with Turkey and Bulgaria and to create, with Romania that came around, a new Balkan alliance under the leadership of the Triple Alliance.

These words from the letter must have been written prior to the attentat, because after that event that "first phase" was envisaged differently and more directly, as far as it concerned Austrian attitude towards Serbia. That more recent view is clearly seen from the concluding part of the letter. It required a simple "exclusion" of Serbia as a political factor in the Balkans. "You will also be convinced after the most recent terrible event in Bosnia that it is no longer

possible to think of reconciling the differences that keep Serbia apart from us and that the existing policy of peace on the part of all European monarchs will be endangered while this nest of criminal agitation in Belgrade continues to live unpunished.”⁶⁸ This is how Emperor Franz Joseph directly addressed Emperor Wilhelm II.

The important conversation between Berchtold and Baron Hötendorf held on 21 June, after which the latter next day wrote a new memoir for the Foreign Minister, which had something to do with the said letter. In this memoir, Hötendorf presented Austria-Hungary’s political position in a very unfavourable light. Having missed suitable opportunities to crush future opponents, the Monarchy now faced the front consisting of its enemies, from Russia through Romania and Serbia to Montenegro, with the unreliable Italy on the other side. His famous *caeterum censeo* was always: use the first opportunity to clear the ground. In order for Austria not to overstretch, he suggested Berchtold to drop the intention to occupy Albania, but rather to focus on other opponents; Albania was created, he said, against Serbia and not for the sake of herself, and it should be left like that.⁶⁹ Apart from this conversation, it is important to note the above mentioned mission of Marquise Pallavicini to Bucharest in April 1914. While negotiating with Take Ionescu, he openly talked of the possibility of a preventive war. “He spoke to me”, Ionescu wrote, “that Austria-Hungary could not remain in the position in which the Balkan events placed her, that Serbia was a threat to her” and that Austria could be brought to the point to provoke a war herself. During the conversation, he repeated the word war five times, without hesitating to stress the meaning.⁷⁰ The former German Ambassador in Berlin, Count Monts, had a meeting with Biliński and Generals Hötendorf and Krobatin in February 1914, on which occasion they discussed political situation. The Austrians, and Biliński in particular, talked openly of the need for a preventive war and its different combinations, and they reproached Germany for not accepting their view.⁷¹

A political memoir was attached to Franz Joseph’s letter, in which the general situation in the Balkans was detailed. Baron Matscheko and Count Forgách were the authors of that memoir and its first draft had been written before 24 June, four days prior to the Sarajevo attentat. Another draft produced after the attentat had a few changes, but the point of departure remained the

68 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 250-2.

69 Hötendorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, III, pp. 694-7.

70 Ionescu, *Souvenirs*, pp. 31-2.

71 *Erinnerungen und Gedanken des Botschafters Anton Graf Monts*, Berlin 1932, pp. 243-5.

same.⁷² This memoir explained why a new Balkan alliance under Russian leadership would have to be directed against Austria. The only way to win Bulgaria over for such an alliance was to promise her some concessions in Macedonia. In accordance with Russian suggestions, Serbia could and would be willing to give such concessions only if she received Bosnia and some other areas in the Danubian Monarchy. The same could be applied to her relations with Romania. The arrival of the Russian Emperor in Constanța and Romania's rapprochement with Russia made Austrian diplomacy fear that Russian plans could be realized, as the success of Russian policy was apparent. Besides, all that was done in the Balkans was, in fact, the result of Russian and French activities. France had long been animated by the desire to revenge on Germany for what had occurred in 1870/1. But Russia also endangered, Berlin should know that, not just Austria but also Germany itself. The thrust of the entire memoir was to present the situation in the Balkans, especially in relation to Russia, as a direct peril to Germany. If Austria had to commit a large number of her divisions to the Balkan front because of the Balkan Alliance, her strength in the north would be weakened accordingly and then Germany would have to split her forces on two fronts and act differently than envisaged in its original war plan. Russia saw Germany, Vienna made a point, as a main hindrance to the realization of her plans, and all her activities were designed to diminish that hindrance and ensure her supremacy. Therefore, it was necessary to preempt Russian plans in the Balkans.

None of this is to say that the fear of Russia was entirely unjustified. Indeed, according to Sazonov's report of 8 December 1913, Russia contemplated to assist the strengthening of the Slav states in the Balkans and to erect a barrier to Austria with their help. Reconciliation between Serbia and Bulgaria was part of her combinations just as Vienna assumed it was the case.⁷³ But that was all for the future and it would take long and serious efforts to make it happen, if it could be accomplished at all.

"Austria-Hungary", the Viennese memoir concluded, "did not lack goodwill and complaisance to have bearable relations with Serbia. But it was proven once again that these efforts were completely futile and that in the future the Monarchy would have to count on the stubborn, intransigent and aggressive hostility on the part of Serbia." This account of Austro-Serbian relations in 1902-1914 shows, we think, clearly enough how insincere and inaccurate that claim of Austrian diplomacy was. Her "goodwill and complaisance" made

72 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 186-95, 253-61; *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1, 1927, pp. 20-30.

73 *Der diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, III, p. 383.

every government in Serbia despair. In any matter that directly concerned the Serbs – whether it was the reforms in Old Serbia and Macedonia, the Customs War, the Sanjak and the Adriatic railway, the Annexation Crisis, Serbian outlet to the sea, the Scutari crisis, the Bulgarian war, revision of the Bucharest Treaty, delimitation with Albania, unification with Montenegro – Austria was always either opposed herself to Serbia or openly sided with her enemies. The extent of evil intentions that the main representatives of the Austrian army and diplomacy exhibited towards Serbia in 1913-14 has been clearly seen. With these and similar statements, Austria wanted to present herself as a victim which in return for her good behavior and offers received only aggressive replies. These hypocritical statements, which aimed to portray Serbia as an absolute culprit, out of any proportion, revealed a great deal of moral and psychological characteristic of that diplomacy which dominated Ballplatz and which was reluctant, for many reasons, to face the truth both in internal and external relations.

In particular, we especially underscore the fact that Austria-Hungary sought a war with Serbia not because of Franz Ferdinand's assassination, but rather because of other motives which have long been discussed. The said letter and the memoir make that perfectly clear. Besides, Giesl, one of Berchtold's main associates, admitted it. "The murder did not create a new situation at all; it was just a cause and the decision was made now with great rapidity."⁷⁴ Serbia needed to be attacked, Baron Hötendorf said, not in order to punish her for the murder, but rather to prevent "the survival of separate independent national states, which would draw to themselves the co-ethnic areas of Austria-Hungary and thus bring about the breakdown of the Monarchy."⁷⁵ The French Ambassador, Jules Cambon, therefore, put it well: "Under the excuse of revenging a death, Austria wants to revive all the old accusations and, if possible, to correct the mistakes she has made since the annexation of Bosnia." If it had been written before the attentat, prior to 24 June, the memoir showed clearly, Poincaré rightly observed, Austria's inclination to encircle and humiliate Serbia, and the attentat was just an excuse for war, and not its real reason.⁷⁶ We have seen how many times Austria brought her relations with Serbia to the point of the outbreak of war. From the Bucharest Peace Treaty onwards, that was to Austria one of those "permanent" ideas to which she reverted almost on a daily basis.

74 *Berliner Monatshefte*, XI, 1933, p. 457.

75 Hötendorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, IV, p. 31.

76 Poincaré, *Au service de la France*, IV, pp. 184, 319; *Les origines de la guerre*, p. 177.

This was the case especially as the Romanian question became more dangerous, along with the Serbian one. It was believed, not without reason, that the successes of Serbian national movement would strengthen the Romanian one and that, if Serbia managed to unify with Montenegro, which seemed to be an imminent possibility, the Romanians would also seek to accomplish some of their national goals. Since Serbia achieved much of her successes against the wishes and despite certain actions on the part of Austria, with Russia's backing, it was believed that this example made a strong impression in Romania. In late 1913, the information that the Romanian Consul in Pest, Gheorghe Derussi, stated publically that Austria would not come to her senses "until the Serbo-Romanian army has been placed in front of Vienna" consternated Austro-Hungarian diplomatic circles.⁷⁷ Derussi was not punished for such undiplomatic statements, although the Austrian side requested that, but rather was appointed a minister in Sofia. Informed by a Romanian General about the hatred of the Romanians for Austria-Hungary, Emperor Wilhelm II himself said that he did not believe that things were so bad.⁷⁸ A public assembly of the Romanian People's League in April 1914, in which the best part of Romanian society took place, clearly showed the extent to which the leading circles in Romania turned against Austria-Hungary. The head of Berchtold's cabinet, Count Hoyos, likened the situation of Austria-Hungary after the Peace of Bucharest with those episodes in a war "when the enemy takes the vital point of a defense position and when it is clearly felt that that point must be retaken at any cost, if defeat is to be avoided ... That is what approximately the Peace of Bucharest means to us." "For us, any solution that would allow the maintenance of the situation created by the Peace of Bucharest, which made not weakened Serbia, under the aegis of Russia, the point of attraction for all Yugoslavs and which kept Romania in the camp of our enemies, meant renouncing not just our status of Great Power, but also our sheer survival ... The coalition of the Peace of Bucharest had to be torn apart, Bulgaria returned her old power, if Austria was going to exist."⁷⁹ The aggressive inclinations of the Austrian Foreign Ministry, after the creation of a new situation in Bucharest, could not be explained or underscored more clearly. If we add to this the words of Emperor Franz Joseph to Baron Tschirschky to the effect that he no longer

77 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIX, p. 472.

78 *Ibid.*, p. 481.

79 E. Steinitz, *Rings um Sasonow*, pp. 69-71. F. Stieve also explains that Austrian view in his *Deutschland und Europa 1890-1914*, Berlin 1928, p. 130: "In the moment, when Austria-Hungary could not count on Romania any more, the last truly reliable pillar of its influence in the Near East was shaken ... With that, the last hope to stop the invading Panslavist aspirations in the Balkans perished."

had confidence in King Carol and Baron Hötendorf's opinion laid out in the special memoir to Emperor Franz Joseph on 16 January 1914, then the mood of Austro-Hungarian circles and the true reason for the war could be interpreted clearly and unambiguously. Hötendorf's opinion was: "The interests of Romania now run across those of the Monarchy, because she sided with Serbia and the latter's political success has awakened aspirations which – although they have long smouldered – emerge now in their full proportions instigated by France and Russia and which made Romania an enemy of the Monarchy. I consider this detachment of Romania and the fact that a showdown with Serbia and Montenegro has not taken place a major harm, which was suffered by the Monarchy in the most recent Balkan crisis and which is not in the least compensated by seemingly and temporary diplomatic successes, the formation of Albania, the preservation of Scutari and the withdrawal of Serbian troops. Only military success against Serbia and Montenegro would solve in a favourable sense that vital Balkan question for the Monarchy and provide it with such prestige that would keep the increased Balkan states, especially Romania, on a leash and remind all other states of the [necessary] caution [in their attitude] towards the Monarchy."⁸⁰

Vienna was especially perturbed by the visit of the Russian Emperor to the Romanian King in Konstanța on 14 June. Diplomatic circles did not conceal their discomfiture and the British Ambassador in Vienna, Bunsen, rightly pointed out the overwhelming nervousness on this score.⁸¹ That visit was viewed as a manifestation of the new orientation in Romanian policy and the loss of a strong fulcrum on which Vienna's diplomacy had counted for more than a quarter of century. Romania gradually and more apparently passed to the camp of the enemies. The Emperor's visit followed a series of attempts to reach as cordial an agreement between Romania and Russia as possible. In the wake of this visit, King Carol said to the German Minister, angered on account of the coverage in the Austrian press, that Romania could do without Austria and that it was Austria now that would need Romanian assistance.⁸²

Berchtold now states that he never claimed that the Serbian government had directly participated in the preparation for the attentat, but rather that it was guilty of tolerating systematic assistance to promotion of the aspirations directed against Austria-Hungary and being passive to the preparation of its clerks for further action.⁸³ Because Serbia tolerated the activities of national

80 Hötendorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, III, p. 757.

81 *British Documents*, XI, p. 2.

82 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIX, p. 519.

83 Steinitz, *Rings um Sasonow*, p. 50.

movement on her soil, Austria made difficulties for her on every step, and that was not a small punishment for Serbia. To declare war because of aspirations is much more heavy responsibility, all the more so as Austria-Hungary was always, in terms of its strength, superior and capable of preventing any Serbian attempt to move from aspirations to deeds. According to Aehrenthal, Berchtold professed that Russia chose the most vulnerable spot for Austria-Hungary to start its disintegration with the assistance of Serbia. The Peace of Bucharest "brought that policy with a strong stroke closer to its realization", and the Sarajevo attentat was but "one of the last forms in which the work of destruction appeared". The central point was, as has been manifest, the failure of Austrian policy in Bucharest. But it was her German ally rather than Russia that brought Austria, apart from her own mistakes, to that failure, and Berlin certainly did not believe that such policy led to the demise of Austria, or less still wanted it. The Peace of Bucharest was a defeat for Austrian aggressiveness in the Balkans and a well-earned blow because of her policy of instigating the Balkan nations against each other rather than a danger to Austria herself. And if the circumstances led to Austria's becoming an object of increasing hatred and demands on the part of her neighbours due to her policy, that could have been mended, if there had been a goodwill. Austrian diplomacy must have had little faith in the vitality of its state, if it truly believed that the Sarajevo attentat had been "the last forms in which the work of destruction appeared" and that it had been organized "with the roles cast" to blow up their house. But at the same time, it imputes an incredible naiveté to its opponents in Russia and Serbia, who could believe that such an act might complete the demolition and that it was suitable at all to produce a desired solution of the Austrian problem.

All this could be interrupted, Vienna believed, if Serbia was punished as quickly and as harsh as possible to set her as a terrifying example for Romania. The above mentioned memoir prepared for Berlin and completed four days before the attentat discussed the settling of relations with Romania as one of its main ideas. The Romanian and the Serbian question were becoming too dangerous for the Vienna government; the combined Serbian and Romanian army could mobilize nearly a million soldiers. Therefore, Vienna sought to eliminate both questions by settling the Serbian one. It was hoped that, after the Serbian defeat, Bucharest would change its attitude and revert to the policy pursued for more than thirty years. Asking for Berchtold's memoir – which he labeled "Romanian" – to be sent to Berlin, the Ambassador in Constantinople Pallavicini wrote on 6 July: "In my opinion, one must ask the question whether the time has come to break the circle that is getting tighter around us with perhaps too daring a game. If we wait longer, the situation can perhaps grow worse for us." He thought that energetic action carried out by the Danubian

Monarchy would not necessarily mean war, but he was in favour of either embarking on it or making a new agreement with Russia, which would have to bring about Austria's abandonment of her Balkan and Asia Minor policy. "If Germany fully realized it was faced with these two alternatives, then Berlin might perhaps decide to choose the first one and to march with us wherever is necessary, leaving us a free hand in the Eastern policy."⁸⁴

Count Berchtold decided on a showdown with Serbia immediately after the attentat, without waiting for the investigation to establish the facts. The case was welcome to him to fulfil the old wish of military circles and a number of his associates to attack Serbia and crush her. A letter that Count Tisza sent to the Emperor on 1 July clearly shows that his decision was made before the investigation had been completed. In that letter, Tisza mentioned his conversation with Berchtold, who revealed his intention "to make the Sarajevo crime an excuse for a showdown with Serbia". Tisza said during that conversation that he considered it a "fatal mistake and that he by no means wants to share the responsibility for that". He knew and realized that Austria-Hungary had no "sufficient" evidence to blame the attentat on Serbia. If the war was started now, the position of Austria would be "the worst as can be imagined": she would be presented as a peacebreaker before the whole world and "initiate a great war under the least favourable circumstances". Besides, diplomatic situation was also unfavourable. Romania could not be counted on, Bulgaria was exhausted, and the ground was not cleared even with Germany. "With the present position in the Balkans, it would be the least of my concerns to look for a suitable *casus belli*."⁸⁵ In view of such appreciation of the situation, he sent word to the Serbo-Croat coalition in Zagreb, against which military circles and their friends started a campaign of calumny, that internal situation in Croatia would not deteriorate nor the latest events would affect the position of the Serbo-Croat coalition.⁸⁶

General Potiorek first submitted on 2 July the concrete proposal to the War Ministry to take action "for [the purpose of] radical removal of the external subversion", i.e. that Austria should decide on a war. "Further hesitation would make the military position in Bosnia and Herzegovina so difficult that I would not be able to take responsibility for preserving the most important interests of the defense of the country."⁸⁷ He justified his proposal on account of Čabrinović's confession that Giganović was a member of *Narodna odbrana*

84 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 324.

85 *Ibid.*, pp. 248-9.

86 According to the statement of Dr. B. Medaković in *Novi život*, VI, 1925, p. 195.

87 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 267.

and his alleged statement that Major Milan Pribićević sent them to Ciganović, after having heard the plan for attentat. The others denied any agreement with Pribićević; Čabrinović himself denied it later (if he said so in the first place, as the investigative authorities later claimed that it was all a misunderstanding). Potiorek also pointed out in his proposal there were "signs of reinforcement of the border guards and gendarmerie" on the Serbian side of the border. Baron Hötendorf went even further and professed that 1,000 rifles and four carts of ammunition had arrived in the border post of Boljanić, that the people were arming themselves and that he saw in all this the undoubted sign of military preparations against the Monarchy.⁸⁸ On 3 July, during the funeral of Franz Ferdinand, he told Auffenberg that "a deserved punishment would now fall upon Serbia".⁸⁹ The joint War Minister Krobatin, who demanded extremely harsh measures against the Serbs, Austrian subjects, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, was in agreement. All these individuals had long demanded a war: Hötendorf, Potiorek and Krobatin had headed the war party during the crisis of 1912-13 and they were anxious now to realize their old plans. Baron Hötendorf wrote on 3 March 1914: "The programme of France and Russia is clear, they are not yet ready and are waiting until they are prepared. The Balkan states are also getting stronger, especially Serbia. Why are we waiting? There is a major question for us: will it still be possible to have the third of the Slav population [in Austria-Hungary] fight for the Germans and Hungarians."⁹⁰ The Military Attaché in Belgrade had written earlier, on 26 January, in the spirit of what his military superiors wanted, that "radical sanitation of our relations with Serbia can be achieved with the destruction of the present Kingdom [of Serbia] as an independent state and the banishment of the Karadjordjevićs".⁹¹ Austria wanted a war against Serbia by all means now, just like she had wanted it a year or two earlier. In that respect, soldiers played the main role and diplomats joined them now. Prince Lichnowsky had no qualms about making it clear that such ambitions stemmed from political, and not moral, motives.⁹² That was equally the case before and after the Sarajevo attentat.

Berchtold quickly came to decide on war under the influence of the bellicose faction, just as he had done in the earlier crises. He told that to the German Ambassador on 3 July. To amplify the impression of his words and bring about a more rapid decision in Berlin, he repeated that unverified and

88 Ibid., p. 268.

89 Auffenberg, *Aus Österreichs Hohe und Niedergang*, p. 256.

90 Hötendorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, III, p. 605.

91 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VII, p. 780.

92 *Vers l'abîme*, Paris 1929, p. 50.

inaccurate information that twelve young men left Belgrade for Vienna to carry out an attentat on Emperor Wilhelm II on the occasion of the funeral of Franz Ferdinand and his wife. That revelation, he hoped, “would perhaps open the eyes in Berlin to the danger that come from Belgrade”. Tschirschky agreed with Berchtold entirely and he said that “only active measure against Serbia might have a result”. Germany would certainly stand by Austria once it realized that she had a clear plan what to do and how far she intended to go. Of course, it was necessary to ensure a favourable diplomatic situation and be certain of the attitude of Romania and Italy, as it would be very dangerous to start a war before that. Berchtold’s reply was vague. It would be seen later, “depending on circumstances”, how far to go in demands to Serbia and what to do with that country afterwards. For the time being, he did not want to be explicit, but it was clear that war was foremost in his mind. He did not want to negotiate with Romania in order to avoid negotiations about “impossible compensations” that could be requested from that quarter. Austria wanted from Germany to keep in check Romania, just like Berlin had restrained Austria when Romania and Serbia had attacked Bulgaria. Berchtold did not consider negotiating with Italy either out of fear that it would ask for compensation in the shape of Valona.

Certain German circles nourished the war-mindedness in Vienna with much vigour. On 1 July, Dr. Victor Naumann told Count Hoyos that not just military circles in Berlin, but also those in the Foreign Ministry contemplated a preventive war against Russia. It was believed, he said, that relations with Britain had been improved and that that country would not side with Russia and France in a war. There were several statements from high-placed German military officials given on 2-3 July to the effect that it would be much more favourable to Germany to embark on a war now than a few years later, and Salza Lichtenau, the Saxon envoy in Berlin reported on 2 July that the military pushed for war.⁹³ In this connection, Naumann, a man with many connections among the Viennese Christian Socialists, proposed that Austria utilize the Sarajevo attentat and “destroy” Serbia. The German Foreign Ministry regarded this moment “as favourable to provoke a major decision”. He could now vouch for the German public opinion, which could not appreciate a conflict arising from a question such as that concerning Djakovica, “that it would side with the ally as one man and understand the war as an act of liberation”. He already influenced the German press in an anti-Serbian sense and he would continue to do so. “Austria-Hungary is lost as a monarchy and as a great power, if it does not use this moment.”⁹⁴ On 4 July, a correspondent of the *Frankfurter Zeitung*

93 Lutz, *Die Vorgeschichte des Weltkrieges*, XI, p. 194.

94 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 235-6.

and “an agent of the German Embassy” Ganz arrived in the press bureau of the Foreign Ministry with a message from Tschirschky that “Germany will help the Monarchy in any case [*durch Dick und Dünn*], whatever it decided to do against Serbia”. Tschirschky also added: “the sooner Austria-Hungary attacks the better ... Even if the German press, which is entirely anti-Serbian today, starts again to clamour for peace, Vienna should not be perturbed, as the Emperor and Germany would unconditionally stand by Austria-Hungary. One Great Power could not speak more openly to another.”⁹⁵ Count Tschirschky’s influence was particularly strong in Vienna at that time, and he did not hesitate to use it during the crisis to incite Austria to undertake decisive and even extreme measures. Tschirschky told Count Andrassy that, wanting to have the Monarchy free of the “Yugoslav sword of Damocles” in the interest of Germany’s being able to count on the Austro-Hungarian strength, he “endeavoured to push us into energetic action and make us understand that Austria-Hungary would lose its value as an ally in Berlin, if it was incapable of settling this matter”.⁹⁶ According to Giesl, Tschirschky said the same to him after 7 July.⁹⁷ Count Czernin wrote that “the tenor of all Mr. Tschirschky’s private conversations at that time was, ‘Now or Never!’... I believed that Tschirschky was, in particular, consumed with the idea that Germany would soon have to wage war with France and Russia and that he considered 1914 more favourable than some later time.”⁹⁸

Tschirschky’s activity was not just an expression of his personal will. On the contrary, it no doubt took place under the influence of the highest circles in Berlin. When he reported to Berlin on 30 July that there was a wish “among serious people” in Vienna to settle scores with Serbia and that he “uses every opportunity to warn in a peaceful manner, but with emphasis and very seriously, not to precipitate [things]”, Emperor Wilhelm II minuted on his report: “Who authorized him to do that? That is very stupid! It is not his business, because it is for Austria alone to decide what to do after that. It would later be said that Germany did not want [to support Vienna], if things went wrong. Tschirschky had better leave this nonsense alone. The ground must be cleared with the Serbs – and quickly at that.” After such comment, which very probably reached Tschirschky in one form or another, it is perfectly understandable that his stance became much more bellicose.⁹⁹ He had hitherto been

95 Ibid., p. 295.

96 *Diplomatie und Weltkrieg*, p. 67.

97 *Zwei Jahrzehnte*, 255; *Berliner Monatshefte*, XI, p. 461.

98 *Im Weltkriege*, pp. 16–7.

99 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, p. 13. The Austrian Ambassador in Berlin, Count Szögyény, heard in the Foreign Ministry that Tschirschky had been given

sensitive to the entire European situation, and especially the attitude of Italy and Romania; he later listened to only those messages he received from Berlin and spoke what he believed was to Berlin's liking.

2

Count Hoyos handed Emperor Franz Joseph's letter to Emperor Wilhelm II on 5 July. Having read it, Emperor Wilhelm II told Szógyény "that he expected a serious action on our part against Serbia", but after the prospect of serious European complications indicated in the Emperor's letter he must discuss matters with his Chancellor before giving his definite reply. But he nevertheless told Szógyény to send message to Franz Joseph that Austria "could count on the full extent of help from Germany in this case as well". On that occasion, the Emperor also said that, in his opinion, "that action must not be delayed. Russia's attitude will certainly be hostile, but he has been prepared for that for years; and even if the war broke out between Austria-Hungary and Russia, we can be convinced that Germany would stand on our side with the usual allied loyalty." But he believed at the same time that Russia was "entirely unprepared for war as yet" and that she would think hard about taking up arms. In fact, he believed that Russia would back down before the joint attitude of Germany and Austria, just like she had done in many earlier decisive crises, especially in 1909. On 6 July, Emperor Wilhelm II told a representative of the navy that Russia was not prepared for war in either military or financial respect, and that even if Russia intended to take action, France would constrain her for the sake of its own financial situation and because of Russia's lack of heavy artillery.¹⁰⁰ All this encouraged Emperor Wilhelm II to push Austria to make rapid and energetic decisions. "If we indeed realized", Szógyény went on, "the need for military action against Serbia, then he (Emperor Wilhelm II) would regret if we failed to use the present moment so favourable to us." As for Romania, the Emperor promised to ensure that she behaved correctly, but he had no real confidence in King Ferdinand and the Bulgarians.¹⁰¹

a "warning" (*Verweis*) because of his attitude. A. Wegerer tried to dispute this, referring to Under-Secretary Zimmermann. See *Die Kriegsschuldfrage*, II, 1923, pp. 26-7. But the warning could have reached Tschirschky without Zimmermann's knowledge. Count Montgelas tried to dispute the influence of Tschirschky in other matters as well, but his arguments are not convincing. See *Ibid.*, VI, 1928, pp. 725-34.

100 *Mémoires du grand-amiral von Tirpitz*, Paris 1930, p. 255. I have at my disposal only the French edition.

101 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 306-7.

Bethmann Hollweg gave his reply the next day. That reply was formulated after the Emperor had consulted with, apart from him and the Under-Secretary Zimmermann, the War Minister and the representatives of General Staff and Admiralty – they had been summoned individually. The Emperor explained that Austria-Hungary was endangered by Greater Serbian propaganda and thus needed assistance if Russia tried to interfere with its action against Serbia. After these consultations, it was decided that Germany should start the necessary military preparations but without drawing much attention, in view of the seriousness of the situation.¹⁰² The Emperor personally discussed this with the summoned military figures. The possibility of war was certainly counted on. After all this, Bethmann could speak with authority. The German government realized the danger that Russian plans for the Balkan alliance posed to Austria-Hungary and the Triple Alliance and agreed to Bulgaria's adherence to the Triple Alliance but in such form that would not impinge on their obligations to Romania. German Ministers would be instructed to speak of this in Sofia and to inform King Carol in Bucharest about the negotiations with Bulgaria and request from him, at the same time, the cessation of anti-Austrian propaganda in Romania. It would be also pointed out that Germany, after the most recent event, accepted the Austrian view of Serbia. The Berlin government would leave it to Austria to make decision about what needed to be done to settle the matter with Serbia; Germany would back her in any case. Just like the Emperor, Bethmann also thought that "the most radical and the best solution of the difficulties in the Balkans" would be to attack Serbia as soon as possible. He agreed that neither Italy nor Romania should be informed in advance and that the present international position was more favourable for war than any later one.¹⁰³

Count Hoyos, who was charged with providing additional explanations to Franz Joseph's letter, said that the situation in the Balkans after the Treaty of Bucharest had become unbearable and that Austria found the moment had come to attack Serbia for external and internal reasons. Vienna realized that, with a view to Russia, a world war could arise from that and, therefore, asked

102 Cf. on these consultations Seton-Watson, *Sarajevo*, pp. 128-30; Jagow, *Deutschland freigesprochen*, pp. 33-47; *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 4., Von der Kriegserklärung an Frankreich bis zur Kriegserklärung Österreich-Ungarns an Rußland nebst Anhang, Berlin 1927, p. 179. The press spoke for a long time about the Crown Council in Potsdam on 5 July. Cf. discussion in Schmitt, *The Coming of the War 1914*, I, pp. 329-41. The Germans present these conversations in more innocent light. Cf. Montgelas, *Leitfaden zur Kriegsschuldfrage*, pp. 93-4.

103 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 319-20, *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, pp. 32-4.

the German government if they also considered the moment favourable politically and militarily and if they were willing to support it in that action. Besides Bethmann Holweg's well-known reply, which we have mentioned, and similar Zimmermann's comment, Hoyos also recorded these words which the responsible German factors uttered to Vienna: Austria "can count in any case on our loyal allied assistance and we are of the opinion that if the war has to come, then it is better to come now than in a year or two when the Entente will be much stronger than today".¹⁰⁴

Why were Hoyos's oral explanations necessary in Berlin in addition to the Emperor's very clear letter which he brought? E. Fischer gives a correct reply: in order to provide the proper interpretation to the letter, along the more bellicose lines, because it had diplomatic character and because it could not spell out everything on account of Count Tisza.¹⁰⁵

Baron Hötzendorf clearly stated that the old Emperor Franz Joseph had made declaration of war conditional upon Germany's attitude and that everyone in Austria had waited for the decisive word from Berlin.¹⁰⁶ On that day, as Camille Bloch rightly asserts, Germany accepted the "absolute obligation" to Austria and started to hasten the action in order not to lose a favourable opportunity for a showdown.¹⁰⁷ The issue of war was decided on 5 and 6 July. Having received the full backing of Berlin, without any reservations, Vienna set forth with determination in the long desired direction. 6 July 1914 became the fateful date for Europe. Germany and Austria "cold bloodedly considered all the consequences of their decision: they were aware that their initiative might result in a European war; they did not desist from the execution of their programme even when the prospect of a conflict emerged with certainty".¹⁰⁸

Why Germany accepted Austrian decision this time? The State Under-Secretary Zimmermann gave reasons and these clearly indicated the extent to which the Sarajevo attentat served only as an excuse. Placed between the hostile France and Russia, Germany needed a strong Austria. It was expected from the energetic Austrian action against Serbia that "the nationalities of the

104 *Revue d'histoire de la Guerre Mondiale*, X, 1934, 110; *Berliner Monatshefte*, X, 1932, 68.

105 Fischer, *Die kritischen 39 Tage*, pp. 64-5.

106 Hötzendorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, IV, pp. 36-7.

107 C. Bloch, *Les causes de la guerre mondiale*, Paris 1933, p. 51; cf. Lutz, *Die Vorgeschichte des Weltkrieges*, XI, pp. 35-6.

108 P. Renouvin, *Revue des deux mondes*, II, 1931, p. 903. With all the well-known facts in view, the claim of the American Professor H. Barnes that after the attentat "the French and the Russians realized that the coming conflict between Austria and Serbia could present an excellent opportunity to bring about the desired European conflict" is entirely uncritical and tendentious. See *Die Kriegsschuldfrage*, IV, 1926, p. 843.

Danubian Monarchy come together again and feel as one, that the decreased economic activity revives once again and to cut the ground from under the neighbours's aspirations to acquire the [Austro-Hungarian] areas".¹⁰⁹ Germany saw the weakening of Austria as the weakening of its own strength. Austria was its only reliable ally among the Great Powers in Europe. If Austria was lost, Germany would be left alone between Russia and France and with Britain, which was a dangerous opponent. The Slav national movement in Austria and in the Balkans, Bethmann Hollweg explained, served Russia and her ambitions directed against Austria, whereas Britain and France were helping it to "break down Germany by destroying its ally".¹¹⁰ To defend Austria meant to Germany to defend indirectly itself and its position. Therefore, Germany tied its fate this time to the fate of the Danubian Monarchy.

Germany did not want to influence Austrian decision regarding Serbia, Bethmann Hollweg went on, because it considered it exclusively Austrian matter and because it did not want to turn it into international issue from the beginning with its engagement.¹¹¹ But did not that question assume wider character by the very fact that Germany consented in advance to protect Austria from the eventual influence of Russia?

Despite all that has been said and established, we could not still positively claim that Germany pushed Austria into action just because the Emperor and Bethman Hollweg "wanted" a world war, as even some German authors have stated.¹¹² In our opinion, they did not want it; to certain degree, they did not even believe that the conflict would turn into a European war, least of all to that extent to which it developed. The most distant combination with which they counted at that time envisaged that Russia might enter into war, and perhaps France, and it seemed to them that it was much more favourable to take up the fighting with these two Powers now than a few years later when Russia became stronger. If the matter is appreciated in this manner, it could be said with justification that Germany, together with Austria, indeed intended from the outset to use the Sarajevo attentat beyond the line that a truly peaceful policy might have allowed. If it was necessary to resort to war in order to settle the Austro-Serbian dispute, as Vienna demanded, then it was better to undertake it now when Russia was still not prepared. However, Berlin believed that Russia could be influenced by certain moral pressure by denouncing Serbia for being guilty for the murder of a member of the imperial house. The belief

109 *Berliner Monatshefte*, IX, 1931, p. 710.

110 Fischer, *Die kritischen 39 Tage*, p. 81.

111 *Betrachtungen zum Weltkrieg*, Berlin 1919, pp. 118, 128-9.

112 *Ibid.*, p. 138.

that a war could be localized due to Russia's reluctance to support Serbia to the full extent was widespread among German statesmen. In this sense, a German historian rightly observed: "This time the calculation was wrong when Austria – which had been used to rattle with German sabre in the previous Balkan wars – counted on Russia's backing down faced with an ultimatum; it was also fateful that the German government had to let Austria to act too independently, because she determined the modus of operating in her alliance with Germany."¹¹³

After the decisions made in Potsdam, Emperor Wilhelm II left for his usual summer journey across the Northern Sea to demonstrate, in German interpretation, that he would not interfere with the details of the Austro-Serbian dispute, or – even more probably – to conceal from Europe the seriousness of Austrian intentions, just as the chiefs of the Austrian army later did.

Immediately afterwards, on 6 July, Count Forgách telegraphed Count Tisza: "Emperor Wilhelm II let it be said to Our Sire that we can count on the full backing of Germany in case of an eventual action. In Emperor Wilhelm II's opinion, we should not wait any longer with action against Serbia. We should not miss the present favourable moment. Russia is not prepared for war today and Germany is standing by our side with the complete allied loyalty."¹¹⁴ This telegram was intended to impress Tisza as to make him drop his reservations upon seeing the full determination of Germany to assist Austria. To further precipitate his decision, the comment about the unpreparedness of Russia was inserted, in which, after all, both Vienna and Berlin believed and with which, despite all Russian statements to the effect that they would not remain passive in case of conflict, they counted, to a large extent. Baron Hötendorf, who had a meeting with Berchtold on 7 July, clearly stated that Berchtold had told him that Germany would make a decisive stand on the Austrian side, "even if our action against Serbia cause a great war". "Germany advises us to strike."¹¹⁵

The change in Emperor Wilhelm II's attitude towards the Austrian stance against Serbia did not come suddenly. It could have been expected from the fall of 1913 onwards. After the crisis in the Balkans had subsided, the Emperor arrived in Konopiště and then in Vienna. In Konopiště, where he visited Crown Prince Franz Ferdinand, the Emperor had the opportunity to make contact with several persons from the ranks of Hungarian and German aristocracy in the Czech lands and with Berchtold on 26 October. These people complained

113 F. Schnabel, *Eine Einführung in die Geschichte der neuesten Zeit*, Leipzig und Berlin 1924, p. 149.

114 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 329.

115 Hötendorf, *Aus meiner Dienszeit*, IV, p. 42.

to him that the increasing arrogance of the Slav people, which was “simply unbearable”, was felt across the Danubian Monarchy. Taking a well-known posture, the Emperor replied: “The Slavs are not born to rule, but to serve; that must be shown to them. There could be no other relation to Serbia for Austria-Hungary than the dependence of the smaller on the larger in accordance with the planetary system.” Quick to combine and speak, and desirous of being liked and arbitrating, the Emperor further said that he thought of no other orientation in the Balkans than that in which Austria played the leading role. In respect to Serbia, he suggested that Austria should try to win her over using different means: 1) money, 2) military education and 3) trade benefits. On her part, Serbia would have to subdue herself to the Monarchy and put her army at its disposal, thus providing a guarantee that there would be no surprises in the south of Austria-Hungary. When Berchtold expressed his doubt that some of these suggestions could be realized, particularly stressing the animosity of the Serbs to Austria, the Emperor replied that one should not care much about that. Besides, he believed that the Serbs would agree to all this, because Austria would protect them from possible attacks from other quarters. If the Serbs refused, then they should be simply forced to agree. Because “when His Majesty Emperor Franz Joseph requests something, the Serbian government must submit; if it does not do that, then it is necessary to bomb Belgrade and keep it occupied for as long as His Majesty’s wish has not been fulfilled”. “You can rest assured”, the Emperor said, thumping on his sabre, “that I have your back and that I am willing to draw sabre whenever your action makes it necessary.” When Berchtold mentioned that the outstanding question concerned the Eastern Railways in Serbia, that he and Austria wanted to preserve them in the hands of their own capital, the Emperor replied that that certainly needed to be done “perhaps on the pattern of the Russian railway through Manchuria”, and that his Minister in Bucharest would influence the Romanian government to work in the same sense in Belgrade. Saying goodbye to Berchtold, the Emperor even said that “whatever comes from the Viennese Foreign Ministry is a commandment to him”.¹¹⁶

It is obvious that one should not take all these words for granted and that the Emperor, as was his wont, exaggerated when he spoke with people face to face and especially abroad, but they were very symptomatic nevertheless. He knew that Vienna had been dissatisfied with his personal stance during the summer of 1913 and he wanted to improve the impression with such

116 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VII, pp. 513-5. Emperor Wilhelm II had also had an earlier conversation with Baron Hötendorf on 8 September during the maneuvers in Germany. See *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, III, p. 431.

exaggerations. Cognizant of the fact that the Serbian question was the most sensitive point of Vienna's policy at that time, he went so far in that matter that the Austrian Foreign Minister felt the need to keep him within the bounds of reality. The danger did not stem from the plans that the Emperor developed, probably not believing himself that they could be realized in the way he hastily expounded, but rather from the possibility that Vienna's diplomacy could now seize on his words and use the change in his political assessment to continue with its policy towards Serbia. Further developments showed how much such fear was justified.

The Emperor repeated his view on 15 December in a conversation with the Austrian Ambassador in Munich, but this time in a mitigated form. "The Serbs must be harnessed to the Monarchy's cart one way or another", but the factors of Austrian policy should also meet the needs of the Serbs. He particularly suggested giving more attention to Serbia than to Bulgaria whose ruler he held in low esteem.¹¹⁷

The bellicose anti-Slav mood of Emperor Wilhelm II was at this time amplified by the difficult struggle relating to the German military mission to Turkey. Baron Wangenheim, German Ambassador in Constantinople, who was dissatisfied with Austria's and Germany's passivity in the Balkans, believed that Turkey must be, in the tradition of German diplomacy, maintained as a friend and an ally in order to paralyze new powers in the Balkans and eventually serve against Russia. In January 1913, he argued that Turkey be militarily reorganized and strengthened, and that German officers were necessary to carry that out.¹¹⁸ Partly on Turkish initiative, this became the subject of much activity in the spring and summer of that year, and a group of senior officers, around 40, was sent to Constantinople in December. They became not just instructors of the Turkish army, but also took command of certain military units. On 5 December, General Liman von Sanders was given command of the corps stationed in Constantinople, while another general was given command of a division. Liman von Sanders had also the right of general military overseeing in the entire Turkey; without his permission, not a single foreign officer could join the Turkish army; he became a member of the Supreme war council and had the right to influence promotions of senior Turkish officers.¹¹⁹ General

¹¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 657-8. Cf. *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXVIII, 338 with his message for Vienna dated 6 April: "A tempting *modus vivendi* must be found for Serbia's relations with the Dual Monarchy. It is certainly more costly today than at that time when we advocated this view for the first time, but it will become unobtainable, if Austria persistently maintains that this only and the right road is impassable."

¹¹⁸ Hötendorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, III, p. 40; *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXVIII, pp. 193-4.

¹¹⁹ *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXVIII, pp. 204-5.

Friedrich von Schellendorf became a deputy to the Chief of the Turkish General Staff and other officers were given important positions in the Army Ministry, the General Staff and in garrisons in the interior. Russia was embittered on account of this, which was done without any consultation with her, since she considered it directly aimed against her. The Turkish army under command of German generals in the capital amounted to the possibility of constraining the decisions of the Sultan and the Turkish government. That was the position "such as no German or any other foreign officer has taken in Constantinople".¹²⁰ With it, Germany acquired political supremacy that would, in Sazonov's words, become "unbearable".¹²¹ For Russia, the participation of German officers in military affairs in Constantinople and the Dardanelles meant endangering her entire policy in the matter of straits and her connection with the Mediterranean Sea; "that would be a blow to the friendship between Russia and Germany", Sazonov pointed out to the German Ambassador.¹²² "A definite establishment of Germany in the Bosphorus and Dardanelles would be the same as sentencing Russia to death, just like German occupation of Calais or Antwerp would be fatal to Great Britain and France", Sazonov wrote in his memoirs.¹²³ After that, there would be nothing else left for Russia to do but to seek compensations with her friends in Turkey, on some other side, and to start in effect the division of that country. Emperor Wilhelm II replied to that with certain defiant intransigence. He wrote on a Report from St. Petersburg sent on 13 December: "This is about our reputation in the world against which there is an outcry from all sides. Therefore, straighten your back and hand on a sword!"¹²⁴ After prolonged negotiations, Liman von Sanders was removed from the position of the corps commander – he was promoted and he could not remain in that position in his new capacity. Russia was ostensibly given satisfaction in this matter; however, the German military mission in reality remained in Turkey and Germany further increased its already powerful influence in the Turkish army through its agency. Relations between Germany and Russia remained strained after the partial settlement of this case. Emperor Wilhelm II wrote himself on a Report from St. Petersburg sent on 25 February 1914: "Russo-Prussian relations are dead forever. We have become enemies."¹²⁵

120 Benckendorff, *Diplomatischen Schriftwechsel*, III, p. 209.

121 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXVIII, p. 235.

122 *Ibid.*, p. 236.

123 Sazonov, *Les années fatales*, p. 191.

124 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXVIII, p. 256.

125 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIX, p. 545. Cf. Jagow in Steinitz, *Rings um Sazonow*, pp. 137-9; H. Herzfeld's articles, *Die Limankrise und die Politik der Grossmächte in der Jahreswende*

This clash brought about heated polemics in the press. As if acting upon instructions, German newspapers frequently attacked Russia, presenting that country as a provoker of Germany and Austria-Hungary and almost as a peace-breaker. Russian danger was presented as an immediate possibility. Emperor Wilhelm II himself believed in it, although his Ambassador in St. Petersburg firmly refuted it.¹²⁶ The idea of a preventive war emerged again and frequently. In late February 1914, a war exercise was carried out in Austria, involving several divisions, and it was designed to meet the case of a joint Austro-German struggle against Russia.¹²⁷ The reputable *Berliner Tageblatt*, no. 123, of 9 March wrote about Russia in a straightforward manner: "The population of this world Empire which increases enormously, the falling birth rate in the west, economic strengthening of the Russians, construction of their railways, fortresses, well-nigh inexhaustible flow of the French money river [into Russia], the growing decomposition of the Habsburg Monarchy that cannot be denied unfortunately, all these are serious moments ... The opinion has often been expressed in Vienna and Pest that the end with horrors is better than the horrors without an end ..." Russia was threatened overtly and the hatred against her was developing systematically. But Russia was now conscious of her strength and she did not allow herself to be perturbed easily. The Germans had never been very popular in that country and their policy of saber rattling was offensive. Austrian policy (the ingratitude of which the Russians could never forget, as they saved Austria during the 1849 revolution) with its aggressiveness in the Balkans became a red flag to Russia, especially from 1908 onwards. Therefore, the semi-official *Birževija Vedomosti* published on 13 March an energetic article approved by the War Ministry and entitled "Russia wants peace, but she is prepared for war" in order to show clearly and unequivocally that all the threats would not have the desired effect. Another Russian reply in newspapers published on 13 June, which stressed the importance of Russian military reorganization, provoked Emperor Wilhelm II to write down that it was envisaged and carried out against Germany. "That article", an expert from Berlin wrote, "completed the impression in Berlin that Russia was working towards a war with Germany."¹²⁸

The Russian Ambassador in Berlin Sverbejev reported to his government on several occasions about the mood among certain German circles in favour of

1913/4, XI, 9-10, 1933 and R. J. Kerner, "The Mission of Liman von Sanders", *The Slavonic Review*, VI, 1927.

126 Cf. *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIX, pp. 548-54.

127 Auffenberg, *Aus Österreichs Höhe und Niedergang*, p. 251.

128 Fischer, *Die kritischen 39 Tage*, pp. 16-7.

war against Russia. These circles believed that Russia would complete her military preparations by 1916 and they were in a hurry to outrun her. Sverbejev's report sent on 9 April 1914 underscored that the "present moment" was considered in Berlin "the most favourable time" to settle scores with Russia.¹²⁹ This spirit came to pervade many influential people, including the Emperor himself, as has been seen. It also extended to Serbia. Jovan Jovanović has recounted that Baron Tschirschky openly told him in February 1914: "Things could not go well between you and Austria-Hungary until the war comes. Austria-Hungary must first quieten Serbia with a war and only then easily settle all the affairs with you."¹³⁰ Count Szapáry, the Austrian Ambassador in St. Petersburg in 1913-14 and a long-serving associate of Aehrenthal and Berchtold in the Foreign Ministry, has recently enlarged on the motives because of which his country was forced to enter war in 1914.¹³¹ Austria-Hungary was afraid that it might suffer the fate of Turkey, a long-decaying state, which the Balkan Alliance had crushed with a single blow. Russia did not have to wield a sword. Her friendly neutrality and influence in Europe was sufficient. Russian policy towards Austria followed the same lines. Russia was not supposed to attack Austria and to cause conflicts and complications in the whole of Europe. "Time is working for us and against our opponents", Sazonov professed to the Serbs. The Serbs, Romanians and other enemies of the Monarchy should erode the Austro-Hungarian state organism until it one day collapsed without much turmoil. Russia's duty was to refrain from causing conflicts herself, but also to prevent Austria from undertaking more severe measures against the Serbs, i.e. from undertaking the necessary steps for her own defense. H. Delbrück more-less reduced the whole matter to similar motives. Could little Serbia have dared to confront the mighty Austria-Hungary unless she was sure of Russia's assistance? "Serbian ambition met with the Russian plan to make the small Balkan nations independent and to receive their help for the grand purpose of obtaining Constantinople." "Had not Serbia found protection in Russia she would have felt that her brazen policy directed against us would harm her, but Russia would have also then lost that last support [in the Balkans] and her eastern policy would have ended in a complete and utter failure." This is what Count Andrassy wrote in the Christmas issue of *Neue Freie Presse* in 1914.

Indeed, Serbia saw in Russia her main support for the great work of national unification of the Yugoslavs, just like Italy had found support in Napoleon III's France. Such Serbia's policy was public and conducted before the eyes of the

129 Benckendorff, *Diplomatischen Schriftwechsel*, III, p. 276.

130 Jovanović, *Stvaranje zajedničke države Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca*, p. 17.

131 Steinitz, *Rings um Sasonow*, p. 100.

whole Europe. For her part, Austria encircled Serbia with Albania, which was created to be Serbia's intransigent enemy, and Bulgaria, in which she incited by all means the hatred for Serbs. This is a diplomatic game between two hostile camps, which has been going on in Europe for years and is still going on. But diplomatic struggle is carried out by diplomatic means. However, Austria feared for her future not so much because she was threatened by Serbia, but because she had little faith in that future herself. An attack on Serbia was designed to instil new faith primarily to Austria's own subjects and to show them that Austria-Hungary was not a very sick man; at the same time, it was a warning to other neighbours, mostly Romania, but also Italy. The Russians and Serbs were not in a hurry. The Serbs were perfectly aware of the fact that national consciousness and solidarity would sooner or later bring all their compatriots to a union with them; even the Yugoslav youth, vigorous and anxious to take action, was inclined to wait for 1917 or some other year. But Austria could not wait. She rushed to subdue national movements to her will and her interests. She wanted action that would preempt her decomposition. Her defensive war was and remained a preventive war. All the praises for the former always turned out to be the explanations of the latter.

Berlin firmly believed that Britain would not side with Russia in this conflict. The Germans had much reason to think so not just on account of the writing of the British press, but also on account of some statements of certain statesmen and important individuals. A war against Russia and France was not shrunk from. Given the tensions and the prospects for future, military circles were on the balance in favour of war. Such opinion gradually took hold among diplomats. The possibility of war and even of "general conflagration" was seriously taken in consideration from mid-July onwards. In his instructions to the Ambassador in Vienna dated 15 July to the effect that Austria should try to win over Italy with some concessions, Jagow mentioned this possibility as a realistic combination.¹³² Such views in Berlin were welcomed in Vienna and increased the bellicosity.

After the messages from Berlin, with the assurance that Germany was firmly on their side, Berchtold summoned on 7 July a meeting between the joint ministers, which was also attended by the Austrian and Hungarian prime ministers, the Chief of the General Staff and a representative of the navy. Before this meeting started and in the presence of the German Ambassador and the two prime ministers, Berchtold let Hoyos read the official reports on the negotiations in Berlin. After a short introduction addressing the ways in which to

¹³² *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, p. 68.

improve the obvious bad aspects of the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Berchtold moved to the matter of relations with Serbia, asking "if the time has not come to make Serbia harmless forever by showing her strength". Aware of the need to prepare the ground diplomatically for such a "decisive blow", he embarked on negotiations with Germany and obtained favourable results. Both Emperor Wilhelm II and Bethmann Hollweg promised their "unconditional assistance" in case of war with Serbia. He was clear in his mind that a conflict with Serbia would bring about war with Russia as a consequence. But since Russia encouraged the formation of a new alliance in the Balkans, involving hitherto their ally Romania, with the intention of using it against Austria when necessary, he was of the opinion that they should not shrink from such a war. In such circumstances, the position of Austria would be growing worse in the future and the Yugoslavs and Romanians would interpret a peaceful abeyance as a sign of weakness – such behaviour would only facilitate the powers of attraction of the neighbouring states. "A logical consequence that emerges from all that has been said would be to preempt our opponents and, with settling the scores with Serbia, to forestall at good time a developing process, which has been in full swing and which later would not be possible to forestall." This clearly shows: 1) that Berchtold and others decided on a war with Serbia before there was any concrete evidence about the participation or the complicity of the Serbian government in the Sarajevo attentat; 2) that the entire explanation of the attack was given with the motivation that had been before the point of departure for Austro-Hungarian diplomacy, namely to remove present and future dangers by means of a preventive war. The Sarajevo attentat was just taken as a cause for the sake of the world opinion; in fact, as Berchtold put it clearly, it was going to be a bloody showdown between Russia's and Austria's Balkan policy. Only after a successful war, Vienna believed, Serbia could be made harmless and Romania saved for the Triple Alliance; it was taken for granted that the war would be successful for the Central Powers given the German strength and preparedness.

At the meeting, Count Tisza took the word after Berchtold. It also seemed to him now, after certain (unrecorded) statements about the investigation in Sarajevo and the writing of the Serbian press, that the possibility of a war with Serbia was coming closer than he had thought earlier. But he was adamant in his opposition to mounting a sudden attack on Serbia without previous diplomatic action, "which seems to have been intended and about which Count Hoyos unfortunately negotiated in Berlin". In that case, they would find themselves in a "very bad position" before Europe and provoke against themselves probably the whole Balkans except Bulgaria. Serbia should be delivered demands first and handed an ultimatum, if she refused to comply. "These

demands must be heavy but not impossible of fulfillment." A diplomatic victory would raise Austro-Hungarian prestige in the Balkans. If their demands were not met, then he would also be in favour of war; but he considered it his duty to point out that he would be only in favour of reducing Serbia in size, but not destroying her completely. Russia would not allow the latter without struggle for life and death, and he could not allow, as a Hungarian Prime Minister, that the Monarchy annex some part of Serbia. "It is not Germany's business to decide whether we should attack Serbia now or not. His personal opinion is that the war does not have to be waged unconditionally in the present moment." The mood in Romania was such that a Romanian attack would have to be counted on and considerable part of the army would have to be kept in the Transylvania just in case to intimidate the Romanians. When Germany was not opposed any more to Bulgaria's adherence to the Triple Alliance, it was necessary to work towards drawing Bulgaria and Turkey closer in order to create a counterweight to Serbia and Romania. In that way, the latter country could be forced to return to her old company. The future also held more promise for the Central Powers in European relations, since the German strength would keep growing in relation to France. For all those reasons, he believed that a preventive war was not the only means of improving Austria-Hungary's difficult position and he was still against it.

Berchtold replied to Tisza's exposition to the effect that diplomatic successes in relation to Serbia did indeed temporarily raise the prestige of the Monarchy, but in reality they only increased earlier tensions. A radical solution could only be achieved with an energetic action. "The destructive impact" of Greater Serbian propaganda was already felt as far as Zagreb and Zadar. As for Romania, he believed that King Carol would be able to restrain her from a direct attack on Austria-Hungary; besides, Bulgaria would also be of importance as she would restrict the freedom of movement of Romania. He feared Romania less today than in the future. If Germany was becoming stronger in relation to France, it should be borne in mind that Russia was also becoming stronger in relation to Germany, and therefore the odds in the future appeared less favourable. As can be seen, this reply was but the praise of a preventive war as well.

Referring to Potiorek's reports, the Austrian Prime Minister found that the internal crisis in Bosnia could only be solved after Serbia, from which "schismatic activity" emanated, had been crushed. Now "a psychological situation is created which, in his opinion, unconditionally requires a military showdown with Serbia". He was influenced by Germany's promise of an "unconditional allied loyalty" and recommendation "to act immediately". If they hesitated, there was a danger of Germany's preparedness becoming less certain. He had

nothing against Tisza's proposal concerning the preceding diplomatic action, but if that proposal was accepted, "it would have to be done with the firm intention that this action could only end in war".

Biliński mostly agreed with Stürgkh. He also drew special attention to the situation in Bosnia. "The most recent events in Bosnia stirred a very dangerous mood among the Serb population, and the pogrom of Serbs in Sarajevo especially led to the situation in which all the Serbs became very excited and bitter, and because of that one cannot differentiate any more who is loyal among the Serbs and who is a Greater Serbian. That situation will never be settled in the province itself; the only means for that is the final decision on whether there is future for Greater Serbian idea or not." Biliński's words clearly show that it was the Austrian authorities that were responsible for the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Is there a more damning charge than that the whole Serb population of a large province was brought into position that the regime could not rely on anyone after so many years? And that the administrator of such a large province had to confess that the authorities would never be able to settle down the situation there? And that confession was no doubt true. We repeat it time and again in this book. The incompetence of the Austrian authorities, which, despite all their experiences, never acquired the ability to appreciate in time national aspirations of their subjects, created a situation that became untenable. The strength of national thought became more powerful than police measures. No matter what propaganda came from Serbia and its extent, it could have never led to such results as stated by Biliński, if Austria had not created with her own methods a position untenable for herself. What ideals could inspire her subjects? What could they believe after so many disappointments from Vienna and Pest?

Biliński did not accept diplomatic action alone. "The ultimatum we delivered to Serbia last autumn aggravated the mood in Bosnia and only increased the hatred against us. There is talk there among the people that King Peter will arrive and liberate the land. A Serb is susceptible to force alone, diplomatic success would make no impression in Bosnia and it would be detrimental rather than anything else."

The War Minister was naturally in favour of war as soon as possible. It was possible that later "power relations could change to our detriment out of proportion". He also advocated a war without a declaration of war, with a sudden attack, just like in the case of the Russo-Japanese war. Mobilization should initially be carried out against Serbia alone and general mobilization only after the attitude of Russia had become evident. The postponement of war once more, just like on two earlier occasions, would be seen as a weakness and lead to intensification of anti-Austrian propaganda in the Yugoslav provinces. He

favoured a secret mobilization to surprise both Serbia and Russia whose border detachments were then decreased due to harvest. Baron Hötzen-dorf is known to have been, in his own admission, in favour of war from the start. On 3 July, he told Auffenberg, just like Krobotin during the meeting, that this favorable opportunity must not be missed even if a “general conflagration” emerged from the Serbo-Austrian conflict.

After a long discussion, it was essentially decided to attack Serbia. Out of consideration for Russia, Tisza’s proposal that Serbia be reduced, but not completely destroyed, was also accepted. This alleged deference was designed to undermine Tisza’s opposition to war. Count Stürgkh suggested that the Karadjordjević dynasty be removed and reduced Serbia placed into militarily dependent position in relation to Austria-Hungary.

Nevertheless, Tisza remained unconvinced about the necessity to wage war. He spoke of the calamity of a great European war that could emerge from that conflict and the possibility of removing a danger for Austria-Hungary in some other manner. Bulgaria could attack Serbia, Russia could turn again to the east and, in general, something else might happen “that could make our position with regard to the Greater Serbian problem much more favourable than it is today”. Count Berchtold refuted these professions with the following arguments: it was possible to envisage even more such possibilities in the future, but there was no time now to do that. The enemies were preparing for a decisive struggle against the Dual Monarchy and Romania was passing into the Russian and French camp. “Bulgaria was not a “full substitute” for the loss of Romania. “And Romania, in his opinion, could not be won over again until there is Greater Serbian propaganda, because it has as a consequence Greater Romanian agitation. Romania will be able to oppose it only when the destruction of Serbia has made her feel alone in the Balkans and when she has realized that she can find support only in the Triple Alliance.” It was not entirely safe to rely on Bulgaria either, because Radoslavov’s government was not firmly standing on its feet and could be discarded by the Russophiles one day.¹³³

The result of the discussion boiled down to the three following statements: 1) that all the present persons asked for “a decision on the conflict with Serbia as quickly as possible”; 2) that Tisza’s view to mobilize only after Serbia had been delivered concrete demands, these had been rejected and an ultimatum had been handed was accepted; 3) that all the present, except Tisza, agreed that “purely diplomatic success would be worthless, even if it ended in a blatant humiliation of Serbia, and that therefore Serbia must be delivered such

133 Auffenberg, *Aus Österreichs Hohe und Niedergang*, p. 256; Hötzen-dorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, IV, pp. 30, 34.

demands which would anticipate rejection in order to prepare a radical solution by means of military action". These conclusions of the ministerial meeting, J. Redlich claims, met with "complete understanding in the higher social circles and even among the masses of Vienna".¹³⁴

The Council held on 7 July set the tone for further behavior on the part of the Danubian Monarchy. It clearly showed that Austria was intent on war as well as the reasons for that. There was no discussion of Serbia's responsibility for the attentat, no evidence was presented of the complicity of the Serbian government that could be thoroughly examined. The war was clearly denoted as a preventive one to be unleashed for the sake of difficulties in which the Austro-Hungarian rule in Bosnia and Austro-Hungarian diplomacy in the Balkans found themselves not just because of Serbia's attitude, but also because of the overt change in Romanian policy. The Sarajevo attentat served only as a pretext, not to say as an excuse, which would be a much better term. Count Tisza saw that and pointed it out, to large extent. He was certainly no Serbophile, and least of all willing to make Serbia's position easier in the entire crisis from 1913 onwards. But he saw clearly that the responsible circles in the Monarchy wanted to take a stance against Serbia that was not sufficiently justified. At the end of the meeting, he stated that he also agreed to delivering Serbia "very heavy" demands, "but not of such kind that our intention to make unacceptable demands be transparent. Otherwise, the legal basis for a declaration of war would be impossible." Finally, he even threatened to draw personal consequences, if his viewpoint was not taken into consideration.

On the same day, 7 July, another meeting was held in the afternoon. It only dealt with the war and the matters such as: 1) would it be possible to mobilize first against Serbia alone and then, if necessary, against Russia; 2) would it be possible to keep considerable number of troops in Transylvania to intimidate Romania; 3) where to start a war with Russia. Hötendorf's replies to those questions are not recorded. But it is clear that the war faction was busy at work and that the meeting saw discussion of power relations and even the possibility of a world war.

On the same day, Berchtold prepared a report for the Emperor. He put forward Tisza's view and then added that his and the opinion of the majority was "to use the present opportunity for military action against Serbia, because our position can only be exacerbated with prolonged waiting and that the Bulgarian orientation, which has not yet been set on the road, even if it works, cannot completely substitute for further deterioration of our relations with Serbia and Romania, which can be predicted with certainty, as well as

134 Margutti, *Kaiser Franz Joseph*, p. 455.

its consequences on our internal conditions". On the same day, he told Baron Tschirschky that the demands to be delivered to Serbia would be so designed "that their acceptance seems to be excluded".¹³⁵

Sensing the mood of his superiors in Vienna and without any evidence whatever about the responsibility of official Serbia, the Charge d'Affairs in Belgrade Storck wrote on 8 July to Vienna that Belgrade was much concerned about the imminent outbreak of a war. "In order to complete her armament in peace and wait for a Russian war, Serbia will again commit any turpitude, suffer any indignity and provide us with any satisfaction until the position has become such as to force us to fight an uphill battle. May God thus provide a convenient *casus belli*, as we need it!" Storck's superior, Baron Giesl, told Baron Hötendorf on 8 July that an entirely different tone now prevailed in the Foreign Ministry; Serbia would not accept the terms imposed on her and that would lead to war; "the moment for that is splendid". These were his own words.¹³⁶

During that time, Berlin hastened a solution. Many people there thought that it was necessary to act as soon as possible while the impression created by the attentat was still strong and immediate and before calmer views of the entire matter set in.¹³⁷ Emperor Wilhelm II was particularly impatient and he gave expression to his impatience in his minutes written on diplomatic reports. Count Szögyény reported on 8 July that he had the opportunity to hear from the state Under-Secretary and various relevant persons in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs "that here they wait our decisions impatiently, because they think that now is the right moment – such a favourable moment will not easily turn up again – to stand against Serbia vigorously". He was told that Tschirschky's reports showed that he had spoken with Berchtold "with certain tepidity" and that he had been reproached from Berlin on that account. At the same time, it was desired "to start at once with the creation of an atmosphere against Serbia in the foreign, and especially British, press". Berchtold accepted this advice immediately and sent instructions accordingly, along with large sums of money, to the embassies in London, Paris, Rome and the Bucharest Legation. On their side, the German government developed lively activities to win over the press, especially in London and Rome. At the same time, the German press was also organized for the purpose of systematic campaigning, whereas those newspapers which advocated peace were threatened with not just words, but also with action. On 5 July, after an editorial article was published which warned against conducting a policy of sentiments, General Auffenberg personally visited the

135 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, p. 36.

136 Hötendorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, IV, p. 57.

137 Cf. F. Stieve, *Die Tragödie der Bundesgenossen*, München 1913, p. 180.

editorial office of the Viennese *Zeit* to admonish and explain that war with Serbia was a dire necessity.

On 8 July, Berchtold informed Tisza of Tschirschky's visit to him with the message from the Emperor "to state with emphasis that Berlin expects an action from the Monarchy against Serbia and that Germany would not understand if we missed this given situation without striking a blow". To Berchtold's question about Germany's attitude towards Bucharest, Tschirschky replied that Berlin considered Romania's action against Austria in this case out of question, and besides Emperor Wilhelm II sent a personal letter to King Carol, "which left nothing to be desired in respect of its clarity". After having a conversation with the Ambassador, Berchtold was convinced "that moderation with Serbia on our part would be interpreted as an admission of weakness and could not remain without impact on our position in the Triple Alliance and the future policy of Germany". These important statements, Berchtold thought, could not be without influence on Tisza's decisions and he immediately forwarded them to him for that reason.

However, Tisza produced his own memoir for Franz Joseph on 8 July. In it, he again presented his view that a war with Serbia would provoke Russia and a general world war. Optimism in Berlin aside, he did not believe in the neutrality of Romania and thus in the certain prospects of victory. Therefore, he wanted to use the present goodwill of Berlin to receive some assistance in a more active Balkan policy, which would for the time being remain in a purely diplomatic field. When the war was better prepared diplomatically, a decisive struggle could then be taken up with better prospects. Even if that diplomatic action, which should draw in Bulgaria, Romania and Greece, did not lead to some favourable results, it would allow for the breathing space to Bulgaria, if postponed for a year or two, to strengthen herself and be a useful ally both in respect to Romania and Serbia. He again suggested that Serbia be delivered certain difficult, but not unacceptable, demands and that the following recriminations form the basis of such demands: 1) the statements of the Serbian diplomats, Dr. Miroslav Spalajković in St. Petersburg and Dr. Milutin Jovanović in Berlin (which ascribed the attentat to horrific internal situation in the Danubian Monarchy; 2) the origins of the bombs found in Bosnia – they came from Kragujevac; 3) Serbian passports of the compromised subjects of Austria-Hungary which they used to cross the border; 4) hostile and alarming statements of Serbian clerks and officers, "which will hopefully (*hoffentlich*) be soon established"; 5) difficulties with the press, societies and school matters of which they complained. If Serbia refused the demands concerning these accusations, then she could be delivered an ultimatum and declared a war. In that way, Tisza thought, "we would pass on the responsibility for war to Serbia",

while it would otherwise lay with Austria. In the second part of his memoir, Tisza expressed his opinion about what should be done with Serbia. "In order to avoid complications with Italy, to ensure the sympathy of Britain and to make it possible for Russia to remain the observer of a war, we would have to declare on our part at a suitable moment, in the form of a statement, that we will not destroy Serbia and still less annex it. In my opinion, Serbia should be reduced after a successful war by ceding her conquered areas to Bulgaria, Greece and Albania, and we should at the most request some strategically important border rectifications. Of course, we would be entitled to war reparations, which would be a tool to keep Serbia under tight control for a long time." Therefore, Tisza also grew accustomed to the notion of war, although he still stated that Austria-Hungary might be satisfied with Serbia's heavy diplomatic defeat.¹³⁸

Emperor Franz Joseph decided for war after the messages from Berlin, but he accepted Tisza's reasons that it was necessary to deliver demands to Serbia beforehand. Finally, Berchtold also agreed to that, believing that it would have a favorable effect on Britain and Romania. He told Tschirschky on 10 July that he was presently mostly concerned with what he could demand from Serbia. "If the Serbs accepted all the demands, that would be a very unsympathetic solution to him and he still ponder what kind of demands could be delivered that Serbia would find impossible to accept." Emperor Wilhelm II added on that report: "To evacuate Sanjak! ... Austria must get it again unconditionally in order to prevent unification between Serbia and Montenegro and [to prevent] the Serbians to get to the sea."¹³⁹

While Tisza tended to eschew armed conflict, Germany constantly sent word that the matter be solved radically. Baron Tschirschky repeated to Berchtold on 11 July that it was necessary to act quickly. On 12 July, Szógyény reported that "all the relevant factors" in Berlin required "the most energetic action against Serbia and to settle scores once and for all with the revolutionary, conspiratorial nest there, leaving it entirely to us to choose the means we consider right for that purpose". Szógyény himself wrote that these circles, together with the Emperor, "in fact, one might say, urge us to take eventually military action against Serbia". They did so, he explained, because Germany "has lately grown stronger in its conviction that Russia is preparing for war against her western neighbours" and made this part of its political calculation for the future. But Russia was still not prepared for that war. Therefore, it was not certain whether

138 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 371-4.

139 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, p. 48.

Russia would jump to Serbia's aid, and if she did so "she is now militarily far from being that prepared and far from being that strong as she would be in all probability in a few years". Berlin also believed that Britain would not enter the war for the sake of a Balkan country, even if both Russia and France enter it. "In general, therefore, political constellation is now so favourable for us as it could ever be."¹⁴⁰ Almost all more prominent people in Austria-Hungary accepted this opinion. Otherwise level-headed Baron Burian wrote afterwards: "Russian preparedness is just a half preparedness, so it is necessary to use the initial precious time."¹⁴¹ Along with these reasons, which obviously justified a preventive war, there was, according to Szőgyény, the Serbian question, the danger of which to Austria-Hungary the Germans fully realized only after the attentat in Sarajevo. The world understood, he said, that Austria must attach blame to Serbia after that. The Serbian friends would not take an anti-Serbian attitude of course, but they would also not intercede on her behalf, "least of all with arms."¹⁴² Jagow instructed the Ambassador in London as early as 12 July to work towards localizing the conflict. The press was supposed to be especially influenced in that sense. "This is about an eminently political question", he wrote again on 15 July, "perhaps the last chance to strike a deadly blow to Greater Serbianism under relatively favourable circumstances. If Austria missed this opportunity, her reputation would then be ruined and she would become an even weaker factor in our group. Since different orientation of our policy seems to be excluded for the moment, with a view to the well-known intimate relations between Britain and Russia, it is our vital interest to maintain the world [power] status of our Austrian ally."¹⁴³

The Foreign Ministry in Vienna counted on war with certainty. On 13 July, diplomatic missions in Belgrade, St. Petersburg and Cetinje were sent message to stick to their earlier instructions in case of a breakdown in diplomatic relations. The Belgrade Legation had to make sure that all secret documents and more important papers had been shipped to Zemun by the end of that week. Indeed, the most important documents were transported to Zemun in two large suitcases in the evening of 18 July.

¹⁴⁰ These official reports clearly show how wrong H. Oncken is in claiming that the "meaning of German forwardness" at that time was only that Austria should capture Belgrade and form the basis for further negotiations, and that Germany did not think of a large-scale war. See *Das deutsche Reich und die Vorgeschichte des Weltkrieges*, p. 792.

¹⁴¹ Graf Stefan Tissa, *Briefe, 1914-1918*. Edited by Oskar von Wertheimer, Berlin 1928, p. 27.

¹⁴² *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 407-9.

¹⁴³ *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, pp. 55, 69. Cf. a letter of 18 July in *Ibid.*, pp. 92-3.

During that time, the legal expert F. Wiesner labored in Sarajevo to assemble evidence of Serbia's participation in the preparations for the attentat for the Foreign Ministry's purposes. The result of his investigation turned up entirely negative. On 13 July, he reported from Sarajevo only this: the local "authoritative" circles were convinced of the existence of Greater Serbian propaganda conducted by the press, societies and other organizations with the knowledge and assistance of the Serbian government – but they could not furnish Wiesner with any reliable evidence. He himself said the following: "The material from the time before the attentat provides no basis [*keine Anhaltspunkte*] [for the claim] that the Serbian government assisted propaganda. There is enough material, although exiguous, [to prove] that the societies from Serbia nourish the movement and that the Serbian government tolerates it. It is not proven, or can only be guessed, whether the leadership of the Serbian government knew of the attentat, or prepared it, or supplied arms. Moreover, there are signs that this is regarded as being excluded." It was only established that the attentat was arranged among the young people in Belgrade and that Major Tankosić and Ciganović took part in the preparations. The bombs were from the Kragujevac arsenal, but there was no basis to claim they were taken from there for this purpose, because such bombs could be found among *komitas* after the war. Border officers, together with financial police, smuggled the assassins from Šabac and Loznica.¹⁴⁴ Even without Wiesner's report, and especially after it, the Foreign Ministry in Vienna knew perfectly well that it was impossible to blame official Serbia. "People in Vienna", Baron Musulin wrote, "were even convinced that the Serbian government was unpleasantly surprised by the fast germination of their own sowing."¹⁴⁵

The decision to attack Serbia had been made earlier and it was not abandoned after this report that contained nothing that compromised the Serbian government. At the moment when Austria made decision to go to war, her official investigator was convinced there was no evidence for the complicity of the Serbian government. Even if after the war, with the benefit of hindsight, the charges against the Serbian government proved perfectly true, they could not justify such a harsh Austrian attitude in 1914. Later findings have more of a historical importance today; at the moment when a historical decision of the

144 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 436-7. After the war, Wiesner wrote several times about that matter with the intention to justify his government, but all his writings are the maneuvering of a lawyer rather than the assessment of a legal expert. He rounded off his articles in the paper from Steinitz's book *Rings um Sasonow*, pp. 167-86. It is especially his study entitled *Das serbische Memorandum vom Jahre 1919. Die Kriegsschuldfrage*, VI, p. 115 ff that reflects his ignorance of major historical matters and unashamed bias.

145 Musulin, *Das Haus am Ballplatz*, p. 220.

Austrian state policy was in the making, these things were not known. Count Berchtold himself writes nowadays: "To investigate the culpability for war one can only take into account those facts, which were known to the government concerned at the time of final decisions."¹⁴⁶ In 1914, he was, however, guided by different appreciation. Had he then thought what he thinks now, Austria could have not declared, or dared to declare, a war. That is also the best proof that Austria did not enter into war in 1914 because of the Sarajevo attentat or because of the conviction that the Serbian government was guilty for it, but rather because she wanted a war for political and diplomatic reasons.

3

On 14 July, Emperor Wilhelm II wrote his reply to Emperor Franz Joseph's letter. After initial remarks about his loyalty and gratitude for the latter's appeal to his friendship, Emperor Wilhelm II stressed to the Austrian ruler that he would find him and Germany, with allied fidelity and tried friendship, on his side "in difficult moments". "I consider it not just a moral duty on the part of all cultured states, but also a commandment for their self-preservation to oppose with full strength propaganda, which especially chose to attack the solid structure of monarchies. I am not unfamiliar with the serious danger that threatens Your lands and the Triple Alliance with its consequences from the agitation conducted by Russian and Serb Panslavists and I realize the need to free the southern borders of Your states from this heavy burden." Of course, he accepted the policy of bringing Bulgaria into the Triple Alliance and he gave Bucharest to understand that Romania's separation from Serbia was requested, as well as the cessation of agitation against Austria-Hungary.¹⁴⁷

On the same day, on 14 July, another meeting took place between Berchtold and the two Prime Ministers, and it was then that the agreement was reached on the demands to be delivered to Serbia. Wiesner's telegram was not taken into consideration – the assumption was still that Serbia had to be linked somehow with the attentat in order to justify a declaration of war. It was decided to produce a note in the form of an ultimatum by 19 July and to hand it to Belgrade on 23 July with the 48 hours deadline for a reply. The dispatch of the note was postponed until that date because the President of France was scheduled to leave St. Petersburg on that day – he was going to pay a visit to the Russian Emperor. If the note was handed earlier, during their meeting in St. Petersburg,

¹⁴⁶ *Die Kriegsschuldfrage*, VI, 1928, p. 1004.

¹⁴⁷ *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 442-3; *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, pp. 43-4.

that could be considered, according to the record of the conference, something of an affront and it could “increase the probability that Russia and France decide for war” after face to face conversation between Emperor Nicholas II and the “honourable President of the Republic”. It was believed that Poincaré and Izvolsky might influence the “peace-loving” Emperor Nicholas II and “cautious” Sazonov to decide in favour of war. Tisza gave in, seeing Germany’s determined attitude and after his proposed course of action was found to make things more difficult from a military viewpoint. Tisza finally agreed to war, but he demanded the principled decision made by the ministerial council to the effect that no land would be taken from Serbia, apart from border rectification. On the same day, 14 July, he informed the German Ambassador of his attitude. On that occasion, he told him that mobilization would be ordered immediately, if Serbia did not accept the demands within a certain deadline. The “note would be composed in such way as to make its acceptance almost impossible”.¹⁴⁸ Making report to the Emperor, Berchtold said: “The content of a note established today, which would be sent to Belgrade, is such that one must count with the likelihood of a military conflict.” Count Hoyos told Tschirschky on 17 July that Austria’s demands on Serbia were such “that it is impossible for a state with some self-consciousness and dignity left to accept them”.¹⁴⁹ All this makes it clear that the Vienna government prepared the war deliberately and systematically. Serbia would be faced with such heavy and unacceptable terms to force her to reject them and provide Austria with the reason to attack. Berchtold detailed the entire plan of action against Serbia to Tschirschky.¹⁵⁰ He and Tisza even apologized to him and Germany for not being able to deliver an ultimatum at once, because they wanted to wait for Poincaré’s departure from St. Petersburg. In their own words, they did not want to appear indecisive and hesitant.¹⁵¹ On 16 July, Berlin agreed to wait for Poincaré’s departure, but the State Secretary “much regrets [*ganz ausserordentlich*] that procrastination”. Upon his return from Berlin on 15 July, the German Ambassador Wangenheim made an even more categorical statement to his Austrian colleague. According to him, Berlin regarded the present moment as no less than “decisive for the Triple Alliance”. If Austria fully succeeded with regard to Serbia, “then the opportunity will rise again to save Romania for the Triple Alliance”. In case of failure, “the existence of the Triple Alliance is considered

148 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, p. 70.

149 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 447-8.

150 Berchtold to Szógyény, 15 July, *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 450.

151 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, p. 105.

threatened".¹⁵² Wangenheim later added that Berlin was "now firmly resolved" to "follow most faithfully" the Danubian Monarchy in Near Eastern policy and support it "with full strength". It would not allow any more to be reproached for leaving Austria in the lurch. But it was, above all, necessary for Austria to take a stand against Serbia "aware of the goal and energetically". Serbia had to be faced with the alternative: either war or such humiliation "that would destroy the Greater Serbian idea for years". He would regard a half success as a defeat. He repeated several times "that the Triple Alliance would completely lose its value, if power relations on our (Austrian) south-east border continued permanently to develop to our detriment. Almost the entire army of the Monarchy would then be tied on that side and Germany would have to defend itself on its own against Russia and France in case of some general conflict." Germany would thus have to look to ensure its interests on the other side. On the basis of Wangenheim's hints, Germany would be forced to turn to Russia.¹⁵³ The Bulgarian Minister Toshev was openly told that Germany considered it its duty not just to support Austrian action, but also to encourage it. The humiliation of Serbia had to reach such an extent that she fell not just on her knees, but also lay prostrate.¹⁵⁴ Pallavicini, who relayed to Berchtold his conversations with Wangenheim, was much impressed. The thought of a preventive war and the removal of future dangers came to the fore here again as clearly as possible. The Italian Ambassador in Constantinople, Marquis Camillo Garroni, heard from Wangenheim about the decision of the Vienna government, to which Berlin agreed, that Serbia be given an ultimatum which she would not be able to accept.¹⁵⁵ The war was, he claimed, a foregone conclusion.

Berlin also prepared a plan how to exonerate itself before other powers against the eventual accusations. The Bavarian Charge d'Affairs Schoen wrote on 18 July that Berlin considered a war against Serbia necessary and would even preferred the Serbs not to give satisfaction. "They are in full agreement here with Austria's exploiting a favourable moment, even at the risk of further complications." When the decision was made, Germany would claim to be "as surprised with Austria's action as other Powers, pointing out that the [German] Emperor is on the journey in the north and that the Chief of the Great General Staff and the Prussian War Minister are on the leave of absence". In other words, Germany took the role of misleading other Powers with inaccurate

152 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 458.

153 *Ibid.*, p. 533.

154 *Die Kriegsschuldfrage*, VI, 1928, p. 232.

155 Schmitt, *The Coming of the War 1914*, I, pp. 333-4; Poincaré, *Au service de la France*, IV, pp. 198-9.

information with a view to avoiding its own responsibility and not influencing Austria to prevent war.¹⁵⁶ When an article about the conflict was about to be published in the official *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* on 19 July, Jagow informed Vienna that it was “deliberately written with moderation given European diplomacy”. The well-known official newspaper “should not alarm before time”. But Vienna should not take that as meaning that Germany was lagging behind their determination.¹⁵⁷

Austria was now a sick man of Europe, just like Turkey had been, the German State Under-Secretary Zimmermann used to say, and the Russians, Italians, Romanians, Serbians and Montenegrins were waiting to inherit her. “A strong and successful action against Serbia would have the effect of the Austrians and Hungarians feeling themselves as a state power, it would enliven the fallen economic life and postpone the aspirations from abroad for years to come.” Therefore, Berlin decided to accept Vienna’s decision to embark on a war with Serbia, even at the cost of a war with Russia. For that reason, it regretted that Austria did not immediately spring into action lest the Serbs should give satisfaction under the influence of Russia and France. German explanations of the need to localize war started immediately after the ultimatum had been delivered; it was believed that localization was possible for many reasons, primarily because Britain and France did not want war, while Russia “is fond of saber-rattling, but reluctant to draw a sword for others in a decisive moment”.¹⁵⁸

Indeed, from 12 July onwards, Berlin systematically guided all activities via diplomatic missions to prepare the ground for the localization of a war between Austria and Serbia in the press and with some governments, acknowledging the right of Austria to resolve the conflict as she saw fit. “This conflict is about a thing that concerns only the two interested parties.”¹⁵⁹ “The more Austria shows herself determined”, Jagow wrote on 18 July to London, “the more energetically we support her, the more likely Russia would remain peaceful. Some noise will certainly be made in St. Petersburg, but basically Russia is not prepared to fight now.”¹⁶⁰ Other German responsible persons repeated these and similar words and that was the point of departure in their assessment of political situation.

In order to ensure the cooperation of Bulgaria or clear the ground as to her attitude in case of the intended war, Berchtold sent a dispatch to his Minister in

156 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 4., 1927, pp. 120-4; *Die Kriegsschuldfrage*, VI, pp. 14-9. Cf. A Baserque, *Les origines de la guerre mondiale*, Paris 1919, pp. 142-4.

157 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, p. 90.

158 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 4., 1927, pp. 120-2.

159 *Ibid.*, I, p. 66.

160 *Ibid.*, p. 93.

Sofia on 17 July to the effect that he should “absolutely prevent” King Ferdinand from going for a holiday abroad and let the King’s secretary know in a convenient manner that it was necessary to wait for the Vienna government’s step in Belgrade.¹⁶¹ The Minister did so not just via the King’s secretary, but also through Prime Minister. At the same time, the conclusion of a secret treaty of alliance between Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria was hurried along; the treaty was defensive according to its text (Article 2), but it could only be aimed at Serbia given the time of its conclusion. The treaty envisaged that Austria must aid Bulgaria if unprovoked, she was attacked by two countries, one of which was Austria’s neighbour. Bulgaria had the same obligation. Since Article 3 of the treaty explicitly expressed a desire to reach an agreement with Romania, it is clear that Serbia alone could have been a possible opponent of Bulgaria and a neighbour of Austria-Hungary.¹⁶² With this treaty, Austria wanted to secure the action of Bulgaria in case Russia entered into war so that the participation of the Bulgarians would free a considerable part of the Austrian army on the southern front.

During that time, and certainly before 18 July, San Giuliano heard from the German Ambassador, perhaps not positively, about Vienna’s intentions and the attitude of the German government.¹⁶³ It was well-known that the Italian government was not in the mood for a war with Serbia. Vienna was aware of that, and that was one of the main reasons, along with a fear of indiscretion, for the reluctance of the Vienna government to inform Rome of their intentions. San Giuliano told the German Ambassador on 14 July that their expert for international law Guido Fusinato expressed the opinion that a government could not be reproached because of political and national propaganda and that Italy could never fight against the nationality principle. “All traditions of the idea of nationality and the liberal principle force Italy to keep itself away from that road.”¹⁶⁴ Next day he added that Italy would not tolerate Austria’s annexation of some of Serbia’s territory, and on 17 July he stressed that Italy and Romania could not allow Austria to crush or conquer Serbia.¹⁶⁵ Greater Serbian propaganda could not be suppressed by force: “it would simply turn into secret [propaganda]”. “Such strong national aspirations could not any longer be crushed forcefully today. Thus, it is an Austrian misapprehension to believe in the omnipotence and the effect of police in such national questions.

161 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 482.

162 *Ibid.*, p. 507.

163 *Ibid.*, p. 482.

164 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, pp. 64, 72, 85.

165 *Ibid.*, p. 81.

Italian history of the last century gives an example of that.”¹⁶⁶ This reply made a grave impression. Italy’s non-participation in the planned action and its anti-Austrian attitude in the matter of Serbia could have difficult political consequences. Italy’s stance could especially influence Russia. But that did not make Berlin try to restrain Austria, but rather suggest her to come to terms with Italy by offering compensations, i.e. consenting to Italy’s entrance into Albania.¹⁶⁷ And that was exactly what Vienna avoided. Fearing some Italian demand on the basis of the earlier mentioned Article 7 of the Triple Alliance treaty, the Foreign Ministry in Vienna produced a special memoir that disputed the Italian right. The memoir penned by Count A. Nemes is undated and the official Austrian collection of documents has dated it “approximately” 19 July. It stated that Austria had no intention to acquire territory from Serbia, but rather that her military occupation would be temporary. Accordingly, there was no need to carry out that occupation in agreement with Italy on the basis of some compensations. Vienna also pointed out that the right to compensation concerned only the case of occupying the Turkish, and not the Serbian, area, although the text of the treaty did not contain such a stipulation and read without any limitation: *dans les regions des Balcons*.

4

At that time, the first news about the seriousness of the situation and the possibility of an Austrian attack reached Belgrade. The Serbian Minister in London, Matija Bošković, sent it on 17 July “from a well-informed source”. His report read: “The following weeks will be very critical and Serbia needs to prepare for anything and do not let herself be surprised. No trust should be placed in the calculated peace-loving statements coming from Austro-Hungarian circles, because the fateful pressure on Serbia is going to be exerted and it might not fall short of an armed attack.”¹⁶⁸ The reports from the Minister in Vienna were not so adamant: Jovan Jovanović even “refrained from assessing the situation” on 15 July, apparently with no opportunity to obtain more reliable information about Austrian intentions, which were concealed purposely in Vienna.¹⁶⁹ He knew, of course, that something was going on; he warned about Tisza’s speech in the parliament, which did not exclude war unless Austrian demands were

166 Ibid., pp. 72, 94. The present-day [the first half of the 1930s] anti-Yugoslav Italy assesses events differently. Cf. the official *Enciclopedia italiana*, 1933, *Guerra mondiale*.

167 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, pp. 67-8, 90.

168 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from London, 4 (17) July 1914.

169 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from Vienna, 2 July 1914.

met; but he – as well as the ambassadors of Russia and France – did not know until the last moment in which direction and how far these demands would go. On 17 July, Belgrade received the message from Rome that San Giuliano had stated to the Austrian Ambassador “that any step of the Austro-Hungarian government towards Serbia, which would be incompatible with international standards and run contrary to Serbia’s sovereign rights, would be condemned by the Italian public opinion and that the Italian government absolutely upholds the full independence of Serbia”. The next day, Ljubomir Mihailović reported from Rome the statement of Duke of Avarna made in Vienna to the effect “that the Austrian step is inevitable and [with it] the danger of an armed conflict, if Serbia does not give satisfaction”, although the deceiving Berchtold assured him that the investigation in Sarajevo would take a long time and that Austrian steps could thus not be specified as yet.¹⁷⁰

Aware of the danger, Pašić stated to the Austrian Minister that the Serbian government was willing to meet any request in the interest of the investigation and take any other measures compatible with Serbia’s dignity and independence. With this in view, the British Minister reported to his government on 17 July that the attitude of the Serbian government was “wise and conciliatory”. The news was already circulated in Belgrade to the effect that the Austrian government could demand a mixed commission, the abolishment of national societies and the press censorship, and such demands were, according to the British Minister, considered unacceptable.¹⁷¹

The decisive meeting of the Council of the joint ministers of Austria-Hungary, to which both Prime Ministers, the Chief of the General Staff and a delegate of the commander of the navy attended, took place on 19 July in Vienna. On that occasion, the text of the note, effectively an ultimatum to be delivered to Serbia, was formulated. According to an earlier decision, the ultimatum would be handed on 23 July, at 5 o’clock. It was necessary to wait for Poincaré to leave St. Petersburg, as had been decided before. It was impossible to hesitate further, Berchtold said, “because Berlin has already started to be nervous, and the news of our intentions have already been rumoured in Rome”, so he could no longer be responsible for the “unwanted cases”. It was also decided during that meeting to proclaim the state of siege in all the lands populated by the Yugoslavs immediately after the mobilization had been announced. Mobilization had been dropped earlier in order to avoid “the evil impression not just abroad, but also among our own population”. The War Minister informed the others that various measures for mobilization would

170 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from Rome, 5 July 1914.

171 *British Documents*, XI, p. 41.

be submitted to the Emperor for his signature on 22 July, that is to say before the ultimatum was delivered, and that the official administrative activities in this connection had already been agreed. Baron Hötendorf provided "secret information" on mobilization and the measures undertaken for the protection of Transylvania from an eventual Romanian uprising or an incursion from Romania. There was some talk during the meeting of the possibility of an Italian action in Albania, and Tisza emphatically demanded confirmation that "no plans for conquest for the Monarchy's benefit were linked with action against Serbia and that not a piece of Serbia would be annexed apart from border rectifications for military reasons". He demanded a unanimous conclusion to that effect, because that was the condition on which the Hungarian government consented to that action. His view was clear. If a part of Serbia was annexed and thus the Yugoslav population of Austria-Hungary increased, the Yugoslav question would not be disposed of, but rather appeared in some new form, perhaps in the form of trialism, which seemed more odious to the Hungarians than the Serbian question. The Hungarians shrank from leaving only one road open for the solution of the Yugoslav question, a situation that could become a reality if Serbia were eliminated given the popular will in favour of unification. There were thus two opposed opinions in the leading circles of Austria-Hungary in respect of relations towards Serbia: whereas the military wanted that country divided and part of it annexed to the Danubian Monarchy, fearing her existence, the Hungarians wanted to maintain it apprehensive that the annexation of Serbia might make the Yugoslav question even more prominent on Austria-Hungary's agenda.

Berchtold declined to accept Tisza's request in that form. To be true, he knew that out of political considerations for Italy and Russia, Austria would not be able this time to annex any territory, but he certainly wanted to "reduce Serbia so much by ceding as much Serbian areas as possible to Bulgaria, Greece and Albania, and perhaps Romania, that she is no longer dangerous". If the circumstances changed, he pointed out, and Russophiles came to power in Bulgaria, and different situation emerged in Albania, he had to "count as a person charged with foreign policy with the possibility that we would be unable not to annex anything at the end of the war due to the existing circumstances, if we wanted to create a situation on our border better than that obtaining now".

Tisza did not accept Berchtold's reservations. He stressed that he did so not just for reasons of internal, but also foreign policy. Russia would not allow the destruction of Serbia and Austria would "improve her international position" before the world by renouncing annexations. Count Stürgkh spoke of the need for certain, strategically justified, border rectification and the necessity to

change the dynasty in Serbia, conclude a military convention with that country and make her dependent on Austria with other measures. The War Minister agreed with that, but only on condition that the occupation of the county of Šabac be settled along with border rectification. Baron Hötzen-dorf, who was emphatically against Tisza's proposal, reduced the "strategic border rectifications" to taking Mačva and the Belgrade area away from Serbia "in order always to have in [our] hands two large bridgeheads".¹⁷² The unanimous conclusion was then reached to "state to other Powers immediately at the outbreak of war that the Monarchy does not conduct a war of conquest and does not intend to annex the Kingdom [of Serbia]. It is natural that this decision did not exclude strategically necessary border rectifications, as well as reducing Serbia for the benefit of other states and perhaps a temporary occupation of parts of the Serbian territory."¹⁷³

As can be seen, a war was the main subject of discussion at this meeting and it was considered a more-less foregone conclusion. Formulated in such terms as to make it unacceptable, the ultimatum became a pure formality necessary for the sake of an impression abroad.

172 Hötzen-dorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, IV, p. 91.

173 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 511-4.

The Ultimatum to Serbia

1

Alexander Musulin, the chief of the Oriental Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, wrote the ultimatum and Berchtold checked and finalized it.¹⁷⁴ “An instigation for [the drafting of] the harshest terms came from the Hungarian head of the department Count Forgách.”¹⁷⁵

A courier for Constantinople took the ultimatum to Belgrade on 20 July. It read:

“On 31 March 1909, the Serbian Minister in Vienna made the following statement to the Imperial and Royal Government, on the instructions of his government:

Serbia recognizes that the *fait accompli* created in Bosnia and Herzegovina has not violated her rights and she will accordingly conform to the decision made by the Powers in conformity with Article 25 of the Treaty of Berlin. Deferring to the advice of the Great Powers, Serbia undertakes to renounce from now onwards the attitude of protest and the opposition, which she has adopted with regard to the annexation since last autumn and, moreover, she undertakes to change the course of her current policy towards Austria-Hungary in order to live with the latter in future on good neighbourly terms.

However, the history of recent years, and especially the sorrowful events of 28 June last, have shown that there is a conspiratorial movement, the object of which is to detach from the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy certain parts of its territory. The movement, which has emerged before the eyes of the Serbian Government, has gone so far as to make itself manifest outside the territory of the Kingdom in the shape of acts of terrorism and a series of outrages and murders.

Far from carrying out the formal undertakings contained in the declaration of 31 March 1909, the Royal Serbian Government has done nothing to suppress this movement. It has permitted the criminal machinations of various societies and associations directed against the Monarchy, and has tolerated unrestrained language on the part of the press, the glorification of the perpetrators

¹⁷⁴ Musulin's account of the intentions and the attitude of the Austro-Hungarian government on this occasion is inaccurate in all its essentials. See *Das Haus am Ballplatz*, pp. 223–5.

¹⁷⁵ Polzer-Hoditz, *Kaiser Karl*, pp. 250–1.

of outrages, the participation of officers and functionaries in subversive agitation, an unwholesome propaganda in public instruction, and finally, all those manifestations that might have incited the Serbian population to hate the Monarchy and despise its institutions.

This culpable tolerance of the Royal Serbian Government had not ceased even at the moment when the events of 28 June last revealed its fatal consequences to the whole world.

It is clear from the depositions and confessions of the criminal perpetrators of the outrage of 28 June last that the Sarajevo crime was planned in Belgrade; that the arms and explosives with which the murderers were provided had been given to them by Serbian officers and functionaries, the members of *Narodna odbrana*; and finally, that the passage into Bosnia of the criminals and their arms was organized and effected by the chiefs of the Serbian border service.

The above mentioned results of the investigation do not permit the Imperial and Royal Government to pursue any longer the attitude of expectant forbearance which they have maintained for years in face of the agitations centered on Belgrade, and thence propagated in the territories of the Monarchy. The results, on the contrary, impose on them the duty of putting an end to the intrigues which form a perpetual menace to the tranquility of the Monarchy.

To achieve this end, the Imperial and Royal Government are compelled to demand from the Royal Serbian Government a formal assurance that they condemn this propaganda against the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy; i.e. the whole series of tendencies, the ultimate aim of which is to detach from the Monarchy territories belonging to it and that they undertake to suppress by every means this criminal and terrorist propaganda.

In order to give a formal character to this undertaking, the Royal Serbian Government will publish on the front page of their *Official Journal* [*Službene novine*] of 26/18 July the following declaration:

"The Royal Government of Serbia condemn the propaganda directed against Austria-Hungary, i.e., the general tendency of which the final aim is to detach from the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy territories belonging to it, and they sincerely deplore the fatal consequences of these criminal proceedings.

The Royal Government regret that Serbian officers and functionaries have participated in the above mentioned propaganda and thus compromised the good neighbourly relations to which the Royal Government were solemnly pledged by their declaration of 31 March 1909.

The Royal Government condemn and repudiate all idea of interfering or attempting to interfere with the destinies of the inhabitants of any part whatsoever of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy; they consider it their duty formally

to warn officers and functionaries, and the whole population of the Kingdom, that henceforward they will proceed with the utmost strictness against persons who may be guilty of such activities, which they will spare no effort to prevent and suppress."

This declaration will simultaneously be communicated to the Royal Army as an order of the day by His Majesty the King and will be published in the *Military Gazette* [*Vojni list*] of the army.

The Royal Serbian Government will further undertake:

1) To suppress any publication which incites to hatred and contempt of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the general tendency of which is directed against its territorial integrity.

2) To dissolve immediately the society styled *Narodna Odbrana*, to confiscate all its means of propaganda, and to proceed in the same manner against other societies and associations in Serbia, which engage in propaganda against the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. The Royal Government will take the necessary measures to prevent the societies dissolved from continuing their activity under different name and in some other form.

3) To eliminate without delay from public instruction in Serbia, both as regards the teaching staff and as regards the methods of instruction, everything that serves, or might serve, to foment the propaganda against Austria-Hungary.

4) To remove from the army and from the administration in general, all officers and functionaries guilty of propaganda against the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy whose names and deeds the Austro-Hungarian Government reserve to themselves the right of communicating to the Serbian Government in due course.

5) To accept the collaboration of representatives of the Imperial and Royal Government for the suppression of the subversive movement directed against the territorial integrity of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

6) To take judicial proceedings against accessories to the plot of 28 June who are in the Serbian territory; delegates sent by the Austro-Hungarian Government will take part in this investigation.

7) To put under arrest without delay Major Voja Tankosić and the individual named Milan Ciganović, a Serbian state functionary, who have been compromised by the results of the magisterial inquiry at Sarajevo.

8) To prevent by effective measures the participation of the Serbian authorities in the illicit traffic in arms and explosives across the border, to dismiss and punish severely the officials of the border service in Šabac and Loznica guilty of having assisted the perpetrators of the Sarajevo crime by facilitating their passage across the border.

9) To furnish the Imperial and Royal Government with explanations regarding the unjustifiable utterances of high Serbian officials, both in Serbia and abroad, who, notwithstanding their official position, have not hesitated since the crime of 28 June last to express themselves in interviews in terms of hostility to Austria-Hungary.

10) To notify the Imperial and Royal Government without delay of the execution of the measures comprised under the preceding heads.

The Imperial and Royal Government expect the reply at the latest by 6 o'clock on Saturday evening the 25th of July.

The memoir concerning the results of the magisterial investigation in Sarajevo, as far as it concerns the functionaries mentioned in Articles 7 and 8, is attached to this note."

"The criminal investigation carried out by the Sarajevo court into Gavrilo Princip and his friends in the matter of murder and complicity in murder in connection with the crime committed on 28 June last has so far established the following:

1) The conspiracy the object of which was to murder Archduke Franz Ferdinand during his stay in Sarajevo was hatched in Belgrade by Gavrilo Princip, Nedeljko Čabrinović, the person named Milan Ciganović and Trifko Grabež, with the assistance of Major Voja Tankosić.

2) Milan Ciganović and Major Voja Tankosić gave six bombs and four Browning revolvers with ammunition to Princip, Čabrinović and Grabež with which the criminals carried out the attentat.

3) Hand grenades originate with the Serbian military arsenal in Kragujevac.

4) To ensure the success of an attentat, Ciganović trained Princip, Čabrinović and Grabež in handling bombs and gave a few lessons in shooting to Princip, Čabrinović and Grabež in a forest near the Topčider shooting range.

5) In order to enable Princip, Čabrinović and Grabež to cross the Bosnian-Herzegovinian border and bring over in secrecy their smuggled arms, Ciganović organized the whole system of secret passage.

Using this organization, captains of the border detachment in Šabac (Rade Popović) and the customs worker Radivoje Grbić in Loznica, with the help of other persons, transferred the criminals and their arms into Bosnia."

Along with the ultimatum, Giesl received a cover letter. It stressed that the eight hours deadline given to Serbia for a reply could not be extended for any

reasons. Any negotiations were excluded. Serbia had to fully accept all that was demanded in the ultimatum. The Minister was instructed to reply to the Serbian Prime Minister's question as to Austria-Hungary's further intentions that he had no information, and he should express his personal opinion that his country had been forced twice to undertake costly military measures because of Serbia's hostile attitude and if forced to do so for the third time, it would have to request the indemnity from the Serbian government. After eight hours, if the Serbians did not accept the ultimatum, the Minister should leave Serbia with his personnel and break off diplomatic relations.¹⁷⁶

Informed that Austria was preparing a potentially dangerous step, the Serbian government sent a circular note to all its legations on 19 (6) July, in which it elaborated its view on the accusations against Serbia spread by the Austrian press. At the same time, it wanted to formulate its view before the Austrian step was taken in order to point out its willingness to meet the justified demands, on the one hand, and to draw the line of how far it could give in, on the other. This circular note signed by Pašić reads as follows:

"Right after the Sarajevo attentat, the Austro-Hungarian press started to lay the blame for that horrible crime on Serbia and the Greater Serbian idea, which was supported and propagated by various societies such as *Narodna odbrana*, *Kolo srpskih sestara*, and others, which the Serbian government tolerated. Having heard of the attentat, both the Court and the Serbian government expressed not just their condolences, but also their condemnation and abhorrence of such a crime. All the celebrations prepared in honour of St. Vitus Day were stopped in Belgrade. Nevertheless, the press in the neighbouring Monarchy did not cease to blame Serbia and the Greater Serbian idea. Moreover, it started to voice various tendentious and untrue news that provoked the Belgrade press to respond, defend, and sometimes attack in its bitterness on account of distortion of events. Realizing that the Austro-Hungarian press was deliberately drawing in the Belgrade press into this inconvenient and delicate discussion, the Serbian government hurriedly advised the Belgrade press, recommending it a cold-blooded attitude and to confine to denying and refuting false and tendentious news. This attempt on the part of the Serbian government bore no results with regard to the writing of some insignificant Belgrade newspapers, especially because further news were daily released, the object of which was to exploit politically the attentat not just against Serbia, but also against the Serbs in Austria-Hungary. The Serbian government could not prevent these polemics between the Serbian and Austro-Hungarian press, because the law,

¹⁷⁶ *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 518-9.

and even constitutional provisions, guaranteed the complete freedom of press in Serbia and banned any preventive measure and confiscation of newspapers. The polemics were further exacerbated because the newspapers in Vienna and Pest extracted certain passages from the Serbian press, which had practically no influence on public opinion, toned them up and then distributed them in the press abroad with the obvious intention to alarm public opinion in other European countries and blame Serbia. Those who followed the course of polemics were familiar with the fact that the Belgrade press defended and confined themselves to refuting attacks and tendentious falsities, but foreign governments were preoccupied with other important matters and had no time to convince themselves of the intention of the Austro-Hungarian press to alarm public opinion at home and abroad.

The Serbian government immediately professed their willingness to bring to trial any Serbian subject who could be proven to have taken part in the Sarajevo attentat. They also stated that they prepared the tightening of legal measures to prevent explosive abuse. In that sense, a draft law had already been prepared and sent to the State Council. It could not be introduced in the parliament because of a recess. Finally, the Serbian government declared themselves willing to carry out all neighbourly duties to which they were obliged as a European state. From the execution of the attentat onwards, Austria-Hungary never approached the Serbian government to seek for assistance in the matter of the attentat. It did not request a single accomplice to be investigated or handed to the court. Only in one case, Austria-Hungary demanded a report on the whereabouts of the pupils expelled from the school of education in Pakrac, who had gone to Serbia to continue their studies. All the information that could be gathered was duly supplied.

However, the Austro-Hungarian press carries on with an anti-Serbian campaign. Public opinion is getting riled against Serbia both in Austria-Hungary and the rest of Europe. The matter went so far that prominent heads of political parties in Austria-Hungary started to submit interpellations concerning the attentat to which the Prime Minister replied. The discussions show that Austria-Hungary intends to take some step, but it is not clear what exactly. It is not specified if the intended measures, especially military ones, would depend on the reply and the complaisance of the Serbian government. It is, however, hinted at conflict if the Serbian government could not return a satisfying, categorical answer.

When the Russian Minister Hartwig passed away suddenly in the house of his Austrian colleague, the newspaper polemics further intensified, but the unfortunate event did not lead to any disorder, especially during Hartwig's funeral in Belgrade. However, the Austro-Hungarian Legation was so upset

because of false news that Austro-Hungarian subjects started to hide, some in hotels in Belgrade and Zemun and others in the Legation itself. On the day of the King's Holiday, which passed off in perfect order, the Austro-Hungarian Minister sent word to me around five o'clock in the afternoon, through Vice-Consul Podgradsky, that the Austro-Hungarian Legation and subjects would be assaulted in Belgrade during the night. He asked me to order that the necessary measures for the protection of their subjects and Legation be undertaken, or he would otherwise consider Serbia responsible for anything that might happen. I replied him that the Serbian government heard nothing of such preparations against the Austrians, but that I would inform the Minister for Interior Affairs nevertheless and plead with him to order whatever was necessary. The next day proved that the Austro-Hungarian Legation was deceived, since no assaults or preparations for assaults took place. Still, the Austro-Hungarian press used this case as well in order to prove that public opinion in Serbia was angered and prepared to do anything. Moreover, it was claimed, 'that something should have happened, since Mr. Pašić had said himself he had heard such rumours'. But this claim was absolutely untrue.

All this clearly shows the intention to excite Austro-Hungarian public opinion against Serbia on every occasion and in any context. Given what was said in the Hungarian parliament, there was good reason to fear that something was about to be done that could have adverse consequences for the relations between Serbia and Austria-Hungary. This fear is all the more justified as it seems that the investigation in Sarajevo would not only be confined to the perpetrators and the potential accomplices, but would also be extended to Serbia and the Greater Serbian idea.

With their attitude and actions, the Serbian government have given evidence that they are working to settle down the situation in the interests of peace and maintaining good relations with their neighbours. In particular, the government have endeavoured to improve their relations with the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, which have of late been cooled off because of the war and the matters that stemmed from the war. For that purpose, the Serbian government have undertaken to arrange the Eastern Railways question, new railway connections and to ensure transit of Austro-Hungarian goods to Constantinople, Sofia, Salonica and Athens.

The Serbian government consider that their vital interests require peace and tranquility in the Balkans to be established as firmly and for as long as possible. And because of that, they now fear that the excitable public opinion in Austria-Hungary might cause the Austro-Hungarian government to take a step that would humiliate the state dignity of Serbia and demand unacceptable things.

Therefore, it is my honour to ask You to spare no effort to make the government you are accredited to realize our sincere intention to maintain friendly relations with Austria-Hungary and to suppress in our territory any attempt to undermine peace and security in the neighbouring Monarchy. We will also comply with the requests of Austria-Hungary to the effect that any accomplices from Serbia – if there are such – be handed to our independent court for trial.

We could never, however, accept demands which are contrary to Serbia's dignity and which no country that respects and guards its independence could accept.

Desirous of establishing and maintaining good neighbourly relations, we plead with the friendly government to bear in mind our statements and to act in a conciliatory spirit whenever the opportunity arises or it is necessary.”¹⁷⁷

2

In its ultimatum, Austria-Hungary accused the Serbian government of tolerating the work of certain societies that pursued subversive aims at its expense, because some officers and functionaries took part in that work and because the wild tone of the press was not restrained. The answer is clear to such accusations. None of the public Serbian societies gave cause to the Serbian government with their public activities to take a stand against them, nor the Austrian government approached the Serbian government with concrete evidence against any society in Serbia in 1909-1914. The Serbian government did not prevent or could not prevent intellectual work for the sake of forming national ideology, just as Austria-Hungary itself could not prevent it in its own territory. A. Marghiloman rightly said that propaganda from abroad could not be considered aggression; otherwise, Romania would be responsible for the activities of her national Cultural League¹⁷⁸ and many other states in the world would be blameworthy. No government can be blamed for the work of secret societies, except when they are aware of it, and that could not be proven in this case. The only association that could be connected to the attentat, “Unification or Death”, or more precisely some of its members, was, however, known to have been notoriously hostile to the government. Suppressing the activities of the

¹⁷⁷ Ministarstvo inostranih dela svim poslanicima na strani sem bečkom, Beograd, 18. 7. 1914, Pov. Br. 2681, in: Dedijer and Anić, eds, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Srbije*, knj. VII, sv. 2, pp. 595-598.

¹⁷⁸ Marghiloman, *Note politice*, p. 233. Being of the same opinion, Prince Lichnowsky suggested Take Ionescu in London that Romania should advise Serbia to disband formally *Narodna odbrana*, until the critical moment had passed, and it could perhaps restore it afterwards under different name. See Ionescu, *Souvenirs*, p. 15.

Black Hand, which had given cause for several conflicts with the government since 1913, the government undertook a series of strict measures against it. The conflict between the government and that organization was well-known to the public. Reporting to his government on 6 June about conflicts between Pašić's Radical Cabinet and the "Black Handers", which would soon lead to dissolution of the parliament and new elections, Baron Giesl even wished success to the Radicals. As for demanding the ban for societies which strengthened the ties with all the Serbs regardless of the state borders, i.e. which propagated the idea of cultural and political unification of all the Serbs, that was no doubt impossible to fulfil. No government could carry that out. The Serb people had had a strongly developed national consciousness, with the consequent aspirations to unification, from eighteenth century onwards, from the time it had been enslaved by the Turks, and let alone in the twentieth century after so many endeavours on its part to unify and so many examples that had taken place in Europe. Such national societies were not a peculiar feature of Serbia, but rather existed in many a country in Europe. Working towards national unification was not considered compromising for a nation and absolutely disallowed anywhere in Europe. Means that were used in a struggle could be condemned, but not the idea itself. In this case, the Austrian demand was justified insofar as it sought punishment for the perpetrators of and the accomplices in a murder and abolishment of societies that used terror to accomplish their goals. In this respect, the Serbian government was willing from the start to meet the Austrian demands; such demands would even assisted Pašić considerably in his struggle with the Black Hand.

As far as the accusations regarding the press were concerned, the Vienna government was least entitled to complain. The writing of a number of newspapers in the Danubian Monarchy about Serbia had been provocative, insulting and unrestrained for years and led to serious conflicts. In 1911, King Peter dropped his visit to Emperor Franz Joseph on account of such writing. Texts in the Serbian press were most often but a reaction to those published in the newspapers in the Danubian Monarchy. Was it not the provocative writing of the Viennese press, immediately after the attentat, with the *Riechspost* leading the way, that brought about the mass protests against the Serbian Legation in Vienna? Was it not harangue of the Austrian press that caused pogroms against the Serbs in many places in Bosnia, Herzegovina and Croatia?¹⁷⁹ And was it possible for the free Serbian press to remain calm while these unheard of pogroms against the Serbs were underway? We claim and can support it with

179 The British Consul in Pest stressed in his report of 14 July that the Serbian press was moderate after the attentat, but it changed its tone in the wake of attacks from the Austro-Hungarian press. See *British Documents*, XI, p. 57.

hundreds of examples that the press writing in Austria-Hungary against Serbia in 1908-1914, and especially in June and July 1914, contained much more various insults at the expense of Serbia than the other way around; and besides, the Austrian press had much larger readership and influence in Europe than the Serbian press. On the other hand, the Serbian constitution guaranteed the freedom of the press and the government could not have restrained it otherwise than legally. Had they had more possibilities to restrain the press, the government would have certainly seen to it that the extremely harsh press attacks against themselves, and even against the Court, be assuaged. Berchtold stated that the Serbian government had suppressed four newspapers in 1905-1910 – the *Narodni list*, *Opozicija*, *Otadžbina* and *Republika* – without suspending the law on press and against its provisions.¹⁸⁰ But his explanation was inaccurate. Some of these newspapers and their editors came into open conflict with the law and suffered the consequences; these were not proper organs of public information, but rather provocative newspapers driven by personal animosities that published scandalous and sensationalist stuff and were not thus widely read. From 1903 to 1914, no organ of a legal political party or any other more serious newspaper was suppressed in Serbia, although many of them, such as *Pravda*, *Štampa*, *Srpska zastava*, published boundless attacks on the government. San Giuliano told the German Ambassador on 12 July that “a government in democratic countries could not be responsible for the press excesses, and the Austrian government must not take an unjust attitude in that matter”.¹⁸¹

The Austrian ultimatum also spoke of “an unwholesome propaganda in public instruction”. This was a reference to textbooks and their content concerning the unity of the Serb people, the lands which the Serbs populated, their common past and national community in general. This complaint was a specific feature of Austrian administration, which rested on the belief that police measures could prevent national feelings and aspirations. Historical and geographical facts would not have disappeared even if the Serbian government had introduced some educational system in which negation of or ignoring the truth could be codified as an educational principle; these facts could and would have reached the youth in hundreds of different ways. Kállay tried to introduce the name Bosnian for the language spoken in Bosnia and Herzegovina and to present the past of that province as that of a separate entity, without any connection to the history of the neighbouring Serb and Croat regions. Such system was carried out for more than twenty years until 1904 when Kállay’s successor, Baron Burian, had to abandon it, because the

180 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 626.

181 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, p. 56.

school youth and the entire society made it perfectly clear that they found this education not just insufficient and non-educational, but also rather comical. H. Lutz has correctly asserted that Austria designed such a demand “to enable her permanent control over schools in Serbia”.¹⁸²

The Serbian government, it was also said, “tolerated all those occurrences that could induce the Serb population to hate the Monarchy and despise its institutions.” The German Minister in Belgrade, Griesinger, wrote on 6 July under the Austrian influence that the Serbian government had “created an atmosphere which makes such explosions of a blind fanaticism possible”.¹⁸³ Therefore, there was a subjective blame of the Serbian government alone for the hatred of Austria. There was no Austrian share in the poisonous state of relations between the two countries. This accusation was very characteristic for the Austrian stance on account of its one-sidedness and exclusiveness; it served to prove better than anything else how unjustified the accusations from the ultimatum were. This review of Serbo-Austrian relations revealed the reasons that “could induce the Serb population to hate the Monarchy”.¹⁸⁴ It was certainly not the factors Austria-Hungary put forward that should be blamed for this ill-feeling, but rather the actions of the Danubian Monarchy itself. It was not *Narodna odbrana* that provoked Austrian policy, but rather the other way around: that policy caused the formation of *Narodna odbrana* and closed the ranks of national movement.

The ultimatum was designed, especially its fifth article, in such a manner as to make its acceptance impossible to an independent state. The entire diplomatic world saw that clearly; anyone who examines the matter more deeply today, and even the Serbian opponents, say so;¹⁸⁵ Austro-Hungarian statesmen have also admitted that. Their statements in that sense during the deliberations that led to the ultimatum have been seen; and there are many others. Proposing the Emperor to declare mobilization on 25 July, Count Tisza said that “according to the content of our note, it seems to me that no other road is possible”.¹⁸⁶ Count Andrassy wrote about the “obvious” tendency in the ultimatum “to force Serbia into war”.¹⁸⁷ Prince Hohenlohe, Austrian Military Attaché in St. Petersburg, told his Bulgarian colleague that the demands were “almost unacceptable.”¹⁸⁸ J. Redlich has stated that “everyone knew that Serbia

182 Lutz, *Die Vorgeschichte des Weltkrieges*, XI, p. 81.

183 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, p. 39.

184 Montgelas, *Leitfaden zur Kriegsschuldfrage*, p. 79 stands out in this respect.

185 Cf. Isaac, *Revue d'histoire de la Guerre Mondiale*, X, 1932, p. 45.

186 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 733.

187 *Diplomatie und Weltkrieg*, p. 68.

188 *Die Kriegsschuldfrage*, VI, 1928, p. 238.

could not accept it [the ultimatum]".¹⁸⁹ After having read it, Prince Bülow was clear in his mind that it would "go terribly far".¹⁹⁰ For V. Naumann, Count Hoyos's agent, it was clear that "the last prospect of peace has gone".¹⁹¹ Baron Hötzen-dorf thought "that Serbia could not accept the conditions imposed".¹⁹² On 7 July, the Bulgarian Minister in Berlin reported to King Ferdinand that Ballplatz was preparing a note for Serbia that no free state could accept.¹⁹³ The most damning was certainly an account of Prince Stolberg to which Bülow referred according to an official report. To his question as to what would happen if Serbia accepted all demands, Berchtold replied smiling that he found it impossible "that a government such as the Serbian one would swallow such demands. If that still happened, there is nothing else left to do but to provoke Serbia even after the acceptance of the demands until Austria gets her opportunity to march into Serbia."¹⁹⁴ Surprised by both the form and the content of the ultimatum, Tittoni told the Austrian Ambassador that being wrong was not enough for Austria, as she seemed to have tried to show before the entire world that her mistake was the worst possible one.¹⁹⁵ The above mentioned provisions, along with article 5, showed that clearly.

The French Professor from the University of Nancy, Léopold Leau, has recently written on the Austrian demands in the ultimatum: "It can be considered outrageous when one state assumes the right on the basis of the alleged charges to force another state to fire officers and clerks, whose attitude it dislikes, to dissolve patriotic societies, to shape the curriculum in schools in certain manner, to influence the press in certain direction and, finally, to accept cooperation in the execution of such policy." The well-known German author concerned with the war guilt, A. Wegerer, has tried to defend the Austrian conduct along the following lines: 1) The British government also made a "similar request" in 1906 when it was about to restore relations with Serbia. However, that is not correct. First of all, the British demands constituted a condition to restore diplomatic relations, and did not constitute an ultimatum that served as a reason for war. This is a major difference. Moreover, Britain requested the removal of some persons and did not pile a series of demands, which were

189 Margutti, *Kaiser Franz Joseph*, p. 456.

190 *Denkwürdigkeiten*, III, p. 140.

191 *Deutschland freigesprochen*, p. 22.

192 Hötzen-dorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, IV, p. 109.

193 *British Documents*, XI, p. 338.

194 *Denkwürdigkeiten*, III, pp. 211-2.

195 *Il giudizio della storia sulla responsabilità della Guerra*, Milan 1916, p. 10. Cf. A. Gauvain's comment that the Austrian step *dépasse en brutalité tout ce qu'il était permis de craindre* in *Les origines de la guerre européenne*, p. 240.

accumulated with a thinly veiled purpose and gave an entirely different character to the whole matter. The British government demanded just the removal from power of the 1903 conspirators, whose participation in the plot was notorious, whereas Austria-Hungary made general demands, without specifying the persons or their concrete and proven crimes. 2) The abolishment of patriotic societies and reform of the school curriculum were, in his view, justified because their entire work was directed against Austria-Hungary. Serbia gave in, however, to the Austrian demand in this respect, although it was one-sided and could considerably affect those societies the patriotic propaganda of which was perfectly legal.¹⁹⁶

The Serbian government was reproached from several sides “because it did not preempt Vienna’s demands and ordered an investigation in this matter on its own initiative”. Seton-Watson wrote that Pašić “remained passive, not trying to justify himself before Vienna, while at the same time he allowed the discharge of military reservists and let nothing to be done for Belgrade’s defense, and he left the Chief of the General Staff, Field-Marshal Putnik, in Austria to continue his medical treatment. All this can no doubt serve as a testimony that he neither prepared nor thought of war until the last moment; but at the same time, this is an evidence of his great improvidence and slowness in assessing events.”¹⁹⁷ Hörmann Wendel has also reproached Pašić’s government for their passivity, indolence and lack of appreciation for the seriousness of the whole situation.¹⁹⁸ The *Neue Freie Presse* stated in its editorial published on 15 July: “There is a question that hovers over our lips since the murder of Archduke Franz Ferdinand. Why has Serbia not said officially a single word so far to refute a suspicion of complicity on the part of a group of her citizens by stating the evidence before the whole cultured world? ... Serbia has so far acted as a party in a lawsuit that has been advised by a defense attorney to remain silent, because it has not yet been subpoenaed.” Sending his instructions regarding the ultimatum to his Ambassador in London on 10 July, Berchtold also pointed out that the Serbian government “did not lift a finger” to take any measures against the Serbian culprits in its own territory, and he elaborated on this complaint in the explanatory note sent to London on 23 July. In the latter document, he particularly insisted on the disappearance of Ciganović from Belgrade and interpreted it as an endeavour on the part of the Serbian

196 *Berliner Monatshefte*, XI, 1933, p. 425 ff.

197 Seton-Watson, *Sarajevo*, p. 92. Cf. T. Schieman, *Deutschland und die grosse Politik anno 1914*, Berlin 1915, p. 232.

198 *Die Habsburger und die Südslawenfrage. Die Vorgeschichte des Weltkrieges*, X, p. 336.

government to remove the traces of the crime.¹⁹⁹ Professor Delbrück used the same argumentation in his work on the war guilt. Since Serbia had done nothing in four weeks to investigate the crime, the request concerning the participation of Austrian functionaries in the investigation was, in his view, “morally more than justified”.²⁰⁰

One of these reproaches is entirely unjustified. Why would Pašić try to defend himself when he was aware that his government was not guilty and when Vienna provided no concrete allegation that required explanation or could serve as a guide for investigation during all this time? On the contrary, with the existing relations between Vienna and Belgrade, his attempt could have only been misinterpreted. The famous French saying to the effect that one who apologizes is accusing himself would no doubt be invoked. That the leading Austro-Hungarian circles and their press would understand, or at least interpret in such manner, any attempt at justification is clear from the fact that a day after the attentat the accusations against Serbia, without any real evidence, were rife not just in the press, but also in military and diplomatic circles. That Pašić and the Serbian government felt no blame and thus no fear of war is best seen from the fact that Field-Marshal Putnik left for an Austrian spa in Gleichenberg to receive medical treatment.

However, it is entirely inaccurate that the Serbian government showed no willingness to investigate the matter and punish the culprits. The Serbian Minister stated in the Viennese Foreign Ministry on 1 and 2 July that “the government of the Kingdom of Serbia condemn the Sarajevo attentat and they will certainly do most loyally all in their power to prove that they will not tolerate any agitation or punishable acts in the Serbian territory, which are designed to disturb our already delicate relations. I reckon that the government are willing to put the accomplices to trial, if it is established they are involved in the Sarajevo crime and they are in Serbia.” Baron Macchio to whom this statement was made failed to give any concrete reply.²⁰¹ In the German Foreign Ministry, the State Under-Secretary assured the representatives of Russia and France on 3 and 4 July that he hoped Serbia would give satisfaction to the demands of the Vienna government regarding the investigation of the Sarajevo crime.²⁰² But those demands, as has been known, had never been delivered prior to the

199 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 601-2.

200 H. Delbrück, *Der Stand der Kriegsschuldfrage*, Berlin 1925, p. 21; cf. Musulin, *Das Haus am Ballplatz*, pp. 220-1.

201 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from Vienna, 19 June (2 July) 1914. Jovanović, *Stvaranje zajedničke države Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca*, p. 89 claims to have made this statement as early as 29 June.

202 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, pp. 50-1.

ultimatum and the Serbian government waited for them in vain. Pašić informed the German Minister as early as 8 July that the Serbian government were preparing certain measures that would aim to improve Austro-Serbian relations, especially with regards to the youth and national societies.

As for demanding that the Austro-Hungarian authorities should investigate in Serbia, it was as much offensive to the Serbian judiciary as it was unacceptable to a sovereign country. Austria deliberately made such a demand in order to humiliate Serbia and demonstrate her complete distrust of her. Some authors claim that Serbia not just failed to conduct an investigation into the preparations for the attentat, but also endeavoured to erase all traces of that. The disappearance of Milan Ciganović has especially been pointed out as an example, and it has been even stated that he was the government's agent in the Black Hand.²⁰³ Having seen that his name was mentioned in connection with the attentat, that man became scared and ran away from Belgrade. But there is absolutely no proof that the Belgrade police removed Ciganović, as the Austrian Charge d'Affairs stated in his dispatch of 7 July; that was just an assumption made and presented as a fact by a zealous Austrian informer. If someone had indeed hidden Ciganović, that would have most likely been Dimitrijević and Tankosić; police had no business with him, as far I could establish.²⁰⁴ Besides, if Ciganović was gone, Tankosić remained in the country, and he was no less blamed than Ciganović and certainly more important than him, as well as the other persons who had transported the assassins or made contact with them. The Serbian government was well aware that it could not hide all the accomplices and that the hiding made no sense. Why did the Austrian authorities not state the names of all the suspects and assist sincerely in disentangling the threads of conspiracy? From the Austrian standpoint, the guilt of the Serbian government would have been unattonable, if the Serbian government had concealed the established culprits, named by the assassins themselves, or if it had failed to subject them to full investigation. If the Serbian government had been insufficiently loyal in this respect, Austria's demand to have her functionaries carry out an investigation would have been justified – albeit very harsh – by the established ill-will on the part of the Serbian government.

Baron M. Taube is absolutely wrong in his work *La politique russe d'avant-guerre et la fin de l'empire des tsars*, Paris 1928, 352-3 when he blamed

²⁰³ F. Wiesner, *Die Kriegsschuldfrage*, VI, 1928, p. 363.

²⁰⁴ Ljubomir Jovanović has been explicit that no one in the government, including the Construction Minister and Railway Minister, had any knowledge of Ciganović before the attentat. He has also stated that Ciganović perished without any knowledge on the part of the government and that the Minister for Interior Affairs conducted an investigation about his disappearance. See *Krv Slovenstva*, p. 14.

Dimitrijević's conspiracy on the Serbian government in keeping with the Austrian thesis. The guilt of a single officer or functionary, whatever his position, could not be the guilt of an entire government. Collective responsibility can never be derived from an individual act, because individuals can undertake their actions for hundred different motives and often under the influence of completely irresponsible personal reasons (sickness etc.). Austria was no doubt entitled to request from the Serbian government in a very energetic manner to provide explanations and apply sanctions on account of this major crime. But the manner in which she did so, without previous negotiations and suddenly, and the content of her ultimatum cut the ground from under her right. It was clear that Austria was guided by the old political hatred and that the murder was taken as an excuse rather than the proper legal reason for a showdown. Taube himself has admitted that Austria forfeited her right and turned into an aggressor, and that she consequently became responsible for later complications.

Some authors²⁰⁵ have asserted that the Serbian government knew of certain culprits and could have made them responsible on its own initiative. The British representative made some suggestions in that sense in Belgrade on 18 July.²⁰⁶ The Serbian government did so and some new facts that I have revealed in this book resulted from the investigation carried out in Belgrade. But the Serbian government could not establish to what extent certain persons were responsible as accomplices and it expected information to that effect from the Austrian investigators. There is no doubt, for example, that the officers in Šabac and Loznica did not know what was the real objective of the young assassins and even the Sarajevo court took that as highly likely. The customs officials who helped the young men across the border knew even less than the officers. Tankosić's name was, along with that of Ciganović, the only one publically mentioned. He was the only person who could tell everything. But Tankosić himself did not want to reveal anything and the Austrian authorities did not want to provide concrete evidence about his complicity and the testimonies of the assassins, as they were intent on investigating the matter themselves in Serbia or making it a cause of war. Tankosić made an effort through his friends to maintain silence over his complicity in the affair. The government was extremely suspicious of him, but had no evidence. With the relations between the government and the Black Hand as they were, it was difficult to arrest Tankosić and offend officer honour, without being able to present the evidence before the public. However, the Austrian government did not

205 Wegerer, *Die Kriegsschuldfrage*, V, 1927, pp. 238-49.

206 *British Documents*, XI, pp. 64-5.

make a single official statement to Serbia concerning the investigation, which it conducted in the utmost secrecy, before the ultimatum was delivered. The Serbian government was hopeful until the last day that the Vienna government would communicate its concrete proposals either in respect of persons or facts. In this sense, it also expected the results of an Italian mediating action, because the Italian government sent word through the Serbian Minister in Rome that the Duke of Avarna was supposed to mention in his conversation with Count Berchtold "the usefulness of the fact that the Serbian government was aware of what the Austrian government request from it".²⁰⁷ Pašić discussed this on 15 July with the Russian Charge d'Affairs Strandmann.²⁰⁸

Besides, the participation of Austrian functionaries in the investigation in Belgrade would bring about, apart from being an affront to Serbian judiciary, other difficult conflicts as well. Judging by the prevalent mood in the highest Austro-Hungarian circles, which eventually informed the text of the ultimatum, it is more than certain that these functionaries would take an attitude in Serbia that would go beyond the bounds of the acceptable. There is no point in deceiving oneself. The Austrian army and all the leading circles wanted to punish Serbia with a war; and because of what they wanted, they would leave enough possibilities to their functionaries to either provoke a conflict at any price or humiliate the dignity of Serbia to the utmost extent. Moreover, the demand was otherwise problematic. The ultimatum said nothing about the duration of the participation of Austrian functionaries in the investigation. Was it not possible for the Vienna government to prolong considerably the mandate of its agents under the pretext of its security? In a conversation with Berchtold on 17 July, Tschirschky asked him what he would do if Serbia accepted the ultimatum. Berchtold replied that "during practical execution of certain provisions the extent of authorization would be stretched very far".²⁰⁹ Is not that enough of an indication of the true danger behind the demand?

It should be noted that Vienna deliberately avoided to address Belgrade and concealed its plans from it and other capitals. Since the Viennese Foreign Ministry this time counted on using the extreme measures against Serbia from the start, it did not want to see the Belgrade government presented before Europe as a neighbour that was helpful in the investigation, but rather wanted to make the point of Serbia's attitude as yet another aggravating circumstance.

207 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from Rome, 1 (14) July 1914, conf. no. 165.

208 *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus*. Reihe 1, Bd. 4., p. 217.

209 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, pp. 104-5.

During his conversations with the Serbian Minister, Berchtold eschewed to make clear his intentions. On 2 July, he spoke, apart from the writing of the Serbian press that was bitter on account of anti-Serbian pogroms across the Sava and Drina, of the necessity to do something on both sides to treat the evil. "Subversive tendencies that have found their expression in Bosnia in such a horrible way must gradually be brought to an end by joint suppression both on this and that side of the border. This is also in the interest of the Serbian government, because there are anarchist elements in this movement given the means it employs and it could also make Serbia a theatre of its terrorist outrages."²¹⁰ To prevent the Serbian government from gaining the impression that something major was in the air in Vienna, Berchtold ordered the excitable Storck on 5 July that he should not "force the issue" during his negotiations in Belgrade.²¹¹ Six days later, Berchtold wrote to Biliński in connection with some news published in the *Neue Freie Presse* about Austria's intentions that it was necessary to be very weary of indiscretion. "I guess I do not have to say what incorrigible harm is caused by premature information, which inform the Serbian government about our most delicate plans and provide it with the opportunity to prepare carefully its chess moves."²¹² The Chief of the General Staff also put much store in suddenness and surprise, because otherwise, he wrote on 12 July, informing the public would be detrimental to the army.²¹³

A Great Power, twenty times stronger than Serbia, counted on this means as well! It is our deepest conviction that this shows more than anything else the extent to which the whole Austrian action was deprived of any ethical basis and prepared to use every means. Why was it necessary to conceal one's intentions even if one is intent on the most radical measures? Vienna gave a clear answer: to surprise the opponent and find it unprepared and to take it away the possibility of defense and mediation! Baron Giesl told the Russian Charge d'Affairs just before he handed the ultimatum that Serbia would be given "*un document anodin*".²¹⁴ On 23 July, the very day the ultimatum was delivered, at 5 o'clock in the afternoon, Baron Macchio assured the French Minister that a note to Serbia would be handed "soon", "probably next day".²¹⁵ Berchtold even reproached his Minister in Belgrade for asking Pašić to implement security measures for the protection of Austrian subjects in Belgrade because of the excitement following Hartwig's death. He did not want Pašić to assume, in his

²¹⁰ *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 250.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 305.

²¹² *Ibid.*, p. 405.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 415.

²¹⁴ *Vreme*, 8 March 1931.

²¹⁵ *Krasnii arhiv*, IV, p. 14.

words, *le beau rôle* due to his mediation.²¹⁶ That was certainly his view of both the informing and assisting the Serbian authorities in the matter of investigating the attentat.

To deceive European public opinion and lull Serbia into tranquility, the newspapers published on 14 July that the War Minister Krobatin left on that day for a “longer summer leave of absence”, and on 16 July it was announced that Hötzen Dorf also went for a holiday in Gossensass. The latter said that this deception of the public had been decided on 8 July in the evening and that it had been Berchtold himself who had suggested “to keep the appearances as if nothing is going on”.²¹⁷ The Bavarian Charge d’Affairs in Berlin wrote on 18 July that the intention was to present “the appearance of calm mood”, while in fact an unacceptable note to Serbia and a war were being prepared.²¹⁸ This deception was indeed successful. The Italian Ambassador in Berlin had been perturbed by Austria’s and Germany’s stance, but then he saw the above mentioned absences as a “much desired calming symptom”.²¹⁹ Lloyd George has also said that he was soothed by the fact that the most important German and Austrian persons had gone for a journey.²²⁰ That general impression was amplified by Tisza’s cold-hearted speech in the Hungarian parliament, which still allowed for the hope that diplomatic solution was possible, although he had already decided on war. In addition, Count Berchtold made statements to the Russian and French Ambassadors in which he assured them that the demands made of Serbia would be completely acceptable.²²¹ After that, the Russian Ambassador was completely calm on 15 July and reported to his government accordingly.²²² Upon his return to St. Petersburg, Count Szapáry told Spalajković that Vienna “looks with tranquility” on relations with Serbia.²²³

German diplomacy assisted and imitated what Austria was doing throughout the crisis.

²¹⁶ *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 428.

²¹⁷ Hötzen Dorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, IV, pp. 61-2.

²¹⁸ *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegeausbruch*, Bd. 4., 1927, p. 120.

²¹⁹ *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 458.

²²⁰ D. Lloyd George, *War Memoirs*, London 1933, p. 53.

²²¹ *Documents diplomatiques*, pp. 72-3.

²²² *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus*. Reihe 1, Bd. 4., p. 215.

²²³ Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from St. Petersburg, 11 July 1914.

3

As for concrete accusations that Austro-Hungarian diplomacy and the public leveled against Serbia, we have to establish a few important facts.

1) The hand grenades found on the assassins were not received directly from Kragujevac, although they were made in the facility there. Austrian experts themselves established that there were certain differences in the type of the grenades found, which would not have been the case if they had been manufactured in a short period of time.²²⁴ This is, however, easily explicable by the fact that the hand grenades were made at different times in the course of 1912-13, when they were produced for the army and the *chetniks*. Some of these hand grenades remained in the possession of certain people, especially *chetniks*, after the wars and they were passed on to the hands of Tankosić and Ciganović. This was, after all, what the assassins stated at the trial, but the court did not accept that statement, although the court expert established the differences between the grenades. The court wanted to believe they were obtained from the depot of *Narodna odbrana* located in the Army Ministry, and that was not true, as it is well-known. The General Staff department of the Army Inspectorate in Sarajevo knew well that this was not true, as it warned the provincial government on 6 February 1914 (no. 325) that “many reservists in Serbia have hand grenades in their private possession” and that it was necessary to watch that those were not transported into Bosnia.²²⁵

2) During the Albanian raid in Serbia, Jagow told the Serbian Charge d’Affairs on 23 September 1913 that although it was true that several Bulgarian officers were among the Albanian raiders, “the government in Sofia could not be made responsible” for that nevertheless.²²⁶ Austria also refused categorically, as has been seen, any attempt to make the Albanian government responsible for the raid of 15-20,000 people into Serbia. However, that sort of argument was not acceptable now when it concerned the Serbs. When Sazonov told the Austrian Ambassador on 18 July that there was not a single piece of evidence against the Serbian government, Count Szapáry replied that “every government must

224 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 404-5. In a dossier attached to the ultimatum, Austrian diplomacy did not provide an authentic opinion of the experts about these hand grenades, but rather deliberately generalized the matter by claiming that they originated with the military depot in Kragujevac. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 697. This striking spinning of the truth is not the only problem in the official Austrian account.

225 I am thankful to Mr. Vojislav Bogićević, a teacher from Tuzla, for this archival material.

226 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXVI, p. 367.

be responsible, to certain extent, for that what is going on in its territory".²²⁷ When the Serbs complained to the Austrian representative in Belgrade in the fall of 1913 that they had been threatened in their own territory not by propaganda, but rather by actual armed attack and that, therefore, they had to attack themselves, the Austrian Minister retorted calmly that Serbia had a large and excellent army, and that she was always capable of defending her borders without attacking an area across the border. It had not been long since those messages and advice had been delivered to Belgrade from Vienna to forget them. How and why did no one repeat them on this occasion, although they were fresh in memory?

3) There are many foreign authors who claim that Serbia, because she had committed herself in 1909 to changing her attitude towards Austria-Hungary and pursuing the policy of a loyal neighbour, was responsible for not fulfilling her promise in that sense and thus indirectly made the attentat possible.²²⁸ The Vienna government also placed much store in such argument. These authors have not taken into consideration sufficiently that the situation had not been stable from 1909 onwards, and that major changes had taken place prior to 1914, during which the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy had taken an openly hostile attitude towards Serbia on several occasions. A loyalty on the part of one side presumes a loyalty on the part of the other one. Serbia could not overcome the hostile mood among her citizens towards Austria when the same Austria was working against her on all sides. The 1909 commitment had no longer been in force for Serbia, both legally and formally, from that moment when Austria had started to prevent her activity in the Balkans with military threats and even ultimatums and when Serbia, in order to protect herself from Austria's blow, had had to appeal to mediation of other Powers and to abandon her war gains. During those crises, Austria never thought of reminding Serbia of her commitment made in 1909, since she fully realized that it was her own anti-Serbian policy that gave cause to Serbia to become increasingly resistant and to incite hatred.

4) As for the demands contained in articles 5 and 6 of the ultimatum, Berchtold tried to explain to King Carol in his message of 24 July that those were not unprecedented. Austria had allowed to Serbian functionaries, he said, to be present during the investigation into the murderers of Prince Michael that had been undertaken in Hungary in 1868. He also referred to the Russian police bureau in Paris, which assisted the French police to watch

227 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 495.

228 Ewart, *The Roots and Causes of the War*, p. 1047.

over dangerous Russian elements; the same bureau existed in Berlin.²²⁹ But Berchtold's examples were not appropriate. The Austrian government had offered the participation of Serbian functionaries in the investigation in Hungary themselves in order to win Serbia over. In state-legal respect, that fact was without any significance. Austria had been a Great Power and Serbia had only been then a tributary Princedom, and no conclusion could be drawn from that at the expense of the prestige and international position of the Danubian Monarchy. The Russian example was no good either. The Russian bureau in both Berlin and Paris had been formed on the basis of a friendly agreement between the governments concerned. The case of Austria and Serbia in 1914 was entirely different. Austria demanded the participation of her own authorities in an investigation by means of an ultimatum; therefore, Austria wanted to extort it by force, to impose it on Serbia. Austria did that publically, before the whole world, and not in a direct confidential communication, in a deliberate attempt to humiliate Serbia and to underscore publically her distrust of the Serbian judiciary and the Serbian authorities in general.

When Orsini made an attempt on the life of Napoleon III in 1858, it was established that the conspiracy had been made in Britain, that the bombs had also been made in that country and that Orsini had crossed into France with an British passport. When the British government wanted to introduce a legal stipulation, at the French suggestion, that would prevent similar cases in the future, the British parliament refused it with the motivation that it was unwilling to look into this matter at the request from abroad.²³⁰ "No country had to suffer more from the attentats prepared in foreign territory than Russia", Sazonov told the Austrian Charge d'Affairs on 6 July. "Have we ever wanted to use the measures with which your newspapers threaten Serbia against any state?"²³¹ The Serbian government was, however, willing to fulfil whatever might have been loyally requested from them.

The Serbian government tried in general to soothe the passions as much as possible. The best proof in that sense was given on the occasion of the sudden death of the Russian Minister Hartwig, which took place at the apartment of the Austrian Minister, Baron Giesl making preparations during in the night of 10 July. Hartwig had a heart condition and he was making preparations during those days to go to Nauheim. When Giesl returned from Vienna on 10 July, Hartwig went to set the record straight with him with regard to the false information to the effect that the Russian Legation had not flown the flag

229 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 626-7.

230 Ewart, *The Roots and Causes of the War*, p. 1046.

231 *Documents diplomatiques*, pp. 26-7.

at half-mast to mourn the passing of Crown Prince and to enquiry at the same time of the measures that the Danubian Monarchy planned to take against Serbia. It was a tête-à-tête conversation and we do not know today either the course or the tone of it. We have only the statements made by Baron Giesl who has been inclined, of course, to present the matter in a manner favorable to himself.²³² Knowing that Giesl was an arrogant and sometimes too harsh a man – one should remember how his German colleague in Constantinople had described him in 1904 and how he had behaved in Montenegro – we think that it is not entirely unjustified to assume that either the tone or the content of his statements caused Hartwig's excitement and thus precipitated his death. It was believed in Belgrade that this death did not occur by chance and that Giesl poisoned the Russian Minister to deprive Serbia of a reliable friend in this crisis. This doubt was voiced in some newspapers, although the government spared no effort to inform the public about the real state of affairs. Due to various news, the Austrian community in Belgrade was in panic that the Serbs would, after Hartwig's funeral, commit a pogrom against its members on the pattern of that to which the Serbs in Sarajevo were subjected, but the Serbian authorities were too cautious and the Serbian public smart enough not to exacerbate the situation further. The intention was to prove that level-headedness must prevail in the most difficult moments.

4

On 18 July, Jagow suggested to the Vienna government through Tschirschky to consent to an Italian action in Valona. Italian preoccupation on that side, he believed, would facilitate considerably Austrian action against Serbia, because "Austrian attack on Serbia would not just be viewed unfavourably in Italy, but would also encounter a direct resistance". Therefore, he considered an agreement between Vienna and Rome in the matter of Albania "urgently needed".²³³ But Berchtold refused to accept this suggestion overconfident in the strength of the Monarchy.²³⁴

On 20 July, Tschirschky came to see Berchtold and warn him about the concern of the Berlin government about the Italian attitude towards Austrian action against Serbia. It was said in Rome: if Austrian demands went too far, Vienna's stance would lose the legal basis and Austria would not be able to count on the support of Italy. San Giuliano requested the opinion of international

232 Cf. the comments about Giesl's account in J. M. Jovanović, *Politika*, no. 8533, 1932.

233 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXVI, p. 736.

234 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 565-6.

law experts and, according to that opinion, "complaints to another state are allowed in the matter of common criminal acts, but not because of political propaganda. The murder of Crown Prince was not committed by Serbia's subjects, and therefore it could not be made the substance of a complaint." Furthermore, he stated that Italy could not cooperate in the suppression of a national idea to which it owed its own restoration in the nineteenth century. Italy had so many conflicts with Austria over national questions "that it almost despairs for the sake of further work to maintain their agreement". For those reasons, the German government advised Vienna to try to keep Italy somehow busy in Valona. Berchtold first complained of the German side, because Italy had already been informed of his intentions, although German information given to Italy was partial and never entirely honest.²³⁵ Putting forward the decisions reached at the ministerial conference, he declined to negotiate about Valona as an object of compensation, since Austria did not intend to embark on a territorial conquest in Serbia. He also complained of Italy's attitude, as that country was seeking a rapprochement with Russia instead of supporting Austria. Austria considered it her task to stem the Slav flood westwards, which was also, in his view, Italy's interest. Finally, he added that they were not intimidated by such news from Italy, "all the less so, because I see from the reports of our Ambassador in Quirinal that Italy has no will for action on account of the Libyan war and that it would give vent to its dissatisfaction with us through words, but barely deeds".²³⁶

But Vienna was very much mistaken. In his memoirs, A. Salandra, Prime Minister at the time, has clearly reflected the mood of the Italians. Although it had accomplished its unification, Italy did not consider it completed. "Each one of us carried a seed of irredentism deep into his heart."²³⁷ And he could hardly wait now for an opportunity to have his wishes realized. Without that, no government could survive in Italy and let alone enter into war on the side of Austria.

Immediately afterwards, Berchtold sent new instructions to his Ambassador in Rome. According to these, the whole Serbian matter was supposed to be presented not altogether sincerely. Austria was forced to "seriously reproach" Belgrade, but she found that a peaceful outcome was "certainly in the realm of possible". Austria hoped that Italy would act with the allied fidelity and loyalty. The Ambassador was authorized to say in his conversations that Austria did

235 Bülow, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, III, p. 169.

236 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VII, pp. 520-2; *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1, 1927, pp. 190-1; A. Salandra, *Souvenirs de 1914-1915*, Paris 1932, p. 27.

237 Salandra, *Souvenirs de 1914-1915*, p. 15.

not think of conquest, if it came to war. Besides, he could ask San Giuliano to influence the Montenegrin government not to stand by Serbia. Italian attempts to intimidate Austria indirectly, through St. Petersburg and Bucharest, would remain, in Berchtold's words, without any effect.²³⁸ Just in case, the Ambassador was given the above mentioned memoir to the effect that Italy's right to compensation should not be recognized, if the Italian government raised that issue. On 21 July, the German Ambassador stated in the Foreign Ministry in Vienna that his government was informed about San Giuliano's excitement because of Austria's step in Serbia, but that he came away from a conversation with the Italian Ambassador in Vienna convinced that Italy would still fulfill its duty as an ally and remain on the side of Austria.²³⁹ Jagow, who was a long-time Ambassador in Rome and a better judge of the mood in Italy, was of different opinion and he advised Vienna to come to an agreement with the Rome government.

Besides, the Austrian government provided enough cause for suspicion in Rome. When Mérey talked to San Giuliano on 21 July about the Austrian step, he stated that Austria had no plans for conquest in Serbia, but he refused to have his statement made public and stressed that he would not commit himself to anything. This reservation was sufficient for Italian politicians to understand what it meant. San Giuliano said he would support the Austrian step as long as it made legitimate demands; otherwise, Italian public opinion would turn against him. "Aware of its revolutionary origins," Italy "has sympathies for irredentist manifestations wherever they took place". Therefore, his position would be facilitated if Austria focused on the Sarajevo disaster rather than other agitations. Of course, Mérey refused such a viewpoint and regarded it as an "insufficient friendship and solidarity".²⁴⁰ San Giuliano was even more outspoken to the German Ambassador. The Austrian step and its explanation gave cause for suspicion to Italy. "Austria could do the same thing tomorrow against Italy because of irredentism." King Carol thought along the same lines, he said, with regard to the Romanians in Hungary. Thus Italy could not agree to such steps.²⁴¹

Offended because he had not been taken timely and sufficiently into the confidence of the Austrian government, San Giuliano was very reserved to the Austrian representative on 24 July and he immediately told the German one that it was "against the spirit of the Triple Alliance to undertake such an action

²³⁸ *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 538-9.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 552.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 567.

²⁴¹ *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, pp. 93-4.

without prior consultation with the allies".²⁴² Then he stated that the text of the Austrian note was "aggressive and clumsy", that it provoked the public opinion in Europe and Italy and that no Italian government could fight against this.²⁴³

In this whole concatenation of questions, we are much interested in why Germany, despite such Italian position, did not change its attitude towards Vienna. After those clear statements, the Triple Alliance did not enter into the struggle together; Germany remained alone with Austria-Hungary, whereas it became increasingly clear that the Triple Entente would act with solidarity in this matter. Germany had long felt that the Triple Alliance was weakening;²⁴⁴ in the most difficult moment, Germany tied its fate to the weakest member of the Triple Alliance and the weakest Great Power in Europe. German diplomats have explained that by the fact that Austria was and remained the only reliable ally; if she had been abandoned, Germany would have been completely alone.²⁴⁵ Germany had had no choice, Jagow later said, and it had marched with Austria "not because of romantic fidelity, but because of its own status".²⁴⁶ To a large extent, this was just a chimera. Germany lost Russia mainly because it identified its policy with that of Austria in many critical questions and situations; to a large extent, that was the reason for a number of crises in the Triple Alliance with regard to Italy. In this instance, being solidary with Austria, which wanted war, Germany was working contrary to its own interests in the teeth of tremendous dangers, although it seemed to its leading figures that these interests required such a policy. On the other hand, Germany put itself in an unenviable position by mediating between Rome and Vienna in the matter of compensations. If indeed Austria had not thought of any conquest in Serbia, either direct or indirect, why would Italy have been given any compensations and negotiations have been held about that? If Berlin had negotiated nevertheless and even suggested Vienna to give in, Rome could have thought then, with good reason, that Austria was actually getting prepared to change the situation in the Balkans to her benefit and that she was only concerned with paying Italy as little a price as possible. Therefore, the suspicion in Austria's ambiguous and reserved statements was growing stronger and more justified, and Germany was, to a large extent, accountable for such development.

²⁴² Ibid., I, p. 139.

²⁴³ Ibid., p. 164.

²⁴⁴ Cf. E. Vermeil, *Les origines de la guerre*, Paris 1926.

²⁴⁵ A. Lumbroso, *Le origini economiche e diplomatiche della guerra mondiale*, I, Milano 1926, p. 28 has expressed similar opinion.

²⁴⁶ B. Schwertfeger, *Der Weltkrieg der Dokumente*, Berlin 1929, p. 356.

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During that time, the Serbian government turned to Berlin with the statement that it intended to maintain the best and most correct relations with the neighbouring Monarchy and that it would fulfil all Austro-Hungarian demands relating to the thorough investigation into the attentat as long as those demands were compatible with the honour and the sovereignty of the Kingdom. The Serbian Charge d'Affairs appealed to Berlin to act conciliatory in Vienna. The Serbian government had issued the instructions to that effect a day before Jovan Jovanović reported from Vienna that it was "highly likely" that Austria was preparing for war against Serbia.²⁴⁷ According to his own account, Jagow replied to that coldly: Serbia's behaving towards Austria-Hungary had been so incorrect of late that he would completely understand if the Vienna government spoke energetically while proclaiming its demands. He suggested Serbia, however, to make such a statement directly to Vienna. He also added that Austria did not blame the Serbian government, which had been under the influence of Pan-Slavism and Hartwig, and that he believed Austria would not take a "step that would offend the dignity and independence of Serbia".²⁴⁸ Jagow immediately relayed his reply to Vienna, but without his advice to the Serbian Charge d'Affairs.²⁴⁹

He replied in such a manner, although he knew exactly what was being prepared against Serbia, since Berchtold, and apparently other persons from the Foreign Ministry and diplomacy, kept Tschirschky and other German diplomats informed about all more important matters and their demands.²⁵⁰ Count Szögyény told the German government the essentials of the ultimatum on 21 July, two days before it was handed to Belgrade, and Tschirschky also received it in Vienna on the same day, in the evening. Jagow later denied to both his Italian colleague and other diplomats²⁵¹ that he had had any prior knowledge of the ultimatum. However, even if he did not know the entire text, he certainly knew the essentials, and that was the crux of the matter. He knew the actual text of the ultimatum at least 24 hours before it was delivered in Belgrade and he could have exerted considerable influence, had he

247 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from Vienna, 7 (20) July 1914.

248 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from Berlin, 7 July 1914.

249 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 553; *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, p. 107.

250 Cf. Bülow, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, III, p. 180; see also Gooss, *Die Vorgeschichte des Weltkrieges*, X, pp. 240-1.

251 Cf. Wegerer, *Berliner Monatshefte*, IX, 1931, pp. 147-50; also P. Renouvin, *Les origines immédiates de la guerre*, Paris 1927, pp. 59, 65.

wanted, together with other members of the government, to mitigate its terms. The German Crown Prince Wilhelm II said clearly: "It cannot be denied that they were informed [in Berlin] of the thrust of the ultimatum and that they counted on the fact that Serbia would refuse it."²⁵² Both Bethmann Hollweg and Jagow claimed that the note was "too sharp", and still, neither before nor after its announcement, when its negative effect was clearly recognized, they did anything to draw attention of Vienna to that or try to somehow amend, if not the note itself, then the consequences that were to follow from it. If they truly found that the note was too sharp, it was their duty then to do so, especially when they saw clearly that it led to war. The Serbian step in Berlin, made in good time on the assumption that Germany would be willing to mediate, could have been taken as a point of departure. But it was declined curtly and categorically, because the aim was to have Serbia severely punished.

The Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg even produced a full indictment against Serbia in his instructions sent to the ambassadors in London, Paris and St. Petersburg on 21 July. He completely accepted the view of the Austrian government in an attempt to synchronize the actions of German representatives with those of the Danubian Monarchy in their accusations against Serbia and the justification of the Austrian step in Belgrade. Although the Serbian Minister had sought for Germany's mediation a day earlier and promised the fulfilment of all justified requests, Bethmann Hollweg maintained that not just because of the attitude of the Serbian press, but also of the Serbian government there was fear "that the Serbian government would refuse to meet the demands and that it would lend itself to provocative attitude towards Austria-Hungary". The Ambassadors were instructed to state that this conflict concerned Serbia and Austria alone and that it should be resolved between these two countries. "We earnestly want the localization of a conflict, because any involvement of any other Power could bring in its trail infinite consequences due to different allied commitments." St. Petersburg was also supposed to be warned about the danger for the monarchist principle stemming from the methods that Serbian political radicalism employed in this instance.²⁵³ In London, it should be underscored that Austria had to put an end to "constant disturbances to which she has been exposed on her eastern border for years" and that no one could think that a Great Power should endure what Austria had been enduring at the hands of Serbia.²⁵⁴

252 *Ich suche die Wahrheit!*, Stuttgart and Berlin 1925, p. 360. Cf. Lutz, *Die Vorgeschichte des Weltkrieges*, XI, pp. 75-8.

253 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, pp. 113-5.

254 *Ibid.*, p. 142.

As for the attitude of other Great Powers in this matter, this was of importance. Prince Lichnowsky reported to Berlin from London that Sir Edward Grey had stated to him that he did not believe in the bellicose complications in the Serbian question and that a general conflict should be avoided. Hints at the sharpness of the Austrian demands made strong impression on Grey and he tried to be a soothing influence. In particular, he suggested to the Austrian Ambassador that his government had better not cross the line of what was possible to accept and be careful not to provoke Russia. Bethmann Hollweg drew the conclusion from Grey's stance that Britain, which was not directly interested in Serbia, would endeavour to desist from any military action and he reported his conclusion to Vienna.²⁵⁵ Indeed, British diplomacy would not have been much concerned if the conflict between Serbia and Austria could have been separated from the whole complex of the common European questions and solved apart from those. But London fully appreciated that an Austrian military initiative would open the entire Balkan question anew and no doubt brought about Russia's activity. And that meant a European danger.

For a while, French diplomats believed that Austria would not cross the line. After a conversation with his Russian colleague, who was of the same opinion, the Ambassador in Vienna Dumaine reported to his government on 8 July that Giesl's return to Belgrade and the resumption of negotiations about the Eastern Railways were the symptoms of appeasement.²⁵⁶ When Poincaré asked the Austrian Ambassador Count Szapáry, in the presence of Viviani and Paléologue, about Austria's intentions in respect to Serbia, the latter replied in the manner that was designed to deceive. He said he hoped that Serbia would not turn the deaf ear to Austrian demands, and that those demands were still not known as the investigation was underway and he was not familiar with its results. Poincaré instantly replied, not without certain asperity, that a government could be made responsible for something only then when there was concrete evidence to do so. An entity could not be accused for the act of an individual. He was not prone to believe that Austria-Hungary would make use of such an accusation against a small country just as an excuse. In that case, it should not be forgotten "that Serbia has friends and that a situation dangerous for peace might arise". The Austrian Ambassador found "that any government is, to certain extent, responsible for everything that takes place in its territory". Poincaré rejected such an appreciation and advanced a few

²⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 533.

²⁵⁶ *Documents diplomatiques*, p. 142.

examples in which that had not been the case.²⁵⁷ The most important example was no doubt the one we have mentioned. Unfortunately, Poincaré did not mention it. In October 1913, Austria was adamant in arguing that the Albanian government was not responsible, although an entire army, a few thousand men strong, raided into Serbia from its territory, even with artillery, and captured several villages and two or three towns on the Serbian soil. When it suited her book, just a few months later, Austria proclaimed a new, and entirely different, theory.

During Poincaré's stay in St. Petersburg, on the basis of disturbing but still unclear news of Austria's intentions in relation to Serbia, French and Russian diplomats agreed that they would work in Vienna so that Serbia not be delivered demands of such kind as to amount to interfering with internal affairs of that country and which Serbia could consider an assault against her sovereignty and independence.²⁵⁸ The Russian and French government, it is clear, did not know that the decision had long been made and that Vienna avoided to inform them of it because it counted on the possible reaction on their part along these lines. In the spirit of the above mentioned agreement, Viviani instructed the Paris government from Stockholm on 25 July to make an enquiry in Belgrade an international affair.²⁵⁹

On 22 July, the French Ambassador Dumaine spoke in the Foreign Ministry in Vienna about the Serbian question. He warned about the danger of war that could assume the nature of a national struggle of the Serb people against the Danubian Monarchy and recommended that this be avoided. But at the same time, according to the Austrian account, he expressed his own and his Russian colleague's conviction that, in case of war, Russia would not stand for Serbia actively, but rather seek to keep a war localized.²⁶⁰ Still, the Russian Ambassador stated in the Foreign Ministry that his government would not be opposed to punishing the culprits and dissolving revolutionary societies, but that it could not allow demands that would be "humiliating to the Serb national sentiment".²⁶¹ On the same day, the British Ambassador also mediated in Vienna, advising moderation to Count Forgách.²⁶²

257 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 568. Cf. Poincaré, *Au service de la France*, IV pp. 253-4; *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, p. 138.

258 Poincaré, *Au service de la France*, IV, pp. 292-3; *Documents diplomatiques*, p. 39; *British Documents*, XI, p. 80.

259 Poincaré, *Au service de la France*, IV, p. 307.

260 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VII, p. 583. Dumaine, *La dernière ambassade de France en Autriche*, pp. 142-4, confirms this.

261 *Documents diplomatiques*, p. 33.

262 *British Documents*, XI, p. 73.

With the sudden delivery of an ultimatum, Berchtold wanted to surprise and prevent the possibility of consultation between the governments concerned. This was explicitly stated in the instructions sent to Rome and Bucharest. The text of the ultimatum was communicated to the ambassadors in these cities as late as 22 July, in the afternoon, because it was not wanted, as Berchtold stressed, to have “the news arrive from Rome to St. Petersburg on that same day”.²⁶³ This decision was further facilitated by the above mentioned Poincaré’s comments. These influenced Berchtold to change his earlier decision on the last day about the moment when the ultimatum should be delivered. Fearing that Poincaré might influence the Russian government, Baron Giesl was ordered on 23 July, at 9:30 am, not to deliver the ultimatum to Serbia before 6 pm so that its content would not be known in St. Petersburg before Poincaré’s departure, which was scheduled for 11 pm.²⁶⁴ The delay was advised by the German government, which found out the exact moment of Poincaré’s departure and informed Vienna. Of course, Berlin was aware of Vienna’s intentions and assisted them. For the same reasons, the German government later ordered that the radio communications be interrupted between the ship on which Poincaré and Viviani traveled and the French capital and other places.²⁶⁵

In addition, Giesl was also ordered this: if Pašić resigned in order to buy some time and prolong the deadline to reply to the ultimatum, Giesl should state that this would not affect the situation in any way, since the Cabinet was bound to perform its duties with full responsibility until a new Cabinet had been formed.²⁶⁶

The ultimatum was delivered on the same day, 23 July, at 6 pm. Pašić was not present in Belgrade, as he was engaged in the election campaign and currently on the way to Salonica; Finance Minister, Dr. Laza Paču was standing for him. Pašić was consumed by the election campaign, which seems to have been rather difficult for his party. He had to rely on all his personal authority to maintain the parliamentary majority for the Radical Party. Therefore, he was constantly on the road from 19 July onwards. He wanted to go to Salonica from southern Serbia and to meet there with Venizelos in order to discuss the real character of the Greco-Turkish dispute and the situation in Albania in which civil war had been fought for several weeks.

263 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 584.

264 *Ibid.*, p. 594; Poincaré, *Au service de la France*, IV, p. 285.

265 Poincaré, *Au service de la France*, IV, p. 328; *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1, 1927, p. 120.

266 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 594.

Paču received Giesl in the presence of the head of the Foreign Ministry, Dr. Slavko Grujić, who served as an interpreter. Having been given a note and still not read it, Paču drew attention of Giesl to the fact that not just Pašić, but also several other ministers were engaged in electoral agitation and that it would be physically impossible for all of them to return in time to hold a ministerial conference and give an answer to the ultimatum. Giesl replied ironically that this should be easy to overcome in the age of railways, telephones and telegraphs given the size of the country. Besides, he had hinted earlier that day at the need to inform Pašić of his impending step.²⁶⁷

On the same day, a telegram was sent from Vienna to Constantinople, Durres, Scutari, Valona and Salonica to inform that, in case of war between Serbia and Austria, the latter country would wish the Albanian population to start a rebellion, exploiting the departure of the Serbian army. Austria did not intend to undertake direct steps in that sense: 1) because with the outbreak of war her consulates in southern Serbia would have to cease their work "and therefore, she will not have direct agencies to mediate" and 2) because the assistance to the Muslim Albanians, who could be counted on for an action against Serbia, could lead to complications as these elements also took part in the rebellion against Prince Wied.²⁶⁸ The Austrian commissar in the international commission Kral replied with much confidence on 25 July that the movement could be played out nicely with the center of activities in Durres.²⁶⁹ The Austrian Military Attaché in Cetinje sent a similar reply.²⁷⁰ On 23 July, the Vienna government sent a message to Sofia. Until the attitude of Romania had become clear, the official Bulgaria should remain neutral. But it was "very desirable" that detachments of *komite* start their action in Macedonia (which would be denied by the government) in order to cut off Serbia's connections with Salonica. The Minister was recommended to use all means to bring about this action upon the news of mobilization.²⁷¹ On 28 July, the day when the war was declared, arms and money were indeed sent to Albania to stir an uprising in southern Serbia as soon as possible.²⁷² After having reached an agreement with the government in Sofia, Count Tarnowski signaled on the same day the

267 On the delivery of the ultimatum, based on the statements of Grujić, see a good article by H. F. Armstrong, *Foreign Affairs*, V, 2, 1927, pp. 267-75.

268 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 598-9.

269 *Ibid.*, pp. 610-11.

270 M. Ronge, *Kriegs und Industrie Spionage*, Vienna 1930, p. 88.

271 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 710-11. Markgraf Pallavicini, however, negotiated with the Bulgarian Minister in Sofia and promised Macedonia to the Bulgarians. See *Die Kriegsschuldfrage*, VI, 1928, p. 237.

272 *Ibid.*, p. 837.

start of *chetniks* action in Macedonia “with the greatest caution so that the government would not be blamed and that it could deny its participation in that game” with a view to Romania’s attitude.²⁷³ On 29 July, Vienna even sent word to Constantinople that the Young Turks should also influence the Muslim Albanians to unite in the struggle against Serbia.²⁷⁴

In doing so, Austria was the first among the Powers that tried to draw in others in her conflict with Serbia. Her and German diplomacy requested the whole time that this conflict be localized and claimed that it concerned only Serbia and Austria. But at the same time, even before Serbia’s reply to the ultimatum was known, on the very day on which the ultimatum was delivered, Austria tried to involve, as her accomplices, Albania, all the Albanians and Bulgarian *chetniks* in the conflict against her small neighbour. In this case, her intention merited a two-fold condemnation: for intending to set the Balkans on fire again and for trying to do so through a country which was still under the alleged control of Great Powers and which was created in the midst of a war, on Austria’s request, in order to neutralize the aggressiveness of a neighbour. Austria-Hungary’s policy towards Albania was laid bare by this action, as well as its responsibility for causing a worldwide conflagration. Apart from that, Austria fully revealed her underground links with Bulgarian *komitadjis* and Albanian “revolutionaries”. Austria made use of the same, and even worse, means than those of which she accused the work of Serbian societies and the Serbian government.

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The Austrian demands to Serbia caused general surprise in the whole Europe. It was clear that they went too far. Even the opponents of Serbia, such as Radoslavov, found it impossible for Serbia to accept those demands.²⁷⁵ The Grand Vizier told Markgraf Pallavicini that Austria’s determination surpassed his expectations and that he was convinced “that Serbia will not accept the terms imposed, because they are of such nature that the acceptance would cause a revolution in the country”.²⁷⁶

The Romanian King Carol discussed the attentat with the Serbian Minister Mihailo Ristić on 2 July. He pointed out the difficulties that might arise from

273 Ibid., p. 853. Cf. on relations between Bulgaria and Austria see the account of the Italian Minister A. Bosdari, *Delle guerre balcaniche, della Grande Guerra e di alcuni fatti precedenti ad esse*, Milan 1928, p. 104. Cf. Ronge, *Kriegs und Industrie Spionage*, pp. 88–9.

274 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 874.

275 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 650.

276 Ibid., pp. 387–9.

it for Serbia, although he did not see any Serbian responsibility “considering that it is apparent to any clever man that the attentats committed are detrimental to the Serbs and realizing how difficult that attentat was for Serbia herself, which needed peace very much”.²⁷⁷ King Carol spoke later along the same lines to the Austrian minister, who advanced the accusations made by his government against Serbia. A group of killers should not be equated with official Serbia, which condemned the attentat just as he did himself. The King expressed his conviction that the Serbian government would conduct the investigation with the utmost correctness, “but he finds it understandable if Serbia would not allow Austrian functionaries to carry out an investigation in Belgrade”.²⁷⁸ The King said this on 10 July, certainly rejecting some comments made by the Austrian Minister. On 11 July, he reiterated his opinion to the German Minister and even observed that it seemed to him that Vienna lost its head.²⁷⁹ He sincerely recommended to the Berlin government to influence Serbia via St. Petersburg in order to eschew complications and to make Serbia satisfy Austrian demands. But Berlin did not respond to that plea either.

When King Carol received the news of the ultimatum on 24 July, he was “unusually stricken”. When the Austrian Minister read the note, he just said: “In eight days we could have a European war” and he could not pull himself together and start a conversation for several minutes. He believed that the Serbian government would have to step down and the King to abdicate, and if that did not occur, then a war would come because he regarded the acceptance of Austrian demands as “almost impossible”. It might happen, he thought, that Serbia refuse to accept the demands, or not enter into war, restraining her army from action. If Austria then occupied Serbia, that could give rise to the greatest international complications.

The King deprecated many points in the ultimatum. Aware of how difficult it would be in his country, in which there was, just like in Serbia, the full freedom of press, to accept and give effect to demands that would seek to constrain severely that freedom, he pointed that out. Pašić could promise a lawsuit against journalists, but not confiscation of the press that would violate the constitution. Then he insisted on points 5 and 6, which he found that “infringe on the national independence of Serbia”. The King promptly said that Russia would not accept that. The Austrian Minister tried to get any positive reply out of the King from this conversation concerning Romania’s attitude. A world war,

277 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from Bucharest, 20 July 1914, conf. no. 109.

278 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 713. Cf. p. 636.

279 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, pp. 59-61.

he said, would be a major misfortune, but the situation was not desperate as the Triple Alliance with Romania was stronger than the Entente Powers. The King replied that he also believed that was the case, although nothing could be predicted with certainty in a war. But he did not promise that Romania would march with Austria. During this conversation, the King especially enquired what would happen with Serbia, stressing that a Greater Bulgaria, arising from eventual territorial changes, would be a danger to Romania. Count Czernin retorted that Austria was not that much against Serbia as it was against the Greater Serbian idea, and then he added that the balance of power in the Balkans could also be achieved by giving Serbia's Krajina to Romania, if part of the Serbian area was ceded to Bulgaria.²⁸⁰

The Romanian Prime Minister Brătianu was more open than the King. He told Czernin that he much regretted the ultimatum note "which has been couched in such a hostile tone that the whole Europe cannot doubt that Austria wants war". It would have been better if the Austrians had invaded Serbia immediately after the assassination than having sent this note on the basis of which they "would be characterized as people who seek to cause a war *à tout prix*". "The note is unacceptable and therefore the danger of a European war is great."²⁸¹

Official British policy towards Serbo-Austrian relations was rather reserved. Sir Edward Grey found that the attentat could justify the more energetic attitude of Austria-Hungary towards Serbia and he was willing to suggest to St. Petersburg to counsel compliance and the acceptance of Austrian demands to Belgrade. He assumed, of course, and he said so to the German Ambassador, that Austria would not go too far, because everything would depend on the measures she intended to take and which should not be such as to "provoke the Slav feeling so much to make it impossible to Sazonov to remain passive".²⁸² Grey had a hunch early on, in the beginning of July, that things could take a dangerous course and that the mood in Berlin was especially to be feared, as there were certain anxieties there in respect to Russian policy.²⁸³ On 22 July, he suggested to Russia to establish contact with Austria in order not to be placed before an incorrigible accomplished fact in terms of the weight and the impossibility of demands that Austria might deliver to Serbia.²⁸⁴ The British

280 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 627-31. Cf. Czernin's account in his *Im Weltkriege*, p. 115 ff.

281 *Ibid.*, pp. 628-34.

282 *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIX, p. 635; *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, p. 49; *British Documents*, XI, pp. 33-4.

283 *British Documents*, XI, pp. 30-1.

284 *Ibid.*, p. 64; *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus*. Reihe 1, Bd. 4., pp. 293-4.

Ambassador in Vienna reported on 16 July that Austria was preparing harsh demands and measures, and that she was certain of Germany's assistance.²⁸⁵ He could support justified Austrian demands, which would not exceed "reasonable bounds", motivated by his desire to resolve the dispute without the use of force. Prince Lichnowsky, who saw clearly the direction in which things were developing and who sincerely endeavoured to save peace, also suggested this idea to the Russian Ambassador in London.²⁸⁶ The notion of "reasonable bounds" meant that Austrian demands, if justified by established facts, were compatible with the independence of the Serbian state.²⁸⁷

Having found out the mood of the British government, Berchtold sent a message to London on 24 July that Austria did not deliver a formal ultimatum but rather a "demarche with a deadline". Breaking off diplomatic relations and military preparations were still to follow, but not yet the beginning of military operations. If Serbia gave in later, under military pressure, Austria would request from her to compensate mobilization costs. London regarded this as a favourable sign and considerable relaxation of the situation, and it immediately forwarded the news to St. Petersburg.²⁸⁸

On the day the note was delivered, the Austrian Ambassador in London had a long conversation with Grey. Not yet knowing the full text of the note, Grey spoke rather generally. He complained of the deadline set in the note that accounted for an ultimatum-like character, since that took away the possibility to calm down the excitement and exert a soothing influence in Belgrade. He realized the seriousness of the situation and warned of the danger with clairvoyance. "If four great states, Austria-Hungary, Germany, Russia and France were involved in a war, a situation would emerge that would amount to economic bankruptcy of Europe. No credit will be available, industrial centers will revolt, so that in most of the countries, regardless of whether they are winners or losers, many of the existing institutions will be blown away." Austria had to, he stressed, speak directly with Russia and convince her of the necessity of her step; otherwise, the odds were not good at all.²⁸⁹ On 22 July, Grey expected from Germany "that it will not identify itself with the demands that are overtly intended to cause a war and that it will not support a policy, which exploits the Sarajevo murder just as an excuse for Austria's Balkan plans and the annulment

285 *British Documents*, XI, pp. 39-40.

286 *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus*. Reihe 1, Bd. 4., pp. 297-9.

287 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, p. 129. The same document spoke of the "national dignity of Serbia". To that, Emperor Wilhelm II minuted: "There is none!" Cf. *British Documents*, XI, pp. 53-4.

288 *British Documents*, XI, p. 84.

289 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 602-3; *British Documents*, XI, pp. 70-1.

of the Peace of Bucharest”.²⁹⁰ But that expectation was futile. The Emperor wrote down a number of comments on his message and categorically said to the Berlin government to refuse British suggestions. Berlin stressed the whole time that it was not familiar with the content of the ultimatum, and not even concerned with it, because that was Austria’s “internal matter”. In doing so, Berlin declined the suggestions that it should mediate in Vienna and take any action that might have a sobering effect in that city.

But Grey’s attitude changed at once as soon as he had read the Austrian ultimatum. Like everyone else, he pointed out article 5 and told the Austrian Ambassador that its fulfilment “would be equal to the end of Serbia’s independence”. He also complained about a short notice given for a reply, because it made the mediation of other Powers well-nigh impossible. “He marked our note”, the Austrian Ambassador reported, “as the most terrible document that one state has ever sent to another” no matter how justified the accusations made were otherwise.²⁹¹ Austria simply forced the hand of Serbia in giving a reply. Another British minister, Winston Churchill, observed that such an ultimatum had never been written lately and that no state in the world could accept it.²⁹² “General impression here is just devastating”, Lichnowsky reported from London on 25 July.²⁹³ The Russian Ambassador wrote: “The text of the Austrian note had an impact of a bomb in London.”²⁹⁴

From the start, Grey feared the consequences that might arise in Europe from the Serbo-Austrian conflict. And therefore, he turned to the allies of Austria and Russia, Germany and France respectively, to try to save peace acting through them. He immediately warned the Austrian Ambassador of the responsibility that his country assumed.²⁹⁵ He said the same thing in a conversation with the German Ambassador. “Never has an independent state been addressed in such a tone.” “The Austrian note surpasses all that he has ever seen in such form.” “He has criticized the form rather than the content.” He believed that the Russian government would find it impossible to recommend Serbia an unconditional acceptance of the Austrian demands. He was

290 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, pp. 129-30.

291 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 878; *British Documents*, XI, pp. 73-4; *Mémoires de Edward Grey*, pp. 287-8.

292 *La crise mondiale*, Paris 1925, pp. 170-1.

293 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, p. 162.

294 *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus. Dokumente aus den Archiven der Zarischen und der Provisorischen Regierung*. Edited by M. N. Pokrovsky, Authorized German translation by Otto Hoetzsch, Reihe 1, Bd. 5., 23. Juli bis 4. Aug. 1914, Berlin 1934, p. 51.

295 *Documents diplomatiques*, p. 53.

concerned and suggested to Germany to first prolong the deadline of the ultimatum in order to gain time for mediation. If this was just a conflict between Austria and Serbia, he would not be unduly worried, but a European conflict, in which four Great Powers would take part, could develop from this one. For a while, the Germans made major, and favourable to them, conclusions from this number of Powers, exclusive of Britain and Italy. To prevent a dangerous conflict between Russia and Austria, Nicolson, Permanent Under-Secretary in the British Foreign Office, proposed, apparently acting at the suggestion of Paul Cambon, that the other four Powers should certainly mediate. Otherwise, a conflict was inevitable, because the general impression was that Austria asked for too much and that neither Serbia nor Russia, which backed Belgrade, could accept her demands. Grey's secretary Tyrrell told the German Ambassador unequivocally that "it could not be contemplated that Serbia accepts what is requested from her". "Austria-Hungary underestimates Serbia; it will bleed there."²⁹⁶ Pointing that out, Grey also wanted to warn Germany about the danger that might emerge from the Serbo-Austrian conflict unless Russia's feelings were taken into consideration and to make Germany agree to influencing Vienna to mitigate the demands and allow for a peaceful settlement.²⁹⁷ "Given the terms of the ultimatum, I am almost powerless to exert any moderating influence", he was explicit. The German thesis about the localization of a war was untenable. All the talk about this, Nicolson wrote to Buchanan, meant to him nothing else "than that the Powers hold a rope and watch how Austria calmly strangles Serbia".²⁹⁸

Informing the French government of the text of the ultimatum delivered to Serbia, the Austrian Ambassador stated on 24 July that his country wanted to confine its dispute with Serbia to these two countries. The German Ambassador was ordered the same day to state in Paris that the Serbo-Austrian dispute concerned only those two countries and to threaten that, in case a third party was involved, Germany would stand faithfully by Austria-Hungary carrying out its obligations as an ally.²⁹⁹ Baron Schoen carried out this order, leaving a clear impression that Germany fully accepted the Austrian viewpoint and that it would back it with all its authority and strength.³⁰⁰ Claiming publicly at the same time, through their ambassadors to Great Powers, that the

296 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 636-40; *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, pp. 154-5.

297 *British Documents*, XI, p. 77; *Mémoires de Edward Grey*, pp. 254-5; Nicolson, *Die Verschwörung der Diplomaten*, p. 425.

298 Nicolson, *Die Verschwörung der Diplomaten*, p. 426.

299 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 640; Poincaré, *Au service de la France*, IV, p. 299.

300 *Documents diplomatiques*, pp. 48-9.

Austrian demands were “just and tactful”, although they admitted in private conversation that the note was “too harsh”,³⁰¹ Bethmann Hollweg and Jagow in fact abandoned the neutral stance and, backing Austria, accepted the responsibility for her action and became her accomplices, to certain extent. Schoen himself was told so in the French Foreign Ministry on 25 July. With that statement, Philippe Berthelot said, Germany placed itself between Austria and other Great Powers.³⁰² Since the Foreign Minister was not present in Paris and the Justice Minister Bienvenu-Martin acted in his place, the replies of the French government were initially rather vague. Bienvenu-Martin expressed his hope that a peaceful solution to the crisis would be found, being somewhat satisfied with the Austrian and German statements that the dispute concerned only Austria-Hungary and Serbia. However, Bienvenu-Martin also insisted on article 5 of the ultimatum and said he had sent word to Serbia to be yielding “as long as their sovereign rights are not infringed”. But he found himself, and told the German Ambassador, that the Austrian demands handed to Serbia “seem unacceptable”.³⁰³ Serbia could be required, he said, to give satisfaction and punish all the culprits, but she could not be requested to accept what was against her dignity and sovereignty. Accepting that, the Serbian government could easily fall victim to a revolution.³⁰⁴ The head of the Political Department of the Foreign Ministry Berthelot, who was more familiar with the matter than Bienvenu-Martin, expressed at once his fears concerning Russia and he was indirectly critical of the ultimatum. Serbia should be counseled, he said, to accept the demands in principle, but to request explanations and more details in respect to some points.³⁰⁵ He spoke in that sense with the Serbian Minister Vesnić. The Serbs could immediately accept all the points that were not humiliating to the sovereignty of their state. They could further reply that Austrian claims were one-sided and that they needed information for further investigation in order to check them and do that promptly. It was necessary, he said, to avoid direct conflict with Austria and subject oneself to the arbitration

301 The instructions with that statement were sent to diplomatic representatives abroad on 21-22 July, before the Austrian ultimatum was well-known in Berlin. But the Berlin government did not bother to alter the instructions when it had found out the exact text of the ultimatum on 22 July, although there was enough time to do so as the statements were not supposed to be made before 24 July. Cf. Lutz, *Die Vorgeschichte des Weltkrieges*, XI, pp. 82-3.

302 *Documents diplomatiques*, p. 55.

303 Poincaré, *Au service de la France*, IV, p. 304.

304 *Ibid.*, p. 305; *Documents diplomatiques*, p. 49.

305 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 641; cf. Schoen, *Mémoires*, pp. 232-3.

of Europe.³⁰⁶ He told the German Ambassador that Austria would do well to discuss some points that could not be carried out immediately, if Serbia truly showed a sincere will to fulfil the demands. To this, Emperor Wilhelm II noted: "Ultimatums are either met or not met, but there is no more discussion!"³⁰⁷ Paris noted that the German Ambassador suggested to the government of the Republic to soothe Russia and when the French side asked Germany to do the same in Austria, the German Ambassador replied that that would be contrary to the localization thesis. However, Jagow told Jules Cambon while discussing that question that it was "of internal importance to Austria"; that he expected "a bit of emotion" on the part of Serbian friends, but he hoped that they would give them a good advice and that the conflict should be localized.³⁰⁸ Cambon replied to that clearly: this could not remain anyone's internal affair when it had become the subject of discussion between the Great Powers and it was the German press itself that deprived this matter of its local character by pointing out Germany's siding with Austria.

Having been informed about the ultimatum on their trip, Poincaré and Viviani stated at once to St. Petersburg that the prolongation of the deadline should be requested for Serbia, that she should accept all that was compatible with her honour and independence and that an international investigation in Serbia be requested instead of the Austrian one.³⁰⁹

In Berlin, which gave Austria a free hand, the British proposal for mediation on the part of the four Great Powers was refused on 25 July. Germany did not want to interfere with the conflict between Serbia and Austria, it was said, and whoever wanted to prevent a war needed only to placate St. Petersburg. Grey replied that there could be no British mediation in St. Petersburg without German mediation in Vienna. But if both Russia and Austria carried out mobilization, would that not affect the other Powers? Would Germany be able then to maintain its passive attitude? If war broke out, no Power in Europe would be able to disinterest itself.³¹⁰

The German government was, however, as Szögyény reported from Berlin, "in full agreement with the content of this note (the ultimatum), it goes

306 *Documents diplomatiques*, p. 47. The opinion that Berthelot produced the draft of the Serbian reply is entirely erroneous. Cf. Renouvin, *Les origines immédiates de la guerre*, p. 87.

307 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, p. 151.

308 *Documents diplomatiques*, p. 51.

309 Poincaré, *Au service de la France*, IV, p. 288.

310 *Ibid.*, p. 56.

without saying”.³¹¹ The same was true for the German press. When Berlin was informed that the Austrian ultimatum placed the Serbian government in a difficult position and that it was struggling to formulate an answer, Emperor Wilhelm II noted with the visible complacency: “How hollow that so-called great Serbian state shows itself; that is the case with all Slav states. It is only necessary to stamp firmly on the feet of that riffraff!”³¹² Even the governments of some of the German states, for example that of Bavaria, approved of the Austrian step. Count Hertling, who spoke with the Austrian Ambassador on behalf of Bavaria, showed so little statesmanlike vision in the assessment of the events that his words could be taken as a classic example of the short-sightedness in politics. But it is likely that he was not the only one in Germany who thought like that. On the contrary, when he who was placed in the most responsible position thought like that, it is quite clear that others could face the events with even less criticism. Hertling claimed that he had information to the effect that Berlin and Rome would soon proffer similar explanations to those of Austria in the Serbian question; he was less sure that the Entente Powers, together with Italy, were tranquilized with the Austrian statement that no territory would be taken from Serbia. He was personally convinced that the Russian Emperor would not get involved “under the circumstances” in the conflict between Serbia and Austria.³¹³

7

As far as Russia's attitude was concerned, Austria-Hungary was closer to the mark than Germany. Berchtold counted more with the likelihood that Russia would not remain inactive this time than German diplomats did.

Relations between Serbia and Russia could not be better at this time. Serbia knew well that she could thank only the protection of Russia for a large part of her successes, which resulted in permanent gains. If it had not been for Russia's influence on France and Britain and German consideration and obligations to her, Serbia would not have survived the war against the Turks in 1912 because of Austria – and perhaps Austria would not have allowed Serbia to wage that war. The entire Serbian society was thus truly faithful to Russia and there was hardly any time in which the cult of Russia had been stronger among the Serbs. Russia felt that. In a report to the Emperor on his travel across Europe, Sazonov wrote on 6 November 1913 how he had advocated the cause of Serbia in Paris,

311 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 625; Schoen, *Mémoires*, pp. 237-9.

312 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, p. 157.

313 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 638-9.

arguing that France herself had interest in seeing Serbia strengthened. "In case of heavy international conflicts, this country would side with France by force of circumstances, because she is a natural opponent of Germany's most important ally."³¹⁴ It would side with Russia all the more so. Russian military circles placed much store in the cooperation of Serbia in case of a war with Austria.³¹⁵ On 17 November 1913, Sazonov told the Serbian Minister that Serbia was "the only country in the Balkans in which and in the statesmen of which Russia had faith".³¹⁶ On the occasion of his visit to Bucharest and Sinaia on 15-16 June 1914, Sazonov emphasized to Brătianu – and the latter relayed it to the Austrian Minister – Russia's peaceful aspirations and said that he could see at that moment no reason for poor relations between Austria and Russia "unless the [Danubian] Monarchy would again come into conflict with Serbia".³¹⁷ Sazonov himself claims to have said that a conflict might arise "only in that case if Austria, because of the Albanian question or under some other pretext, intended to attack Serbia to weaken that Kingdom considerably, to which we could not probably remain indifferent".³¹⁸ Later on, after the attentat, on 3 July, Count Czernin reported from Bucharest that Brătianu told him Sazonov's words, which then sounded much more radical: "that Russia could not remain peaceful in a war between the Monarchy and Serbia, but would have to declare war". Czernin added his impression that Brătianu wanted to frighten Austria with this statement and to restrain her from attacking Serbia.³¹⁹

Russia needed Serbia. Serbia was the most reliable fulcrum in Russia's Balkan policy. Austria succeeded to bring her own people at the helm of Bulgaria; Germany practically took the Turkish army under its wing and had its reliable tool in the shape of the Turkish government. The German court had a powerful influence on Greece as well and endeavoured to strengthen it further. If Serbia had to bow to Austria, Russia would not have a single state in the Balkans as a reliable base for further work. Therefore, she had to defend Serbia in her own interest. If she lost Serbia, Russia would also lose at the same

314 *Der diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, III, p. 329.

315 M. Pokrowski, *Drei Konferenzen*, p. 49.

316 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from St. Petersburg, 17 November 1913, conf. no. 536.

317 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 169. Cf. *Die Grosse Politik*, XXXIX, pp. 520, 522.

318 *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus*. Reihe 1, Bd. 3., p. 296. Cf. Sazonov, *Les années fatales*, p. 120.

319 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 278. In April 1914, the Russian Ambassador in Rome Krupenski told Prince Bülow that he heard Austria was preparing a blow against Serbia. That would have, he stressed, major consequences for the peace of Europe. "Russia will not allow Austria to overrun Serbia." The Russian Ambassador in Munich spoke similarly. See Bülow, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, III, pp. 127, 158-9.

time all that she had accomplished in Bucharest. St. Petersburg saw clearly that Austria's attitude towards Serbia was increasingly aggressive the more Serbia was orientated to Russia. It was a matter of course that by supporting Serbia, Russia supported her aspirations in the future; besides, Austria did the same thing by supporting Romania earlier and then Bulgaria.

Sazonov realized the crux of the problem. He explained the situation in Austria in a report to Emperor Nicholas II on 20 January 1914. Nationalist activities forced the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy to either carry out important reforms providing the possibility to all its nations for their free development in a federal framework, or to try to save and definitely establish the predominance of Germans and Hungarians in a "desperate struggle". "In a given moment, especially if Germany is inclined that way, the bellicose mood might prevail in Austria-Hungary, the supporters of which claim that war is perhaps the only way out of the unsolvable internal difficulties."³²⁰ It was now clear to him that that moment had indeed come in Vienna and that Russia could not remain inactive in that "desperate struggle".

Sazonov trusted Pašić's statement that the Serbian government had nothing to do with the attentat, and he sent him word through Minister Spalajković on 4 July that Pašić's staying in office was a guarantee "that Serbia is not a hotbed of adventures". He added that sympathies for Serbia would grow in the wake of violence committed against the Serbs in Bosnia, but that Serbia should remain restrained and ease the tensions *coute que coute* in order to avoid dangerous situations.³²¹

The Russian side let Vienna know early on that they could not allow any action "that would constrain the political independence of Serbia". A secretary in the Russian Embassy in Vienna told so, at the Ambassador's order, to a correspondent of the *Neue Freie Presse* on 7 July. The latter refused to publish this statement in his newspaper, but he informed of it the German Embassy and certainly the Austrian authorities.³²² The Russian Ambassador in Vienna Shebeko told his British colleague on 5 July that Russia would not allow an Austrian attack on Serbia and would protect the latter country. A Serbian war would certainly turn into European one.³²³ On 8 July, Marquis Andrea Carloti reported to his government from St. Petersburg that Sazonov had said to the Austrian representative that the request for cooperation of the Austrian

³²⁰ *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus*. Reihe 1, Bd. 1., p. 49.

³²¹ Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from St. Petersburg, 21 June (4 July) 1914.

³²² *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, p. 45.

³²³ *British Documents*, XI, p. 31.

functionaries with the Serbian authorities would “make a very bad impression in Russia” and he insisted that Vienna drop this intention. Austria should not “place her foot on such a dangerous path”.³²⁴ To deceive the Russian government, Count Berchtold stated to the Russian representative that “the Austro-Hungarian government have no intention of causing a conflict, but rather want to clarify the details of the criminal attentat in order to have all the culprits and all their accomplices punished as they deserve and, in doing so, prevent the repetition of similar terrible events in the future”.³²⁵ On 16 July, at a dinner party in the home of Countess Marie Kleinmichel in St. Petersburg, Baron Schilling, Sazonov’s assistant, told the Italian Ambassador that Russia would not allow Austria to endanger the integrity and independence of Serbia. Marquis Carloti suggested that such statement be given in Vienna, because it could decide on the harsh measures against Serbia in the belief that Russian protection would not go beyond the words. Baron Schilling responded that it should be the duty of Austrian allies to inform that country of the true feeling in Russia. Carloti promised to report this to Rome, but he maintained that Russia should make the recommended step. Schilling feared that a direct Russian statement could be considered something of an ultimatum and thought its impression would be better if it came from the side of an ally. Schilling informed Sazonov of his conversation and the latter then decided to state openly his attitude to the Austrian Ambassador. But in a conversation held on 18 July, the Austrian Ambassador was perfectly pacific and denied any intention of his government to aggravate relations with Serbia. Bent on deception, Count Szapáry was, in Sazonov’s words, “tame as a lamb”.³²⁶

To the German Ambassador, with whom he had a lengthy conversation on 21 July, Sazonov openly pointed out the dangers that could emerge, if the bellicose party prevailed in Vienna. The attitude of the Serbian government was “perfectly correct” and the whole country and its government could not be accused because of the actions of individuals. No evidence was provided against Serbia. There is the Greater Serbian propaganda, but Austria herself also bore the responsibility for that as she “has always distinguished herself by a poor method of governing”. If every government were made responsible for propaganda conducted in or from its territory, then Russia should rise against Sweden, where anti-Russian agitation was taking place, but she did not do so as she differed in that respect from Vienna’s diplomacy. Being agitated, Sazonov declared on that day that “if it was intent on breaking peace,

324 *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus*. Reihe 1, Bd. 4., p. 128.

325 *Ibid.*, p. 131. Shebekov’s report dates 8 July.

326 *Krasnii arhiv*, IV, pp. 5-6.

[Austria-Hungary] should not forget that it would have to count with Europe in that case. Russia could not watch indifferently a step made in Belgrade, which would seek to humiliate Serbia." Especially, "there could be no talk of an ultimatum". Sazonov also told the Italian Ambassador with the same determination that Russia "would not be able to tolerate Austria's speaking threateningly to Serbia or taking military measures. *La politique de la Russie est pacifiques, mais pas passive.*"³²⁷

When Sazonov later found out from various reports that the Austrian note could be harsh nevertheless, he instructed his Ambassador in Vienna on 22 July to give a "friendly, but energetic" warning about "dangerous consequences" that might follow, if Austrian demands to Serbia were unacceptable to Serbia's dignity. The French and British Ambassador in Vienna were also instructed to advise moderation.³²⁸ On the same day, 22 July, Krupenski dispatched San Giuliano's message. Italy was still not familiar with the content of an Austrian note, but he had no doubt "that Austria intend to strike a heavy blow and destroy Serbia. To accomplish that goal, Austria would not shirk from extreme means."³²⁹

When on 24 July Berchtold invited the Russian representative to discuss the ultimatum and to assuage the utterly bad impression, Prince Kudashev said straightaway that Austria's attitude towards Serbia designed to humiliate that country would not be left without repercussions in Russia. Berchtold was, of course, disingenuous in saying, in order to soothe the Russian, "that nothing was further from their mind that wanting to humiliate Serbia" and that he personally endeavoured to leave out of the note anything that might create such an impression. Austria had to prove her position of a Great Power, which is necessary for the European balance of power, with a proper *coup de force*. Everyone in Austria, including the old Emperor, was convinced that Greater Serbian propaganda undermined the dynasty and the state and that it must be ended. Kudashev replied that Austria requested "the impossible from the government of a constitutional state"; "it seems to him that one is requested to jump out of the window first and then to come back climbing the stairs". He considered it a humiliation to Serbia to dictate her the text of the government's statement and the order for the army, and he especially dwelled, just like everyone else, on article 5. In his view, that demand was not in keeping

327 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, pp. 127-8.

328 *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7, 45; *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus*. Reihe 1, Bd. 4., pp. 292-3.

329 *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus*. Reihe 1, Bd. 4., p. 299.

with the international law. The Russian institutions in Berlin and Paris were a privilege, and not the right. Finally, he was perturbed by such a short deadline.

Sazonov was even more outspoken. After having received the news of the ultimatum from Baron Schilling, he shouted with a deep excitement: "That is a European war!" He told the Austrian Ambassador as the latter was still at the door: "I see what it is. You want to wage war against Serbia and this is an excuse. I see what is being done. The German press is whipping you up. You are setting Europe to fire ... This is considered an unjustified attack." Sazonov denied the responsibility of the Serbian government, because he was deeply convinced that it had nothing to do with the attentat;³³⁰ he denoted the Austrian demands as unacceptable and even shouted that Serbia would never allow the disbandment of *Narodna odbrana*. When article 5 was discussed, he said: "Serbia will not then be a master in her own house any more ... You will want to intervene time and again, and what life you will create for Europe!" He asked why the Austrians did not let the Serbs to have their say in the investigation. When the Austrian Ambassador tried to stress that Russia also had no interest in having the dynastic and monarchist idea endangered by attentats, Sazonov replied that the monarchist idea had nothing to do with this. He underscored that he restrained himself from taking any attitude towards the Austrian step and giving any reply, but he said that a serious situation was created.

The Russian Ambassador in London Benckendorff was equally embittered by the Austrian attitude. Russia could not allow, he told Prince Lichnowsky on 24 July, to have Serbia become an Austria vassal. "That kind of note is written only by a government that seeks war; that is not a tone of peace."³³¹

On that day, 24 July, Sazonov summoned a Cabinet meeting. He reviewed the situation before the Cabinet and stated that Austria handed such demands to Serbia, "which are in their essentials completely unacceptable to the Kingdom of Serbia as a sovereign state". After his exposition, the Cabinet decided: 1) to ask Austria in agreement with other Powers to prolong the deadline so that the Powers could be informed of the crux of the problem; 2) to recommend Serbia, if she felt herself weak and not capable, not to resist in case of an Austrian attack, but rather to address the Powers to mediate and 3) to ask for the Emperor's consent to mobilization of four military districts (Kiev, Odessa, Moscow and Kazan), as well as the Baltic and Black Sea fleet.

330 Sazonov, *Les années fatales*, p. 161; *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 644-5; *Krasnii arhiv*, IV, pp. 14-5; *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus*. Reihe 1, Bd. 5., pp. 36-7, 96-7.

331 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, p. 150.

This was communicated the same evening to the Serbian Minister and the Russian Minister in Belgrade. It was suggested to Serbia to accept all that could be accepted just to avoid the worst.³³² Sazonov was convinced that Austria was seeking a reason for war at all costs; what she demanded from Serbia meant that Serbia be either destroyed or renounce her national independence on her own volition.³³³ On the same evening, an official statement was prepared and published next day to the effect that “the Russian government watches carefully the course of the Austro-Serbian conflict to which Russia could not be indifferent”. The next day, a Cabinet meeting took place under the chairmanship of Emperor. The Emperor was fully supportive of Serbia. In his diary entry on 25 July, he recorded that out of the ten points of the Austrian ultimatum, eight were “unacceptable to an independent state”.³³⁴ The ministerial conference approved of all the conclusions reached the previous day, except for that concerning the proclamation of mobilization.

Sazonov then addressed all the capitals of the Great Powers and Bucharest with the wish to prolong the deadline given to Serbia in order to gain time for the Powers to study the matter. His reasons were the following: Austria apprised the Powers of the ultimatum 12 hours after it had been delivered to Belgrade and they could not form the judgment about the justification of the undertaken measures in such a short time. Austria's refusal would, Sazonov stressed, run contrary to international ethics and the statement Austria made to Russia.³³⁵ On the same day, he spoke with the Serbian Minister about the ultimatum with disgust: “There are demands in it that a state cannot accept without committing a suicide.” He promised Russia's help, but he did not state what would constitute that assistance. However, he formulated the proposal that Serbia should not defend herself, if she did not feel strong enough to fight, but rather withdraw her army in the direction of Greece.

Sazonov told the German Ambassador, after the ministerial conference, in the evening of 24 July, that the Austro-Serbian conflict was not a question that concerned only those two states, but was rather a European one. The 1909 statement presented an act accomplished by the whole of Europe. Therefore, Europe would have its say now as well. Austria offered the Powers a file on the Serbian question, but she presented an ultimatum even before that file

332 M. Spalaïkovitsch, *La Yougoslavie à l'Assemblée générale de la Société d'Histoire Diplomatique*, Paris 1934, pp. 11-3.

333 Sazonov, *Les années fatales*, p. 162; *Krasnii arhiv*, IV, pp. 7-8; *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus*. Reihe 1, Bd. 5., pp. 25-6; *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 645-7.

334 *Berliner Monatshefte*, XII, 1934, p. 236.

335 *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus*. Reihe 1, Bd. 5., p. 29.

had been handed and studied, and the Serbian word had been heard. The explanation of the Austrian demands was given to the Powers after 25 July and not on the same day when they were informed of the ultimatum; Austria was accusing and judging without giving an opportunity to either Serbia or the Powers to check those accusations or reply to them.³³⁶ This begged the question why Austria put forward these accusations when she was not willing to discuss them and had already made her decision. Russia would request an international investigation of this file. Russia could not allow the conflict to be resolved between Austria and Serbia alone. Count Pourtalès replied that Austria would not consent to foreign interference with her dispute with Serbia and that she would hardly accept to submit the results of her investigation to a European forum; and that Germany could not allow something that would infringe on the dignity of its ally as a Great Power. It was, therefore, requested unconditionally that the demands of the Danubian Monarchy be met, although it was clear to any thinking individual that the Serbo-Austrian issue could not be solved separately and independently of the general European one. Even the opponents of Serbia had spoken clearly and with good reason about Europeanization of the Serbian question after all the previous events and the London Conference.³³⁷ Sazonov stressed that Russia could not accept with indifference that Austria might “devour Serbia” (*le dévorer la Serbie*). Pourtalès declined that Austria entertained such desires, because that would be against her own interests. Austria only wanted that Serbia be meted out the punishment deserved. Sazonov did not believe that “even if statements existed to that effect”. To Sazonov’s appeal that Germany and Russia work for the maintenance of peace, Pourtalès replied that Germany certainly did not intend to provoke a war, but that it “fully stands for” the interests of its ally.³³⁸ In further conversation with Pourtalès, Sazonov insisted that the legal aspect must be separated from the political one in the matter of the Austrian step against Serbia. Serbia could make concessions in legal matters, if justified, but political demands were much more complicated. The results of the Austrian

336 The legal expert of the Viennese Foreign Ministry, F. Wiesner, has found fault with the Entente Powers for not assessing the Austrian accusations, “if not [in a] well-intentioned [manner], at least with business-like correctness and impartiality” before taking Serbia into protection. See *Die Kriegsschuldfrage*, V, 1927, p. 494. However, it could be justly asked: Why did not Austria give them time to do so? Is it possible to study peacefully the validity of accusations when they are accompanied by an ultimatum?

337 Cf. E. Anrich, *Die jugoslawische Frage und die Julikrise 1914*, Stuttgart 1931, p. 113.

338 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 648-9; *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1, 1927, pp. 167-9.

investigation seemed to Sazonov “more than suspicious”, all the more so as Austria wanted to be a prosecutor and a judge at the same time.

From all these statements, Pourtalès somehow came to the conclusion that Russia did not consider war for the time being – at least as long as Austria did not take something from Serbia – and that she wanted to make this matter a European one in order to gain time.³³⁹ He reported to Berlin accordingly, although Sazonov asked him to explain the gravity of the situation to his government. The Austrian Ambassador formed similar impressions, and he believed and reported that Russia “would not go beyond diplomatic action”.³⁴⁰ This impression of Sazonov’s attitude was wrong altogether. Sazonov indeed favoured peace and advocated it; he confided in the French Ambassador on 25 July that Russia would not cease communications and negotiations even if Austria embarked on an action against Serbia. But that was only his personal opinion, sincerely pacific, but only temporary in the hope that some way out would be found in the last moment. Apart from that, he was clear and categorical in his statements from the start. Russia did not want a war indeed, but she would not allow the destruction of Serbia even at the cost of a war. Throughout the whole crisis of 1912-13, Russia had stressed that she would not allow a repetition of her humiliation in 1908-9. During the Balkan crisis, Russia had been prone to give major concessions, despite her energy and determination, because it had often been the matter of whether Serbia and the Serbs would have received this or that place, or obtained this or that concession. This time, however, it was clear that the future of Serbia and her status as an independent state were at stake. And Russia could not back down at that cost, for the sake of her own interests. “The ultimatum sent to Belgrade”, Sazonov was explicit, “was basically but a maneuver directed against Russia.” “By accepting that ultimatum, Serbia would be acknowledged as Austria’s vassal”, Emperor Nicholas II himself wrote to the British King. Sazonov told the German Ambassador on 24 July to look at the entire system of Austrian policy in the Balkans. The intention was now to subdue Serbia, then it would be Bulgaria’s turn, and finally, Austria would emerge on the Black Sea.³⁴¹ Therefore, the decision was made on 25 July that Russia would throw all her strength behind Serbia, even at the cost of a war. And the war would break out, Emperor Nicholas II said himself, when Austrian troops crossed the Serbian border.³⁴² If Austria

339 Ibid., pp. 705-6; *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, pp. 188-90.

340 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, pp. 200-1.

341 Ibid., p. 190.

342 *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus. Dokumente aus den Archiven der Zarischen und der Provisorischen Regierung*. Edited by M. N. Pokrovsky,

accomplished what she wanted, the Russian Ambassador in Constantinople wrote, that would mean “the complete ruin of our prestige and our position in the Near East established with so much sacrifice and efforts”.³⁴³

Sazonov immediately sensed and pointed out to the British Ambassador that Austria would never have decided to adopt this attitude and deliver this kind of ultimatum unless she had received Germany’s approval.³⁴⁴ It was obvious that Germany wanted to cover the Austrian step with its authority and strength. After the Liman von Sanders mission, this was Germany’s second move that was interpreted in St. Petersburg as being indirectly aimed at Russia. And not without good reason. Emperor Wilhelm II minuted on a report from Vienna sent on 24 July that Austria had to take Sanjak and that there must be the change in the balance of power in the Balkans. “Austria must be preponderant [Power] in the Balkans in relation to other lesser [Powers] at the expense of Russia; otherwise, there is no peace.”³⁴⁵

Sazonov realized that the situation was critical on the basis of both the Austrian ultimatum and Germany’s stance. He thus turned to the representatives of France, Britain and Romania on 24 July to discuss their common steps. On 24 July, Buchanan’s suggestion to ask for prolongation of the deadline given to Serbia, in order to gain time for negotiations, was accepted. In the course of further conversations, Sazonov enquired of the ambassadors of Britain and France how much Russia could count on them on this occasion. The reply of France was clear and positive; Buchanan was evasive, pointing out that the British public opinion would find it difficult to understand that their government was taking up arms to defend Serbia, where no British interest was at stake. Sazonov promptly and rightly replied that the Serbian question was part of the European one and that vital interests of others might be involved in it. Sazonov also reproached the British Ambassador because his government did not openly declare that, in case of a general conflagration, they would stand by Russia and France, since that could have impact in Vienna and Berlin to make them look at the danger of a war with more caution.³⁴⁶ The British view was this: if they sided with Russia overtly and promptly – which would be difficult anyway as Britain had no commitments to Russia – then there would be hardly

Authorized German translation by Otto Hoetzsch, Reihe 2, Bd. 6. 1., 5. Aug. 1914 bis 1. Nov. 1914, Berlin 1934, p. 67.

343 Ibid., p. 126.

344 *Mémoires de sir G. Buchanan*, Paris 1925, pp. 40, 44, 54.

345 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, p. 152.

346 Several scholars have accepted this reproach. Cf. B. Schmitt, *Die Kriegsschuldfrage*, IV, 1926, p. 865.

anyone to mediate among the Powers with authority and whose view could be considered disinterested.³⁴⁷

Counting on such British view and the role of Britain in the Serbo-Austrian dispute in 1909, Sazonov proposed on 25 July to the Serbian government that it address Britain with a plea for mediation.³⁴⁸ He thought, however, that there was another way out of the whole situation, namely if he himself were to go through all the points of the Austrian demands together with the Austrian Ambassador, with the approval of the Vienna government, and remove from them what was indeed unacceptable.

However, Berchtold remained completely intransigent. Austria was aware, he wrote on 25 July instructing the Ambassador in St. Petersburg, that a conflict with Russia could arise from the conflict with Serbia, but that would not stop her. Austria sought to put an end to situation in which “Russia’s giving a free hand to Serbia allows the latter a permanent, unpunished and unpunishable endangerment of the Monarchy”. If Russia considered that the opportunity had presented itself “for a great showdown with the European Central Powers”, then any instructions were superfluous – but if Russia was not prepared for war and did not intend to wage it, then he should act along the following lines, in the spirit of the Viennese policy. The Ambassador would surely not succeed in assuring Sazonov about the necessity of the Austrian step in Belgrade, but the latter might be assuaged and restrained by the statement that Austria was “saturated with territory” and that she did not want conquest in Serbia, but only sought to defend herself. With the utter disingenuousness, the Ambassador was supposed to tell Sazonov that Austria had been patient only because she had not wanted to have a showdown with Serbia while the Serbian struggle with the old Turkish enemy had been going on. “Things are different today: Serbia achieved her aspirations at the expense of Turkey and the Monarchy could act against Serbia without exposing itself to the reproach that it seeks to prevent the free development of the Serbian state.” Austria did not intend to suppress the Christian Orthodox Slavs; to assure Russia that she was not their opponent, the Ambassador could point out that Austria came into conflict with Serbia alone, whereas relations with Montenegro were “completely normal and neighbourly friendly”. The Ambassador was to state and threaten that Austria would push to the extreme and not back down in the face of possible European complications in order to accomplish what it required. “The course of the last forty years and the historical fact that our most gracious

347 Asquith, *The Genesis of the War*, p. 201; cf. *British Documents*, XI, pp. 80–2, 94.

348 *Krasnii arhiv*, IV, pp. 12, 46; *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus*. Reihe 1, Bd. 5., p. 47.

master gained the glorious name of the Keeper of Peace has shown that we have so far tended to maintain peace as much as it has depended on us, which we also consider the most precious possession of the peoples." It was thought in Vienna, the false tone of the instructions went on, "that the division of the Turkish legacy and the strengthening of the Balkan states to the point of state and political independence removed any possibility for a conflict between us and Russia". That Berchtold was not sincere could best be seen from the fact that he sent a dispatch to the Ambassador in St. Petersburg on the same day, insisting that "for now" he did not mention to either Sazonov or the Italian Ambassador anything about Austrian "territorial disinterest in Serbia"³⁴⁹ and that on 27 July Count Czernin gave an "evasive reply" to King Carol's explicit question in that sense.³⁵⁰ Austrian diplomats could still less talk of Austria's intention to distribute the Serbian territory to other countries and that negotiations were held for that purpose.

The Russian Ambassador in Vienna urgently requested from the Foreign Ministry on 25 July, at noon, that the deadline for Serbia's reply be prolonged. The Great Powers were, he said, completely surprised by the Austrian step and the Russian government believed that it was a matter of "natural consideration" that the Vienna government owed to Russia and other Powers to give them the opportunity to study what was communicated to them. Baron Macchio, who was acting for Berchtold while he was with the Emperor in Bad Ischl, replied that he would inform the Foreign Minister of this request, but that he could tell immediately that there was no chance of prolonging the deadline. The Russian government was mistaken if it thought that it was apprised of certain things so that it could, together with other governments, give its opinion; the statement of the Vienna government was merely in the nature of providing information and it was made as "a duty of international courtesy". Austria did not agree by any means to have her dispute with Serbia laid out before a European summit. The Austrian Ambassador reiterated that his government considered the whole dispute a matter that concerned only themselves and Serbia.³⁵¹ Berchtold promptly refused the Russian request; he only messaged that Serbia had time to declare an unconditional acceptance of the Austrian demands even after the breaking off of diplomatic relations; only in that case, she would have to pay for all military expenses incurred in the meanwhile. Other than that, he fully approved of Macchio's reply.³⁵²

349 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 721-4.

350 *Ibid.*, pp. 779-80.

351 *Ibid.*, p. 731; *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1, 1927, p. 172.

352 *Ibid.*, p. 732.

All the responsible personalities in Austria-Hungary thought more-less the same. Even Count Tisza, who had earlier been a chief drag on hasty decisions, joined at this time the camp of those who precipitated a solution and showed much impatience. Even before he learned of the Serbian reply, he sent a note to the Emperor on 25 July requesting that mobilization be immediately declared in case of Serbia's "insufficient" reply. He could not wait for a few hours to see the Serbian reply. "The least hesitation or reluctance would harm immensely the assessment of the Monarchy's energy and capability of action, it would influence the attitude of not just our friends and opponents, but also the wavering elements and could be linked with veritably fatal consequences."³⁵³

Baron Hold Ferneck, a university professor, assigned to the Foreign Ministry, produced on 25 July something of a legal explanation for Austrian irreconcilable and dismissive attitude, if Serbia caved in after all and accepted the demands imposed or accepted them conditionally. If Serbia accepted the conditions and formulated any kind of protest, then her acceptance should be refused as not sufficient for these reasons: 1) because she protested again after the 1909 note; 2) because she called into question the Austrian right to point out Serbia's responsibility as Austria saw fit; 3) because she showed that "there could be no talk of internal conversion even when her mistakes have been pointed out" and 4) because she proved that she did not intend honestly and loyally to meet the terms imposed. If Serbia accepted all without a protest, the expert legal opinion went on, "we can still note that she did not state within the given deadline that she had carried out those provisions that she had to carry out 'immediately' or 'as urgently as possible' and the fulfillment of which she had to inform us 'without delay'."³⁵⁴ Baron Hold Ferneck obviously provided "legal" advice in the spirit of what was requested of him or, at best, what he felt in the atmosphere of the Foreign Ministry. Regardless of what she did, whether she accepted the demands or not, conditionally or unconditionally, Serbia was going to be found guilty and receive a blow that was prepared for her. The words of the Austrian Ambassador in Rome in his report to Berchtold of 27 July show that clearly. He feared lest Germany was working towards preventing Austria from a war through mediation of other Powers. If it came to that mediation, "then Serbia would in the end cave in in the main issue, but she would be allowed to have her state dignity spared, to certain degree, in form. That would be that way out which Your Excellency is now declining firmly and

353 Ibid., p. 733.

354 Ibid., p. 732. Prof. Dr. Uebersberger has explained this document away as being "private" and claimed Berchtold was not familiar with it. See *Die Kriegsschuldfrage*, IV, 1926, p. 977. Cf. Lutz, *Die Vorgeschichte des Weltkrieges*, XI, p. 489.

which would in fact create for us a much worse situation than that obtaining now.”³⁵⁵

The Russian government also addressed the Romanian government on 25 July with the question if the latter would be willing to mediate in the sense that the deadline given in the ultimatum be prolonged and the Serbs be allowed to accept the terms. The Romanian Prime Minister agreed to mediate, although the deadline had already expired at the moment when his government could do so. He turned to the Austrian Minister with the question whether it would be possible for the Austrian troops to stop their advancing upon their entry into Serbia and, having given the assurance that they did not contemplate a permanent annexation, start negotiations with Serbia while remaining on the Serbian soil. But all the attempts in Vienna in that sense were in vain.

The German government seems to have agreed to this proposal, to some extent – at least it replied in that sense – and promised to relay Russian wishes, which were supported by other Cabinets, to Vienna, but it expressed fear at the same time that there would be no results.³⁵⁶ There was an impression, however, that Germany itself was not in favour of that prolongation. Jagow did not receive the Russian Charge d’Affairs, after lengthy negotiations, before 25 July, at 4:50 pm, when the deadline was fast approaching, although the latter insisted to speak about this matter that threatened, in his words, to turn into a major crisis.³⁵⁷ The Germans themselves admit that Germany did not expedite the proposals of other Powers to prolong the deadline to Vienna. Besides, all Jagow’s replies gave the impression that Germany approved the Austrian step and that it did not think seriously to halt it. Berlin just recommended that Serbia be advised to concede as much as possible. And even if a conflict between Austria and Serbia broke out, Jagow told the Russian Ambassador, that would not be a war, but rather “*une petite exécution*”.³⁵⁸ Emperor Wilhelm II’s note made on the report Count Lichnowsky sent on 24 July was indicative of the mood in Berlin. Grey told Lichnowsky that he would be willing, together with Germany, to work in Vienna for prolongation of the deadline. Emperor Wilhelm II simply wrote a single word: “Unnecessary – *nutzlos*”.³⁵⁹

355 Ibid., p. 802.

356 *Documents diplomatiques*, p. 58; *Russko-germanskie otnoshenija*, p. 167.

357 Ibid., p. 59; *Russko-germanskie otnoshenija*, pp. 194-5.

358 *Russko-germanskie otnoshenija*, p. 195; Wegerer, *Die Kriegsschuldfrage*, VI, 1928, p. 26.

359 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, p. 155.

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Baron Giesl has claimed that he started the preparations to leave upon handing in the note; he instructed his clerks and started to pack his things. A day earlier, he had even ordered a car to take him to the train station. He had been ordered to do so on the night of 24 July from the Foreign Ministry, which counted on the breaking off of relations with Serbia with certainty given the content of the ultimatum. In the same instructions, the Minister was ordered to accept only the full, unconditional acceptance of all the demands; "Your Excellency must take any conditional [that] acceptance or accompanied by reservations as a refusal".³⁶⁰

After receiving the ultimatum, the Serbian government immediately called Pašić to come back. On 24 July, at 5 am, he arrived in Belgrade and went to the Foreign Ministry where all the ministers had already gathered. "The note and its content have completely surprised the Cabinet", Giesl reported accurately.³⁶¹ According to the German Minister, the ultimatum "hit as a bomb; nothing has been prepared".³⁶² When he received the ultimatum, Dr. Paču, who was acting for Prime Minister, informed the same evening all the Serbian Ministers abroad of it with the remark "that the demands are of such nature that no Serbian government could accept them in their entirety". On the same evening, the Italian representatives in St. Petersburg and Bucharest made statements to their hosts, according to the information from their government, that Austria had delivered to Serbia "a completely unacceptable ultimatum".³⁶³

During the lengthy ministerial conferences, under the chairmanship of Crown Prince Alexander, the Serbian government discussed their reply. The weight of the Austrian demands, unusual in both the tone and the content, was extraordinary as well as the situation in which Serbia found herself. To accept the demands as they were meant to accept Austria's interference with strictly internal Serbian affairs, without knowing to which matters that interference might extend. That would also mean to expose oneself to inevitable conflicts on account of the authority, the exceeding of authorization and overzealousness. Such an interference – there was no doubt about it – would be a constraint on the independence of the Serbian state. Along with that, the ultimatum showed a clear tendency to humiliate Serbia. Austria even took the liberty to dictate

360 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 620-1.

361 *Ibid.*, p. 623.

362 *Berliner Monatshefte*, VIII, 1930, p. 839.

363 *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus*. Reihe 1, Bd. 5., p. 3.

the text of a military order on behalf of Serbia's ruler! Although with a heavy heart, but aware of the disproportion in strength between the two countries, the government nevertheless consented to fulfil all the demands of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy that aimed at its sense of pride; they even agreed, to a large extent, to the demands that were supposed to ensure, in view of Vienna, the objectivity of an investigation; they only had certain reservations about restraints on Serbia's independence. The utmost concessions were given. A free country could not go any further.

And still, with a view to Austria's attitude, which showed open hostility, the government counted on the possibility that Vienna would refuse to be satisfied, despite all the concessions. Fearing for the survival of Serbia, Crown Prince and Regent Alexander sent a telegram to the Russian Emperor, in agreement with the government. It read: "The Austro-Hungarian Government delivered last night a note to the Serbian Government concerning the Sarajevo attentat. Conscious of her international obligations, Serbia stated in the first days after the horrible crime that she condemned it and that she was willing to start an investigation in her own territory, if the complicity of some of her subjects was established in the course of the investigation conducted by the Austro-Hungarian authorities. The demands from the Austro-Hungarian note, however, humiliate Serbia gratuitously and are not compatible with her dignity as an independent state. We are requested in a peremptory manner that the Serbian Government publish in the official gazette and the Monarch in an order to the army that the hostile spirit against Austria must be suppressed and that we have shown a criminal lenience to our own insidious subversion. We are being forced to accept Austro-Hungarian functionaries in Serbia, who would conduct an investigation together with ours and oversee the compliance with other conditions from the note. We are given a 48 hours deadline to accept all this, or the Austro-Hungarian Minister will leave Belgrade. We are willing to accept those Austro-Hungarian demands which are in accordance with the status of an independent state and those which Your Majesty would advise us to accept. We will punish severely ourselves all the persons proven to have been involved in the attentat. Certain conditions cannot be met without the change in our legislation, which takes some time. The deadline given to us is too short. The Austro-Hungarian army, which is concentrating on our border, could attack us after the deadline. We find it impossible to defend ourselves and thus we beg Your Majesty to provide us with His assistance as soon as possible. The precious benevolence, which have been extended to us many times so far, give us hope that this plea of ours will also be granted by the noble Slav heart of Your Majesty. In these tortuous moments, I express the feelings of My

People which begs Your Majesty to take interest in the fate of the Kingdom of Serbia.”

The Serbian reply to the Austrian ultimatum read:

“The Royal Government has received the communication of the Imperial and Royal Government of the 10th instant and is convinced that its reply will dissipate any misunderstanding which threatens to destroy the friendly and neighbourly relations between the Austrian monarchy and the Kingdom of Serbia.

The Royal Government is conscious that nowhere there have been renewed protests against the great neighbourly Monarchy like those from the National Assembly, as well as in the declarations and actions of the responsible representatives of the state at that time, and which were terminated by the statement of the Serbian Government of March 18th, 1909; furthermore, that since that time neither the successive royal governments, nor the officials have made any attempt to alter the political and judicial condition created in Bosnia and the Herzegovina. The Royal Government states that the I. and R. Government has made no protestation in this sense excepting in the case of a textbook, in regard to which an entirely satisfactory explanation has been given. Serbia has given during the time of the Balkan crisis in numerous cases evidence of her pacific and moderate policy, and it is only owing to Serbia and the sacrifices that she has made in the interest of the peace of Europe that this peace has been preserved on several occasions.

The Royal Government cannot be made responsible for expressions of a private character, as for instance newspaper articles and the peaceable work of patriotic societies, expressions which are of very common appearance in almost all countries and which ordinarily are not under the control of the state. This all the less, as the Royal Government has shown great courtesy in the solution of a whole series of questions which have arisen between Serbia and Austria-Hungary, whereby it has succeeded to solve a series of thereof for the benefit of the progress of both countries.

The Royal Government was therefore painfully surprised by the assertions that citizens of Serbia had participated in the preparations of the outrage in Sarajevo. The Government expected to be invited to cooperate in the investigation of the crime, and it was ready, in order to prove its complete correctness, to proceed against all persons in regard to whom it would receive information. According to the wishes of the I. and R. Government, the Royal Government is prepared to surrender to the court, without regard to position and rank, every Serbian citizen for whose participation in the crime of Sarajevo it should have

received proof. It binds itself to publish the following statement on the first page of the official organ of the 13/26th of July:

‘The Royal Serbian Government condemns every propaganda which should be directed against Austria-Hungary, i.e., the entirety of such activities as aim towards the separation of certain territories from the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, and it regrets sincerely the lamentable consequences of this criminal machination. The Royal Government regrets that certain Serbian officers and functionaries have participated in the above mentioned propaganda, and thus compromised the good neighbourly relations for the observation of which the Royal Government solemnly obliged itself through the declaration of March 31st, 1909.

The Royal Serbian Government condemns and rejects any thought and attempt to interfere with the fate of inhabitants of any part of Austria-Hungary; it considers it its duty to draw attention to officers, functionaries and all the population of the Kingdom of Serbia that in the future it will deal most severely with those persons who are guilty of such actions, which the Serbian Government will prevent and punish with all its powers.’

This statement will be declared to the Royal Army in the name of His Majesty the King by a daily order of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Alexander and it will be published in the next issue of the Military Gazette.

Furthermore:

1) During the next regular meeting of the National Assembly, the Royal Serbian Government binds itself to embody in the press law a clause, whereby the incitement to hatred of, and contempt for, the Monarchy is to be most severely punished, as well as every publication whose general tendency is directed against the territorial integrity of Austria-Hungary. It binds itself in view of the coming revision of the constitution to embody an amendment into Article 22 of the constitutional law that permits the confiscation of such publications as it is at present impossible according to the clear definition of Article 12 of the constitution.

2) The Serbian Government possesses no proofs and the note of the I. and R. Government does not submit them that the society *Narodna odbrana* and other similar societies have committed, up to the present, any criminal actions of this manner through any one of their members. Notwithstanding this, the Royal Serbian Government will meet the demand of the I. and R. Government and dissolve the society *Narodna odbrana*, as well as every other society that should work against Austria-Hungary.

3) The Royal Serbian Government binds itself to eliminate immediately from the public instruction anything that serves or might serve the propaganda

directed against Austria-Hungary when the I. and R. Government furnishes them facts and proofs of this propaganda.

4) The Royal Serbian Government also agree to dismiss from the military and civil services those officers and officials in regard to whom it has been proved by judicial investigation that they have been guilty of actions against the territorial integrity of the Monarchy and expect that the I. and R. Government communicate to them the names of those officers and officials, and the facts with which they have been charged for the purpose of further investigation.

5) The Royal Serbian Government confesses that it is not clear about the sense and the scope of that demand of the I. and R. Government which concerns the obligation on the part of Serbia to permit the cooperation of officials of the I. and R. Government in Serbian territory, but it declares that it is willing to accept every cooperation which conforms with international law and criminal law, as well as with the friendly and neighbourly relations.

6) The Royal Serbian Government considers it its duty as a matter of course to begin an investigation against all those persons who have participated in the outrage of June 28th and who are in its territory. As far as the cooperation in this investigation of specially delegated officials of the I. and R. Government is concerned, the Royal Serbian Government cannot accept their involvement, as this is a violation of the constitution and of criminal procedure. Yet in some concrete cases the results of the investigation might be communicated to the Austro-Hungarian officials.

7) The Royal Serbian Government arrested on the same evening [of the day on which the note was received] Major Vojislav Tankosic. As for Milan Ciganović, who is a citizen of Austria-Hungary and who has been employed until June 28th with the Railroad Department, it has as yet been impossible to locate him, wherefore a warrant has been issued against him. The I. and R. Government is asked to make known as soon as possible the existing grounds for suspicion or the eventual proofs of guilt, obtained so far in the investigation at Sarajevo, for the purpose of further investigation.

8) The Royal Serbian Government will amplify and render more severe the existing measures to suppress the illegal trafficking of arms and explosives across the border. It is a matter of course that it will proceed at once against, and punish severely, those officials of the border service on the Šabac-Loznica line who violated their duty and who have permitted the perpetrators of the crime to cross the border.

9) The Royal Serbian Government will gladly provide explanations about the statements which its officials in Serbia and abroad have made in interviews after the attentat and which, according to the assertion of the I. and R. Government, were hostile to the Monarchy as soon as the I. and R. Government points out

where those statements were made and it has been established that the expressions in question have actually been made by the functionaries concerned, of which the Royal Serbian Government itself will take care to collect the evidence and confirmation.

10) The Royal Serbian Government will notify the I. and R. Government, so far as this has not been already done by the present note, of the execution of the measures in question as soon as one of those measures has been ordered and put into execution.

In case the I. and R. Government should not be satisfied with this answer, the Royal Serbian Government is prepared, as always, considering it to be in general interest not to rush the solution of this matter, to accept a peaceable solution by referring the decision of this question to the International Court at The Hague or to the Great Powers which took part in the working out of the declaration given by the Royal Serbian Government on March 18/31st, 1909."

Since Austria invoked in her note the Serbian reply to the Vienna government at the end of the Annexation Crisis, Sazonov suggested to Serbia to appeal to Britain, as a Power that was directly involved in the making of that statement, for mediation. At that time, Britain had the most authority in Europe and Berlin took its attitude most into consideration. Only British mediation, St. Petersburg believed, could save the peace of Europe. After that, Serbia could appeal to other Great Powers to mediate. Pašić turned to the British Charge d'Affairs immediately on 24 July.³⁶⁴ He told him that Vienna's demands were "such that the government of any independent country could not accept them in their entirety". He expressed his hope and wish that the British government would influence Vienna to make those demands moderate. Even without this Serbian appeal, the British government, in agreement with France, realizing the seriousness of the situation, proposed the mediation of the four Great Powers and thus made the Serbian question a European one, which was impossible to deal with separately. Whereas Berlin professed that the Austro-Serbian conflict was a purely local affair and that it was only necessary to prevent a conflict between Russia and Austria, London and Paris rightly responded that the latter conflict arose from the former and that whoever wanted peace had to work sincerely to diffuse the former conflict and resolve it through common mediation. This view was in reality and historically the only justified one and it was proven correct and most statesmanlike. Russia then stated it would back down and leave the entire matter for Britain, Germany, Italy and France to decide,

364 Lutz, *Die Vorgeschichte des Weltkrieges*, XI, p. 500 has stated inaccurately that Pašić did not heed Sazonov's advice.

if the Austrian government agreed to have the Serbian appeal to the Great Powers accepted and the whole dispute subjected to an European enquiry.³⁶⁵

The Serbian Minister in London, Mateja Bošković, reported on 24 July that the public opinion waited to see what Russia would do. All depended on Russia. Serbia needed to provide a reply before the Powers had overcome their surprise in such manner as not to decline the Austrian demands and to promise criminal investigation but “all within the bounds of international law and possibly without the encroachment on Serbia’s independence”.³⁶⁶ On 24 July, Grey sent a message to the British representative in Belgrade in which he warned Serbia that it was her duty to express her regret for all that had occurred and to promise “the fullest satisfaction” if the accusations proved correct. “A Serbian reply, after all, must be so composed as to correspond to the requirements of Serbian interests.” Grey was not willing to undertake anything else without an agreement with Russia and France, and this was also going to be communicated to the Serbian government after the agreement with these two countries had been reached. It should be noted that Prince Lichnowsky himself suggested this kind of answer, as he was hopeful that it could be sufficient to allow Austria not to proceed to taking military measures.³⁶⁷

On 24 July, Pašić told the Russian Minister and informed St. Petersburg himself that Serbia would give her reply in time. He stated that the Serbian government would “plead with friendly countries to protect the independence of Serbia”. He also added with determination: “If the war were inevitable, Serbia would wage it.”³⁶⁸ At the same time, he accepted the advice given by Russia and France to ask the Powers for extension of the deadline.

During that time, news and messages from other capitals reached Belgrade. On 25 July, at 5:16 am, the message arrived from Rome to the effect that it was necessary to yield “even at the cost of sacrifices, because these would be temporary”. As much difficult the demands were, “they could be altered in practice”. The Minister in Rome reported that Italy would work in Serbia’s interest, but that its “actual assistance” could not be counted on. The center of gravity was in St. Petersburg, whereas Rome was still not able to foresee all the consequences. Živojin Balugdžić reported after midnight on the night of 24/25 July his conversation with the Greek Foreign Minister. The latter found that “the demands were heavy and could not be accepted” and believed that “the refusal

365 *British Documents*, XI, p. 93.

366 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from London, 11 July 1914.

367 *British Documents*, XI, pp. 78, 82. Since the French and Russian Minister did not receive similar instructions and seeing that the Serbian government was making the utmost concessions, the British Minister did not convey this message.

368 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Instructions for St. Petersburg, 11 July 1914; also *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus*. Reihe 1, Bd. 5., p. 38.

of these demands on our part could not have any difficult consequences for us. Austria-Hungary cannot and do not dare to take any action; he thinks that others will find the way for settlement." The report also came from Bucharest on 25 July, at 2:35 pm, that the Romanian Foreign Minister thought "that Austria-Hungary is not authorized by Germany to go all the way in dealing with us, but rather to settle the questions under discussion with the help of the ultimatum".

The Serbian government presented a draft of its reply to the representatives of Russia, France, Italy and Britain as early as the morning of 25 July. Pašić stressed on that occasion the conciliatoriness of the Serbian government and its readiness to accept "all the Austro-Hungarian demands to the maximal extent that this could be done". He also added: "The Serbian government hopes that the Austro-Hungarian government, unless it is after a war at all costs, will have to accept the fullest satisfaction which the Serbian reply gives it." On 25 July, at 3 pm, Grey handed the draft of a Serbian reply to the German Ambassador in London, asking from his government to influence Vienna to accept it "given its conciliatory tenor". Berchtold replied to London on 26 July that Serbia had declared mobilization at the time Grey had said that, and that this was the proof that Serbia "had no inclination whatever to a peaceful settlement".³⁶⁹

Giesl has claimed that there was a general feeling in Serbia in favour of accepting the ultimatum in its entirety until the afternoon of 25 July. The change took place after the reply of the Russian Emperor had arrived. When the Crown Prince revealed this reply in the officers mess, the officers were thrilled. It was then, according to Giesl, that mobilization was declared; it was then that the transport of the vault of the National Bank was begun, as well as the archives of the Foreign Ministry and the dispatch of the Belgrade garrison in the interior.³⁷⁰ Berchtold accepted Giesl's account.³⁷¹ H. Oncken has even detailed how Russia sent word to Serbia to mobilize and how the Russian Emperor set the course for a war with his reply.³⁷² A. Wegerer has tried to prove in another book that Serbia suddenly changed her decision to back down in the afternoon of 25 July, under the influence of some Russian message.³⁷³ However, it is reliably established today, as has been mentioned, that the Serbian

369 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 747.

370 *Zwei Jahrzehnte*, p. 268; *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, no. 313, 1933; *Berliner Monatshefte*, XI, 1933, p. 465. It was Lončarević, *Jugoslaviens Entstehung*, pp. 594-7 who brought this news to the Austrian Legation, but he speaks of two dispatches from the Russian government rather than a reply from the Russian Emperor.

371 *Berliner Monatshefte*, XI, 1933, p. 375.

372 Oncken, *Das deutsche Reich und die Vorgeschichte des Weltkrieges*, p. 802.

373 A. Wegerer, *Der entscheidende Schritt in den Weltkrieg*, Berlin 1931. In this book, he mostly relied on information from newspapers and their suspicious findings and second-hand stories.

government informed in the morning of 25 July the ministers of friendly Great Powers about the content of its reply and that they reported about that reply to their governments. That reply, without any significant changes, was given to the Austrian Minister at 6 o'clock. Giesl's account in this respect is, therefore, entirely unfounded. It is characteristic, however, that Count Forgách, who believed in this account, shouted on 30 July: "Russia has indeed helped us to be able to settle scores with Serbia."³⁷⁴

We are able to establish all this based on the authentic information. 1) The reply of the Russian Emperor to Crown Prince Alexander's telegram arrived on 29 July and it could not, therefore, have the impact attributed to it four days earlier. The official Russian collection of documents shows that the Emperor asked on 26 July what to answer to that telegram, which was, in his view, "modest and dignified".³⁷⁵ 2) Only one dispatch came to the Foreign Ministry in Belgrade from St. Petersburg on 25 July. It was sent after the midnight, at 1:40 am, and it arrived in Belgrade at 11:40 am. It mostly detailed the situation in St. Petersburg as it was on 24 July in the evening. It read: "The Russian Foreign Minister told the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador that all this is the work of Count Forgách. The general opinion is that Serbia cannot accept the Austro-Hungarian demands. The Ministerial Council decided to take energetic measures, including mobilization. The Emperor's approval is awaited. An official communique is about to be published with which Russia takes Serbia into protection." Spalajković's second telegram sent on 25 July, at 3:22 pm, did not reach Belgrade before 26 July, at 2:40 pm. In this dispatch, Spalajković reported that at the ministerial meeting and the military council, under the chairmanship of the Emperor, "favorable solutions for Serbia" had been decided on and that the "officers and the army manifest the greatest bellicosity". There was no direct Russian message either on the part of the Emperor or on the part of the government in that dispatch. Spalajković stated what was known in St. Petersburg and what other diplomatic representatives reported to their governments. To be true, his message made no mention of what Sazonov had told him, recommending the Serbs utter restraint, but there was no direct encouragement either. His message had no impact on the Serbian government to make it change its earlier decisions, but rather brought confirmation that St. Petersburg took a dim view of the Austrian demands and his conviction that Serbia would not be left at the mercy of her large neighbour.

374 Lončarević, *Jugoslaviens Entstehung*, p. 631.

375 *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus*. Reihe 1, Bd. 5., p. 39.

The report of the Russian Charge d'Affairs in Belgrade Strandmann on the developments those days also made no mention of any telegram from St. Petersburg that arrived on 25 July and influenced the decisions made.³⁷⁶

Baron Giesl has also mentioned a visit made to him by Agriculture Minister Velizar Janković, slightly before the reply to the ultimatum was given, as a special proof that Serbia considered her note insufficient. Janković came to him, he says, counting on the possibility of war, to ask him that his wife, who was on the way home across the Austrian territory, be sent to Vichy and given a certain sum of money, which he would send her via the Minister. On that occasion, Giesl enquired of him about the content of the note, and Janković replied that part of the demands had been accepted, but that it had been impossible to accept all.³⁷⁷ To leave aside the truly unusual gesture of Janković, who asked for a favour the Minister of a state that had just delivered an ultimatum to his country,³⁷⁸ it is still impossible to conclude from this case all that Giesl wants to conclude. Serbia received the ultimatum; this is an undisputed fact. Serbia accepted it in principle and in nearly all the details, and therefore she could hope, despite all the negative experiences, that Austria might agree to provide the necessary explanations in one or two points. Besides, Serbia agreed to submit the matters of dispute to an international court and to accept any decision that might result from that. A war did not necessarily have to be the only outcome, although it had to be taken into consideration judging by the tone of the ultimatum.

Giesl says: "The Serbian note was indeed a masterly piece and produced in such a way to blind a superficial reader and to create the impression of conciliatoriness. In fact, the Serbian government did not agree without reservation to any of our demands and some replies reflect a barely concealed mockery."³⁷⁹ "The Serbian reply", Baron Musulin, who composed the Austrian ultimatum, also wrote, "seems like the shiniest example of diplomatic skill that I know of." Musulin considered the Austrian position after that diplomatically lost and he was not in favour of proceeding with the extreme measures after such reply. Although the note did not satisfy the Austrian demands and constituted, in Vienna's view, a skilful evasion rather than caving in, he found nevertheless that it was of such nature as to make its rejection harmful to Austria rather

376 Ibid., p. 355.

377 *Zwei Jahrzehnte*, p. 268; *Berliner Monatshefte*, IX, 1931, pp. 866-7; XI, 1933, pp. 466-7.

378 He claimed to have headed to the German Legation and in some sort of confusion arrived in the Austrian one. See *Politika*, no. 8320, 1931.

379 *Zwei Jahrzehnte*, p. 270. Stojan Protić, Minister for Interior Affairs, drafted the Serbian reply and the other members of Cabinet stated their remarks.

than Serbia. Still, he was also convinced that the Serbian reply was essentially a refusal.³⁸⁰

Certainly because he did not expect a favourable reply and because he heard the news, and because he appreciated the tone and the content of the ultimatum, Giesl had already changed his clothes and ordered a car to take him to the train station, even before he received Pašić and the Serbian reply.³⁸¹ His duty was to establish if the Serbian government accepted the ultimatum in its entirety or not; he was not supposed to involve himself in explaining or analyzing the Serbian reply, if it was not unconditional. Therefore, as soon as he saw that the Serbian reply had some reservations, he regarded it as being negative and left Belgrade on the same evening, at 6:30 pm.

The German Minister in Belgrade, Baron Griesinger, has claimed that the diplomats gathered in his Legation on the evening of 25 July and found that Giesl's departure was premature, and that they all believed that Serbia's complacency was "very considerable". The Austrian behavior was impetuous. "Nothing was heard from Vienna at this time about the satisfaction they wanted to be given. And then all of the sudden came the ultimatum, which formulated terms with such preciseness and sharpness, that not even the most naïve person could believe in their smooth acceptance without resistance."³⁸²

Just before midnight, at 11:40 pm, on 23 July, Jovanović's telegram arrived from Vienna, reporting that the Austrian army was sent to the south, "because it was believed that our dispute would be settled only by war". On the same day, at 11:46 am, the Serbian Consul in Pest, J. Milanković, reported that eight monitors moved down the Danube that morning and that reserve officers were called to the colours. Border guards stationed across from Zemun and Zvornik reported the arrival of troops and ammunition; a report on Zemun arrived on 24 and a report on Zvornik on 25 July. The latter was especially important. The commander of Loznica reported that 16 mountain cannons arrived in Zvornik and that a military camp stretched right to the Drina river. The authorities from Smederevo also reported suspicious movements of Austrian ships in the vicinity of this town.³⁸³ On the basis of this news, the Serbian Army Ministry issued orders to all border commanders to be alert and summoned all the officers to their headquarters, while division commanders were ordered to check

380 Musulin, *Das Haus am Ballplatz*, pp. 240-1.

381 His traveling clothes, an Italian newspaper observed, seems to have indicated that the ultimatum was unacceptable. See *Il Regime Fascista*, 19 July 1934.

382 *Berliner Monatshefte*, VIII, 1930, pp. 839-40. Cf. Kutschbach, *Der Brandherd Europas*, p. 177.

383 Some of this information was confirmed in a dispatch from the Russian Consul in Pest. See *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus*. Reihe 1, Bd. 5., p. 37.

the preparations for mobilization. Just in case, the government ordered at the same time the evacuation of more important offices, archives, the vault of the National Bank and the Finance Ministry. Despite all Serbian conciliatoriness, it was believed that Austria might initiate hostilities; her military measures were ominous. The mobilization order was thus prepared on 25 July, but it was not signed before Giesl broke off diplomatic relations, after 7 o'clock and it was announced around 10 pm.³⁸⁴ Austrian news about the Serbian mobilization prior to the delivery of the ultimatum stemmed either from being ill-informed, in the wake of Serbian precaution measures, or because they served the purpose of showing that the Serbs had realized their response was negative and the war thus inevitable.

If the Serbs carried out certain measures to be military prepared without declaring mobilization, the Austrians did the same – and not just on the Serbian border. Baron Giesl confirmed that the commander of Zemun Baumgartner had informed him that, fearing a Serbian attack, he had ordered his garrison to entrench on the Zemun side of the Danube before the response to the ultimatum had been given.³⁸⁵ Another reporter claimed that the Zemun garrison had already been in the state of preparedness.³⁸⁶

Russia, Britain, France, Italy and Romania advised Serbia to concede as much as possible. Italy recommended Serbia on 22 July to back down even at the cost of sacrifice; “one should remember the history of Piedmont after Orsini’s attentat”, San Giuliano said.³⁸⁷ It was all the more necessary to give in, it was heard from Italy, as “Russia will not, or better cannot” enter into war, if it broke out.³⁸⁸ Serbia acted on their advice, and all the four Great Powers were very satisfied with the Serbian response. “The Serbian reply has overcome all our expectations with its moderation”, Sazonov professed to the capitals of other Great Powers.³⁸⁹ “The whole Russia and the public opinion of many other countries consider Serbia’s reply satisfying; it is impossible to demand

384 Cf. the accounts of H. Wendel and Jovan Jovanović in *Politika*, no. 8530, 1932 and no. 8672, 1932. Austrian information that Serbia declared mobilization on 25 July, at 3 pm, was considered accurate in several quarters. Cf. M. P. Price, *The Diplomatic History of the War*, London 1915, p. 169.

385 *Neue Freie Presse*, no. 24378, 1932.

386 A. Persian, *Narodni Listy*, 3 August 1933.

387 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from Rome, 9 July 1914.

388 On 26 July, Sazonov sent word to Rome that this view was not accurate. See *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus*. Reihe 1, Bd. 5., p. 83. The Italian politician L. Bisolati rightly observed on 2 August: “The delivery of the note to Serbia in fact implied the declaration of war to Russia”. See *La politica estera dell’Italia del 1897 al 1920*, Milano 1923, p. 329.

389 *Krasnii arhiv*, IV, p. 16.

from an independent country to go any further in its concessions made at the request of another nation", Emperor Nicholas II himself wrote in an unsent letter to Emperor Wilhelm II.³⁹⁰ "The French [Foreign] Ministry finds that we could not go any further", Vesnić reported from Paris.

As soon as he had received the draft of a Serbian response, in the afternoon of 25 July, Grey invited the German Ambassador with a view to influencing Vienna through the German government. It seemed to Grey that the Serbian response could make a "favourable impression" in Vienna and he implored Germany to work in that sense,³⁹¹ especially to have the ultimatum accepted as a basis for further negotiations. Jagow replied that he would forward the suggestion to Vienna, but he did not agree with it as the conflict with Serbia became the matter of prestige for the Danubian Monarchy.

After Giesl had left Belgrade on 25 July with the staff of his Legation, the Foreign Ministry in Vienna issued on 26 July a passport for the Serbian Minister. The rupture of diplomatic relations was completed in form. Berchtold explained to the world public that the Serbian government had "refused" (*"hat abgelehnt"*) their demands and that Austria-Hungary was "compelled" "to force Serbia with the most drastic means to change fundamentally her hitherto hostile attitude". Austria decided to "face the Greater Serbian subversion with a sword". Reporting this to Berlin, Berchtold professed: "We hope confidently that our imminent showdown with Serbia will not give rise to further complications; if that is the case, however, we assert with gratitude that Germany will be aware of its duty as an ally in keeping with its tried fidelity and that it will assist us in the imposed struggle against other opponent."³⁹²

Having been informed of the Austrian intentions, the Italian government instructed on 25 July its Ambassador in Vienna to state that Italy, in case of war and even a temporary occupation of the Serbian territory, would request compensations. On the basis of their treaty, Italy requested Austria to come to an agreement with it before the eventual occupation of the Serbian soil.³⁹³ Both official and unofficial Italy were fully sympathetic with the Serbian side, seeing in the Austrian action a decisive and intransigent will to make war. The ultimatum seemed to Salandra and San Giuliano "exaggerated and fierce in both its essence and form and without precedent in diplomatic traditions".³⁹⁴

390 *Die Kriegsschuldfrage*, II, p. 509.

391 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, p. 178; *British Documents*, XI, p. 88.

392 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 735.

393 *Ibid.*, pp. 719-20, 846-7.

394 Salandra, *Souvenirs de 1914-1915*, p. 29.

Believing that the Austrian ultimatum was a "true provocation of war", Tommaso Tittoni suggested to his government to state immediately in both Vienna and Berlin that Italian cooperation could by no means be counted on after that.³⁹⁵ On 27 July, San Giuliano was adamant in a conversation with the German Ambassador that "the existence of Serbia is an unconditional request for Italy". "This barrier against Austria must not perish."³⁹⁶

The German Ambassador told Berchtold on 26 July about the conversation between his colleague in Rome and San Giuliano. The latter had been rather irritated and stressed that the Austrian step in Belgrade had been, in fact, an act of aggression and that Italy would not suffer the consequences. The Triple Alliance had been formed for defense and not for attack. Therefore, were Russia to enter into war, Italy could not and would not be willing to side with Austria. Moreover, Italy would request compensations from Austria based on their treaty, even if her conquest in Serbia was temporary. Fearing that Italy might abandon the Triple Alliance on account of its disagreement with Austria, Germany was in full agreement with the Italian view concerning compensations and made it clear to Vienna through Tschirschky that it was solidary with it.³⁹⁷ Emperor Wilhelm II himself sent a message to Vienna on 27 July to come to terms with Italy as soon as possible.³⁹⁸ In consultation with Mérey, the very bellicose Austrian Ambassador in Rome, Berchtold declined to make a commitment to Italy in that sense,³⁹⁹ although it must have been clear to him that this would much complicate the conflict between his country and Serbia and it could cause considerable difficulties during the war. This was all the more true as Italy sent him a written communication on that matter on 29 July.⁴⁰⁰ Instead of being a moderating factor in the Austrian capital and a serious warning to all the bellicose elements, the dispute with Italy was taken lightly. Austrian desire to settle scores with Serbia and Austrian confidence in her own and German determined diplomatic stance were such as to hinder the correct assessment of danger and of all the possibilities that would arise from the reopening of the Serbian. i.e. the Eastern question. The confident Austrian Ambassador in Rome wrote on 29 July: "People are here astonished and impressed by the fierce form and content of our note to the

395 Tittoni, *Il giudizio della storia sulla responsabilit  della Guerra*, pp. 98-9, 157.

396 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, p. 227. Cf. Salandra, *Souvenirs de 1914-1915*, pp. 34-5.

397 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, pp. 149, 186; Salandra, *Souvenirs de 1914-1915*, 29.

398 *Ibid.*, p. 230.

399 * st-Ing. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 737-8, 846-7.

400 *Ibid.*, p. 886.

Serbian government and our determination so far, *d'aller jusqu'au bout*, i.e. to provoke a war with Serbia and even take the risk of a European conflagration. Nothing impress more the Italians than the cold resolve and ruthless energy, which calmly and without hesitation go to its goal not fearing the danger. In addition, a small chill seems to have gripped the Italians – and perhaps the Romanians – while reading our note, since such a harsh treatment of an irredentist movement forces one to see a certain analogy – although in an entirely different context – and to study one's own conscience burdened with sins.”⁴⁰¹

9

Austria explained in a separate note why she was not satisfied with the Serbian response. Austria found that, above all, the Serbian government did not directly reply to her statements that there was a conspiratorial movement and that the government did nothing to prevent it, but rather turned the question around. It replied that all the Serbian governments from 1909 onwards had been neighbourly loyal and that neither them nor their functionaries had done nothing to change the status of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Austria did not accuse the Serbian government and its functionaries of acting officially, but rather of not suppressing the movement directed against the integrity of the Danubian Monarchy. The obligation of the Serbian government “concerned changing the entire course of its policy and establishing friendly neighbourly relations with the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and not just official non-interference with the status of Bosnia within the Monarchy”. Furthermore, Austria rejected the claim of the Serbian government that the writing of the press and the activities of societies had a purely private character. The press and the societies were subjected to state control in all modern countries. The Serbian government was guilty because it “failed completely” to oversee its press and societies, although it knew of their activities against Austria. As for the statement of the Serbian government that it did not know that Serbian subjects took part in the preparation of the Sarajevo attentat and that it waited for information from the Austrian government, Vienna found it inaccurate. The Serbian government knew of suspicions concerning some people and it was its legal duty to initiate an investigation spontaneously. However, it did nothing. The Austrian demand that an official statement include the following sentence: “The Royal Serbian Government condemns the propaganda directed against Austria-Hungary”, the Serbian government changed to: “The Royal Serbian Government condemns any propaganda that could be directed [against Austria-Hungary]”. This

⁴⁰¹ Ibid., pp. 887-8.

change showed the tendency of the Serbian government to present the matter as if that propaganda did not exist or was not known to the government. "That formula is insincere and with the ulterior motive, because the Serbian government thus reserves for itself an excuse to be used later to the effect that it has not denounced propaganda with that statement and acknowledged it as hostile to the Monarchy, from which it could further infer that it is not bound to suppress propaganda of that kind." The Serbian government also changed the text of the Austrian demand that read: "The Royal Government regrets that Serbian officers and functionaries took part ... " as follows: "The Royal Government regrets that, according to the statement of the I. and R. Government, some Serbian ... " The Austrian government regarded this change as being made with the same tendency as the above mentioned one. The Serbian government bound itself that it would propose at the first regular assembly of the parliament an amendment to the press law in the sense of the Austrian demands and an alteration of Article 22 of the constitution. Austria was not satisfied with these promises and requested an absolutely positive response. The change in law could turn out differently from what she wanted. Besides, there was no time framework in the response for the law amendments concerned. If the parliament refused them, then all would remain the same. The Serbian government replied it would dissolve *Narodna odbrana* and any other society that acted against Austria-Hungary, although it had no evidence that *Narodna odbrana* and other similar societies committed any crime. The Austrian response denied this Serbian reservation, since the propaganda of that society "pervades the entire public life in Serbia". Moreover, Austria mentioned that the Serbian government made no promise to confiscate propaganda means of that society and to prevent the dissolved societies from being re-established, and that there was thus no guarantee that the actions of those societies would be ended. The Austrian government also found fault with the Serbian response insofar as Serbia asked for evidence of propaganda aimed at Austria in the public instruction of the Kingdom, when it was known that Serbian textbooks contained "the material that could be reproached on that account" and when a large number of teachers belonged to *Narodna odbrana* and the affiliated associations. Austria demanded from Serbia to fire "all officers and functionaries" whose names the former country would state and who were "guilty of propaganda" against her. The Serbian government replied that it would remove all those "who have been proven guilty of acts committed against the territorial integrity of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in the course of a judicial process". Austria was not satisfied with that and found that her demand was rejected with this Serbian alteration, because propaganda against Austria was not in and of itself a matter that would be punishable at a court in Serbia.

Vienna commented the Serbian response to the fifth point of the ultimatum as follows: "Neither general nor criminal procedural law has nothing to do with this question; this is the matter of a purely state-police character, which needs to be settled by a special agreement. Serbia's reservation is therefore not understandable and it would, on account of its indeterminate form, serve the purpose of leading to insurmountable difficulties in reaching an agreement." The Austrian reply explained the sixth point as follows: "It has not come into our mind to have the I. and R. functionaries participate in the Serbian judicial proceeding, but rather to have them participate in a police pre-investigation, which should collect and provide the material for investigation. If the Serbian government misunderstands us here, it does it on purpose, because it must be familiar with the difference between *enquête judiciaire* and simple *recherches*. As the Serbian government seeks to eschew any control of the procedure to be conducted and which would, if properly conducted, yield very undesirable results for it and as it could not plausibly refuse the participation of our functionaries in the police proceedings (analogies for such police mediation are rife), it took a view that should give the air of justification to its refusal and stamp our demand as being impossible of fulfilment." As for the seventh point of the Serbian response, the Austrians noted that Ciganović had taken a leave of absence in Ribare three days after his role in the events had been revealed "at the request of the Belgrade police prefecture". The police prefect himself stated, however, in an earlier conversation that there was no person named Milan Ciganović in Belgrade. As for the ninth point that concerned certain statements of Serbian functionaries in Serbia and abroad and for which Austria demanded explanations, the Austrian government replied that the Serbian government must have been familiar with those statements and if it asked for additional information from the Vienna government, it proved that "it does not think seriously of fulfilling that request".⁴⁰²

On closer examination of the reasons advanced by the Austrian government, as well as those contained in the ultimatum and the response, it is clear what were the main Austrian tendencies and why the Serbian response could not satisfy them. Austria did not accuse directly the Serbian government of spreading an anti-Austrian movement in Serbia, but rather blamed it indirectly for tolerating that movement, although it bound itself to conduct its policy in a friendly spirit. As has been said, this accusation would have been justified, to a large extent, had Austria's policy towards Serbia been that of a friendly neighbour. From the multitude of cases discussed here, which were known to the whole of Europe, it is clear what happened. In most cases, it was Austria

402 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 814-22.

who initiated poor relations with Serbia. The Serbs sought in vain for an agreement with the Vienna government in the most important questions and before major decisions had been made. On the other hand, were there not individuals, the whole groups and parties in Austria that overtly worked against Serbia? They did it not just in word, but also in deed, as in the case of Albania. Did not the Chief of the Austrian General Staff almost publically speak against the independence of Serbia? And was he the only one? In this fateful moment, Austria justified her decision against Serbia with grievances that applied in the same measure to herself. Besides, if Serbia committed herself to changing her policy in 1909, she did not do that for all eternity. Her commitment could not have remained a one-sided matter. It depended on Austria as much as it depended on Serbia to enable the latter country to keep her commitment.

The essential difference between the Serbian and the Austrian view was that Austria demanded sanctions because of Greater Serbian propaganda as such, whereas the Serbian government was willing to punish only crimes that resulted from that propaganda. The propaganda itself as an ideological movement could not be the grounds for punishment. The government could not do such a thing, because the idea of national unification was generally accepted. How would have Italy accepted such a demand with regard to its own subjects? Could it be possible to request from Germany today to persecute anyone who sympathizes with the national-socialist movement and takes part in it or just those individuals who are actually guilty of causing disorder in Austria?*

Austria demanded in advance the consent to fire Serbian officers and functionaries whom she might earmark for dismissing from service, whereas the Serbian government agreed to fire and punish just those individuals whose guilt had been established – this was the only legally justified course. It could not and must not have been done otherwise, or else the fate of Serbian officers and functionaries would have depended on the Austrian, and not their own, government. And the Austrian government sought to suppress the Serb national idea as such and to subject Serbian policy to its control. As a representative of the Serb national policy and a considerable attraction to her Yugoslav subjects, Serbia was a danger to Austria, and the latter country wanted to break her as soon as possible or make her completely subservient to Vienna's will. And therefore, Austria was intent on taking the fate of Serbian officers and functionaries in her own hands and making it subject to her own will.

The Serbian government bound itself to propose an amendment to the law on press during the next parliamentary session and to revise Article 22 of the

* This is Ćorović's reference to Nazi Germany's campaign of subversion against the independence of Austria, which included terrorist outrages.

constitution as soon as the opportunity presented itself. A government in a parliamentary state could have hardly done otherwise without violating the laws of the land. That what Austria demanded could only be carried out if the government, the majority of which was not certain just before the elections, assumed a dictatorial attitude and create perhaps a large-scale crisis.

The Austrian response sought to assuage the initially general bad impression made by the fifth and the sixth point of the ultimatum. Austria's demands were not only taken "amiss" in Serbia, but also in the whole of Europe among diplomats and statesmen. Even today, there are people loyal to Austria who write that those demands infringed on "the sovereignty of the Sava Kingdom, to a certain extent."⁴⁰³ If there was some misunderstanding, the blame lay on the Austrian side, because the Austrian demands were not formulated more clearly. Besides, the demands were not any easier after additional explanations. In the ultimatum, Austria requested the cooperation of her functionaries in Serbia without even previously trying to ask the Serbian authorities to make the necessary enquiries based on the information provided. Why did Austria run away from – if those demands were not unusual in practice – better explaining her demand to either the Serbian government or other Powers, especially when she saw that her demands were condemned or interpreted unfavourably in so many capitals?

Why did Austria, if she was convinced of her right, run away from The Hague Court, which was invoked by Serbia in her note? Vienna replied that it was not fitting for Austria, as a Great Power, to discuss her dispute with a small neighbour before The Hague Court. It was her prestige that was at stake. Or even better, her intention to be the judge of it herself. That was not a purely legal dispute, Vienna said, but rather a political one, and The Hague Court would not be able to manage all the problems concerned. Such a viewpoint made it clear that legal scruples were not relevant to the decisions made and it was no wonder then that this was appreciated and that the general attitude towards Austria's stance was reserved. As Bismarck once famously said, might took precedence over right in this case.

Austria-Hungary did not agree – and Germany fully supported it in that – to submit its dispute concerning the responsibility for the attentat to the judgment of Europe.⁴⁰⁴ Austria-Hungary did not want to allow to have the matters that concerned it discussed perhaps in a manner different from that which it preferred. With the balance of power in Europe as it was then, Austria-Hungary also feared that the Entente Powers might support Serbia and save

⁴⁰³ E. Glaise-Horstenau, *Schönere Zukunft*, VI, 1931, p. 1043.

⁴⁰⁴ Cf. F. Pourtalès, *Mes dernières négociations à Saint-Petersbourg*, Paris 1929, pp. 21, 25.

her from the blow it intended to deal to that country. Vienna would not be content with any milder punishment, although it was clear that the other Great Powers, including Russia, would be prone, for the sake of maintaining peace, to impose certain obligations on Serbia in respect to Austria-Hungary and to agree to Serbia's assuming some responsibility for not having been more energetic in dealing with activist elements. After having suffered a much greater harm with the assassination of King Alexander on 9 October 1934, Yugoslavia still decided as soon as she had found out the results of investigation to declare publically her accusations against the Hungarian authorities before the League of Nations and to discuss that matter and establish the responsibility before the eyes of the whole world. The Yugoslav government knew well that Hungary had powerful friends and that they would certainly try to assist Budapest and perhaps lead the discussion astray from the main questions, and it still preferred a public enquiry into responsibility to a one-sided extortion. Austria's moral stance would have been stronger had she attempted this method of work and her responsibility not just for her own, but also for the peace of Europe would have been off the table.

In his explanation, Dr. Gooss who mostly accepts the Austrian view has pointed out that the Serbian response did not provide "full satisfaction" to Austria, because it did not adhere strictly to Austrian stylization. However, the issue was not whether the Serbian government gave full satisfaction, but rather whether it basically accepted the Austrian demands and showed goodwill to fulfil them. That it could not accept them in its entirety was clear to the whole world; people were surprised, including the most experienced diplomats, that much was accepted. Serbia indeed accepted all that could be accepted and not without humiliation to herself in certain points. As for the main points of the ultimatum, the fifth and the sixth one, Dr. Gooss has also admitted that Austria failed to say "in what manner and how long the requested Austro-Hungarian office would be entitled to take part [in the investigation] on Serbian soil ... With the unconditional acceptance of the Austro-Hungarian demand, it would have been impossible to avoid the abdication of the Serbian government's sovereign rights." As for the demands contained in the sixth point, Gooss has endeavoured to prove that Austria was justified, given the attitude of the Serbian government, although those "insulted the Serbian sovereignty" as well. Gooss's claim that on account of the attentat the Serbian government had to guarantee *ex contractu* and *ex delicto* and that all the other countries recognized the justification of Austrian demands for full satisfaction and sufficient guarantees for the future is not entirely accurate.⁴⁰⁵ The Serbian government

405 Gooss, *Die Vorgeschichte des Weltkrieges*, pp. 276-91, 301.

itself admitted that it needed to provide certain guarantees for the future and the necessary satisfaction; but apart from Germany and Austria, all the other chancelleries stressed the following view: a government and the entire people could not be responsible for the act of an individual and the Austrian demands went too far in terms of both the form and the essence.

The War

1

When the Serbian response to the Austrian ultimatum was published, almost the entire objective world had the impression that it was completely satisfying and that Serbia gave in to the maximum extent. The German Admiral Tirpitz found that Serbia showed “an unexpected spirit of conciliation”;⁴⁰⁶ Prince Bülow wrote that the German government had to state publically after the Serbian response: “We have established with pleasure that the Serbian government, thanks to the wise advice of all the Great Powers, accepted nearly all the Austrian proposals.” The contested points were supposed to be submitted to the arbitral tribunal at The Hague.⁴⁰⁷ An Austrian diplomat even shouted in Berlin: “What exactly one needs to say to those there to refuse an ultimatum? Are we going to be forced to send them a note that starts with the words, “You, Serbian swines”?”⁴⁰⁸ The Bavarian representative in Berlin Lechenferd wrote to his government on 29 July “that it is difficult to dispute that Serbia was willing to satisfy the wishes of Austria-Hungary in almost all points.”⁴⁰⁹

The impression was the same in other diplomatic circles as well. The Romanian King found that Serbia “cave in almost completely” and that peaceful solution of the dispute was possible.⁴¹⁰ On 26 July, Berthelot told the Austrian Ambassador in Paris that he was surprised that “that reply, which amounts to a complete capitulation, has not been accepted.”⁴¹¹ He expressed hope that such complacency on the part of Serbia would create the basis for further negotiations. The French government accepted, however, the Russian view that the Serbo-Austrian dispute with the invocation of the 1909 declaration, which had been notified to the Powers, was a European question and that it was thus a matter for the Powers to look into the Austrian accusation. The German Ambassador was adamant in his opposition to such an appreciation, claiming that such thought was not capable of fulfilment.⁴¹² The Italian

406 *Mémoires du grand-amiral von Tirpitz*, p. 261.

407 *Denkwürdigkeiten*, III, p. 164.

408 *Journal des débats*, no. 207, 1934.

409 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 4., 1927, p. 134.

410 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 779.

411 *Ibid.*, p. 750.

412 *Ibid.*, p. 751.

government also accepted the Russian view. Besides, the Austrian Ambassador in Rome was asked what the point was of informing the Powers of the Austrian note, if the dispute with Serbia was of no concern to Europe.⁴¹³

The Russian Ambassador suggested to Berlin on 25 July, when the extension of the deadline had become pointless, not to be hasty about the declaration of war in order to gain time for the Powers to avoid conflict. The Austrian note was designed, he stressed, “to insult Serbia and provoke her to war”. Jagow replied that this would be an “execution” in a local affair rather than a war. The Russian Charge d’Affairs expressed his regret “that the German government do not weigh its responsibilities in case the hostilities break out, which could spread to the rest of Europe”. Jagow responded with a seeming disinterest that he refused to believe in such consequences.⁴¹⁴

Before the Serbian reply had become known, Szőgyény reported from Berlin on 25 July that local circles “generally assume it as certain that an eventual negative response by Serbia will be followed immediately by our declaration of war, together with military operations. Any procrastination with the start of military operations is seen here as a major danger of the involvement of other Powers. They advise us in the strongest terms to start at once and to present the world with a *fait accompli*.” Szőgyény added on his behalf that he “agrees completely with such view of the Foreign Ministry”.⁴¹⁵ After having received Szőgyény’s dispatch, Berchtold had a conversation with Baron Hötzendorf on 26 July, in the presence of the German Ambassador. Berchtold and Tschirschky favoured a war as soon as possible, but Hötzendorf argued that military operations could not be started with insufficient forces and that, in his calculation, enough troops would not be assembled before 12 August to deal a strong and decisive blow to Serbia.⁴¹⁶

At the same time, Emperor Wilhelm II ordered the Ambassador in Constantinople to draw Turkey into the Triple Alliance and he sent word himself to the Greek King that his place was on the side of the Triple Alliance. He agreed to attempt to win over Bulgaria.⁴¹⁷ Turkey and Bulgaria could then invite Romania to join them and their armies could be at the disposal of the Triple Alliance, i.e. Austria.⁴¹⁸ The Emperor obviously counted on the possibility and probability of an armed conflict and the necessity to determine the attitude of certain powers. If this is not what he believed, which is highly

⁴¹³ Ibid., p. 757.

⁴¹⁴ *Documents diplomatiques*, p. 60.

⁴¹⁵ *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 704.

⁴¹⁶ *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegeausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, p. 195-6.

⁴¹⁷ *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 705.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid., p. 712.

unlikely, then it is obvious that the German requests to have a localized war were, just like the Austrian ones, entirely insincere. There is other evidence for this claim. On 24 July, the German representative addressed the Greek Foreign Ministry with the message that war between Austria and Serbia was possible and that Bulgaria would try to benefit from that war. It was thus necessary for Greece to detach herself from Serbia "in time" so that the Peace of Bucharest could be overthrown more easily. Jagow even threatened: if Greece opposed Bulgaria, then Turkey could easily turn against Greece.⁴¹⁹ The Berlin government assisted the aspirations of other states against Serbia and did not see a violation of the principle of a localized war in an eventual participation of Bulgaria. In this, it followed Vienna's policy unreservedly with an unmitigated enthusiasm.

As soon as the special issues of newspapers had been published with the news that Baron Giesl had left Belgrade, the boisterous demonstrations took place in the evening of 25 July in Berlin and Munich for the glory of Austria. Austria was expected to go to war. The thrilled masses welcomed her energetic gesture as a precursor of a more energetic action that could and would spring themselves into action. Demonstrations against Russia also took place in Berlin.⁴²⁰

The confidence of Viennese diplomacy was further bolstered by various favourable news that came from Count Szőgyény. For example, he reported on 26 July that the Foreign Ministry in Berlin was convinced that Romania would fulfil her obligations as an ally, or that the Montenegrin King Nicholas was in favour of neutrality.⁴²¹ However, the fact that such news arrived, without sufficient critical examination, and that Vienna and Berlin believed in them shows the extent to which the ruling circles in these two capitals and their diplomatic representatives were not in touch with the people in the countries whose fate they decided and how they made combinations with overconfidence and the lack of realistic assumptions. They rushed into war danger without feeling it, partly because they believed in the power of their army and did not want to see it and partly because they were not able to assess all the consequences.

Berchtold insisted on war with the increasing persistence. On 26 July, he ordered Consul Kral in Durres to spread the news among the Albanians that Austria had declared war on Serbia, that the Serbian troops had left Kosovo

419 *Die Kriegsschuldfrage*, V, 1927, pp. 250-1; *Documents diplomatiques 1913-1917: Traité d'alliance gréco-serbe. Invasion germano-bulgare en Macédoine*, Athènes 1917, pp. 37-9.

420 *Russko-germanskie otnoshenija*, p. 169.

421 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 738.

and that the Austrian army had crossed the Serbian border.⁴²² Prior to the declaration of war, this was no doubt a hostile action that was designed to stir the movement of the Albanians against Serbia. This was certainly not an act of self-defense and could not be construed as such; with it, Austria was the first to spread the war theatre and attempt to involve into fighting the population of a third country. Her responsibility for the outbreak of the World War is highlighted by this act.

The Russians did not make it a secret that they could not remain indifferent to the fate of Serbia. St. Petersburg made it clear that its assistance could be an active one. On 26 July, the War Minister, General Sukhomlinov, told the German Military Attaché: "If Austria crossed the Serbian border, the military districts across from Austria, Kiev, Odessa, Moscow and Kazan, would be mobilized."⁴²³ Sazonov also told the Italian Ambassador before 27 July that Russia would not allow Austria at the cost of war to overrun Serbia. The Serbian Minister in Rome heard so on 27 July.

The response of the Russian Emperor to the Serbian Regent given on 27 July also made it clear that Russia would not abandon Serbia. It read: "Having addressed me at the extraordinary difficult moment, Your Royal Highness was not mistaken about my feelings for Him, as well as My abiding affection for the Serbian People. The present situation draws My most serious attention and My Government spares no effort to settle the difficulties that have emerged. I have not the slightest doubt that Your Highness and the Royal Government will assist this work by doing all that is possible to find a solution that would remove the horrors of a new war and maintain the dignity of Serbia. As long as there is the slightest hope to avoid bloodshed, all My efforts will strive to that goal. If we fail, despite our most sincere wish, Your Majesty can rest assured that even in that case Russia will not abandon Serbia."⁴²⁴

Informed of the mood in Russia and the rest of Europe, Berchtold was in a hurry to declare war as soon as possible. His head of cabinet explained on 26 July to the Imperial Office that Berchtold was in a haste with declaration

422 Ibid., p. 745.

423 Ibid., p. 760.

424 An ill-informed and very one-sided French author has found that the Russian government and Emperor Nicholas II were "extremely bellicose" during this crisis. This telegram and the whole stance of Russia are sufficient evidence to the contrary. See René Gerin, *Comment fut provoquée la guerre de 1914*, Paris 1933, p. 151. H. Oncken's claim that Emperor Nicholas II requested from Crown Prince Alexander, immediately after the attentat, not to dissolve *Narodna odbrana* is also inaccurate. See *Das deutsche Reich und die Vorgeschichte des Weltkrieges*, p. 802.

“to prevent a possible mediation of third powers or some other difficulties”.⁴²⁵ This was also made clear to the German Ambassador.⁴²⁶ Berchtold found the Serbian note insincere and designed to “create a false impression that the Serbian government would be prepared to fulfil, to a large extent, the demands we made”. It showed “that the Serbian government does not intend seriously to put an end to a punishable tolerance they have showed so far to conspiratorial attempts against the Monarchy”. The Serbian note contained in principle and in details so many reservations and limitations “that it renders insignificant even those concessions actually made”. Serbia “completely refused” the participation of Austro-Hungarian functionaries in the investigation of the assassins; the promises of suppression of anti-Austrian publications were “similar to rejection”; the demand to prevent a reappearance of the old anti-Austrian societies in new forms “was not taken into consideration at all”. That the Serbian government themselves found their reply “unacceptable” to Austria-Hungary, Berchtold ended his message to the Powers on 27 July, was clear from the proposal that disputes be submitted to The Hague Court and that general mobilization had been ordered three hours before the reply was given.⁴²⁷

But his messages designed to create a bad impression were of no avail. Grey was “angry, but specific” when he said on 27 July, after having read the Serbian response: “If Austria-Hungary is not satisfied with this unheard of humiliation of Serbia, it proves then that this has been an excuse and that it only seeks to destroy Serbia and Russian influence.” In his words, “Serbia’s response has overcome in terms of conciliation what we could dare to hope for”.⁴²⁸ The occupation of Belgrade would be “a very ill-thought step and cause the greatest European conflagration”. To save peace, he proposed again for Austria to be satisfied with the response, i.e. to take it as a basis for negotiations, or to summon a conference comprised of the four Great Powers – Britain, Germany, France and Italy. Germany requested from him, Grey told the German Ambassador, to exert a calming influence in St. Petersburg; now was the time for Germany to act in Vienna.⁴²⁹ Serbia gave in, Russia exerted a moderating influence in Belgrade; it was only Vienna that was intransigent. If there was to be a genuine appeasement, then not only St. Petersburg, but also Vienna had to be influenced. He also told the Austrian Minister, according to Count Mensdorff’s account, that he was “disappointed because we treat the Serbian reply as if

425 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 768-9.

426 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegeausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, p. 224.

427 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 774.

428 *Mémoires de Edward Grey*, p. 288.

429 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 793-4; 827-8; *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegeausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, pp. 224-5; *British Documents*, XI, p. 130.

it is a complete rejection; however, it is the greatest humiliation to which an independent country has ever been subjected and it actually accepts all the points." It was not possible "to ask from Russia to influence Serbia to go any further than she has done in her reply". St. Petersburg believed that the conciliatory Serbian response would assuage the tension, but it grew even stronger now, after the response, on account of the Austrian attitude. A conference he suggested could take place only under the condition that Austria-Hungary and Russia desist from any military operation during that time. When Grey spoke of restraint in dealing with Serbia, Count Mensdorff replied "that he feared it was perhaps too late for that". Grey observed that Austria-Hungary took a great risk if in its desire to make war on Serbia at any cost, it believed Russia would remain peaceful. He even warned Mensdorff that the British government itself would not demobilize its fleet, which was concentrated for maneuvers, independently of these events.

Count Mensdorff formed the wrong impression that Grey's proposal for a conference was just intended to prevent a conflict among the Great Powers and to localize a conflict, and he reported to his government accordingly.⁴³⁰ However, that cannot be concluded from what Grey said, as recorded by Mensdorff. On the contrary, Grey was convinced that a conflict was entirely gratuitous after the conciliatory Serbian response and that it could be hardly localized if it broke out. He was well aware of the mood in St. Petersburg and that it would be impossible for the Russian government to remain passive. And Russia's entry into war would immediately involve France on her side and Germany on the Austrian side. In his view, a conference would liquidate the conflict peacefully and find a way out of the increasingly tense situation. Grey talked to the German Ambassador even more openly. If Austria attacked Serbia after that sort of response, she would then demonstrate her intention to destroy that country. This would be a European matter and could lead to the involvement of other Powers.⁴³¹ Nicolson shared Grey's opinion and he condemned the Austrian attitude in the wake of the Serbian response.⁴³² In view of the British Ambassador in Vienna, M. Bunsen, it was clear that Austria was bent on a war and that the whole affair, together with the ultimatum, was designed to make it inevitable. Austria would remain unbending and inaccessible to mediation until Serbia had been punished.⁴³³

430 Ibid., pp. 794-5.

431 *Documents diplomatiques*, p. 81.

432 Nicolson, *Die Verschwörung der Diplomaten*, p. 426.

433 *British Documents*, XI, p. 123.

The Austrian Ambassador in Paris was met with a similar reply. Bienvenu-Martin was stunned and said "that no one understands" Austria-Hungary's breaking off diplomatic relations after such little differences between the Serbian reply and the Austrian demands. "Austria-Hungary would burden itself with the terrible responsibility, if it caused a world war because of these remaining small differences, given that Serbia has backed down so much." Bienvenu-Martin thought that a new Austrian ultimatum was to follow, probably somewhat more circumspect, which, in his opinion, Serbia would accept. "Serbia's deference which went far and which was considered impossible here made a strong impression. In view of our stance", Count Szögyény reported to Vienna, "the conviction is spread that we want a war at any price."⁴³⁴ Bienvenu-Martin suggested to the German Ambassador, at the same time, to have the proposal for a mediation on the part of the four Great Powers accepted, while Berthelot openly warned him of the responsibility to which Germany exposed itself, if it continued to let Austria plunge into war, despite the clearly recognizable consequences.⁴³⁵

The attitude of German diplomacy after the Serbian response to the Austrian ultimatum is of special interest. When the French Ambassador asked Jagow on 27 July if he had read that response and if Germany could still follow Austria "with its eyes blindfolded", Jagow replied that he "did not have time still" to read it.⁴³⁶ In fact, he received that response rather late. On the same day, he asked the Serbian Charge d'Affairs to give him a copy, since he had not still received one from Vienna.⁴³⁷ He and his entourage were only influenced by serious messages from London, where the Serbian response made the best impression, and Emperor Wilhelm II's comments on the Serbian response made on 28 July.

After having read that response, the Emperor wrote down on it the following: "Brilliant success for a 48 hours deadline. It is more than it could be expected! A great moral success for Vienna: but with this, any reason for war is taken away and Giesl could have easily stayed in Belgrade. I would never order mobilization after that."⁴³⁸ On 28 July, at 2:10 pm, Emperor Wilhelm II sent a letter to the State Secretary, in which he said that, in his view, the wishes of the Danubian Monarchy had mostly been fulfilled (*im Grossen und Ganzen*). "A few reservations Serbia made with regard to certain points can be settled in

434 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 797.

435 Poincaré, *Au service de la France*, IV, pp. 329-32.

436 *Documents diplomatiques*, p. 86.

437 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from Berlin, 14 July 1914, conf. no. 2821.

438 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, p. 237.

the course of negotiations. But here lay a capitulation of the most humiliating kind announced *urbi et orbi* and, because of that, any reason for war is taken away." But with the Serbs being "Orientals" and unreliable, it was necessary to use against them *douce violence* in order to turn words into deeds. Austria could carry this out by taking Belgrade from Serbia as a pledge and keeping it as long as Serbia had not fulfilled the Austrian demands. He was personally willing to mediate on that basis to save peace, at least formally.⁴³⁹ It was only then that Jagow found on 29 July that the Serbian note presented a possible basis for negotiations,⁴⁴⁰ but by that time it was too late to try and stop the Austrian action. The war had already been declared, with the moral support of Germany, on account of a reply which that country itself considered sufficient satisfaction.

To be true, Jagow and German diplomacy then reaffirmed the Austrian viewpoint not so much because it was any more convincing, but rather because Austrian arguments had been upheld to the point of making it difficult to discard them. When the Russian Ambassador drew attention of Jagow to the reply of the Serbian government, the latter responded that it did not satisfy Austria in some important points. Austria did not believe in Serbia's good faith. He could not take it upon himself to advise Austria to give way in a vital question for her; it was for Austria to make such a decision.⁴⁴¹ He spoke along the similar lines to the French Ambassador. It was a matter for Austria, Berlin kept saying, to settle her conflict with Serbia. The Berlin government might not agree with every Vienna's step, but it could not leave in the lurch its ally who claimed to be threatened. Berlin deprived itself of critical assessment and allowed Vienna to take the lead completely. It assumed the role of a protector of Austria in relation to other powers and gave that country a free hand, approving in advance of anything she might do. The most striking testimony of how far this went was the fact that the German press did not publish initially the entire Serbian response as its content could have given a rise to criticism of the attitude taken by the German and Austrian government.

As for the German contention that Austria did not trust Serbia and thus wanted to ensure control over the execution of her demands, Cambon replied on 29 July and put forward another proposal. As an independent state, Serbia could not consent to the control of a single power, but an international commission would give a completely different character to the whole matter. An international commission of control, he said, had already been established in

439 Ibid., II, pp. 16-7.

440 *Documents diplomatiques*, p. 109.

441 *Russko-germanskie otnosheniya*, p. 199.

Greece and it would not be a novelty.⁴⁴² But this proposal also, just like all the previous ones that sought a peaceful solution, remained futile.

Informed of the anger in Russia and the mood in London, Paris and Rome, and in keeping with the advice coming from Berlin, Berchtold authorized Szógyény during the night of 27 July to state to Sazonov and the Italian Ambassador in St. Petersburg, but still with the emphasis and reservation "not to commit to any obligatory arrangement", that Austria-Hungary "does not intend to undertake any territorial conquest as long as a war between Austria-Hungary and Serbia remains localized". But this time too, this statement was insincere, as can be seen from the above mentioned reservation. The main thing for Vienna was to use that statement to keep Russia away from mediating in the conflict. After the destruction of Serbia, in which Vienna believed, this matter could be changed to suit Vienna's wishes. Before the victory of the Balkan allies against the Turks, all the Powers had been in agreement that the *status quo* would not be changed; after their victory, no one thought of that agreement. Vienna believed that such a development might take place after its victory over Serbia. It was in this frame of mind that the Austrian Ambassador in Rome could tell his Bulgarian colleague on 31 July that the statement made in St. Petersburg was not in force,⁴⁴³ not considering it an important secret that needed to be concealed from friends.

The Berlin government, which insisted in Vienna that Austria should give the above statement in the belief this would have its effect on Russia and Italy, informed the Paris and London government in the morning of 27 July that Vienna had done so. "The only aspiration of Austria-Hungary is to ensure its peace. In this moment, the decision of whether a European war will break out rests with Russia alone." Making this point to the Paris and London government, German diplomats implied that France had no reason to identify itself fully with Russia and that influencing Russia to desist from direct mediation might be the only salvation for the peace of Europe.⁴⁴⁴ They wanted to influence London to keep its neutrality and to blame all on Russia. However, Berlin did not know that Austria had not made an absolutely clear statement as to her territorial disinterest in Serbia and did not intend to make it.

On the same day, Jagow spoke of the possibility of serious complications in case of Russian mobilization in his conversation with Jules Cambon. When Cambon asked him if Germany had the obligation to mobilize in case

442 *Documents diplomatiques*, pp. 109-10; *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus*. Reihe 1, Bd. 5., p. 142.

443 *Die Kriegsschuldfrage*, VI, 1928, p. 251.

444 Poincaré, *Au service de la France*, IV, pp. 341-2; *Documents diplomatiques*, p. 79.

Russia mobilized on the Austrian border alone, Jagow replied in the negative and authorized the French Ambassador to relay this to his government. But he expressed his wish that friendly powers influence Russia, because if that country attacked Austria, Germany would then have to assist its ally.⁴⁴⁵ Prince Lichnowsky had made a similar statement in London the previous day, on 26 July.⁴⁴⁶

Serbian conciliatoriness was a surprise, especially in St. Petersburg, although it recommended it. Sazonov himself declared on 27 July to all the missions abroad that it surpassed all his expectations. "We cannot understand what else Austria might demand unless she seeks for an excuse to launch an expedition against Serbia."⁴⁴⁷ Sazonov told the Austrian Ambassador that it was even impossible to carry out what his country requested and the Serbian government promised. The first and the second point of the ultimatum could not be realized without the amendment of the Serbian laws on press and societies, and the parliament would be unwilling to agree to that; the execution of the fourth and fifth point could almost cause a revolution in Serbia. An agreement could be reached, however, on other points. Therefore, Sazonov urged on 26 July in the interest of peace that Austria reformulate, i.e. moderate her demands, in agreement with him, believing this was the only way to avert the conflict.⁴⁴⁸ "In that way, perhaps it will be possible to find a formula that is acceptable to Serbia and that will at the same time bring about the fulfilment of Austrian demands in principle." Otherwise, he told Count Pourtalès, Russia would have to spring into action; she did not act out of sympathy for the Serbs, but because she wanted to maintain the balance of power in the Balkans and to prevent a Serbian vassalage to Austria. In order to spare Austrian susceptibilities, Sazonov agreed, on Pourtalès's advice, not to submit the question to the Great Powers and to try instead a direct agreement between Vienna and St. Petersburg in this sense.⁴⁴⁹ Sazonov was willing to go as far as possible to satisfy the Austrian demands and to make, in his own words, "a golden bridge".

Due to mediation of the German Ambassador, another meeting between Sazonov and Szógyény was arranged for 26 July. In the course of discussion, which was much calmer than the previous one, the Austrian Ambassador in

445 *Documents diplomatiques*, p. 82; *Russko-germanskie otnoshenija*, p. 173; *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus*. Reihe 1, Bd. 5., p. 117.

446 *British Documents*, XI, pp. 103, 128.

447 *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus*. Reihe 2, Bd. 6.1., pp. 106-7.

448 *Russko-germanskie otnoshenija*, pp. 170-1, 175.

449 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegeausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, pp. 197-8; *British Documents*, XI, pp. 143-4; Pourtalès, *Mes dernières négociations à Saint-Petersbourg*, pp. 26-7, 30.

St. Petersburg showed himself intransigent. To Sazonov's proposal that Austria-Hungary accept the mediation of the Italian or British King in this conflict, he was evasive, but overall negative: "Things are set in motion and some of them cannot be recalled." Sazonov especially envisaged mediation in the matter of the fifth point: instead of Austrian functionaries, he suggested cooperation between all consuls or the representatives of the Great Powers in Belgrade. "In that way, we would avoid tête-à-tête conversations between us and Austria-Hungary despite Germany's proclivities", he told the Serbian Minister.⁴⁵⁰ Such a procedure could be maintained in the future and it would certainly ensure a peaceful development to Serbia. He also commented on the firing of officers and functionaries, finding it natural that Austria-Hungary should explain its requests.⁴⁵¹ For a while, he believed that with direct negotiations with the Vienna government, he would be able to affect the change in its decisions and he discussed this with foreign representatives. But he was constantly met with a rebuff. Austria agreed neither to extend the deadline for a reply, nor to assuage the most difficult points in the ultimatum, nor to mediation of the British or Italian King, nor to submit the dispute to The Hague Court, nor to have the four Great Powers mediating. The Vienna government resolutely refused on 28 July to authorize Count Szógyény to assume any obligations in his discussions with Sazonov about the Serbian note. It was claimed in Vienna that no one at home would understand the discussion about the response to the ultimatum that had already been declared unsatisfactory. Vienna did not desist from what it intended in a single point. It was bent on a war at any price, even at the cost of a major European conflict that seemed increasingly likely.

Believing that direct Austro-Russian negotiations could clear the ground, friendly Powers dropped the proposal for a four-Power mediation. Britain only requested that, during the course of these negotiations, Russia, Austria and Serbia restrain from any military action. But that British proposal could have had any chance of success just in case Germany had accepted and wholeheartedly promoted it in Vienna; without that, it would remain a mediation of the Triple Entente Powers aimed at the Triple Alliance, in which Italy demonstrated from the start that it was not at once with its Austrian ally. However, Germany would have none of it.

450 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from St. Petersburg, 1 July 1914.

451 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 805; *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus*. Reihe 1, Bd. 5., pp. 84-5.

2

Fearing new proposals and to stop any further mediation, Berchtold suggested to Emperor Franz Joseph on 27 July to declare war on Serbia. "In view of ... the note containing the response of the Serbian government, which has been composed very skilfully and which is worthless in essence and accommodating in form, I consider that it is not excluded that the Triple Entente Powers could make another attempt to find a peaceful solution to the conflict, if a declaration of war has not created a clear situation." In order to win the Emperor over more easily, Berchtold added the unverified and accidental news to the effect that Serbian detachments had opened fire on Austro-Hungarian troops near Kovin and that a major skirmish arose out of it. "Hostilities were thus started in reality and it seems all the more necessary to secure the freedom of action for the army in terms of international law that it could only have in a state of war." The Emperor then approved the declaration of war on 28 July.⁴⁵²

This declaration of war made with the intention to prevent mediation for peace and in the midst of the current mediations precipitated events and facilitated a general war. Vienna showed that it did not intend to listen to and accept anyone's mediation in a matter in which it wanted to be a prosecutor, a judge and an enforcement officer. Having been informed of Vienna's intention as early as 26 July and realizing the course in which events were shaping, Germany did nothing to make the Vienna government more patient. The war was declared and it opened, along with the Serbian-Austrian question, all other questions in modern Europe. Long-repressed differences, mistrust and hostilities broke out now, as if by magic, in the open and set the whole Europe on fire. As Pierre Renouvin has rightly asserted, Austria-Hungary only precipitated these events.⁴⁵³

The war was declared on Serbia via dispatch contrary to international practice. Austria first suggested to the German government that its Minister in Belgrade announce the declaration of war, but the latter refused that on 24 July with the motivation that such an act might give the conflict wider significance, contrary to the aspiration to keep the Austro-Serbian conflict a local affair.⁴⁵⁴ When the telegram with the declaration of war arrived in Niš, Pašić did not initially believe in its authenticity. Pašić turned to the German Minister for clarification, as the latter represented the interests of Austria, but he was not able to provide any information. He then talked to the British representative,

452 Ibid., p. 811.

453 Renouvin, *Les origines immédiates de la guerre*, pp. 109–11.

454 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, p. 143.

expressing his fear that this was something of a trap to lure Serbia into attacking Austria first.⁴⁵⁵ This seemed likely to him as Vesnić had reported from Paris on 27 July that, according to the statement of the Austrian Ambassador in Paris, the Danubian Monarchy “will take another step to force us into the absolute acceptance of its demands”;⁴⁵⁶ news also arrived from various sides on 27-28 July that the chances were that the extreme means would be preempted. Vesnić’s dispatches from Paris and those from Stanojević in Bucharest were particularly optimistic. Vesnić concluded on the basis of Schoen’s statements in Paris that Germany would be acting conciliatory and that not just Russia’s attitude, but also that of Italy would play a part. In Bucharest, the Romanian Foreign Minister assured the Serbian Minister “that Germany is looking for an honourable way out for Austria-Hungary from the current situation and thinks that way out could be found during the time Austria-Hungary is mobilizing”.⁴⁵⁷ In Athens, the Foreign Minister also told Balugdžić that Austria started to hesitate and that she “does not think she is allowed to declare war because of such a small reservation that Serbia formulated in her reply”. It was his impression “that the conflict would be internationalized”.⁴⁵⁸ “The suspicion in the authenticity of the dispatch that declared war”, Pašić sent a circular, “was amplified by the fact that the same dispatch was sent to the Supreme Command and it arrived by different route, i.e. Vienna-Zemun-Belgrade, whereas it was sent to the Foreign Ministry via Romania.” Cautious as ever, Pašić immediately informed Cetinje to be restrained and under no circumstances cause a conflict on account of the suspicion in the authenticity of that declaration.

Since it was established that the news of the Serbian army’s opening fire near Kovin was unreliable, that incident was dropped from the dispatch as part of the explanation for the declaration of war. But Austrian circles repeated it nevertheless throughout that day. Emperor Franz Joseph reiterated it on 28 July in his dispatch to King Carol and Berchtold did the same in a conversation with the British and Russian Ambassadors on the same day.⁴⁵⁹ Berchtold did not bother to check this information earlier, although he used it to influence the old Emperor and explain the necessity to proclaim a state of war. This is a further contribution to illuminate the moral side of his responsibility in the whole complex of questions, although the skirmish near Kovin, real or

455 *British Documents*, XI, p. 154.

456 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from Paris, conf. no. 218.

457 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from Bucharest, 14 July 1914.

458 Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from Athens, 14 July 1914.

459 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 830, 840, 850.

fabricated, was not essential to him, as he had already decided on war before and without that incident.

In his book *Neue Wege*, 121-5, A. Heyrowsky claims that this fighting took place indeed. He does so on the basis of a document from the Serbian Army Ministry, which mentioned that incident on 30 July based on a dispatch from Athens sent two days earlier. This dispatch did not arrive in Niš before 31 July and thus became known to the Serbian government – and that in an unclear and damaged form. This is the only information on that fighting. Even if we take that Heyrowsky's account is accurate (and the document he refers to is not entirely reliable), it could have hardly justified Berchtold's action. If it ever took place, that skirmish occurred without the knowledge of the Serbian government and the military headquarters, because they found out about it only four days later in a roundabout manner. And most importantly, it is not clear who and how started the fighting – not even the highly biased Heyrowsky clarifies this point; it is unknown whether the Serbian or the Austrian side was responsible. Rudolf Kissling has claimed on the basis of documents from the Austrian military archives that there was no fighting at all; rather, Austrian soldiers from the 28th Jäger Battalion forced a Serbian ship to land along their coast on 27 July, before the war was declared. It was this action, which Kissling found to have resulted from the overzealousness on the Austrian side, that gave rise to the news in Pest about the fighting and that was forwarded to Vienna and later proved false.⁴⁶⁰ Serbian reports reveal, however, that an Austrian monitor forced the Serbian ship *Vardar* to surrender in Orșova on 26 July and that the Serbian flag was taken off the ship. On the same day, the Austrians detained and searched the ship *Mačva* and then let it go, whereas several shots were fired at the ship *Car Nikola*.

3

Even without knowing that the Austrian statement to the effect that conquest in Serbia was not contemplated was not sincere, Sazonov was dissatisfied with it. This time, the Russian government would not allow an Austrian attack on Serbia at any cost, especially after so conciliatory Serbian reply. Secondly, it was clear to St. Petersburg and the rest of the world that Austria had the ulterior motives in declaring war against Serbia and that, notwithstanding the statements that the Vienna government was not interested in conquest, the dangers were not removed – and these were not less than the conquest itself. St. Petersburg was well aware that Serbia was not guilty for the attentat, which

⁴⁶⁰ *Berliner Monatshefte*, VIII, 1930, pp. 1139-41.

was only used as an excuse, and that the real reason behind Austria-Hungary's actions was to break Serbia down, humiliate her, detach from Russia and subdue to the will of Vienna. Sazonov was explicit on 29 July when he told the Austrian Ambassador that imposing the demands on Serbia meant, in fact, a vassalage.⁴⁶¹ And Russia did not intend to allow Serbia to become to Austria what Bukhara was to Russia.⁴⁶² Therefore, Sazonov stressed to Buchanan that no promise on the part of Austria concerning an attack on Serbia would satisfy Russia and that Russia would declare mobilization against Austria as soon as her army crossed the Serbian border.⁴⁶³ Buchanan informed his German colleague about that and warned him of the danger that threatened unless Austria had not backed down at the last moment. Pourtalès, Bethmann and almost the entire German diplomacy found that Russia's stance was provocative and that that country was the main culprit for a world war. Germany was not guilty for giving Austria a *card blanche* and promised her a full diplomatic and military support; it was Russia's fault that she, for many reasons, pledged her diplomatic and military assistance to Serbia against a Great Power. This occurred in the moment when German representatives abroad could and would not state whether Austria would respect the independence of Serbia,⁴⁶⁴ and when Austria purposely avoided to make a statement on the integrity of Serbia.⁴⁶⁵ This strange logic appears today as well in many papers of the German school of thought, although it was blatantly impossible and unjustified. It might be defensible only in the case if the Russian attitude came all of the sudden and it was not possible, for many reasons, to backpedal at the last moment. But since we have the reliable knowledge that both Vienna and Berlin counted on the Russian resistance and the possible military intervention, more-less with certainty, and since Russia made it clear from the outset of the crisis and stated publically that she could not remain indifferent to the fate of Serbia, then the fault lay with those who, despite the prospects and the dangers of a world war, uncompromisingly pushed in a single direction. This is all the more true given that Russia offered several possibilities to resolve the matter peacefully and not without heavy moral sacrifices for Serbia. For that reason, Sir Edward Goschen, British Ambassador in Berlin told Bethmann Hollweg on 28 July that Austria in

461 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 899.

462 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 2., *Vom Eintreffen der serbischen Antwortnote in Berlin bis zum Bekanntwerden der russischen allgemeinen Mobilmachung*, Berlin 1927, p. 128.

463 *Mémoires de sir G. Buchanan*, p. 46.

464 *British Documents*, XI, p. 154.

465 Documents demonstrate indeed that Austrian diplomacy was not straightforward in dealing with Germany as well. Cf. Lutz, *Die Vorgeschichte des Weltkrieges*, XI, pp. 142-3.

particular, with her intransigence, would not be spared from the responsibility for war, if it broke out. Grey was “truly agitated” because of such German attitude. German diplomacy defended itself that it had no prior knowledge of the Austrian ultimatum; it condemned its harshness and Jagow personally found that it was unacceptable to Serbia; and when after the Serbian response the opportunity presented itself to give Austria satisfaction and preserve peace, Germany refused to assist.⁴⁶⁶ King Carol, a tried friend of the Triple Alliance, openly told the Austrian Ambassador that after all the decision on the outbreak of a world war depended on Austria alone.⁴⁶⁷

Among German diplomats, it was Prince Licnowsky alone who constantly pointed out that Austria was intent on war to destroy Serbia and that Vienna took a dim view of any negotiations and aspirations to avoid war. His Austrian colleagues did not conceal that, just as they did not conceal the true Austrian intentions in terms of territorial settlement. In his report of 28 July, Lichnowsky explicitly mentioned the predicted division of the Serbian area between Bulgaria and Albania. Bethmann Hollweg wrote down the following angry comment on that report: “This duplicity of Austria is unbearable. They deny us the explanations of their programme and claim that Count Hoyos’s expositions, which amounted to the dismemberment of Serbia, were strictly private; they are lambs in St. Petersburg, who think of nothing evil, and their Embassy in London speaks of division of the Serbian area between Bulgaria and Albania.”⁴⁶⁸ After that and after Goschen’s statement in Berlin, the German government advised Vienna on 29 July that Austria should reiterate to Russia her profession that she did not contemplate conquest in Serbia and that her occupation of certain places would be only temporary. Bethmann Hollweg saw in that statement the chief means “to shift the odium for a World War exclusively onto Russia, which could perhaps be leveled at us in the present atmosphere”.⁴⁶⁹ In his instructions to his Ambassador in Vienna, Bethmann Hollweg stressed the fact that Austrian refusal of any mediation, especially after the conciliatory Serbian reply, could estrange the public opinion in Europe from Austria and incite hatred for that country because of the outbreak of a world war. In the same instructions, Bethmann Hollweg advanced to Vienna for the first time the proposal of his Emperor that Austria take Belgrade and some other border areas as a pledge and then stop there. This could win sympathies for Austria in Europe and, on the other hand, place Russia in an unfavourable

⁴⁶⁶ *Mémoires de Edward Grey*, p. 298.

⁴⁶⁷ *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 832.

⁴⁶⁸ *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegausbruch*, Bd. 2., 1927, p. 21.

⁴⁶⁹ *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 859.

light if she disagreed. Bethmann Hollweg pointed out to Tschirschky that the impression must not be made that Germany wanted to restrain Austria; the former country just wanted for Austria to accomplish her goal and either avoid a world war or improve the conditions under which the two countries would have to wage it.⁴⁷⁰

Of all the suggestions made, the one that was the easiest to carry out was that made by Grey, who suggested a conference between the four Great Powers in London and their mediation in Vienna, St. Petersburg and Belgrade, and the restraint from any military measures as long as these negotiations were under-way.⁴⁷¹ France and Italy agreed at once. But Germany refused this suggestion, just like it had refused it in 1908. When Grey advanced his suggestion for the first time on 24 July, Emperor Wilhelm II recorded on the relevant report two days later that it was superfluous and that he would not accept it unless Austria asked him to do so. "In the vital matters and the matters of honour one does not consult others."⁴⁷² On 26 July, Prince Heinrich, Emperor Wilhelm II's brother, reported that the British King himself favoured the four-power mediation;⁴⁷³ and Goschen proposed it officially on behalf of his government on 27 July. Jagow replied that such a conference would appear as something of an arbitral tribunal and that Germany could not accept it unless Russia and Austria-Hungary requested it. The same arguments had been used, as has been seen, when Austria-Hungary had unilaterally annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina. Sir Arthur Nicolson realized on 26 July that Germany would not consent to their proposals,⁴⁷⁴ although it informed London that it would agree to a four-power mediation, but only in the outstanding matters between Russia and Austria and not in the whole dispute. It was clear that this was not possible without taking into consideration the Serbo-Austrian conflict on which the attitude of St. Petersburg depended. The German reply was thus based on the view that the conflict between Austria and Serbia would remain local and their object accomplished. On 27 July, Grey emphasized to the German Ambassador that after the Serbian response, it was Austria that had to be conciliatory and that caution had to be counseled largely in Vienna.⁴⁷⁵ The French Ambassador suggested that Germany accept at least a mediation of Great Powers without a conference as long as peace was maintained. He even opted for the mildest form of a demand to be submitted to Vienna and St. Petersburg: "to refrain

470 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, pp. 37-9.

471 *British Documents*, XI, pp. 100-1.

472 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, pp. 155-6.

473 *Ibid.*, p. 185.

474 *British Documents*, XI, p. 102.

475 *Ibid.*, p. 124.

from any action that might aggravate the current state of affairs", i.e. that the Austrians did not cross the Serbian border. But that was also in vain. Bethmann Hollweg repeated Jagow's words and Emperor Wilhelm II wrote down in this connection: "I will not get involved in anything."⁴⁷⁶

While Britain and France spared no effort to find any mode for negotiations, Jagow sent message to Vienna that he "would soon perhaps have British proposals for mediation to deliver", but the German government "give assurances that it in no way identified itself with those proposals, and it is even decisively against taking them into consideration, but he relays them just in order to take an British request into account". He hoped that he would manage with this seeming accommodation to convince Britain of his objectivity and detach that country from Russia and France so that other Great Powers did not interfere with Austria's war plans in respect to Serbia. Berlin still believed based on information from several quarters that Britain would remain neutral and that conviction considerably contributed to its stiff and unbending attitude, although Prince Lichnowsky delivered on 26 July the British message to the effect that the thought of a localized war "must be removed from practical politics".⁴⁷⁷ In some other matters, Jagow declined Grey's suggestions himself without referring to Austria's attitude. Upon receiving the message from London on 26 July that the Berlin government should influence Vienna to soften the note sent to Serbia, Jagow responded that he would indeed fulfil that wish, but he could not assist it "because the Serbian dispute is a matter of prestige for the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, in which Germany also plays a part".⁴⁷⁸ Forwarding this proposal to Vienna on 27 July, Bethmann Hollweg wrote: "Since we have already refused one British proposal, it is impossible to us to refuse also this British suggestion *a limine*"; in other words, Vienna could turn it down indirectly. It was only necessary to preserve a form, as Bethmann Hollweg felt Germany's inconvenient position both internationally and internally, if he kept rejecting every attempt to mediate.⁴⁷⁹

The extent to which Berlin took a negative attitude was clear from the conversation that Jagow had on 28 July with the Russian Charge d'Affairs Sverbejev. The latter insisted that an agreement between Russia and Austria, which Germany advised, could only be reached if it took into account not just the

476 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, p. 218.

477 *Ibid.*, p. 209.

478 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 779.

479 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 1., 1927, p. 241; cf. Renouvin, *Revue des deux mondes*, II, 1931, p. 897.

Austrian, but also the Russian viewpoint. Jagow replied that Austria's position was more difficult. In her case, the matter was of vital importance, whereas that was not the case with Russia. Sverbejev vehemently denied that and stressed that Russia could not allow Austria to demolish what Russia had built in the Balkans for centuries with a strike of a pen. Jagow put an end to their conversation. "In this matter, we will each stick to our opinion. I know your views from before and cannot agree with them. You know mine and cannot admit them as well."⁴⁸⁰ Germany could not be requested, Bethmann Hollweg wrote on the same day, 28 July, to London, to "force" Austria to be conciliatory to Serbia. "In doing so, we would contribute to undermining the status of Austria-Hungary as a Great Power and to changing the European balance of power to the detriment of the Triple Alliance."⁴⁸¹

After the Austrian declaration of war, it seemed that all attempts at direct negotiations between Vienna and St. Petersburg would cease. On 28 July, Sazonov asked Britain to undertake mediation and stop Austrian military operations against Serbia. This was urgently necessary, because negotiations without the halt on military operations could serve Austria to do away with Serbia while procrastinating with the negotiations.⁴⁸² And Russia could not peacefully watch that. However, at the same time, on 28 July, Berchtold told the Russian Ambassador in Vienna that Austria could not go back any more.

Nevertheless, Sazonov did not refuse the possibility of negotiations even later. When the German Ambassador recommended him on 29 July to continue with them, he replied that he was willing only if Vienna listened to the advice coming from Berlin, for which Pourtalès told him ran along the lines of conciliation. He even thought that it would be possible to continue with these direct negotiations and, at the same time, start the work of a four-power conference.⁴⁸³ Having received the news that Vienna rejected direct negotiations, he left a free hand to Britain to work in this sense,⁴⁸⁴ but he did not still abandon negotiations with the Austrians. Count Szapáry reported on 29 July that his impression was that Sazonov did not want a conflict and that he was "grasping

480 *Russko-germanskie otnoshenija*, pp. 202-3.

481 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 2., 1927, p. 32.

482 *British Documents*, XI, p. 169; *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus*. Reihe 1, Bd. 5., pp. 134-5.

483 *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus*. Reihe 2, Bd. 6. 1., pp. 157-8.

484 *Ibid.*, p. 158.

at straws" to avoid it.⁴⁸⁵ A better and more direct testimony of Russia's goodwill to find an agreement could hardly be found.⁴⁸⁶

Just like in 1908, Germany declined the thought of a conference, largely because it was convinced that the Austrian demands could not be tenable and because German actions would be exposed to certain criticism. Some German authors⁴⁸⁷ are right in asserting that Berlin was weary of a conference, since it was aware that the main Austrian demand would not obtain the majority given that Italy was not willing to support Austria. It was thus a foregone conclusion that Austria would refuse any suggestion for a conference, as it did on 28 July.⁴⁸⁸

Nevertheless, Bethmann Hollweg was deeply dissatisfied with Austria from 29 July onwards. Vienna's reluctance to recognize Italy's right to compensations threatened to implode the Triple Alliance. When because of Germany's pressure the Vienna government finally agreed on 28 July to reach an understanding, it included the following assertion in its statement: "We do not seek at all territorial gains. But if we find ourselves forced, despite our expectations, to undertake an occupation of the Serbian area, which would not be considered temporary, we are prepared in that case to exchange opinion with Italy". After reading that text, it was clear to Bethmann Hollweg how dangerous it was for them and their present position. Italy would relay that statement to Russia and it was clear what impression it would make in St. Petersburg, where the Austrians professed that they were not intent on conquest. Therefore, Bethmann Hollweg angrily sent message to Vienna on 29 July that Germany, as an ally, "could not support a policy with a double bottom".⁴⁸⁹ And the whole Austrian policy in the Balkans, especially towards Serbia, was indeed duplicitous.

485 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 897. Sazonov himself used the words "grasping at straws" in a conversation with Pourtalès. See *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 2., 1927, p. 76.

486 Therefore, the otherwise objective B. Schwertfeger's claim is erroneous: "*An dem Kriegswillen Russlands sind alle Bemühungen der Diplomaten zuschanden geworden.*" See *Der Weltkrieg der Dokumente*, p. 362. G. Michon, *L'alliance franco-russe*, Paris 1927 is entirely one-sided and directed against the Russian Empire.

487 Cf. Wegerer, *Die Kriegsschuldfrage*, VI, 1928, p. 42.

488 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 825.

489 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 2., 1927, pp. 44, 54, 73. Cf. *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 846-7. The Italian Ambassador in Vienna indeed told his British colleague on 29 July that he doubted Austria would be willing to make a statement before the whole Europe that she did not intend to conquer the Serbian area and to impinge on the independence of Serbia. See *British Documents*, XI, p. 172.

Why did Austria not give or was not willing to give a bounding statement that the territorial integrity of Serbia would be maintained? Above all, Austria hoped that after the eventual military success she would be in a position to dictate the terms of peace and she did not want to tie her hands. Secondly, Austria made some promises to the Bulgarians and Albanians to cede them parts of the Serbian territory in the south. On 29 July, Count Czernin made hints at division of Serbia even in Bucharest.⁴⁹⁰ On the same day, Berchtold sent message to Durres that action against Serbia be carried out in secrecy to avoid suspicions "that we want *a priori* to demolish the London conclusions and the Peace of Bucharest".⁴⁹¹ Having heard that the Romanian Prime Minister would arrive in Vienna, Tisza wrote on 29 July that he was firmly convinced, "more firmly than ever", that there could be no talk of Romanian requests to keep the balance of power in the Balkans, which King Carol underscored in his dispatch to Emperor Franz Joseph. It was a matter of course that the territorial changes in Macedonia would be carried out at the expense of Serbia.⁴⁹² A part of Serbia was promised even to Greece on the same day.⁴⁹³

4

The Serbian Minister in Rome, Ljubomir Mihailović, agreed to certain suggestions in conversation with San Giuliano made with a view to preserving peace. He did it without the authorization from Belgrade, but he believed that there would be no objections. And the suggestions were: that Great Powers gathered at a conference advise Serbia to accept the Austrian note in its entirety and that Serbia does so. Belgrade would more easily give in to a request from Europe than from Austria alone. The Great Powers would then interpret the contested points, the fifth and the sixth one. San Giuliano suggested all this to the British Ambassador on 27 July and the latter to his government.⁴⁹⁴ Next day, Mihailović went a step further and thought that Austria could explain

490 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 869.

491 *Ibid.*, pp. 873-4.

492 *Ibid.*, p. 906. The Romanian and Greek governments were openly in favour of the maintenance of the situation created by the Treaty of Bucharest and they made that clear to Sofia in a special statement. Bucharest was seriously concerned about Serbia. The Prime Minister told the Serbian Minister on 30 July, wishing the best of luck to his country, that "strong Serbia is necessary to Romania. The Serbian reply to the Austrian note was conciliatory to the utmost limits, but he said: it would have been better had we given in completely in the anticipation of a better opportunity." See Archives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Report from Bucharest, 17 July 1914.

493 *Ibid.*, p. 907.

494 *British Documents*, XI, p. 141.

to Great Powers herself how she intended to carry out these points from her demands. The Great Powers could then inform Serbia to accept the ultimatum unconditionally.⁴⁹⁵ Grey replied that Vienna would have no mediation and that he could thus do nothing in that sense, and he suggested to San Giuliano to address Vienna and Berlin with this proposal.⁴⁹⁶ But nevertheless Grey advanced this proposal on 29 July, including even a guarantee on the part of the Great Powers that Serbia would fulfil her promises. To that, Count Mensdorff responded that it was too late after the declaration of war. "It is then perhaps too late to prevent a general war as well", Grey replied. He told the Italian Ambassador on 29 July that Austria could "get guarantees for the future without a war that calls into question European peace", but she was not willing in principle to enter into discussion with the Powers in respect of Serbia.⁴⁹⁷ On 29 July, San Giuliano told the Serbian Minister that all the attempts in that direction had failed: "Germany wants war". When the German Ambassador let Grey know that his government did not agree to humiliate Austria with certain pressure on the part of the Powers, the latter responded that no one intended to do that, but he wondered how far Austria was prepared to go in humiliating others. And it was not just Serbia that was being humiliated, but also Russia.⁴⁹⁸ On the same day and under the impression of these harsh and unusual words, Bethmann Hollweg sent a dispatch to Vienna to the effect that he considered such yielding on the part of Serbia a basis for negotiations "based on the occupation of part of the Serbia area as a pledge".⁴⁹⁹

In his conversation with Grey, Count Mensdorff explained that, in accordance with the previous treaties between Austria and Russia, Serbia belonged to the Austrian sphere of influence and that Russia had no reason to fear for her influence in the Balkans, if Belgrade ceased to be the main pillar of her influence. Austria was now in a defensive position, because Russia assisted small states around her, which turned into her enemies.⁵⁰⁰ Grey saw clearly the gravity of the whole matter and told the German Ambassador on 29 July that Russia, as a Christian Orthodox state, would risk her position and her prestige in the Balkans if she maintained the attitude of expectation, while Austria did with Serbia as she pleased.⁵⁰¹ And the Austrian reference to Serbia's

495 Ibid., p. 153.

496 Ibid., pp. 161-2; *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 2., 1927, p. 69.

497 Ibid., p. 181; *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 2., 1927, p. 80.

498 Ibid., p. 181.

499 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 2., 1927, pp. 106-7.

500 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 877-80.

501 *British Documents*, XI, p. 172; *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 2., 1927, p. 68.

belonging to her sphere of influence revealed enough the secret intentions of the Vienna government.

Vienna hoped to be able to detach Montenegro from Serbia, promising the former country certain benefits. But national consciousness of the people in Montenegro and brotherly solidarity with Serbia were so strong that any individual attempt not to join Serbia in the struggle against Austria would fail at the outset. On 30 July, the Montenegrin government addressed Austria with the question as to what she intended to do with Serbia after the Serbian response and made it clear that there were "blood ties" between Montenegro and Serbia.⁵⁰² On 31 July, Vienna promised to Montenegro, in case it remained neutral, financial assistance and territorial aggrandizement at the expense of Serbia, in the region of Novi Pazar, and perhaps in Albania.⁵⁰³ The Austrian Minister was explicit in Cetinje that Austria would also cede Scutari to Montenegro.⁵⁰⁴ Cetinje responded to that offer with disgust and tied the fate of Montenegro to that of Serbia.

5

By mobilizing her army in the direction of Austria, which was announced on 29 July, Russia intended to demonstrate that she took the matter very seriously this time and that her attitude must be taken into account. Russia hoped that this would have some impact in both Vienna and Berlin, where the voices were heard from several, and even diplomatic, quarters that Russia was just "bluffing" and did not dare, in fact, to take action. Mobilization was an expensive and dangerous warning, but St. Petersburg believed that it was much needed to help people snap out of it, at least at the last moment, and hoped it would be effective. Indeed, if Berlin supported Austria in the belief that their attitude would be sufficient to ensure the success, just like in 1909, they had ample opportunity now to revise their decisions. As the Germans did not want to do so, it was clear that they were bent on imposing their and Austrian will, even at the cost of the most dangerous complications. The Russian Ambassador stated clearly in Vienna on 30 July that mobilization was designed to show the aspiration and the right of the Russian Emperor to have his say in the solution of the Serbian question.⁵⁰⁵ Russia wanted, Shebeko also said, to prevent peacefully an Austrian attack on Serbia. When that had failed, Russia responded

⁵⁰² *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 918.

⁵⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 952.

⁵⁰⁴ *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus*. Reihe 1, Bd. 5., p. 290.

⁵⁰⁵ *Documents diplomatiques*, p. 118.

with her mobilization to Austrian aggressiveness. Austrian pressure on Serbia, Emperor Nicholas II wrote to the British King George V on 2 August, would lead to destruction of that country and her becoming an Austrian vassal, and that “would shake the balance of power in the Balkans, which is of such vital interest to my country and also to those powers who seek to maintain the balance of power in Europe”.⁵⁰⁶

The mobilization order was announced after it had become known that the Austrians had declared war on Serbia. Upon hearing the news that they had started the bombardment of Belgrade in the night of 28/29 July, Russian public opinion was agitated to a great extent and demanded even general mobilization.⁵⁰⁷ Sazonov heard the news at the very moment he was speaking with the Austrian Ambassador and that affected profoundly his attitude. “What is there to talk about any more”, he said angrily, “when you act like this?” From that moment onwards, he decided, along with the other Russian official circles, to resort to more decisive measures.

On 29 July, Pourtalès came to see Sazonov with the message that Germany would try to make Austria more conciliatory, but he asked this to be kept in secret. He also pleaded with Russia not to make German mediation in Vienna more difficult with premature mobilization. St. Petersburg viewed this step with much mistrust. It was thought that Germany might have been maneuvering and deliberately procrastinating so that Russia would not be prepared in time. In fact, under the impression of the news coming from London and Rome, and dissatisfied with Austria’s lack of sincerity, Bethmann Hollweg sent clear and curt messages to Vienna on 29 July to continue the negotiations with St. Petersburg and to make a specific statement about Austrian intentions in Serbia. All this should be done “to prevent a general disaster or certainly to place Russia in the wrong”. When Pourtalès again called on in the afternoon and stated that Germany would be forced, if Russia continued her military preparations, even without declaring mobilization, to mobilize as an ally of Austria and that an attack would follow, Sazonov replied acidly: “I have no more doubts now about the real causes of Austrian intransigence.” Pourtalès protested, but Sazonov sought to see evidence in Germany’s deeds. After the midnight, on 30 July, Pourtalès went to Sazonov again to ask him if the Russian government would be satisfied with the Austrian statement that the integrity of Serbia would not be disturbed. Sazonov replied that would not be sufficient.

506 *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus*. Reihe 1, Bd. 5., p. 278.

507 At 11 pm on 28 July, the Austrians started to bombard Belgrade from Zemun without any previous warning and monitors on the Danube continued with shelling until the dawn. After the midnight the Serbs blew up the bridge connecting Belgrade and Zemun.

When the German Ambassador asked him what Russia would consider sufficient to cease her military measures, Sazonov dictated the following text: "If Austria is prepared, admitting that the Austro-Serbian question has assumed the character of a European question, to leave out of her ultimatum those points that violate the sovereign rights of Serbia, Russia binds herself to cease her military preparations." Sazonov stressed to Pourtalès that it was not just the territorial integrity of Serbia that Russia wants to preserve, but also the independence and sovereignty of that country. "We cannot allow that Serbia become a vassal of Austria." Besides, even if the government sacrificed Serbia, all Russia would rise against it. It was now Sazonov, together with Russian military circles, who was in haste. He came to believe that Germany was not truly pacifist and that it mediated in St. Petersburg with a view to gaining time for Austria. And Austria wanted to overrun Serbia before Russia could assist her. Therefore, Sazonov rejected out of hand Pourtalès's suggestions to leave certain points to be discussed later, at the time of peace negotiations, i.e. after Austria had largely accomplished what she intended. Considering the Austrian bombardment of Belgrade a prelude to the Austrian army's action against Serbia and the crossing of the border, he persuaded the Emperor to declare partial mobilization of the Russian army that had already been decided.⁵⁰⁸

However, it was obvious that an agreement could not be reached on that basis. Austria went too far, the war was declared; to return to the Russian proposal now, in that form, would be such a humiliation that Austria could not accept it. Sazonov's suggestion in that sense made to the Austrian Ambassador on 26 July bore no result; it was still less likely to be accepted in Vienna now. That was the case. Berchtold told the British Ambassador on 28 July that any discussion on that basis was excluded and, moreover, pointless, as Austria had declared war on Serbia that day.⁵⁰⁹ Jagow said on 30 July that Sazonov's suggestion was unacceptable to Vienna.⁵¹⁰ And without that concession, the matter was a dead-end. St. Petersburg claimed that if Austria had no intention indeed to infringe on Serbia's sovereignty, she had to back down from those points in the ultimatum that breached the sovereignty of that country; if Austria stuck to the ultimatum, then her statements were worthless. Grey offered Germany to find some formula and whatever that might be, as long as it maintained peace, Britain, France and Italy would give their consent.⁵¹¹

⁵⁰⁸ Poincaré, *Au service de la France*, IV, pp. 399-403; *Documents diplomatiques*, pp. 117-8; *Russko-germanskie otnoshenija*, p. 181; *Krasnii arhiv*, IV, pp. 20, 22; *Die Kriegsschuldfrage*, II, 1923, p. 350.

⁵⁰⁹ *Documents diplomatiques*, p. 102.

⁵¹⁰ *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus*. Reihe 1, Bd. 5., pp. 207-8.

⁵¹¹ Poincaré, *Au service de la France*, IV, p. 376; *Documents diplomatiques*, p. 112.

Emperor Nicholas II attempted to save the situation at the last moment by addressing directly Emperor Wilhelm II. On 28 July, he sent a dispatch to the German ruler in which he professed to turn to him directly “for help”. “An unworthy war has been declared on a weak state. The bitterness in Russia, which I fully share, is tremendous.” He felt that he would not be able to resist the public opinion that pushed for war. “To try to remove such an misfortune as a European war, I beg You, in the name of our old friendship, to do what You can, to restrain Your allies from going too far.”⁵¹² Emperor Wilhelm II’s telegram crossed way with this dispatch, stating that he received the news of the mood in Russia “with the utmost anxiety”. “Unscrupulous agitation going on in Serbia for years has finally led to the horrendous crime to which Franz Ferdinand fell victim.” The spirit of regicides still reigns in that country and Wilhelm II thus appealed to Nicholas II’s monarchical solidarity. All those responsible for that murder should be meted out the punishment they deserved. And Wilhelm II then added with the blatant disregard for truth: “In this case, politics plays no role.” In the second part of the dispatch, he promised to influence the Austrians to come to terms with Russia as soon as possible.⁵¹³ In his notes on Nicholas II’s dispatch, Wilhelm II described it as a “confession of his own weakness and an attempt to pass the responsibility onto me”, noted that the telegram contained “a hidden threat” and “an appeal similar to an order to stop the hand of an ally”.⁵¹⁴ When the German Ambassador made the statement in St. Petersburg next day that Germany would mobilize, if Russia did not cease her military preparations, Emperor Nicholas II sent another dispatch to Emperor Wilhelm II on 29 July, at 8:20 pm, warning him that this statement made by Pourtalès assumed a different tone than that in Wilhelm II’s telegram. In addition, the Russian Emperor proposed that the Austro-Serbian question be submitted to The Hague conference “in order to prevent bloodshed”.⁵¹⁵ Replying to a dispatch from King Carol, he also asked him to intercede with Emperor Wilhelm II “to spare the world from a horrific misfortune”.⁵¹⁶ Berlin, just like Vienna, rejected out of hand the notion of submitting the Serbo-Austrian conflict to the international court at The Hague and the Russian Emperor’s proposal was met with the ridicule and ironic comments.

Wilhelm II responded to Nicholas II’s messages on 29 July, stating that he did not find the Austrian action against Serbia “unworthy”. “Austria knows

⁵¹² *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus*. Reihe 1, Bd. 5., p. 136.

⁵¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 141-2; *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 2., 1927, pp. 48-9.

⁵¹⁴ *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 2., 1927, p. 46.

⁵¹⁵ *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus*. Reihe 1, Bd. 5., pp. 155-6.

⁵¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

from the experience that Serbian promises on the paper are entirely unreliable", and therefore sought to see deeds. Since Austria did not require territorial benefits, it was his opinion that Russia could remain in the role of an observer. He still worked for a direct agreement between Vienna and St. Petersburg. Austria would view Russian military measures as threats and they could "precipitate misfortune", as well as make his position as a mediator more difficult.⁵¹⁷ Emperor Nicholas II replied to Berlin on 30 July with a letter and a dispatch. He condemned the attentat, but he declined that the Serbian government took part in it. Austria did not leave time to Europe to investigate and check her allegations, and it is known from the experience that one could not trust judicial proceedings when political matters were involved. He explicitly mentioned the Friedjung and Prochaska affairs. "Everyone in Russia and many people abroad find that Serbia's response was a good one; to request from an independent state to go even further, to submit to the will of another state is impossible. Punishment expeditions are undertaken only in one own's country or in colonies." The Emperor said that military measures, including partial mobilization, which had been declared on 29 July, had been decided on three days earlier and he expressed hope that they would not affect Wilhelm II's role as a mediator. "We need your powerful pressure on Austria to come to an agreement with us."⁵¹⁸ Wilhelm II repeated that Russian mobilization thwarted, perhaps even made impossible, his mediation and, in an attempt to shift the responsibility onto him at the last moment, he ended his message to the Russian Emperor as follows: "The whole gravity of the decision rests now only on Your shoulders, which would take responsibility for peace or war."⁵¹⁹ Before he received this reply, Emperor Nicholas II had informed Berlin that it was technically impossible to stop the ongoing military preparations, but he solemnly pledged himself that his troops would not do anything provocative as long as the negotiations with Austria concerning Serbia were underway.⁵²⁰ London noted that this German shifting of the responsibility onto Russia on account of mobilization was in fact insincere. Germany was militarily fully prepared and the Russian mobilization, Nicolson pointed out, could not be interpreted as a provocative measure.⁵²¹ The relevant circles in Berlin knew that Russia was not prepared for war in 1914. This knowledge, as

517 Ibid., p. 172, *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 2., 1927, pp. 70-1.

518 Ibid., pp. 192-3.

519 Ibid., p. 205; *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 2., 1927, p. 134.

520 Ibid., p. 222; *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 3., *Vom Bekanntwerden der russischen allgemeinen Mobilmachung bis zur Kriegserklärung an Frankreich*, Berlin 1927, p. 5.

521 *British Documents*, XI, p. 216.

has been seen, was decisive in their combinations that assumed a localized war. Therefore, their presentation of the danger of Russian mobilization was insincere and exaggerated for the purpose of saddling St. Petersburg with the responsibility for war.

Since the war had been declared and Austria had refused to negotiate on the basis of the Serbian reply, it was very difficult to find other means to cease hostilities, with all the parties being more-less satisfied. On 29 July, Grey seems to have come to the idea, which had already been broached by Emperor Wilhelm II, to choose less of two evils. To satisfy Austria and preserve her prestige, he proposed that the Austrian army, which had already embarked on operations in the direction of Belgrade and perhaps conquered it, temporarily stay in that city, holding it as a pledge. But Austria had to stop there. During that time, Russia would mediate, together with other Powers, to make Austrian demands acceptable to Serbia. It was thought that the Powers could guarantee Austria that Serbia would carry out her commitments. After Serbia had given satisfaction to Austria, the occupying army would withdraw. Germany accepted from the start this proposal, which King George recommended to Prince Heinrich on 30 July, and France also gave its consent.⁵²² Emperor Wilhelm II, who partly considered it his own brainchild, handed it to Franz Joseph on 30 July. He said that the Austrian army would be given satisfaction for mobilizing three times against Serbia in vain, and such a pledge was sufficient for that satisfaction.⁵²³ King Carol suggested the same. On 31 July, Sazonov also, together with Emperor Nicholas II, agreed to the formula proposed from London:⁵²⁴ "If Austria agrees to cease her advance into Serbia and acknowledges that the Serbo-Austrian conflict has assumed the character of a question of European interest and that the Great Powers examine the satisfaction that Serbia might give to the Austro-Hungarian government, without violating her rights as a sovereign state and her independence, Russia agrees to maintain a waiting attitude."⁵²⁵ Russia indeed consented to any decent cooperation to preserve peace until the last moment. Along with Britain, Russia agreed even to such arrangement that did not spare Serbia from considerable humiliation and concessions. Tschirschky rightly observed in Vienna that the occupation

522 *Documents diplomatiques*, pp. 125-6; *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus*. Reihe 1, Bd. 5., pp. 199-200.

523 A. Tirpitz, *Deutsche Ohnmachtspolitik in Weltkriege*, Hanburg and Berlin 1926, p. 4.

524 *British Documents*, XI, p. 196.

525 *Documents diplomatiques*, p. 126; Poincaré, *Au service de la France*, IV, p. 225; *British Documents*, XI, p. 249.

of the Serbian soil on the part of the Austrian army, with the consent of Russia, was "a valuable strengthening of Austrian influence in the Balkans".⁵²⁶

In Berlin, where the danger for Germany had been realized on 29 July after the reception of Grey's messages, Bethmann Hollweg found that Austria should be satisfied with the above mentioned proposal. "Austria's political prestige, the honour of her arms, as well as her justified demands from Serbia could sufficiently be secured by the occupation of Belgrade or other places. By humiliating Serbia, she will strengthen again her position in the Balkans and also in relation to Russia." He therefore recommended to the Vienna government on 30 July "urgently and with emphases to accept that mediation "under the said very honourable terms. The responsibility for the consequences to follow otherwise would be extraordinary difficult for Austria and for ourselves."⁵²⁷ In the second dispatch sent on the same day, Bethmann Hollweg professed that he did not request from the Vienna government to negotiate with Serbia, with whom it was in war, but to avoid negotiation with Russia was "a major mistake that actually provokes Russia's military involvement ... We are indeed prepared to fulfil our allied duty, but we must decline to be drawn by Vienna into a world conflagration thoughtlessly and regardless of our advice." He ordered Tschirschky to speak with Berchtold "with all the emphasis and great seriousness".⁵²⁸ In the third dispatch, he particularly stressed: if Britain successfully mediated in St. Petersburg and Paris, whereas Vienna rejected all, "then Vienna documents that it seeks war unconditionally, in which we are dragged, while Russia remains blameless".⁵²⁹ It was, however, rather inconvenient to ask from Tschirschky to speak with such emphasis in Vienna in accordance with the above instructions, when he was, as has been seen, one of the main instigators to war largely on the basis of the stance taken by certain circles in Berlin.

But the most important thing in the whole matter was that Bethmann Hollweg did not feel he was supported in his new decisive policy towards Vienna. While the tone of his dispatches to Tschirschky was energetic and curt, the report he sent to the Emperor on 30 July was softened and contained not a word of reproach for Vienna or any mention of his energetic message. That was an undoubted proof that he was weary of criticism from either the Emperor or his entourage and that he was not certain that his attitude would be approved and accepted by others. The Bavarian military representative in Berlin was explicit in this respect in his report of 30 July, noting dissatisfaction in the

526 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 2., 1927, p. 171.

527 *Ibid.*, p. 114.

528 *Ibid.*, p. 115.

529 *Ibid.*, pp. 151-2.

Army Ministry with Bethmann Hollweg's action.⁵³⁰ Moreover, he explicitly instructed the Ambassador in Vienna not to carry out what had been instructed in the third dispatch of 30 July, because the General Staff required a rapid decision, given the partial Russian mobilization, which did not accord with the policy of waiting and mediation.⁵³¹ On 30 July, in the evening, Moltke reported to Vienna before he checked the news about the Russian general mobilization that he regarded "the position as critical", if Austria did not immediately mobilize against Russia. Moltke's message to the General Staff in Vienna was crucial. In it, he clearly stated that Austrian mobilization, which might be explained on account of Russian mobilization, would provide a justified cause to Germany to fulfil its allied obligations. It seems highly likely that he advised the rejection of the British proposal.⁵³² H. Lutz has even claimed on that basis that "this pushing on the part of Moltke would, in his own view, lead to a European war even without the declaration of Russian general mobilization". Military circles in Germany had a decisive word in this last phase and considerably pushed the Chancellor in the background. They were aware of their predominance over the opponents and stressed it (the German army had the more powerful artillery than the Russians and the French, better rifles and better trained army),⁵³³ requesting that advantage be taken of it. Moltke even regarded the Sarajevo attentat "as a fortune", because it provided an opportunity to start a war before the Russian preparations would have been completed in 1917.⁵³⁴

On 29 July, the Bavarian military plenipotentiary reported from Berlin that the struggle was underway there between military representatives and the Foreign Ministry. "The Army Minister supported by the Chief of the General Staff urgently wants military measures, which would correspond with the tense political position and still threatening war danger. The Chief of the General Staff wants to go even further. He exerts his full influence to make use of the rarely favourable position and embark on an action; he points out that Russia is feeling inadequate in a military sense, that it is a favourable time of the year, that harvest has been largely completed, that an annual training is over."⁵³⁵ As

530 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 4., 1927, p. 157.

531 *Ibid.*, II, pp. 158-9.

532 Cf. Lutz, *Die Vorgeschichte des Weltkrieges*, XI, pp. 228-33; Hötendorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, IV, pp. 152-3.

533 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 4., 1927, p. 142.

534 *Ibid.*, p. 148. In the fall of 1914, he wrote that "this" war was a "necessity, which is essential to the development of the world". See H. v. Moltke, *Erinnerungen, Briefe, Dokumente*, Stuttgart 1922, p. 13.

535 *Die Kriegsschuldfrage*, V, 1927, p. 552; *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 4., 1927, p. 153. In his article in that journal, T. Shepher attempts to defend Moltke from the accusations of bellicosity; he seeks to explain that Moltke's attitude considerably

soon as he received the news of Russian partial mobilization against Austria, Moltke sent message to Vienna that Austria must declare general mobilization and that Germany would follow the suit. This message was delivered before Russian general mobilization was declared. Likewise, it was before that declaration that it was decided at the war council in Potsdam to undertake measures "to slide slowly into the stage of threatening war danger".⁵³⁶

Berlin had no reply to the proposal from Vienna until the noon on 31 July. But the responsible circles in Berlin did not hope for success, according to the Bavarian representatives; "moreover, they are convinced that Grey's undoubtedly fair endeavours to preserve peace will not arrest the course of events".⁵³⁷

The interference of the German General Staff with diplomatic affairs was especially felt in Vienna. In a memoir of the German General Staff sent to the Chancellor, written before Russian partial mobilization was declared, the soldiers absolutely and unconditionally advocated the Austrian view of the conflict. Serbia alone was guilty for the Serbo-Austrian conflict, and Russia, which supported Serbia, was responsible for the danger of further complications.⁵³⁸ After Bethmann Hollweg's messages, Count Berchtold started to hesitate. Tschirschky reported that he had read him twice the message from Berlin on 30 July and that he had listened "pale and in silence" and immediately asked for an audience with the Emperor.⁵³⁹ During the audience, Baron Hötendorf, who was in direct contact with the General Staff in Berlin and who had received that encouraging message from Moltke, managed to make him intransigent again. He became intransigent to such an extent that it was now Hötendorf who requested that, in case the hostilities ceased, as the Western Powers and Germany itself suggested, Serbia be demanded not just the reimbursement of mobilization costs, but also to cede permanently Belgrade and Šabac with the surrounding area. Serbia would even have to pay for the Austrian fortification of these places. After the consultation in the presence of Emperor Franz Joseph, it was decided to declare general mobilization because of Russia, to continue military operations against Serbia and to reply kindly to Grey's proposal, but not to accept it actually.⁵⁴⁰

Berchtold told Hötendorf that he formed the impression from diplomatic messages that Germany started to back down. "But now I have the most assuring

changed after 29 July due to the news of Russia's sombre stance. Cf. Tirpitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 17, 20-2.

536 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 4., 1927, p. 156.

537 *Die Kriegsschuldfrage*, VI, 1928, p. 51.

538 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 2., 1927, pp. 60-2.

539 *Ibid.*, p. 171.

540 Hötendorf, *Aus meiner Deinstzeit*, IV, p. 151.

statement from the most competent military quarter.”⁵⁴¹ The influence from that quarter prevailed indeed. “Moltke’s influence on this decision [in Vienna] cannot be disputed any more”, an expert in these matters has rightly asserted.⁵⁴² On 30 July, Jagow had to confess to the French Ambassador, whom he had authorized two days earlier to report to his government that Germany was not bound to mobilize, if Russia mobilized on the Austrian border alone, that his words did not constitute a “firm commitment” and that military reasons dictated different attitude.⁵⁴³

Berchtold then told the Russian Ambassador that he had to respond to Russian mobilization with Austrian mobilization, but that would not present any threat to Russia. Moreover, he authorized now Count Szapáry to “start” negotiations with Sazonov. Szapáry was supposed to “explain” (*zu erläutern*) to Sazonov the Austrian note to Serbia and to hear Russian comments and proposals, but without any real commitment. The instructions read that the Ambassador could provide “facultative explanations along general lines” and that Vienna would by no means depart from the stated points of the ultimatum. Such conversations could go on for weeks. That could be seen from Berchtold’s conversations with the Russian Ambassador in Vienna, which were very courteous but without any real results. Only one thing emerged clearly: Austria was not willing to be conciliatory in the Serbian question. To deceive, Berchtold stated again, as if he made some concession, that Austria did not intend to conquer land for herself in Serbia and to “destroy” Serbian independence.⁵⁴⁴ He still left the possibility to interpret his statements very broadly, if need be. The extent of his insincerity is best seen from the fact that he later, on 31 July, authorized the Minister in Athens to promise a part of Serbia to Greece;⁵⁴⁵ also, the Ambassador in Rome told again to San Giuliano that the Austrian statement was made “without formal commitment”.⁵⁴⁶ Seeing that Austrian reluctance, the Italian Foreign Minister overtly said to the German Ambassador, while explaining why Italy did not want to take their side as an ally, that the Austrian action was aggressive and that Austrian reluctance must have had some ulterior motive in respect to Serbia and her independence.⁵⁴⁷

541 Ibid., p. 153.

542 Lutz, *Die Vorgeschichte des Weltkrieges*, XI, p. 237.

543 *Documents diplomatiques*, p. 123.

544 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 908, 932-3. On 30 July, Count Czernin gave an evasive reply to the direct question of King Carol whether Austria intended to reduce the territory of Serbia, which left the King unsatisfied. Ibid., p. 914.

545 Ibid., p. 940.

546 Ibid., p. 962.

547 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 3., 1927, p. 38.

When the Austrian Ambassador relayed him the message from his government on 31 July, Sazonov thanked him and said that it would be better now to conduct negotiations in London, with the participation of all the Powers and under the chairmanship of Britain. There was no point in having general conversations about the relations between Russia and Austria-Hungary, while they faced the concrete question of whether Serbia would remain free and independent. Nevertheless, the Emperor issued an order to Sazonov to continue negotiations.⁵⁴⁸

In his telegram to Emperor Wilhelm II, Franz Joseph refused the British proposal on 31 July. He referred to Wilhelm II's words that Russian mobilization would be responsible for war, but his main reason not to yield was the ambition to overrun Serbia. "Another salvation of Serbia through Russian mediation would lead to the most serious consequences for my lands and I cannot therefore allow such mediation." The final part of the reply appealed to the German allied fidelity.⁵⁴⁹ The war was being prepared and sought for, even at the severest cost. In that connection, the general mobilization of the Austrian army was declared that day.

At the ministerial conference on 31 July and afterwards, Berchtold detailed why he did not consent to the proposal to confine the whole action to the occupation of Belgrade. It clearly emerges from his exposition that Austria did not consider making concessions and that negotiations were only held to restrain Russia and, if possible, justify Austria before Europe. The British proposal was not to be really accepted, but certain accommodation was necessary "in form" to conceal the true intentions. Bethmann Hollweg has not been correct therefore in claiming that Vienna "accepted Grey's mediation" and "guaranteed the Serbian integrity".⁵⁵⁰ "The question of the temporary occupation of Belgrade was put forward in connection with the mediation *à quatre*, which was taken into consideration on the British side; the occupation of the Serbian area was not designed to serve the simple acceptance of our demands delivered to Serbia and as yet unfulfilled, but rather to assist a diplomatic action in which out of four Great Powers to undertake mediation only one would politically side with us. It takes no closer examination to see that on that road our interests in a vitally important matter would be at stake from the start. In addition, the conviction in the Sava Kingdom that they could complete unscathed the undermining with a view to bringing down the Habsburg Monarchy would

548 *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus*. Reihe 1, Bd. 5., p. 226.

549 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, p. 942; *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 3., 1927, p. 3.

550 *Betrachtungen zum Weltkriege*, Berlin 1919, pp. 125-6, 155.

only receive further encouragement. Just like with our so-called “diplomatic successes” in 1909 and 1913, nothing would remain from such an outer manoeuvre, if Serbia were accommodating, except the increased bitterness with the strengthened conviction that clearly outlined destructive programme against the Monarchy would finally succeed.” These were the words of Count Berchtold himself. In addition, military circles considered such an occupation of Belgrade a perilous adventure for which they did not want to assume responsibility. They were vehemently against it, together with Berchtold, to leave the Serbian army undefeated and not destroyed. Berchtold and Hötzendorf together put forward their views before the old Emperor on 30 July and managed to win him over,⁵⁵¹ as well as all the joint ministers and both prime ministers at the meeting held on 31 July.⁵⁵²

Worried because of German stance and aware that Germany had undertaken much in terms of military preparations and was much more prepared and capable of being prepared faster than them, Russian military circles requested on 30 July that Russia declare general rather than partial mobilization. Around 3 pm on the same day, Emperor Nicholas II gave his approval,⁵⁵³ but, as has been seen from his whole attitude, he did not contemplate to attack yet and he made a clear and binding statement to that effect. Germany took Russian mobilization as a cause to precipitate events. At the insistence of military factors, Germany declared “war danger” and then, on 31 July, at 1 pm in Berlin and at midnight in St. Petersburg, demanded in the form of an ultimatum from Russia to recall her mobilization within twelve hours deadline. When Russia refused to respond to such demand, Germany declared war on

551 *Öst-Ung. Aussenpolitik*, VIII, pp. 976-8; *Die Kriegsschuldfrage*, V, 1927, pp. 683-4; Lutz, *Die Vorgeschichte des Weltkrieges*, XI, pp. 240-4.

552 During the lurch, on 31 July, the Austrian Ambassador in Paris, Count Szécsen, told the Romanian Minister Lahovary that peace could perhaps be saved at the last moment. His government, he said, “would perhaps not be reluctant to state the satisfactions to be demanded from Serbia, if Serbia addressed it on her own either directly or through the mediation of a friendly power”. It has been seen, however, that his government did not think of such a possibility and would not probably take that proposal into consideration. But Lahovary immediately took upon himself to mediate, assuming that the Ambassador was not working against the intentions of his government. He told Vesnić Szécsen’s words and asked him to relay them to his government. The two diplomats then went to the French Foreign Ministry and informed the director of the Political Department Pierre de Margerie about what had passed. It was 10 pm. On 1 August, the Swiss Ambassador in Paris, Charles Lardy, joined their action. But the reply was to the effect that all was too late after the German ultimatum to Russia. See A. Bach, *Die Kriegsschuldfrage*, VI, 1928, pp. 212-5; *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus*. Reihe 1, Bd. 5., p. 267. Cf. about Szécsen’s step Renouvin, *Les origines immédiates de la guerre*, pp. 205-6.

553 *Krasnii arhiv*, IV, pp. 30-1.

her, which brought about further consequences and led to the World War.⁵⁵⁴ Baron Hötzendorf himself is explicit that “the categorical decision of Germany started the Great War”.⁵⁵⁵

However, Austria initially explained the motivation for her declaration of war against Russia, which took place as late as 5 August, just with her obligation to the Reich as an ally, and not with her own conflict with Russia. After the decisive German protest, the declaration of war was then ascribed to Russia’s threatening attitude in the conflict between Serbia and Austria and to the outbreak of Russian hostilities against Germany. Berchtold himself started, however, to shift the blame for the outbreak of war onto Germany and Emperor Wilhelm II in order to justify Austria.⁵⁵⁶ Austria’s duplicitous role was especially pronounced with this action. Germany entered into war adventure primarily because of her and Austrian diplomacy now wanted to present the matter the other way around, as if Austria entered into the war for the sake of Germany rather than for her own reasons. This is how much the question of war responsibility was ethically based in her case!

Most German authors, in keeping with the intentions prevalent before the declaration of war, seek to present Russian mobilization as a true cause of the war. They present the matter as if some sort of agreement was on the way to realization, nearly at hand, and Russian mobilization suddenly put an end to all that. That is what Jagow told the Russian Ambassador and Bethamnn Hollweg said in the Bundestag. St. Petersburg no doubt made a mistake in switching from partial to general mobilization,⁵⁵⁷ but that was not the true reason for the failure of the whole mediating action. As has been seen, Vienna in fact turned down the British proposal for mediation on 31 July and carried on imperturbably and irreconcilably with military operations in Serbia and with the intention to present Russia with an accomplished fact. The view of Seton-Watson that the responsibility for the outbreak of the World War cannot be attributed to Russian mobilization is perfectly justified, as well as his assertion, “that the true responsibility for war fall at the time before the Ultimatum of 23 July, and that those Great Powers who had hitherto worked to deliberately

554 *Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Bd. 3., 1927, p. 8; cf. the condemnation of the German action in Tirpitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-8. Cf. Lutz, *Die Vorgeschichte des Weltkrieges*, XI, pp. 326-7.

555 Hötzendorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, IV, p. 323.

556 Cf. Lutz, *Die Vorgeschichte des Weltkrieges*, XI, pp. 447-8.

557 Cf. Sir R. Beazley, *On Some Causes of the Great War*, London 1932. The author especially reproaches Russia because she was the first Great Power to declare general mobilization. Cf. also Lutz, *Die Vorgeschichte des Weltkrieges*, XI, pp. 310-11; G. von Jagow, *Ursachen und Ausbruch des Weltkrieges*, Berlin 1919, p. 126.

mislead Europe and thwart any intervention have to bear the responsibility for what followed therefrom".⁵⁵⁸ That responsibility was even more obvious after the ultimatum when, under different pretexts, any proposal to steer the matter towards a peaceful solution was declined resolutely. Realizing the essence of the matter, Tittoni rightly stressed that it was not Russian mobilization that caused the World War, but rather "the undeniable intention of Austria to destroy Serbia and her unusual and inadmissible ambition to have Europe indifferently assist her attack".⁵⁵⁹

6

Certain German authors have long attempted to reduce the question of the responsibility for the outbreak of war to the matter of the Sarajevo attentat alone. "If it (the attentat) is regarded as something permissible, then the action of Austria towards Serbia and Germany's assistance to Austria are unjustified; but if the Sarajevo attentat is seen as a crime that stemmed from the Greater Serbian propaganda and threatened the survival of the Dual Monarchy, then Austria's action against Serbia becomes justified and the assistance of other powers to Serbia [becomes] the defence of a crime."⁵⁶⁰ But the matter can and must be viewed differently. No responsible factors in both Serbia and Russia saw the attentat as something permissible. And if they neither viewed it as such nor took part in it, then the Austro-Hungarian action was clearly unjustified. The entire nation cannot be blamed for the act of an individual. Austria did just that, although her criminal investigators stressed, at the time when the ultimatum was being decided on, that the participation of the Serbian government in the attentat could not be proved and, moreover, was not likely. Why did Austria eschew the electoral court at The Hague? Why did she want to be both a persecutor and a judge in her conflict with Serbia – and her alone at that? If Serbia had been guilty, The Hague Court would have established that and forced Serbia to make concessions as it saw fit. The public sentence of an international neutral court would have been a heavy blow to Serbia and Austria would have had the full moral right to point the finger at Serbia as an element of disorder and provocation in any new conflict. But Austria was afraid to go to court, because she knew well that there was no evidence for all her accusations against Serbia. She preferred force of arms to the right that

⁵⁵⁸ Seton-Watson, *Sarajevo*, p. 158.

⁵⁵⁹ *Nuovi scritti*, p. 74.

⁵⁶⁰ Wegerer, *Berliner Monatshefte*, XI, 1933, p. 445.

she might invoke. Therefore, her action was unjustified and all the attempts to defend it have turned out affected and unconvincing.

The Austrian explanation for the war that aimed at wider public was essentially the following: Austria had to defend herself; her survival as a Great Power was at stake; she was forced into war, i.e. she was in a predicament (*Zwangslage*), as it was said.⁵⁶¹ The leading patriotic circles in Austria saw that the Danubian Monarchy's Balkan policy had been wracked and that the situation was created in the Near East contrary to her interests. Having defeated Turkey and secured herself from Bulgaria with the Treaty of Bucharest, Serbia had had after 1913 the only goal to take part one day in the destruction of Austria-Hungary. Her power of attraction was getting stronger and affected the Yugoslav subjects of Austria-Hungary on a daily basis; the agitation of her patriotic societies and personalities was assuming greater proportions. In the Yugoslav regions of the Danubian Monarchy, national activities were increasing; they could not be restrained and even became aggressive. After 1912, Romania joined Serbia, as that country also had a large number of her compatriots in Hungary deeply dissatisfied with the regime they were under. Russia, an old opponent of Austria in the Balkans, which had manifold interests not just to suppress the latter country, but also to see her considerably weakened, was behind Serbia and Romania, with which Greece and Montenegro were associated. If the Serbs and Romanians succeeded – publically supported by Russia and secretly by Italy – at the expense of Austria-Hungary, that monarchy would not just lose Bosnia and Herzegovina with Dalmatia or Transylvania, but much more than that. Serbia would attempt the unification of Yugoslavs under her leadership, while Romania would request Bukovina and parts of the Banat. Afterwards, Austria would lose an access to the sea, many of her important provinces and become a second- or third-class power. She would have no appreciable value for Germany as an ally; Italy would take away the areas with the Italian population and the whole future of Austria would be put into question. The only individual who showed the will and the strength to reform the old Habsburg Empire, give it a new lease of life and new objectives, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, fell victim to a Serbian hand. In 1914, Emperor Franz Joseph was 84, he was old and disabled, while his successor was a young man, with no experience, who had been hitherto kept away from state affairs. To preserve the old Empire from the emerging danger, the assassination of Crown Prince, which caused bitterness against the attackers within and outside Austria, needed to be used and Serbia invaded as a main culprit for many difficulties. A victory over the Serbs would

⁵⁶¹ Along with many Austrian and German authors, this view is also expounded in A. Lumbroso, *Le origini economiche e diplomatiche della guerra mondiale*, II, pp. 504-7.

provide a fresh impetus to the state, restore faith in its will to live and postpone, if not fully remove, all the dangers that seemed to be imminent.

It should be admitted that there was certain logic and justification in such an account and, if all the premises were correct, it could be largely regarded as justified. But that was not the case. If the Danubian Monarchy's Balkan policy had suffered a breakdown, it was those who guided and conducted it that had been primarily responsible. Its lack of adroitness was reflected not just in the fact that it made Serbia bitter, but it also alienated Romania. The Serb national movement increasingly assumed an anti-Austrian character, but that occurred not just because of the strengthening of national activity and consciousness, but also because of the errors of the Danubian Monarchy, which did not appreciate or know how to set the course of its state interests to run parallel with the Serb ones and almost constantly confronted them. For a long time, the Serbs sought to find a support in the Danubian Monarchy. It was not their fault that it responded throughout the eighteenth century with forced proselytism in its area and with the assistance to all the other national elements in the Balkans to their detriment in the nineteenth century. Furthermore, it was not the fault of the Serbs that the entire internal policy of Austria-Hungary was conducted in such way that the Slavs in both Austria and Hungary were treated as second-class citizens; and that in the early twentieth century, in the face of nationalist danger, neither Vienna nor Pest appreciated that the Yugoslavs could be ruled over differently than with commissars and police methods. In general, it was a cynicism to pursue a state policy in such manner to tie the Slavs of Austria-Hungary to German and Hungarian interests, while they were, without any influence in foreign and military policy, exploited for the sake of a policy that ran contrary both to their feelings and to their vital interests. There is an important fact that politicians did not appreciate and that must draw attention of an historian: the Yugoslav, initially called Illyrian, idea emerged in the 1830s in Croatia as a reaction to the exaggerated aspirations of Hungarian national movement; it assumed greater proportions in 1848/9 when the Hungarians tried to impose by force their state idea to the Serbs and Croats; it was renewed after the Austrian defeats in the war with Germany and Italy (1859-1866) when Vienna started to give concessions to the Hungarians and when, in order to satisfy them, the Serbs and Croats were sacrificed. The struggle between Vienna and Pest in 1902-1906 brought about further activities and the formation of the Serbo-Croat Coalition in order to prepare the people for events that threatened with major disruptions. The Yugoslav question would have never emerged in its entirety had it not been for dissatisfaction in Croatia and the impetus for that dissatisfaction did not come from Belgrade, but rather from Vienna and Pest.

Franz Ferdinand himself realized and even wrote that it was Hungarian policy that led the Croats to the Rijeka Resolution and to defection.⁵⁶² Serbia made use of that dissatisfaction, but did not cause it; she could not cause it across the Yugoslav lands in the course of a whole century and in such large an area. This is the crux of the problem and the whole question revolves around it. Sazonov sent message to Czech politicians in 1914 that they should not count on Russia, but nevertheless as soon as the war started, the entire Czech public opinion, "uncritically Russophile" in the words of Masaryk, waited for the Russians and their Cossacks to liberate the Czech lands and for a Russian to take the Czech throne.⁵⁶³ Does not that shed the light to the Austrian problem and the thrust of Austrian internal policy more clearly than anything else? It was not a Serb or a Slav, but rather a person from the entourage of Emperor Franz Joseph, one of his aid-de-camps during sixteen years, who claimed that the Emperor had been "rather alien" to the aspirations of the Slavs in both Austria and Hungary. "It can almost be said that he barely understood them,"⁵⁶⁴ although the Slavs constituted the relative majority of the population in his country. He quickly made peace with the fact that dualism meant the government of Germans and Hungarians. And that was not going to be changed during his lifetime. No one from the Emperor's entourage dared to promote, "at least by whisper", the national autonomy for the Czechs or the unification of the Yugoslavs, even under his sceptre.⁵⁶⁵

These were recriminations concerning how the situation in 1914 developed. But once the situation had been created, it had to be dealt with. And the war was the only exit from such situation. However, we do not think that was the case. When the causes that have led to certain situation are known, it is then first necessary to remove them. The Serbian question was but a part of the problems in the Danubian Monarchy. If sufficient energy had been accumulated to start a war, it could have been accumulated to perform internal reforms. If Franz Ferdinand had been killed, his guiding thought and the people with whom he had intended to carry it out remained. But Austria sought for a war because she did not dare and could not decide to embark on radical internal reforms. Would the Hungarians have agreed in 1914 to allow unification between the Croats and Slovenes? Would they have given the true national freedom to the Romanians? The tendency of the Serbs and other Yugoslavs

562 T. von Sosnosky, *Franz Ferdinand*, München und Berlin 1929, pp. 82, 86.

563 *Die Weltrevolution*, Berlin 1925, pp. 13-4.

564 Margutti, *Kaiser Franz Joseph*, p. 232.

565 *Ibid.*, p. 237.

to unify would not have been possible to suppress in that stage in 1914 and afterwards even with such measures, but Austria would have probably saved her other parts, at least for some time, without exposing herself to danger. Her composition did not accord with the spirit of the twentieth century, but if Austria herself had not initiated the solution of her question by provoking the World War, she could have probably been maintained for some time to come by force of historical tradition and because of European fear of what might follow from her demise. But the leading circles in Austria themselves were not clear in their mind as to what should be done. Even the greatest defenders of Austria today admit that her state policy lacked a clear programme to deal with the Yugoslav question,⁵⁶⁶ or any other question for that matter. Moreover, there were serious doubts in the possibility of her survival in many quarters friendly to Austria.⁵⁶⁷ The increasingly sharp and difficult-to-overcome crises among her various nations clearly demonstrated that the old organism was decomposing. The only cohesive element in the country had long been the army, glued together due to the iron discipline, and senior officials from the ranks of the two leading nations, the Germans and Hungarians. They pushed into war; they were the only ones who hoped for success in that war, which would primarily brought about the strengthening of their prestige and influence and which would substitute the questions of foreign affairs for those of internal policy. The Italian Prime Minister Salandra said that not just the Balkan peoples, but also Italy was weary of Austrian aggressiveness. "With her head down", Austria pushed into action, seeking for hegemony, if not aggrandizement, in the Balkans.⁵⁶⁸ With these successes, the military leaders and some Austrian statesmen intended to prolong her life; they believed that the affirmation of Austria as a Great Power lay in such activist policy. The most experienced among them, the old Emperor Franz Joseph, who is often and wrongly portrayed as a peace-making ruler – he was never that – consented to that decision himself. He felt acutely that an attempt to carry out radical reforms in Austria-Hungary, in which the leading nations stood to lose much, could have led to civil war, or at least could have caused major crises and disturbances the outcome of which did not seem certain; a war, however difficult the circumstances, might turn out favourably, especially if Germany threw in its strength and the enemy did not still manage to recover and prepare properly.

566 Cf. *Berliner Monatshefte*, XII, 1934, p. 937.

567 Cf. the opinion of the famous German scholar A. Hettner: "The breakdown of the Monarchy could hardly be avoided in the future, although its time was not certain." See *Grundzüge der Länderkunde*, Berlin 1927, p. 156.

568 Salandra, *Souvenirs de 1914-1915*, p. 21.

This is the only way to understand and explain his decision, particularly since he himself did not have much faith in the future of his country. He decided on war only after he had been promised Germany's assistance. Even then he was riddled with suspicion. He told Baron Hötendorf at the most fateful moment, making a decision to go to war: "If the Monarchy were to fall through, let it at least founder decently!"⁵⁶⁹ By "decently" he meant devastation and war which would engulf the whole Europe, bringing down Austria.

The extent to which Austria-Hungary did not correspond with national sentiments of the twentieth century was best seen during and after its demise. None of its many nationalities tried to maintain or restore the old state of affairs, but rather they all entered with joy into the states of their compatriots or restored their own national states. Even among the Germans in what is left of Austria, the movement for unification with the Germans from the Reich is increasingly strong.*

One of our politicians, who studied these matters for a while, was right when he claimed: the Belgrade government was "doing approximately the same as Cavour and Bismarck did, the former to liberate Italy from the Austrian rule and the latter to exclude Austria from the German union. In this respect, from King Peter to the last man in Serbia in 1908-1914, everyone felt the same."⁵⁷⁰ The French Ambassador in Vienna A. Dumaine noted that those Serbs with whom he came into contact, i.e. the responsible persons, were quite moderate and even possessed of the "ultimate wisdom", because they had something of a mystical trust in their future and because they were conscious of Serbia's rise.⁵⁷¹ Austria was, however, a major anachronism in Europe, the subsistence of which could have been maintained after 1914, for some time to come, but her ultimate disappearance could not have been prevented. The process that started in 1848, increased in 1859 in the struggle with the Italians and in 1866 with the Italians and Germans, entered into the last phase in 1914 – and this time on Austria's own initiative.

Historical processes result from combination of factors. They take place partly stemming from certain legacies, partly from conflicts of material interests and partly from the irresistible vital forces in the nations that seek for their natural solutions. The causes of the Serbo-Austrian conflict, which led to the World War, constituted just part of the very complex questions in Europe,

⁵⁶⁹ Hötendorf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, IV, p. 162.

* Ćorović refers here to the strength of the Anschluss movement in Austria in the 1930s, especially among Pan-Germans and National Socialists.

⁵⁷⁰ J. Jovanović, *Politika*, no. 8290, 1931.

⁵⁷¹ Dumaine, *La dernière ambassade de France en Autriche*, p. 116.

in which all those factors played their role. After all, it that had not been the case, that conflict could not have caused such a reaction. We have tried here to explain certain personal actions and the whole course of historical development of relations between Austria-Hungary and Serbia, leaving aside the motives and actions of other powers. And if all these moments were taken into consideration, it would then be even more clear how much the whole European situation at that time was marked by a general psychosis of distrust and heavy conflicts of interests. The Serbo-Austrian question was just a part of the general European crisis and it was absolutely impossible to localize it and deal with it in a narrow framework. That obvious historical fact, which is confirmed today by both the past and the deeper appreciation of all problems in the new Europe, past, present and future, was not clear to many people who determined the fate of nations in 1914. The costly experience acquired during that crisis and the World War resulted in the general knowledge that the historical life of Europe, ever more complex and with intertwined interests, knows no longer of any action of historical importance that could remain without further and deeper connections and resonance.

Afterword

A Polyhistor and a Witness

The question of the responsibility for the outbreak of the Great War, which so thoroughly changed the fabrics of European societies and the map of Europe, was a major issue in both interwar politics and historiography. The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (SCS, renamed Yugoslavia after 1929), one of the states created after the Great War, did not at first participate in the controversy. However, a vast number of publications of primary sources, which were supposed to demonstrate the injustice suffered by Germany and its allies through the imposition of the “guilt clause” of the Treaty of Versailles forced the government of the Kingdom of SCS to present its case in the ongoing historiographical and political debate.

The issue in the case of the Kingdom of SCS was to demonstrate that Serbia, the state which played the role of Piedmont in the unification of Souths Slavs, was not responsible for the outbreak of hostilities with Austria-Hungary, the conflict that spread to become the first global war in contemporary history. The initiative to present Serbia's case in a scholarly publication of documents relating to the economic and diplomatic dispute between Serbia and Austria-Hungary came from Vojislav Jovanović, the head of the History Department of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of SCS, in 1927. His intention was to prove beyond any reasonable doubt that the claim that Serbia had been responsible for the outbreak of the Great War was untenable.¹

The need for such a collection of documents became even more urgent when the Dutch committee for research on the causes of the Great War in 1928 inquired whether it was possible to consult the Archives of the Serbian Ministry for Foreign Affairs from 1907 to 1914, and especially after Milos Boghitschewitsch published in German his works on Serbian foreign policy prior to the Great War. Boghitschewitsch's works were written for the specific purpose of presenting a case against Serbia as a culprit for the outbreak of the war. They were based on the documents that the Austro-Hungarian authorities took from the archives in Serbia during the period of occupation (1915-1918), but their selection was rather tendentious.² For that reason, it was decided in 1930 to accompany the publication of documents with a historiographical

1 See the afterword in the Serbian edition of Ćorović's book: Radoš Ljušić, *Odnosi između Srbije i Austro-Ugarske u XX veku*, Beograd 1992, pp. 821-844.

2 Milos Boghitschewitsch, *Die Auswärtige Politik Serbiens, 1903-1914*, Band I., *Geheimakten aus Serbischen Archiven*; Band II., *Diplomatische Geheimakten aus Russischen, Montenegrinischen, und Sonstigen Archiven*; Band III., *Serbien und der Weltkrieg*, Berlin: Brückenverlag. 1928, 1929, 1931.

synthesis on the relations between Serbia and Austria-Hungary from the time of the accession of the Karadjordjević dynasty to the throne in Serbia (1903) to the July crisis of 1914. Vladimir Ćorović, a professor of history at the Belgrade University, was charged with the immensely demanding and responsible task of writing a book on the origins and development of the political and economic conflict between Serbia and Austria-Hungary, which culminated in the declaration of war in 1914. When he accepted this assignment, Ćorović requested an access to the archives of the Serbian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the archives of the provincial government in Sarajevo, as well as the archives of the common Austro-Hungarian Finance Ministry which was in charge of administrating Bosnia and Herzegovina. He was also provided with the necessary funding for research abroad and for the acquisition of the relevant literature. Thus, Ćorović was in a position to consult all the available documents and literature on the subject.

Ćorović's book was also supposed to have an English edition. Stojan Gavrilović, a member of the Yugoslav diplomatic corps, undertook to produce an English translation of the book. A professor of history at the Stanford University, Ralph Haswell Lutz, who was also the director of the Hoover Institution, agreed to write a preface to the English edition. Despite such a promising start and the fact that the monograph was considered an undertaking of utmost importance for Yugoslavia, it did not see the light of day in Belgrade bookstores before 1992, while its English edition is available only now. What happened? Ćorović completed his book and it was even printed in 1936, but the Yugoslav government, then headed by Milan Stojadinović, decided not to allow its publication in order to avoid possible diplomatic issues with Germany. A monograph that pinned the blame for the outbreak of war in 1914 on Austria-Hungary and Germany could not be pleasing to Berlin and Germany had become by this time Yugoslavia's most important trading partner and the most assertive Great Power in the Balkans. After the Second World War, the book remained proscribed in Tito's communist Yugoslavia, since Ćorović was blacklisted as one of the prominent public figures of royalist Yugoslavia.

Who was then the author who had the dubious privilege of having his writings considered seditious by both the right-wing royal government and the communist censors of Tito's regime? Ćorović was born in the intellectually lively community of Serbian merchants in Mostar, where, along with his elder brother Svetozar and the later well-known poet Aleksa Šantić, he represented the nascent elite of the new generation of the Serbian intellectual youth. While he was a pupil in the grammar school in Mostar, Ćorović started publishing his first literary works in the journals published in Mostar, but also further away in Dubrovnik and Belgrade. From the very beginning Ćorović demonstrated

his inclination not just to write his own pieces, but also to review the works of others. After completing the grammar school, he went to study the German and Slavonic philology in Vienna, learning from professors Vatroslav Jagić, Konstantin Jiriček and Milan Rešetar. Having graduated with honours in 1908, he proceeded to Munich, Paris and Bologna to further his studies in the Middle Ages and Greek philology by attending lectures and working in archives and libraries. He received his Ph.D. in Vienna for a dissertation on Lukijan Mušicki, a Serbian poet and writer from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. During his student years in Vienna, Ćorović was very active in different Serbian youth and literary associations, editing several youth journals. Therefore, he came to know quite well his generation of young intellectuals of Serbian, Muslim and Croat origin from Austria-Hungary.³

Having been awarded Ph.D., he got a job at the Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo in 1909. This was one of the institutions founded by Austria – Hungary after the occupation of the province in 1878, which was given the task to build a scholarly case for the autochthonous identity of the province and its *diferentia specifica* in respect to its southern neighbours, Serbia and Montenegro. Besides his work at the Museum, Ćorović was very active in *Prosveta*, the principal cultural association of Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina and he was also the editor of its main journal *Bosanska vila*. He developed close ties with the literary and university circles in Belgrade. He published in *Srpski književni glasnik*, the journal of modern literary circles in Belgrade, and he was even invited to take a professorship in history at the Belgrade University. Ćorović chose to stay in Sarajevo, however, and to continue working both in the Museum and *Prosveta*, where he edited some special issues of the journal to celebrate Serbia's and Montenegro's victories in the Balkan Wars.

When the Great War broke out, Ćorović was mobilized and sent to the Eastern front, only to be arrested and brought back to Bosnia in November 1914; he was accused of taking part in treasonous collusion with Serbia as a secretary of the *Prosveta* association before the war. During the trial held in Banja Luka from November 1915 to March 1916, Ćorović was sentenced to eight year imprisonment. As a sign of good will, Emperor Charles pardoned all the prisoners convicted in the Banja Luka trial in November 1917. Ćorović then moved to Zagreb, where in the atmosphere of a revived political life in Austria-Hungary he became one of the editors of the *Književni Jug* journal.⁴ The title of the journal (meaning *The Literary South*) was emblematic for Ćorović's most profound

3 Jeremija Mitrović, "Vladimir Ćorović, prilozi za biografiju", *Spomenik CXXXI*, Odeljenje istorijskih nauka, 7, Beograd 1992, pp. 242-243.

4 Ibid., pp. 246-247.

inner beliefs. In his literary works, from the beginnings in Mostar to *Književni Jug*, Ćorović was a firm believer in the union of South Slavs. In the days after the breakthrough of the Salonika (Macedonian) front in September 1918 and the subsequent demise of Austria-Hungary, Ćorović was one of the delegates of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the National Council of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, the provisional body of Yugoslavs from the collapsing Austria-Hungary which in late November 1918 clamoured for unification with Serbia and the creation of the Kingdom of SCS. Ćorović was present in Belgrade during the solemn proclamation of the Yugoslav state by Prince Alexander Karadjordjević on 1 December 1918. With his writings and activities before 1914 and during his brief political engagement, Ćorović plainly demonstrated that he was a strong supporter of Yugoslavia and, moreover, an integral Yugoslav, which in contemporary political vocabulary meant that he was not only in favour of Yugoslavia as a state, but also of the concept of a single Yugoslav nation.

After the war, Ćorović moved to Belgrade where he became a professor of history at the University. He was a very prolific writer with the special affinity and capacity for writing historical syntheses. He wrote the first history of Yugoslavia, a three-volume history of Serbs, a history of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and a black book on the sufferings of Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the First World War. While writing his monographs on important and ground-breaking subjects he followed the principles of scholarly research that he learned in Vienna. His work always started in archives with philological analysis in order to establish the exact wording of a source material and to be able later to evaluate its importance and pertinence for the subject of his study. This philological-historical method of research was the legacy of Ćorović's professors in Vienna and he adopted it as the most appropriate one in a historiography that was still lacking major collections of sources for national history. Well-versed in contemporary historical writings, with a clear and balanced judgement unimpaired by his own political and national leanings, Ćorović could write with the same competence and authority about the Serbian medieval literature and contemporary events. A tireless researcher and writer, Ćorović was one of a few polyhistorians in Serbian historiography.

It is important to note that Ćorović wrote about the relations between Serbia and Austria-Hungary not only in his capacity of a historian, but also as a witness. He discussed in fact those years during which he started on the path that would take him from the grammar school in Mostar to the University of Vienna and back to Bosnia. That was the time in which his generation came to intellectual maturity in Austria-Hungary, be it in grammar schools and universities or as civil servants in the provincial administration of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Ćorović wrote about Austria-Hungary which he knew well from the inside and

about Serbia with which he had numerous contacts. He wrote about his contemporaries, be it about Serbian politicians whom he had met after moving to Serbia in 1919, or Austro-Hungarian dignitaries whom he had met in Sarajevo or seen, although from far away, in Vienna, or people of his own and younger generations who had made the bulk of youth movements that had shaken the foundations of the Habsburg Monarchy before the war.

As a historian, Ćorović based his book on diplomatic sources, and yet it is not just a book on diplomatic history, or not only on diplomatic history. In his clear and straightforward style, Ćorović successfully argues his case and refutes the writings of the revisionist historians of the 1920s and 1930s. Thoroughly documented, Ćorović's book has another, larger perspective of the conflict between a national movement and an anachronist and stale Empire incapable of transforming itself. In his introduction, Ćorović points out the missed opportunity for a durable understanding between the Serbian national movement and the Hapsburg Empire. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, Serbian insurgents from the Ottoman Empire looked to Vienna as a natural ally in their struggle for freedom. It was only after they had reached the conclusion that Vienna would not help them that they turned to Russia. This means that their alliance with Russia was grounded in strategic requirements rather than religious and ethnic affinity.

As a witness, Ćorović writes about his and younger generations that lived during the last stages of the conflict which started in the beginning of the nineteenth century. His main point is that the essential motivation for the actions of his generation did not stem from Serbian propaganda but from the everyday conditions in which the Serbs lived in Austria-Hungary. The absence of an initial understanding in the beginning of the century developed after the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1878 into a major issue within Austria-Hungary. The younger generation became convinced that conditions in Bosnia and Herzegovina were so bad that there was no other alternative than to take up arms. Therefore, Ćorović concludes, it is of no use to investigate the doings of *Narodna odbrana* or *Crna Ruka* (Black Hand) in order to find the culprits for the Sarajevo assassination. Ćorović knew personally the prominent men of this revolutionary generation, and he even met Princip on the eve of the arrival of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo, and he was told to stay away from the Museum which the heir to the throne of the Hapsburg Empire was supposed to visit.

Aside from the event that led to the declaration of war against Serbia, Ćorović looks for more profound causes of the outbreak of the war. He carefully examines the evolution of the conflict between Serbia and Austria-Hungary from the reform action in Macedonia in 1902 to the July crisis of 1914. The titles of

the chapters in his book mirror the sequence of economic and political clashes between Belgrade and Vienna: the Reform Question in Turkey, the Tariff War, the Adriatic Railway, the Annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Balkan Wars, the Sarajevo Attentat, the Ultimatum to Serbia. After a thorough analysis of the available sources and literature, Ćorović concludes that Austria-Hungary did not embark on a war because of the Sarajevo assassination, or because it was convinced that Serbia was responsible for that assassination, but because it wanted a war for political and diplomatic reasons.

This English edition of Ćorović's monograph, although published on the centenary of the end of the Great War rather than of its outbreak, will present to a wider international audience the best synthesis on Serbia's pre-1914 foreign policy written to this day. The Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts has published a series of volumes of Serbian diplomatic correspondence from the 1903-1914 period, completing the task that Vojislav Jovanovic tackled in 1927.⁵ Although such important undertaking, which had long been realised in other countries, considerably facilitates the efforts of historians, no other historian after Ćorović faced the task of writing a synthesis on Serbian foreign policy before 1914. Several monographs addressed certain particular aspects of the relations between Serbia and Austria-Hungary, such as the Tariff War,⁶ the Adriatic Railway,⁷ the Drive to the East (*Drang nach Osten*),⁸ the Sarajevo assassination,⁹ or Serbia's relations with France and Great Britain.¹⁰ However, Ćorović's book is still the best synthesis on the subject, because of the sheer depth of analysis and the amount of the documents used, some of which were lost in the meantime as a result of Nazis's plunder of Yugoslav archives during the Second World War. But above all, it is Ćorović's inner knowledge of the epoch, his capacity to expose the facts without bias and his personal experience of the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina that make his monograph a seminal work unrivalled to this day.

Vojislav G. Pavlović

5 *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije 1903-1914*, online available at: <http://diplprepiska.mi.sanu.ac.rs/>.

6 Dimitrije Djordjević, *Carinski rat Srbije i Austro-Ugarske 1906-1911*, Beograd 1962.

7 Dimitrije Djordjević, *Izlazak Srbije na Jadransko more i konferencija ambasadora u Londonu 1912. godine*, Beograd 1954.

8 Andrej Mitrović, *Prodor na Balkan i Srbija*, Beograd 2011².

9 Vladimir Dedijer, *The Road to Sarajevo*, New York 1966.

10 Ljiljana Aleksić, *Odnosi Srbije sa Francuskom i Engleskom 1903-1914*, Beograd 1963; Milorad Ekmečić, *Ratni ciljevi Srbije 1914*, Beograd 1973.

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This first English publication of Vladimir Ćorović's study is a culmination of efforts that had started long before this book saw the light of day. The origin of this work goes back to the late 1920s when Yugoslav officials and intellectuals decided to provide a competent, scholarly work of international reputation on the question of the origins of the World War I. The publication of the book planned for 1936 could not be realized as the Yugoslav government complied with a request from the Third Reich to cancel it. A work that was likely to delve into the responsibility of not just Austria-Hungary, but also of the German Empire for the outbreak of the Great War was not welcome to Nazi Germany. Even today Ćorović's book is worth reading to check the state of discussion in the aftermath of more recent publications on the outbreak of World War I.

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