

Čedomir Antić

NEUTRALITY AS INDEPENDENCE  
Great Britain, Serbia and the Crimean War



СРПСКА АКАДЕМИЈА НАУКА И УМЕТНОСТИ  
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ČEDOMIR ANTIĆ

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## FOREWORD

*by Winfried Baumgart, Professor of Johannes Gutenberg University, Mainz*

Čedomir Antić's study on Britain and Serbia during the Crimean War is a welcome addition to the vast literature on that war between Russia and the two Western Powers. Serbia, in fact, was until now a rare exception in historiography in so far as it has never been the object of a book (in any Western language) about that crucial war in the middle of the nineteenth century. Practically every country or region in Europe, from Sweden to Sicily, from Finland and Poland to Portugal has been treated – with the exception of the Netherlands and Serbia – as to its role during the war. The gap, as regards Serbia, is now closed although several aspects of the country's standing still remain to be investigated with the help of the rich material available in many European archives.

Antić has set himself the task of describing Serbia's role year by year, from 1853 to 1856, in the light of the reports sent to London by the British consul general in Belgrade, Thomas Grenier de Fonblanque. Britain had established a consulate general in Belgrade in 1837. Fonblanque occupied his post there from 1842 onwards. Thus, at the beginning of the Crimean War, he was an experienced observer on the spot. Consuls general at that time did not only look after the commercial interests of the power they represented, but also had diplomatic and political functions, although Serbia was still a component part of the Ottoman Empire.

As Antić makes clear in his book, Serbia managed to observe a policy of neutrality during the war although it was harassed in 1853/54 by Russian pressure to incite revolts against Ottoman domination and to furnish volunteers to the Russian occupation force in the neighbouring Danubian Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia. Pressure was also exerted by Austria – which, falsely, was believed to be in collusion with the great power of the North. The danger of Austrian occupation of the Serbian principality was the result: 1) of the fear of the policy makers in Vienna that Russian predominance in Serbia would be det-

rimental to its own influence; 2) of the notion that a veritable war on the Danube would almost be lethal to the existence of the Habsburg empire which had barely survived the shocks of the revolution of 1848/50; 3) of the fear that Serbia was the rallying ground of the revolutionary elements (Hungarians, Poles etc) that would throw the torch of revolution into Austria. Russian influence, however, prevailed in Serbia in 1853, as Antić makes clear, by forcing Prince Aleksandar to dismiss his pro-Western Prime Minister, Ilija Garašanin. When the theatre of war in 1854 moved from the Danube to the Crimea, Serbia had much more leeway to preserve its precarious neutrality. Demands from Constantinople to furnish at least some money for the prosecution of the war against Russia were successfully resisted. In fact, Serbia's autonomy was corroborated by a firman of the Sultan in January 1854 in which the ancient rights of the principality were again specified and guaranteed. This autonomy was put under general European protection as a result of the Paris Peace Congress of 1856.

Čedomir Antić is right in stating that Serbia's neutrality during the Criman War was a great step forward to her gaining independence during the next great Eastern crisis of 1875-78. It is to be hoped that Antić will continue his research on Serbia in 1853-56 by looking into the consular reports of the representatives of the other great powers which had consuls in Belgrade, i.e. Russia, France, Austria, and Prussia.



## *Preface*

At the end of October 2001, I attended the lecture in the magnificent building of *The British Empire and Commonwealth Museum*<sup>1</sup> within the Master's program at the Department of Historical Studies at the Bristol University. Since the question of the history of British imperialism is at present politically exceptionally sensitive, the lecturer was prepared to answer certain questions that were not directly related to the collections and museum's archives, or to its methodology diligently developed by the museum associates throughout several years in an effort to establish the closest possible connections with the Bristol University. The questions put by a student from Cyprus about the fate of the archives from her native country and Anglo-centric perception of the history of the British-Cypriot connections in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries could have seemed complex, even unpleasant, but the patient lecturer listened to them attentively and gave precise answers. He even readily answered the question concerning the "deadline when the archives relating to former British colonies will be returned to the native countries", even expecting cynical comments that followed because he had listed the preservation of the archive material and corresponding museum exhibits as one of the good sides of the British imperialism. However, it seemed as if he had not expected the question I put. I asked him: "Why the Balkans, where Britain was present as a mistress of the Ionian Islands (1815-1864), the protecting power of the autonomous status of Serbia (from 1856 to 1878) and the independence of Greece (from 1831), as well as the rescuer of the Ottoman Empire in 1853 and 1878, that is of the region sufficiently significant to become eventually the cause of the First World War, has not been even symbolically represented in the museum's display or in its published program?"

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<sup>1</sup> It refers to the course *Themes in Contemporary History*.

The answer I received was long, disconnected and could be summarized as the definition of the British imperialism of the nineteenth century. In his opinion, Great Britain implemented its colonial policy on the territories east of Persia (Iran) and south of Sahara. This was why these distant countries were important for illustrating British imperial policy. My remark that the Crimean War (1853-1856), the biggest European conflict in the nineteenth century in which Great Britain played an important, if not the most important role, began in fact because of the Balkans and left the deepest impact on its political future. I argued that the relationship of Great Britain towards the Ottoman Empire, Great Powers that threatened it and the states pretenders to its heritage was a complex one just because the survival of the Ottoman Empire represented both the least expensive, but the most reliable maintenance of the British predominance in Asia and Africa.

Although these arguments did not suffice for the introduction of a completely new concept by a prominent British museum, the fact remains that the Crimean War, after which Great Britain became one of the protectors of Serbia, did not draw particular attention until the present day even in our country. This was the biggest European war in which Serbia and her people failed to take part. The consequences of the Crimean War were immediately obvious by their far-reaching effects, but its true significance and impact on the internal policy and international status of the Principality of Serbia was long underestimated by its contemporaries and even historians. In the historic perception of the contemporaries and memories of the generations to come this war has remained as something unfinished: indecision of the official Serbia was considered to be the result of the crisis of the Constitutionalist regime, and the international isolation was explained by Serbia's failure to stand by its long-standing ally Russia, failing, however, to prove its loyalty to the Ottoman Empire. The changes that took place in 1856 were seen as incidental and not linked to the foreign political actions of Serbia. The significance of the appearance of Serbia on the international stage was not considered relevant, the connection between the internal and external events during the Crimean War with the changes in Serbia and the ensuing reforms was almost excluded. The Crimean War was a neglected topic in the historiography of the Modern Serbia, and in this topic the least attention was devoted to the relations between Great Britain and Serbia, although Great Britain was the most influential factor in the European policy of that period.

The course and the outcome of the Crimean War are thus of equal interest, when speaking about its influence on the Principality of Serbia, the same as the image of this war that developed in time. Serbia managed to preserve peace and keep her neutrality. Regardless of the fact that the peacefulness and non-commitment were, however, the result of indecision and weakness, the neutrality that Serbia was able to maintain during the war provided the period of the greatest independence that this Principality had ever enjoyed, even with international recognition. In fact, in the big war neutrality meant independence as well, and its maintenance opened the period that would end in international recognition of sovereign Serbia in 1878.

The historic sources of Serbian-British relations during the Crimean War are numerous and abundant. In addition to the report of the British Consul General in Serbia, as well as his correspondence with the ambassadors in Constantinople and Vienna, and the home secretary, i.e., the Foreign Office secretary, kept in the British National Archives (The Public Records Office, Kew), personal archives of several British politicians and diplomats, including Aberdeen, Redcliffe, Clarendon and Fonblanque are significant for the relations of Serbia and Britain.

One of the most important problems faced by the researcher of early diplomatic relations between Great Britain and Serbia (1837–1878) is the disproportion between contemporary British and Serbian sources. While between one hundred and one hundred and twenty reports were dispatched annually by the British Consulate General in Belgrade, together with special reports (memoirs), Foreign Office instructions and consular correspondence, Serbia not only did not have a permanent representative office in London, but no more serious trace could be found about the semi-official missions of Jovan Marinović and Ilija Garašanin in London during these years in the fund of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Popečiteljstvo*), or in Ilija Garašanin's<sup>2</sup> personal files. Bearing in mind that at that time foreign policy in Serbia was defined by the Prince, together with his Prime Minister (*the Prince's Predstavnik*) and Minister (*Popečitelj*) of Foreign Affairs (during the Crimean War this was most frequently the same person), their communication with foreign consuls was mainly direct and private. This is probably the reason why, contrary to

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<sup>2</sup> The exception is the letter of recommendation written by Fonblanque to Addington to receive Garašanin. Fonblanque to Addington, 3 June 1853, I.G. 913, AS (The Ilija Garašanin Papers, The Archives of Serbia).

the hundreds of notes of different nature exchanged with the neighbouring Austria, it is possible to find only about ten documents directly or indirectly related to Great Britain and the British Consul General in the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A similar situation is found with the preserved correspondence of Serbian foreign policy makers. For instance, no trace could be found in Konstantin Nikolajević's papers about his contacts with Redcliffe and Colonel Rose that can be completely reconstructed by means of British sources contrary to Marinović's and Garašanin's London visits.

When speaking about contemporary newspapers, the situation is different. Quite understandably, the advantage is here on the side of Great Britain. In the middle of the nineteenth century several tens of important daily and weekly newspapers were published there: in addition to *The Times* and *The Illustrated London News*, with the circulation exceeding fifty thousand copies, the papers such as *The Morning Herald* and *The Manchester Guardian* had a significant impact on the public in Great Britain. At that time only two newspapers were published in the Principality of Serbia – *Srbske novine* (*The Serbian Newspaper*) and *Šumadinka*, with regular but not daily editions, and their circulations hardly reached two thousand copies<sup>3</sup>. *Srbske novine* was a semi-official newspaper of the Serbian authorities, and *Šumadinka*, particularly after its banning in 1850, was coming out fairly regularly (with the exception of 1853), but its political columns related to foreign policy were mostly of informative but not analytical character, while hardly anything was written about the interior policy. The comparison coming to mind with the Serbian press in Austria is particularly interesting in case of *Srbski dnevnik* (*The Serbian Daily*) which, although very partial to Russia, was writing more freely about the situation in Europe, while analyzing committedly and in detail the internal situation in Serbia. However, contrary to the British papers that only occasionally and rarely wrote about Serbia as the most important topic, the Serbian papers mainly took over the news from Great Britain published in the Austrian and German papers<sup>4</sup>. Therefore, the news from Great Britain seemed more like curiosities than the real press news.

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<sup>3</sup> J. Skerlić, *Istorija srpske štampe*, /In Serbian: *The History of the Serbian Press*/. Belgrade, 1997, pp. 49.

<sup>4</sup> In the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century only nine copies of the British newspapers were available in Serbia, and that was the Vienna edition of *The Times*.

The world literature about the Crimean War is very abundant. Until present almost ten thousand monographs and studies were published about this period<sup>5</sup>. Nevertheless, prominent war historians have not specially studied Serbian archives or, even more interestingly, the reports of the British Consul General from Serbia. Although some historians of the Crimean War -Baumgart, Schroeder and Goldfranc rely mainly on published diplomatic material originating from the very highest sources of European diplomacies, they devote dutiful attention to Serbia<sup>6</sup>.

Serbian historiography wrote about the Crimean War only incidentally<sup>7</sup>. Jovan Ristić, who devoted a special study to Serbia during the Crimean War, was an exception. Nevertheless, while the Eastern Crisis from 1853-6 remained in the shadow of the Great Eastern Crisis from 1875-8 in which Serbia and Montenegro took direct part as well, the British policy towards Serbia in this period remained overshadowed by the relations of Serbia with Russia, Austria and, first of all, France<sup>8</sup>. Finally, out of contemporary historians of the Serbian-British relations, only Ljubodrag Ristić paid considerably more attention to the period of the Crimean War in his monograph about Serbian-British diplomatic relations from the Paris Congress to the Kanlidz Conference<sup>9</sup>.

The topic presented in this book has been the subject of my three-year-long research (the period from 2000 to the end of 2002), included in my Master's thesis entitled *Great Britain and Serbia at the Time of the Crimean War (1853-1856)*. I would like on this occasion to express my gratitude to my

<sup>5</sup> W. Baumgart, pp. 219–233.

<sup>6</sup> W. Baumgart, *The Crimean War 1853–1856*, London, 1999, P. Schroeder, *Great Britain, Austria and The Crimean War*, New York, 1972, D. Goldfranc, *The Origins of Modern Wars-The Crimean War*, London, 1996.

<sup>7</sup> D. Stranjaković, *Vlada ustavobranitelja – unutarinja i spoljna politika 1842–1853*, /In Serbian: *The Constitutionalists and Their Rule – Internal and Foreign Policy 1842-1853*/, Belgrade, 1932, S. Jovanović, *Ustavobranitelji i njihova vlada 1838–1858*, /In Serbian: *The Constitutionalists and Their Rule 1838-1858*/, Belgrade, 1933/ M. Ekmečić, *Balkan i revolucija 1848*, /In Serbian: *The Balkans and the 1848 revolution*/, Belgrade, 1999.

<sup>8</sup> Dragoslav Stranjaković devoted only one paragraph to the Great Britain's policy towards Serbia, stating that he did not much consult the British sources. D. Stranjaković, p. 261

<sup>9</sup> Lj. Ristić, *Engleska i Srbija od Pariskog mira do Kanlidžke konferencije (1856–1862)* /In Serbian: *England and Serbia from the Paris Peace to the Kanlidz Conference /1866-1862*/, (MA thesis), Belgrade, 1993.

mentor Radoš Ljušić, Professor of Belgrade University. I owe great gratitude to Dr. Robert Anderson from London, for his invaluable support and priceless instructions. I also wish to thank Dr. Djordje Kostić, head of the project *Europe and Balkans in Modern Times: Common Views and Mutual Intertwinings* (Project No. 2163, financed by the Ministry of Science and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Serbia), as well as to the esteemed colleagues from the Institute of Balkan Studies of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SASA). I would also like to thank Marica Šuput and Aleksandar Fotić, Professors of the Belgrade University for their highly valued advice and support. The experience and knowledge I gained during my master studies at the Department of Historical Studies of the Bristol University were of great help during my work. Therefore, my particular thanks to Dr. Nigel Brailey and Christopher Clay, emeritus university professor. I wish especially to thank Dr. Christian Promitzer and Dr. Karl Kaser from the Institute for South-Eastern Europe of the Graz University for their cordial and warm reception. I also owe special gratitude to Dr Winfried Baumgart, Professor of Johannes Gutenberg University, Mainz.

I am personally grateful to Mirjana Popović-Lukačević and Marko D. Leko, retired university professors, for their devoted efforts enabling me to fulfil my great desire to go out into the world at the time when our country was isolated and ostracized. I owe special thanks to my family – my mother Anamaria, grandparents Andjela and Tarcizije and my wife Ivana.

## CHAPTER ONE

### **SERBIA AND GREAT BRITAIN BEFORE THE CRIMEAN WAR**

(DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS MAKERS)

“Brothers! England is strong and mighty; its Consul is greater and more important than the Prince of Serbia; England will be not against the Serbian people, but against its government (*Praviteljstvo*), so the emperors of Russia, our protector and our Turkish Suzerain will help it, so, my brothers we are nothing and these Austrian Serbs (*Nemačkari*) and Nenadovićs would like to make a kingdom out of Serbia.”

*Ilija Garašanin predicting Vučić's opinion during the crisis in the relations between Great Britain and Serbia in 1850 (AS,IG,672)*

The second rise of British imperialism (1815-1914) was indisputably linked with the preservation of the Ottoman Empire showing uncontainable declining during the entire nineteenth century<sup>1</sup>. The exception from this policy was made only twice in the new century: during the Napoleonic wars in the beginning of the nineteenth century when the oriental policy of the French Empire was trying to preserve the integrity of the Ottoman possessions in Europe, when the British diplomacy considered the possibility of dividing European Turkey; and after the conclusion of the Anglo-Russian Alliance in 1907, when Great Britain departed from its most important principle of the Balkans policy until then, reduced to the maintenance of the existing state on the peninsula at any cost<sup>2</sup>. The Crimean War (1853-1856) represented the

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<sup>1</sup> Until 1850 even one half of the Sultan's subjects lived in the European regions of the Ottoman Empire, although on a significantly smaller territory than the Sultan's possessions in Asia and Africa. The Ottoman Empire was involved in forty three wars in the period from 1463 to 1918, out of which even thirty one war was led with different European states. D. Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire (1700–1922)*, Cambridge, 2000, pp. 54, 83–4.

<sup>2</sup> H. Temperley, *History of Serbia*, London, 1917, p. 202, B. Jelavich, *Russia's Balkan Entanglements, 1806–1914*, Cambridge 1991, p. 217.

mainstay of the British policy on the Balkans. Although this war was waged only in its first phase (1853-1854) on the Danube, it was the first clash in this region before the First World War in which Great Britain was directly involved. It was relatively difficult to draw London into this clash brought about by the attempts of France to break the Holy Alliance. As Lord Palmerston (Henry John Temple Viscount Palmerston) had mentioned much earlier, the question of the preservation of the Ottoman Empire, and thus the strife against the Russian predominance on the Balkans and in the Near East was of decisive economic interest for Great Britain. This is why during the Crimean War Britain became the most irreconcilable opponent of Russia and the extreme advocate of the need for Russia to be completely and irretrievably defeated<sup>3</sup>. Such policy triumphed at the Paris Congress in 1856. Nevertheless, it isolated Britain in the long run, because with the disappearance of the Holy Alliance the possibility of Germany and Italy unification was opened, as well as the establishment of Franco-Russian Alliance.

Contrary to the First World War and the Great Eastern Crisis (1875-1878) Serbia had not participated in the biggest European war of the nineteenth century. What was her role in the Crimean War? Historiography, both national and international, agreed that this small principality had had great potential significance in the first stage of the war, but that it had not ceased playing the role of a relatively powerless object in big diplomatic games accompanying the Russo-Turkish war on the Danube. According to the generally accepted standpoint, even this potential role became impossible due to the inactivity of the Principality of Serbia and the fact that the war was moved to the Black Sea and the Crimea at the end of 1854. This is why the achievements of the Paris Congress, in case of Serbia, were frequently considered as incidental and not too significant. Still, after the Paris peace, Serbia entered the international political scene in a special way. Despite the fact that its autonomy was established through the agreement of two Great Powers which were in war for three years (1853-1856), Serbia managed to remain neutral, and after the war its international position was guaranteed by six Great Powers together with the Ottoman Empire<sup>4</sup>. The position of Serbia after the Paris Congress and the

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<sup>3</sup> L. S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans 1815– 1914*, New York, 1953, p. 35.

<sup>4</sup> It is frequently stated in the British historiography that Serbia in fact obtained independence in 1856. A. Freeman, *Historical Course for Schools, General Sketch 1874*, p. 356; C. P. Hill, J. C. Wright, *British History 1815–1914*, Oxford, 1981, p.129.



ensuing reforms carried out soon after have not still been perceived by our historiography as one continuing process. The internal history of Serbia itself during the three-year-long European war, otherwise very stormy and dynamic, was considered mainly as a function of the country's neutrality, which became certain to be maintained only at the end of the spring in 1854. The political torpor in Serbia and its leaving the centre of the European foreign political entanglement contributed that the first stage of the war and Serbian role in it was somewhat underrated. On the other hand, the significance of Serbia in the European policy became especially evident through the prevailing belief of the Western European diplomacies and public opinion about its big military power<sup>5</sup>. This belief was dispelled by the Serbian inactivity, but not to such an extent as later defeat in the First Serbian-Turkish war in 1876.

It may be said that the attitude of Great Britain towards Serbia in this period was more an indicative than in the case of the policy of Ottoman Empire, Russia or Austria. Namely, Great Britain had no direct interests in Serbia. It is logical, however, as central interests of its world policy were linked to the Ottoman Empire and Russia, that the role of Serbia extremely gained in significance. After two decades the British policy in the field formed by consul generals in Serbia, mainly without major impact on the British policy and underrated in Serbia, and on the other side, influential chance travelers for whom this small principality was only one of the stops on the way, reached its first big international test in 1853. We speak here about the formative period of the British policy towards Serbia, in which it is possible to perceive all its dimensions in the forthcoming six decades.

Great Britain established diplomatic relations with Serbia on the 5<sup>th</sup> of June 1837, when the first British Consul General, Colonel Hodges (George Lloyd Hodges) handed over his letter of credence to Prince Miloš after his arrival to Kragujevac<sup>6</sup>. With the arrival of foreign diplomatic representatives

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<sup>5</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 11. November 1853, Copy No. 83: In May 1851 *The Times* reporter from Vienna compared the relationship between the Ottoman Empire and Serbia with the relationship between France and Burgundy at the time of Louis IX. He stated, relying on reliable sources, that the entire Serbian population was armed and able to arm from one hundred to one hundred and fifty thousand infantrymen, and from seven to eleven thousands of cavalrymen. "Austria", *The Times*, 27. May 1851.

<sup>6</sup> M. Gavrilović, "Velika Britanija i Srbija", *Iz nove srpske istorije*, /In Serbian: "Great Britain and Serbia", *From New Serbian History*/, Belgrade, 1926, pp. 113–114; S. K. Pavlowitch, *Anglo-Russian Rivalry in Serbia, 1837–1839*, Paris, 1961, p. 45.

to Serbia at the end of the thirties in the nineteenth century, the autonomous status of the Principality officially established by Hati-sheriffs from 1830, 1833 and 1838 received another international confirmation. British policy aimed to strengthen Serbian independence against the all-powerful Russian protectorate. One of the important inspirers was influential David Urquhart, one of the most prominent advocates of the anti-Russian policy in Great Britain, who visited Serbia in different capacities even in four missions in the period from 1832 to 1837.<sup>7</sup> Urquhart was very well-versed in the Serbian circumstances, and he was personally acquainted with Prince Miloš and other Serbian leaders. In fact, he was the one to initiate, relying on his own rich experience, the appointment of the first Consul General for Serbia. In addition to energetic Urquhart, the British government and the public were significantly influenced by the Polish emigration headed by Prince Adam Czartoryski, who in the emancipation of the Southern Slavs saw the way for the liberation of their homeland<sup>8</sup>.

The instructions given to Hodges were still very moderate, entrusting him with two important goals: one was of the economic, and the other of political nature. The political influence of Britain in Serbia could not be achieved, naturally, in the way in which Russia, Austria or Ottoman Empire were implementing their predomination. "The boats", as several decades later

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<sup>7</sup> David Urquhart (1805–1877) was the British politician, diplomat and political writer. He participated in the Greek War for Independence and two political missions in Constantinople in 1831 and 1833. He was the member of the British Parliament from 1847 to 1852, opposing the foreign policy of Great Britain, and particularly Palmerston's and Redcliffe's actions. Distinguished historians (M. Ekmečić, *Stvaranje Jugoslavije*, /In Serbian: *Creation of Yugoslavia*/, Belgrade, 1989, p. 473) ascribe great influence to him on the preparation of *Načertanije* (1844). It is, however, evident that at the end of the Crimean War he advocated a very conservative and restrictive emancipation of Wallachia and Moldavia, thus leading to the conclusion that he did not support the national principle any more in solving the question of Serbia. D. Urquhart, "Is Mr. Urquhart A Tory or A Radical. Answered by his Constitution for the Danubian Provinces" (int. W. Cyples), *Political Tracts 1712–1856*, Sheffield, 1856, pp. 1–13.

<sup>8</sup> From 1834 to 1846 Urquhart and Czartoryski published the journal "Portfolio", devoting a significant place to the question of the British policy towards Serbia (M. Ekmečić, p. 224). The great difference in the approach of these two politicians who were only temporarily on the same side is, however, neglected. While Urquhart was prepared to fight for warding off the Russian imperialism for the sake of the survival of the "Bosphorus patient", the fall of the Russian Empire at the cost of the Ottoman Empire fall did not, obviously, fit into his plans.

Ilija Garašanin remarked, “could not travel on dry land”, and that is why the just awakened interest for Serbia could primarily be of economic character<sup>9</sup>. The lack of roads and the distance between two countries made this task difficult to achieve, and slowed its attainment. Hodges could work on suppression of the Russian influence only in coalition with other powers, but still, from the beginning he had not only failed to bring together his modest power with them, but also allowed them to get united against him. He had no better luck in selecting the allies in the Principality itself, so during the conflict of Prince Miloš and the Constitutionalist opposition he sided with the politically more and more isolated Serbian monarch<sup>10</sup>. Hodges’s support only led Prince Miloš to get unrealistic expectations. Official Britain used to prompt him in turns to enter the open conflict with the Russian diplomacy, only to discourage him later and to withdraw itself. Owing to his close relationship with the British Consul Prince Miloš was ready to believe that he would get sufficient support to resist Russia, and even certain concessions from the Porte. Constitution, the issue about which all political interests and conflicts in Serbia started to clash from 1835 onwards, also brought together the Prince and the British diplomacy on the same side. Great Britain, however, although advising the Serbian ruler to remain firm, took care not to spoil its relations with Russia. The Prince’s defeat finally and completely exposed this double game, arousing bitterness and compromising Hodges so much that his stay in Belgrade was not possible any more. In May 1839, having stayed in Belgrade for exactly two years and only several months after passing of the Turkish constitution, the British Consul General moved to Zemun. Such an outcome of the first British mission had a very great impact on the future reputation and influence of the British diplomacy in Serbia. Until his death Prince Miloš believed that unreliable British assistance brought about his deposal in 1839<sup>11</sup>. The British policy towards Serbia was seriously criticized in the British Parliament itself, and almost two decades later Hodges’s successor to the position of the Consul General wrote how since Hodges’s departure Britain was not interfering with

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<sup>9</sup> D. Stranjaković, *Ilija Garašanin*, Kragujevac: Jefimija 2005.

<sup>10</sup> S. K. Pavlowitch, *Anglo-Russian rivalry in Serbia (1837–1839)*, Paris 1961, p.158.

<sup>11</sup> A. Rastović, *Velika Britanija i Srbija (1878–1889)*, /In Serbian: *Great Britain and Serbia (1878–1889)*/. Belgrade, 2000, p. 23.

the Serbian internal policy, except in principle<sup>12</sup>. It may be finally said that the greatest mistake of the first British Consul General was really the conviction that foreign policy was of prevailing interest to the Serbian policy makers as well. This was why he believed that it was possible to reach a compromise pattern of the constitutional system in Serbia, leaving absolute power to the ruler, while the Constitutionals could be satisfied by a guarantee of the basic civil rights<sup>13</sup>.

The new British Consul General came to Serbia not before the spring of 1842. Thomas Grenier de Fonblanque arrived to Belgrade, even eight months after his appointment as head the British Consulate in Serbia (on the 21<sup>st</sup> of August 1841). It seems that the British diplomacy by its very choice and instructions attempted to stay out of the turbulent events that were shaking Serbia at that time<sup>14</sup>. In September 1842 Vučić's uprising took place, Prince Mihailo was dethroned, and the Constitutionals and Prince Aleksandar Karadjordjević came to power. Fonblanque remained at the post of the Consul General in Serbia longer than all his successors. His eighteen-year-long service in Belgrade had no match in the length of the mandate of any other foreign consul staying in Serbia during the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, it might be said that Fonblanque's personality and work, despite the fact that the continuity of his long lasting activities could be very precisely followed in available sources, remained controversial and enigmatic. As Fonblanque was at the post of the Consul General in Serbia during the Crimean War, it was in fact during his mandate that Great Britain, now together with France, obtained again a significant influence on the Serbian policy, so that on this occasion something more should be written about this interesting historical personality,

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<sup>12</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 29 February 1856, F.O. 78/1097, No.10, (PRO, Kew, London).

<sup>13</sup> R. Ljušić, *Kneževina Srbija (1830–1839)*, /In Serbian: *The Principality of Serbia 1830-1839*/, Belgrade, 1983, pp. 158.

<sup>14</sup> The long journey Fonblanque took via Gibraltar, Malta and Trieste was already extremely unusual, pointing out by its very choice to the small significance Foreign Office attached to Serbia. The superiors were even accusing him that he had chosen the longest route in order to avoid his creditors. Ph. Auty, "Neobjavljeni dokumenti engleskog ministarstva o Srbiji 1837–1911", /In Serbian: *Unpublished Foreign Office Documents about Serbia 1837-1911*/, *Istorijski časopis*, /In Serbian: *Historical Journal*/, vol. XII–XIII, 1961–1962, Belgrade, 1963, p. 418. In one of his speeches held in the early forties of the nineteenth century, Benjamin Disraeli, the future British conservative Prime Minister, singled out Thomas Fonblanque as an example of "general lack of capability and qualifications" among the British diplomats. Benjamin Disraeli, *Benjamin Disraeli Letters, 1842-1847*, 1989, p. 23.

whose character overshadowed his own work, at least when speaking about the image prevailing in later historiography.

In the reviews published until present about the history of the British-Serbian relations there is not much about Fonblanque's biography. The ancestors of the second British Consul General in Serbia had moved to the region of Cornwall in the seventeenth century fleeing the religious persecution in France<sup>15</sup>. During the next century they were already fully integrated, as Fonblanque's father entered the House of Commons as the Member of Parliament for Camelford. Albany William Fonblanque, Thomas Fonblanque's brother, was a distinguished journalist and the editor of the influential *Examiner* for a long time<sup>16</sup>. Thomas Fonblanque himself started his career in a manner usual for the majority of prominent British politicians and diplomats of the nineteenth century, particularly if not of an aristocratic origin. In 1808, during the Napoleonic wars, he joined the British Army in which he served for full eight years, on the fronts in Spain, Sicily and Belgium<sup>17</sup>. As it was customary in the Foreign Office official biographies, the date of Fonblanque's

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<sup>15</sup> Fonblanque, Albany William, *Encyclopaedia Britannica, A New Survey of Universal Knowledge*, Volume 9, London, 1957.

<sup>16</sup> O. H. Lejard, *Od Beograda do Carigrada za šest dana*, /In Serbian: *From Belgrade to Constantinople in Six Days*/, B. Momčilović (edit.), *Britanski putopisci o našim krajevima u XIX veku*, /In Serbian: *British Travel Writers about Our Regions in nineteenth century*/, Novi Sad, 1993, p. 63. **British travellers, occasionally passing through Belgrade, had much more favourable opinion of Fonblanque. Skane thus stated that he had pleasant and interesting talks with Fonblanque not only about Serbian topics, but also about all other topics they came upon for which he "was equally an inexhaustible source". Skane, *The Frontier Lands of the Christian and the Turk*, Vol.2, 177.**

<sup>17</sup> Thomas Grenier de Fonblanque, *Foreign Office List 1859-1860*. **Thomas Grenier Viscount de Fonblanque, K.H. was the descendant of the old Italian noble family Grenieri that moved to Languedoc in the thirteenth century. The older branch of the family bearing the title Marquess of Juliers became extinct in 1829. Pierre Grenier, Thomans Fonblanque's ancestor, defended the castle Cessenan from the Duke of Montmorency in 1584. Because of this his descendants received the title of Counte de Hautessere et de Fonblanque from Henry IV. In 1688 the title was confirmed by the Intendant of Languedoc M. de Bezons. Anthony Fonblanque, Thomas Fonblanque's great-grandfather, moved to England in the beginning of the eighteenth century, where he was naturalized by the Parliament Act of 14.4.1738. Thomas Grenier de Fonblanque's father, John Martin de Fonblanque (de iure Comte de Fonblanque K.C. (1844), was the Barrister-at-law of the Middle Temple (24.1.1783-4.1.1857). John Martin was the M.P. for Camelford (1803-1806) and a personal friend of H.R.H. Prince of Wales afterwards George IV. He actually reassumed the original surname of "de Grenier", by the royal**



birth was not recorded, but as he was still in service in 1858, it could be assumed that he had to be very young when he had joined the army – perhaps, barely sixteen years old. He entered the diplomatic service on the 21<sup>st</sup> of September 1816, when he was appointed the Consul for the region of the French coast of the English Channel. It seems that he

distinguished himself in the service from the beginning, because before his transfer he was decorated with the Guelphic order of the 3<sup>rd</sup> class. On the first of January 1822 he was appointed the Consul in Eastern Prussia and remained unassigned for four years after this Consulate was dissolved in 1832. Since 1836 he was at the post of the British Consul for Prussian Dominions. In 1838 he was transferred across the Atlantic to Philadelphia, where he remained for more than three years. The appointment as the Consul General in Serbia represented by all means a significant promotion for the 49-year old diplomat. By ill fortune this was to be the last one in his career.

License on 16.5.1828. Thomas Grenier de Fonblanque was John Martin's middle son. The eldest son, John Samuel Martin was in 21<sup>st</sup> Fusiliers, afterwards a Commissioner for bankruptcy. Albany William, the youngest John Martin's son, was a journalist and a well known writer of his time. T. G. de Fonblanque married Jane-Catherine, Sir Jonah Barrington, the judge of the High Court of Admiralty in Ireland and a M.P. in the British Parliament, daughter. The wedding took place in 1815 and Fonblanque was introduced as K.H., a hereditary viscount of France and the second son of the eminent King's counsel. John Burke, Sir Bernard, *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Extinct and Dormant Baronetcies of England*, Bar, Barrington of Barrington Hall. Thomas Grenier de Fonblanque was mentioned as the captain of the h.p.2<sup>nd</sup> Garrison Battalion already in 1842. Arthur William Alsager Pollock (Edit.), *The United Service Magazine* 1842. Thomas and Jane-Catherine had at least three children. Adelaide Arabella married Otto Count Schlippenbach and Sckofte Chamberlain to the King of Prussia. The wedding took place in Napoli on 1.11.1850. Adelaide Arabella died only six years later (1.8.1856) in Basedow, Mecklenburg-Schwerin, *The Gentleman's Magazine*, July 1856, Obituary, 893). Younger daughter Caroline married Rev. Richard Croker, M.A. in 1861 (*The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Review* by Sylvanus Urban, Gent 1861). Thomas de Fonblanque's son, Edward Barrington de Fonblanque, inherited the title of viscount. Edward Barrington's grandson and namesake had a distinguished military career becoming a Major-General in the British army. In 1924. he even won a golden medal on the Olympic games. Thomas Grenier de Fonblanque's descendant John Robert de Fonblanque (born in 1943) is currently the Director in the office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities in Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). See p. 189.

It would not be too strong to say that from the very beginning Serbia did not much attract Fonblanque. The population he met there was of different culture and the mentality he could not stand. The politicians he was in contact with were mostly loathsome to him. The Princes Mihailo and Aleksandar seemed to him as sheer puppets: the former was in the power of the Russian Consul Veščenko, while not only the Russian and Austrian diplomacies were competing who would gain the power over the latter, but also the fractions of the quarrelling Constitutionalist oligarchy. Burdened with Hodges's legacy Fonblanque was also dissatisfied with the weak British influence and his low income which made him considerably lag behind his colleagues, even at the time when he became the doyen of the small diplomatic corps in the Principality.<sup>18</sup> There were another two important turning points Fonblanque experienced during the forties in the nineteenth century, that finally modelled his negative attitude towards Serbia and the Serbian people. First of all, he got dysentery from which he was treated and recovering in Zemun, having left the Consulate building in Belgrade for quite some time. Later on the 1848-1849 Hungarian Revolution took place in which the Serbs in Southern Hungary, with abundant help from the official Serbia and its volunteers, fought against the Hungarians, the British favorites. Many years later Fonblanque wrote with disgust about riotous Serbian volunteers everybody feared, even their fellow Serbs from Austria. If Fonblanque had to seriously accuse any Serbian politician, this had to be unavoidably corroborated by the participation of the same in the Hungarian war.<sup>19</sup> There is not much written in historiography

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<sup>18</sup> Fonblanque's annual salary amounted to 800 pounds sterling, allocating him 156 pounds for expenses. In total, the above sum was higher than the average salary of the state counselor in the Principality of Serbia (i.e., 4,780 thalers in comparison with the counselor's salary of 2,500 thalers). The British Consul, however, lagged behind the remuneration received by the Belgrade Pasha amounting to 12,000 ducats, i.e., 5,000 pounds sterling, or Ilija Garašanin's property, estimated at 2,000 pounds. Fonblanque was constantly dissatisfied with his pay, stating that he was the least paid of other foreign consuls, and that his salary was smaller than the pay received by some Serbian politicians. It is true that Fonblanque's budget in 1855 was for more than one third smaller than the total sum of his actual expenses in Belgrade. Fonblanque to Clarendon, Belgrade, 19 January 1855, and Fonblanque to Wodehouse, 3 March 1855, Turkey (Wallachia and Servia), F.O. 78/1096.

<sup>19</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 14 July 1854, F.O. 78/1009, No. 41; Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 13 April 1856, F.O. 78/1197, No. 22. He wrote that Tripković, the Prince's aide-de-camp, had personally tortured old people and children in Southern Hungary.



about his role in those events. However, several years later he was personally boasting about giving shelter to Lajos Kossuth himself, the leader of the Hungarian Revolution, when running away from the Austrian retaliation across the Serbian territory.<sup>20</sup> The proud British consul claimed that the official Austria had never forgiven him for the role he played, so that even the Austrian emperor Franz Joseph I when travelling by boat on the Danube in 1852, personally forbade the crew of his ship to return the honours the British flag, under which Kossuth's rescuer defiantly stood.<sup>21</sup>

It is quite understandable that the legacy could not have been responsible for everything. Fonblanque was truly a very difficult person. Despite their continuous cooperation Garašanin himself described him once as "a completely crazy person".<sup>22</sup> The British Consul General was frequently the victim of circumstances in Serbia. Thus in 1851 he came into conflict with the Serbian authorities because the gathered mob stoned the British Consulate and burnt the hoisted British flag in front of it. The reason was that he had omitted to have the building illuminated on the occasion of Prince Aleksandar's birthday. The Serbian government finally apologized and even took over certain obligations concerning the construction of roads in order to expand the modest British trade in Serbia. However, when at last, two years later certain British investments were made in Serbia (the Woodward company intended to invest several thousand pounds into the pork processing), an unpleasant disagreement occurred with the contractors, in which Fonblanque himself had to take part.<sup>23</sup> The misunderstandings between the British Consul

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<sup>20</sup> Fonblanque to Canning, Belgrade, 15 January 1852, F.O. 78/896; Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 30 July 1853, F.O. 78/943, No. 46

<sup>21</sup> It seems that the other two suzerains of empires having decisive impact on the circumstances in Serbia were aware of Fonblanque's activity. In the beginning of 1855 he even had to give an explanation to his superiors for the Sultan's alleged personal wish to decorate him, while several months later he recollected that the emperor Nikolay I knew how to emphasize the significant role the British Consul General actually played in Serbia in the years preceding the Crimean War saying: "C'est donc une Conlenure ? que ce Monsieur de Fonblanque!" Fonblanque to Clarendon, Belgrade, 19 February 1855, F.O. 78/1095; Fonblanque to Clarendon, Belgrade, 20 February 1856, F.O. 78/1197, No. 8.

<sup>22</sup> D. Stranjaković, *Ilija Garašanin*, Kragujevac: Jefimija 2005.

<sup>23</sup> The agreement between the brothers Ljutić from Smederevo and William Woodward from Manchester, 2./14 October 1852, Fonblanque to MID (Serbian Ministry of Foreign Affairs), 30 September 1853, MID-I, VI-105 ( d.b. 3152);



General and his surroundings got in the end a fateful turn. In May 1858, while carelessly walking he was attacked by the Turkish guards and the injuries he sustained had lethal consequences.<sup>24</sup> But Fonblanque was not always the innocent victim in his complex relations with the Serbs and the Turks. During one minor traffic accident he beat up the incautious coachman and his almost three times younger passenger. The injured party sued him, but without much success as the Serbian authorities took trouble not to antagonize Great Britain even when quite banal issue was in question.<sup>25</sup>

This was, however, only one side of the British Consul General's personality. Although he despised Serbian politicians, he remained in sincere friendship with Ilija Garašanin for a long time. It is true that Garašanin sometimes used to talk unfavourably about him, but even during the greatest crises such a negative attitude was not mutual.<sup>26</sup>

He was denying the Serbian people many qualities that any civilized people should have, but frequently this was not made in ill will. Despite the fact that during almost two decades of living in Serbia he did not learn to speak the Serbian language, Fonblanque showed a great interest in its circumstances as can be proved by this excerpt:

„...the wants of Servia abundantly supplied by keeping one-third of the rich soil under culture. Servia could feed five millions of people and export grain and cattle beside, but under a system tainted by indolence and vice, – her Population has, within the last fifteen years, declined from one million to nine hundred thousand. As there is no poverty to restrain early marriages; this decay must be ascribed to more unusual causes and the most patent of these, is the tolerated habit of procuring abortion – a process which

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Fonblanque to MID, 30 September 1853, MID-I, VI-105 (d.b. 3152); Fonblanque to Clarendon, 27 July 1855, F.O. 78/1096, and Fonblanque – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 28 February 1856, MID II-190,5, No. 631.

<sup>24</sup> Ž. Djordjević, "Slučaj engleskog konzula Fonblanka 1858", (In Serbian: The Case of the English Consul Fonblanque 1858), *Istorijski glasnik* 1-2, /In Serbian: *Historical Herald* 1-2/, Belgrade, 1978, pp. 117-120.

<sup>25</sup> S. Magazinović – Popečiteljstvu inostranih dela, 9. avgust (21. avgust) 1856, /In Serbian: To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 9 August (21 August) 1856/, MID IV-855, No. 2969, AS.

<sup>26</sup> Even the British ambassador in Constantinople noticed Fonblanque's affinity towards the leaders of the "patriotic party" in Serbia, thus also calling Garašanin "Fonblankque's friend". Redcliffe to Fonblanque, 19 February 1856, F.O. 352/43C, Redcliffe Papers.

implicates great mortality amongst Females. This is not an opportune moment for me to indulge in speculations about the fate of Servia; but I may perhaps be allowed to admit a belief of my having established the lemma of its' anticipation for self- (that is, for national) government, and to assert, as a corollary—that no social amelioration – in fine, no redemption for an inclination to savage life on a Russian plan, or to a Russian degree can save the Country so full of capabilities – unless an enlightened government can be introduced, from without, under the protection of Foreign Federal Troops – not all Austrian, and none of them Turkish – until better principles are implanted among invisibly relapsing Natives. Foreigners of the wrong-kind precipitated the ruin of Greece, Foreigners of appropriate description could regenerate Servia<sup>27</sup>.”

He showed the similar insight in the beginning of December 1854 when he described in his report to Redcliffe the strange persistence of the Serbian authorities to install the telegraph through Serbia on their own. He argued that they were not able or willing to build a road from the City of Belgrade to five miles distant Topčider, concluding that “the favourite rule with Serbs is to start building the house from the roof”<sup>28</sup>.

In addition to this, Fonblanque was acquainted with the national aspirations of Serbia. He was one of the rare foreign diplomats who anticipated the significant role Serbia would play in the future, particularly in relation to uniting of the Southern Slavs.<sup>29</sup> Fonblanque's proposals for the constitutional reform of Serbia in the forthcoming decades proved as an excellent anticipation of the Serbian institutions evolution. Even when dealing with the economic future of the Principality, his estimate that the only profitable export article would, actually, be the export of pork has proved to be correct.<sup>30</sup> Fonblanque's observations were as much as interesting as daring, and probably therefore were not well received by the Foreign Office. He proposed the constitutional and state reforms in Serbia under the British protectorate, his own concept of the reform of the Ottoman Empire by asymmetric federalization, as well as a completely new presentation of the British economy in Serbia. Despite all his efforts, the proposals he kept sending contained, however, a great immediate risk, and even greater and more uncertain long-term effects. Unable to obtain

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<sup>27</sup> Fonblanque to Clarendon, Belgrade, 20 November 1854, F.O. 78/1009, No. 43.

<sup>28</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 10 December 1854, F.O. 78/1009, No. 65.

<sup>29</sup> Ph. Auty, pp. 422–3.

<sup>30</sup> Fonblanque to Addington, Belgrade, 13 April 1854, F.O. 78/1008.

long-term gains at the least possible risk, the practical British foreign policy makers opted for, as a rule, small risks and immediate effects.

The attention should also be paid here to the nature of the British-Serbian diplomatic relations during the fifties of the nineteenth century. At that time Serbia, alongside with some German countries and Switzerland, was one of the rare landlocked European countries. In addition to this, it was not independent, and the land communications were, as seen, very bad. In the middle of the nineteenth century the population of London itself, for instance, two and a half times exceeded the total population of the Principality of Serbia while, according to some statistics, as much as six million people were involved in commerce in Great Britain.<sup>31</sup> Their institutions greatly differed as well. Great Britain was the centre of the European liberalism, and the parliamentary principle was so strong that already for one century the cabinets depended on the parliamentary majority in the Westminster Palace. The role of citizens was not only expanded in state governing in 1832, but actually the time of the Crimean War brought about its new triumph, because for the first time in history, the pressure of the public opinion caused the downfall of one Cabinet.<sup>32</sup>

The diplomacy was somewhat more conservative in relation to the other British state institutions. During the Crimean War it acted in the form already established in the eighteenth century. Closed and oligarchic by nature, during the nineteenth century it started only gradually to become professionalized, but only to a limited extent.<sup>33</sup> In the nineteenth century Serbia belonged first to the Southern, and later to the Eastern Foreign Office Department.<sup>34</sup> At that time Great Britain maintained diplomatic relations at the rank of ambassador with six European powers only: France, Spain, Russia, Austria, Prussia and the Ottoman Empire. In about some other twenty countries in the world considered independent at the time, Great Britain was represented by the rank of a minister or the minister extraordinary and envoy plenipotentiary, while it had general consuls or general agents in the countries such as Serbia. Fonblanque was the

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<sup>31</sup> "Šumadinka", 15/27 February 1855, yr. IV, No.14.

<sup>32</sup> More accurately, the writing of *The Times* led to the fall of the Aberdeen's government. C.P. Hill and J.C.Wright, p. 128.

<sup>33</sup> During the nineteenth century the changes at the head of the Foreign Office were less frequent than in other ministries. Only two state secretaries (Canning and Grey) out of seventeen heading the British diplomacy from 1815 to 1914, were not peers: Z. S. Steiner, *The Foreign Office, 1898-1914*, Cambridge, 1969, p. 2.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 214-215.

general agent in Serbia, but notwithstanding all his attempts to get at least one (regional) consulate opened in the Lower Danube region (with the seat in Smederevo), not only that had been unsuccessful, but in his opinion he was ranked a step lower in the Foreign Office hierarchy in comparison to his Belgrade colleagues from other countries.<sup>35</sup> A comparatively small significance the Principality of Serbia had enjoyed in the British plans until 1853 resulted in its policy towards the Principality being essentially determined by the general policy towards the Ottoman Empire. As we have seen, this policy did not basically change since 1815, although it could be said that despite entering into the war with Russia, Aberdeen's Cabinet (George Hamilton Gordon Earl of Aberdeen) was much less disposed against Russia than in the case of Palmerston's Cabinet to succeed him in 1855. The changes in the British policy towards the Ottoman Empire had almost no effect on its policy towards Serbia. Serbia was hardly ever mentioned in the Parliament during the war, and no document exclusively related to it was found in Aberdeen's papers. The policy towards Serbia was essentially defined by the British Ambassador in Constantinople, Sir Stratford de Redcliffe and Fonblanque, with the final approval of Lord Clarendon (Clarendon, George William Frederick Villiers, 4<sup>th</sup> earl of), the State Secretary (Minister of Foreign Affairs) in Aberdeen's Cabinet. A closer circle of Aberdeen's Cabinet, determined much more important British policy issues in the war whereas the issues such as the Serbian one were mainly within the State Secretary's complete competence.<sup>36</sup>

During this time Serbia was ruled by the Prince and the State Council in accordance with the Turkish Constitution which, as Slobodan Jovanović very precisely observed, was written more to restrict the ruler than to provide valid administration to the state.<sup>37</sup> While the ruler was made unable to perform both by the letter of the Constitution and the fact that Porte had not recognized the right to title succession of the Karadjordjević family, the State Council was increasingly losing touch with the people thus becoming not only oligarchic but a closed bureaucratic institution as well. Serbia was thus under the great

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<sup>35</sup> Fonblanque to Clarendon, 12 July 1853, F.O. 78/946, Consular No. 8.

<sup>36</sup> "Inner cabinet" consisted of Aberdeen as the Prime Minister, John Russell, the majority leader in the House of Commons, Clarendon, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Palmerston, the Home Secretary. A. J. P. Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1848–1918*, London, 1994, p. 52.

<sup>37</sup> S. Jovanović, *Ustavobranitelji i njihova vlada, 1838–1858*, /In Serbian: *Constitutionalists and Their Rule, 1838–1858*/, Belgrade, 1933, pp. 187– 8.

influence of the Ottoman Empire, its Suzerain, Russia, its Protector and Austria to which it was militarily and economically oriented.

As an autonomous state within the Ottoman Empire the Principality had no established relations with foreign states. The Serbian Agent at the Porte – Kapou-kehaja and occasional agents in Wallachia and Moldavia were the exceptions. Serbia felt the need to expand its diplomatic activities during the Crimean War. Jovan Marinović was thus sent to Paris in an unofficial mission,



Ilija Garašanin

and he remained there for one year only, maintaining regular contacts with the French and British Ministries of Foreign Affairs.<sup>38</sup> Aleksa Janković was later sent to Vienna with a similar task.<sup>39</sup> Although Serbia was often under the prevailing influence of Russia during the Crimean War, mainly Russian diplomats used to come to Serbia (Fonton, Mouchin, Popov and others). Anastas Nikolić's mission dispatched to the Russian General Headquarters in Wallachia, remained a rather isolated case of direct diplomatic activity of the official Serbia in this respect.<sup>40</sup> Contrary to other Great Powers which sent their special envoys to Serbia, particularly in the period of the great crisis from the summer 1853 to the spring of 1854, Great Britain did not send additional diplomats in Serbia.<sup>41</sup>

Fonblanque was the highest diplomatic representative of Great Britain during the Crimean War. In Serbia, in addition to the Prince, his Prime Minister (*Predstavnik*) was in charge of the foreign policy, who also carried out the duty of the Minister of Foreign Affairs (*Popečitelj*). Apart from these two men, Fonblanque maintained contacts with several members of the State Council, although this institution had not the mandate for foreign policy affairs. The British Consul General even claimed that he had to be given credit for admitting to the State Council four members partial to Great Britain and France after 1851. Still, it could be said that the majority of Serbian politicians he cooperated with had cold, probably even hostile relations with him. We have seen how he considered the Prince to be a weak and extremely unreliable person. In several instances he even claimed that his deposal was a prerequisite for the progress of Serbia. Understandably, he despised the "Russian party", and his contacts

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<sup>38</sup> J. Ristić, "Srbija i Krimski rat", *Istorijski spisi*, (In Serbian: "Serbia and the Crimean War", *Historical Writings*), Belgrade, 1940, p. 150. Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 20 September 1854, F.O. 78/1009., No. 47.

<sup>39</sup> J. Ristić, p. 113.

<sup>40</sup> J. Ristić, p. 121. Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 12 May 1854, F.O. 78/1008.

<sup>41</sup> Fonton's and Mouchin's Russia, Maierhoffer's Austria, Bure's France and Merroni's Prussia. G. Jakšić, D. Stranjaković, *Srbija od 1813. do 1858*, /In Serbian: *Serbia from 1813 to 1855*/, Belgrade, p. 148; Lj. Aleksić, "Francuski uticaj u spoljnoj i unutrašnjoj politici Srbije za vreme Krimskog rata", /In Serbian: French Influence in the Foreign and Internal Policy of Serbia during the Crimean War/, *Istorijski časopis (IČ)*, /In Serbian: *Historical Journal* of the Historical Institute of the SASA, vol. IX for 1960, Belgrade, 1961, pp. 62–3. Even the possibility of the opening of the U.S. Consulate in Belgrade was mentioned at the beginning of the war. Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 30 July 1853, F.O. 78/943, No. 46.

with its leaders Toma Vučić Perišić and Stefan Stefanović-Tenka were rare and limited, filled with distrust. He shrank from the Austrophiles, particularly after 1848, but he remained in regular connections with them. Except from Garašanin, he did not deem it necessary to say a good word about the Prince's Prime Ministers until the end of the Crimean War. Avram Petronijević, Constitutionalist leader, influential and relatively independent was, according to him, an irreconcilable opponent of the West and incorrigible demagogue, Aleksa Simić – a Russophile and accomplice in the ruler's incapacity, Aleksa Janković – Austrophile who, bribed by his appointment for the Prime Minister completely changed his political attitude.<sup>42</sup> Garašanin had personally good relations with him, primarily because of the political orientation he adopted after his visit to Paris in 1852 and the unswervingness he showed as one of the first victims of Menshikov's mission already in March 1853. In addition to their political similarity which was probably the greatest in the period from 1852 to 1858, one cannot neglect the impact of the fact that Fonblanque and Garašanin were able to communicate without any bigger problems in the German language which apparently the British Consul General spoke better than the French language.<sup>43</sup> Although language barriers were not important for Fonblanque in general, as the politicians he communicated with were speaking one of the European languages, the lack of knowledge of the Serbian language isolated him a lot. This fact was especially manifested in the affair with the 1854 *Memorandum* and the articles in *Srbske novine* at the end of 1855, when he delatedly reacted just because he had had no opportunity of getting their official translation in time.<sup>44</sup> Still, despite the fact that the British policy towards the Balkans was defined and directed primarily by Clarendon and Redcliffe, its inspirer in great extent, in case of Serbia, was certainly Fonblanque himself. In the narrow circle of the above mentioned British diplomats and a somewhat

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<sup>42</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 29 December 1855, F.O. 78/1095, Copy No. 60; J. Ristić, *Propast oligarhije 1856–1858, Spoljašnji odnošaji Srbije III*, (In Serbian: *The Fall of Oligarchy 1856-1858, Foreign Relations of Serbia III*), Belgrade, 1886, p. 238.

<sup>43</sup> Garašanin's life was significantly changed by his visit to Paris. In fact, it awakened Garašanin's increased interest in foreign policy. For the first time then he started to wear the Western civilian clothes. D. Stranjaković, *Ilija Garašanin*, Kragujevac: Jefimija 2005, pp. 244, 481. During the Crimean War he visited Paris and London twice, about which his biographers (Stranjaković and D. MacKenzie, *Ilija Garašanin: Balkan Bismarck*, (New York: East European Monographs, Boulder, 1985) did not especially write. Fonblanque to Addington, 3 June 1853, IG, 913, AS.

<sup>44</sup> Fonblanque to Clarendon, Belgrade, 12 December 1855, O 78/ 1095, No. 42.





Malakhov, Franz Roubaud. Detail of his panoramic painting  
The Siege of Sevastopol

greater number of Serbian politicians, it is possible to recognize the makers of the British-Serbian relations during the Crimean War.

The study of the relations between Great Britain and Serbia during the Crimean War obviously deserves a special attention for many reasons. It has been mentioned that during the entire nineteenth century London showed much greater interest for the circumstances in Serbia only during the Crimean War (1853-1856) and Great Eastern Crisis (1875-1878). But while during the Great Eastern Crisis Great Britain was negatively disposed towards Serbia from the beginning and had no direct military participation in the crisis, the conditions were basically different during the Crimean War. The interests Great Britain had for Serbia were twofold. The attitude of Serbia should without fail, according to the British belief, define the position of all Balkan Christians, and particularly South Slavs. On the other hand, the total number of British

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<sup>45</sup> W. Baumgart, *The Crimean War (1853– 1856)*, London, 1999, p.78.



soldiers submitted to the Parliament in the summer of 1854 amounted to 183,000, together with the troops in the colonies. Only 30,000 British soldiers were, however, sent to the East.<sup>45</sup> By the end of 1853 the estimates of the number of the Serbian armed troops, reaching the British public, were in the range of sixty to eighty thousand soldiers. Although these estimates were later denied both by the diplomats and observers, as well as by the official Serbia, they ascribed it great significance at the climax of the crisis in 1853-1854. Later, particularly in the beginning of 1856, Serbia remained completely neglected in the plans of Great Britain and Western allies. The reform of the Ottoman Empire was carried out without visible connection with the reforms of the Danube principalities and Serbia which, notwithstanding, took place. The reasons for such a policy of Great Britain and its allies were disregarded in the historiography until present, exactly because of the prevailing belief that limited Russo-Turkish war on the Danube showed not only the weakness of Russia but also the small significance of the Balkans in the forthcoming conflict. The impact of the decisions of the Paris Congress on further development of political circumstances and the determination of the status of Serbia was underestimated owing to the inappropriate comparison of Serbia with the Danube principalities and Piedmont. The study that follows is an analysis of chronologically presented British-Serbian diplomatic relations, with special topical reviews of their important segments which have not even until present drawn the attention of the historians.

## CHAPTER TWO

### **ANNUS MIRABILIS – 1853** THE EASTERN CRISIS 1852–1854

“In the history of the Eastern question there has not been a crisis burdened with so many complex questions as this one; never before had the human mind strained so hard to entangle and untangle them as then.”

Jovan Ristić, *Srbija i Krimska vojna (Serbia and the Crimean War)*

The debacle of the 1848-1849 revolution seemed complete in 1852: the old system was re-established in all Central European countries, and in France Louis Napoleon was crowned with imperial crown. Nevertheless 1849 could not have been the same as 1815, and the crisis that started in 1852 had to prove the fact that the revolution debacle did not mean the victory of the Holy Alliance as well. The crisis over the Holy Places (1852-1853) and Montenegro (1853) represented in effect a challenge for the system established in 1815 which was successfully tested in the East of Europe and Levant in 1829-30, 1841 and 1849.

The question of the balance between the European powers did not directly affect Serbia. Strictly speaking, both sides had no intention of changing its status. However, with the beginning of the conflict and the outbreak of the European war it seemed that the very survival of the Ottoman Empire was exposed to danger. The sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire inevitably opened up the eternal topic of the status of Serbia, Wallachia and Moldavia.<sup>1</sup> The beginning of the crisis burst out quite unexpectedly in an effort of the newly proclaimed French emperor Napoleon III to increase his prestige by demanding

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<sup>1</sup> P. W. Shroeder, *Austria, Great Britain and the Crimean War – The Destruction of the European Concert*, London, 1972, p. 23 – W. Baumgart, p. 25.

from the Porte to recognize the right of the Catholics to keys of the most important churches in Jerusalem. The Holy places crisis, as it remained known, soon got transformed into a conflict of principle over the right of Russia to the protection of the Christian subjects of the Porte, to which both France and Russia had pretensions. The Kuchuk Kainardji Treaty from 1774 to which Russia referred to, had given Russia ambiguous right of protectorate over the Ottoman Christians.<sup>2</sup> In the interpretation of Tsar Nikolay I, the clauses of the mentioned Treaty, confirmed and extended by the provisions of the Unkiar Skelessi Treaty of 1833, gave St Petersburg not only the possibility of representing twelve million Ottoman Empire Christians, but also of ruling them.<sup>3</sup> Russian foreign policy concept mainly created as an independent Act of the Tsar's will, was the subject of controversy in later historiography, while it had been almost beyond understanding for his contemporaries.<sup>4</sup> It is certain that the resentment towards France and the conflict arising over the Holy places put the Holy Alliance to test, that had watched over the conservative system on the continent for almost four decades. Nonetheless, just as in 1828-1829 Russia deviated from the principle of legitimacy in case of the Greek question, the situation in the Ottoman Empire opened up new doubts on this occasion, so that nine years after the first speculations about its division of power the Russian ruler presented again a similar proposal, this time to the British ambassador Ser Hamilton Seymour.<sup>5</sup> This is how a fairly logical but not much principled concept came about, to

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<sup>2</sup> Newer authors point out that the question of the right of Russia to the protectorate over the Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Empire has not been clearly defined even by the Kuchuk Kainardji Treaty. According to Davis Roderic, the versions of the Treaty in the Turkish and Russian languages were each formulated in favour of the Ottoman Empire, that is of Russia, but the version in the Italian language, the official language of negotiations, interpreted the protectorate provisions in favour of the Ottoman Empire interests. D. H. Roderic „Russian Skill and Turkish Imbecility: The Treaty of Kuchuk Kainardji Reconsidered“, *Slavic Review*, Vol. 35, No. 3, pp. 469–470.

<sup>3</sup> A. J. P. Taylor, p. 52.

<sup>4</sup> Some historians ascribed purely economic causes to this war. The available sources, however, point out that economic reasons had no significant, or in particular a key role in the creation of the Russian foreign policy of that time. Lj. Aleksić, „Francuski uticaj u spoljnoj i unutrašnjoj politici Srbije za vreme Krimskog rata“, / In Serbian: French Influence in the Foreign and Internal Policy of Serbia during the Crimean War/, *Istorijski časopis (IČ)*, /In Serbian: *Historical Journal* of the Historical Institute of the SASA, vol. IX for 1960/, Belgrade, 1961, p. 55.

<sup>5</sup> A.J.P.Taylor, pp. 51–52.

which the Russian diplomacy adhered: Russia, as the most devoted advocate of legitimacy defended the Ottoman Empire integrity, ready to administer it together with the Porte, or better said through the Porte, but striving to bring about its immediate downfall in case of any kind of disobedience. However, while in other cases the official Russia tried to keep the same enemies it had had at the time of the Holy Alliance creation, in the middle of the nineteenth century Great Britain could not, despite expectations of Russia, be its ally in the division of the Ottoman Empire. The British commercial interests imposed the preservation of the existing state in the East, since the appearance of another power in the strategically important region of the Middle East would endanger its colonial interests. The public opinion was influenced by such conditions so that it chiefly assumed a hostile attitude towards Russia already in the thirties of the nineteenth century. The 1848 Revolution and the inclination towards the goals of the Polish and Hungarian revolutionaries probably made the British public most of all inclined towards a possible conflict with Russia. However, the British Cabinet mostly tried to avoid the war because it was not convinced that any significant political and economic benefits could result from it.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, during the war a considerable difference in the attitudes towards the war could be felt between the people of France and Great Britain. In the beginning of the crisis the public in Britain was more inclined to the war with Russia than it was the case of its own government, while it was the opposite in France, where the Emperor himself instigated the conflict with St Petersburg. On the other hand, the British Cabinet became increasingly belligerent from the beginning of the war conflicts in the autumn of 1853 only to remain the most persistent and extreme advocate of the war until 1856. As Taylor has observed, the true goals of the Crimean War were not either on the Balkans or in Jerusalem, but they were, quite on the contrary, linked to the question of the balance between the Great Powers, for the restructuring of the European system of alliances and certain Middle European issues.<sup>7</sup>

In its conflict with France Russia attempted to rely on the allies from the Holy Alliance. However, its influence at the Porte during the Holy places crisis

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<sup>6</sup> Such assessments were not accurate, because the end of the Crimean War was immediately followed by the period of unimaginable expansion of the Western export into the Ottoman Empire. S. Faroljhi, B. McGowan, D. Quataert, S. Pamuk, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, vol. II, 1600–1914, Cambridge, 1994, p. 828.

<sup>7</sup> A.J.P, Taylor p. 61.

proved to be sufficient. Tsar Nikolay firmly believed that Russia was powerful enough to impose its policy by itself on the Ottoman Empire as long as the other four Great Powers were not united against it.<sup>8</sup> It is obvious today that Russia in 1853 was not quite sure in its intentions to destroy the Ottoman Empire. First of all, its confusing strategy and political indecisiveness proved this in about the best way. Contemporary historians explain that such behaviour of the Russian diplomacy was the consequence of the fact that from the dominant European power Russia turned in one year only into the isolated usurper of the system it had vitally contributed to be established.

The first step on this road happened at the time when the border conflict between Montenegro and the Ottoman Empire threatened to end in the collapse of Montenegro. This small country, only recently raised to the rank of principality was attacked by an army of fourty thousand Ottoman soldiers under the command of Omer Pasha. Although apparently quite insignificant, the conflict between Constantinople and Cetinje impinged upon the question of the sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire. In need of a success in foreign policy after the position it found itself following the Hungarian revolution and the Russian intervention, Austria sided with the Montenegrins, thus defending the buffer zone that divided the Ottoman state from its otherwise useless and hazardless possessions in Boka.<sup>9</sup> Russia sided with Austria, still occupied with its conflict not only with France, but with the Porte as well over the Holy places. Montenegro thus became a precedent, “a small political atom” of key significance for the European stability, as Lord Dudley Stuart described this small principality to the British Parliament.<sup>10</sup> As long as Austria and Russia acted together their decisiveness had unavoidably to overcome the Porte’s will.

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<sup>8</sup> A.J.P.Taylor p. 54; P, Shroeder, p. 113.

<sup>9</sup> Klek and Sutura.

<sup>10</sup> *Srbske novine*, /In Serbian: *The Serbian Newspaper*/. 3/15 March 1853, no. 27, yr. XX, p. 92. An interesting fact is that the official Britain attempted to remain neutral in this first period of the European crisis. In his answer to the question put by Lord Stanley in the Parliament about Montenegro, its status and the attitude of Britain concerning the conflict among the Ottoman Empire and Russia and Austria, Lord Malmesbury claimed that Montenegro, although not recognized for one hundred and fifty years, enjoyed real independence, while its ruler as an Orthodox Bishop „rightfully“ enjoyed the protection of the Russian emperor. G. Ernjaković, (editor), *Karl Marks – Fridrih Engels, Dela*, /In Serbian: *Karl Marx – Fridrich Engels, Works*/ vol. 13, Belgrade, 1976, pp. 54–56.

General Leiningen was sent from Vienna to Constantinople where he dictated the conditions concerning Montenegro to the Porte. The Ottoman army was evacuated and the peace re-established, while the border remained threateningly restless. Leiningen's mission embittered the Osmanlis and the Britons, but encouraged the Russian diplomacy in its intentions to win, together with Austria, the priority at the Porte and to divide the Balkans and the straits between the two of them in case of collapse of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>11</sup> This is why Tsar Nikolay considered it necessary to send himself as well an envoy to Constantinople to solve all open questions in direct negotiations with the Porte.

His choice was Prince Menshikov<sup>12</sup>, the proud Russian admiral who was entrusted for this occasion with the role of a diplomat. Prince Menshikov had to, like Leiningen, submit Russian demands to the Porte, whereas his mission had not been fully defined. It is said that it is impossible to wage wars without at least the existence of the tiniest chance or a misunderstanding. However, some of the wars in the nineteenth century could hardly be based to such an extent on a misunderstanding as it was the case with the Crimean War. In the dictate imposed by Menschnikoff to the Porte immediately upon his arrival to Constantinople in February, Great Britain thus immediately felt the arrogance of the Power, whereas in fact the Russian diplomacy obviously tried to cover up its own weakness. After the decades of the Count Nesselrode's execution of the Tsar's rigid will, now for the execution of this diplomatic mission Nikolay I selected an aristocrat – soldier, who he perceived to be the closest to the people, but who considered himself to be ultraliberal among the Russian politicians.<sup>13</sup> This dichotomy of opinions in the Russian diplomacy as, after all, in the Austrian one as well, considerably speeded up the development of events leading to the war. Menshnikov quickly and easily solved the Holy places conflict in favour of Russia. However, just as soon he had succeeded in this, he requested the dismissal of his main collocutor, Fuad-Effendi, the Porte's Min-

<sup>11</sup> J. Ristić, *Srbija i Krimski rat*, /in Serbian: *Serbia and the Crimean War*/. p. 77. P. Shroeder p. 27.

<sup>12</sup> Menšikov, Aleksandar Sergejevič (mentioned as Menschikoff by older authors), the Russian admiral and diplomat. Born in 1794 or 1796, the descendant of the first Russian count, the leader of the unsuccessful mission to Teheran in the twenties of the XIX century and the participant of the Russo-Turkish 1828-9 War. *Prince Menschikoff – The Russian Minister of Marine*, *The Illustrated London News*, 10 December 1853, p. 485.

<sup>13</sup> Nikolajević to Garašanin, Constantinople, 30 March 1853, I.G., 893, A.S.

ister of Foreign Affairs. When he succeeded in this as well, he issued the order for consistent application of the Russian interpretation of the Treaty signed in Kuchuk Kainardji. By his insistence on this request, he failed to preserve the achievements reached so far, the mob in Constantinople started boiling over and the British and French ships sailed into the Sea of Marmara. Remaining in Constantinople until May, Menshnikov finally came to believe that the only one obstruction the Russian diplomacy had in Constantinople was – the British diplomacy and the “infernal Redcliffe’s tyranny”.<sup>14</sup>

At that time Aberdeen’s Cabinet in London was divided about its stand towards the forthcoming Eastern crisis. Aberdeen was inclined to Russia and wanted at no cost to bring the British diplomacy into the conflict between St Petersburg and Paris. In Britain, however, anti-Russian mood was becoming stronger and stronger, and Palmerston and Russel (Lord John Russell), the members of the Cabinet, openly opposed any neutral policy.<sup>15</sup> For all that



Prince Alexander Menshikov  
(Menschikoff)

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<sup>14</sup> A. J. P. Taylor, p. 53.

<sup>15</sup> P. Shroeder, p. 49.

Clarendon, the Secretary for Foreign Affairs felt that his position was being endangered exactly by Stratford Canning (de Redcliffe), the influential British ambassador in Constantinople, who was still in London during the first weeks of the crisis, where the Queen proclaimed him the Lord of Redcliffe.

The conflict between Russia and Austria on one side, and Great Britain and France on the other, reached its peak in the Principality of Serbia already at the end of 1852. The British Consul in Belgrade, Fonblanque had been showing for a long time hostile feelings towards the official Austria. Such his attitude accurately expressed the official position of Great Britain adopted during the Hungarian Revolution and the distrusts towards the Habsburg monarchy, the traditional protector of the Catholic Church, which was in conflict with the British state in the beginning of the 1850's. However, it seems that Fonblanque was considerably influenced by the obvious power of the Austrian diplomacy, with its successful influence on the Serbian prince and his environment, in barring the investment of the British capital into Serbia.<sup>16</sup> Fonblanque firmly believed that the Austrian support to Montenegro had been primarily moti-



John Russell

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<sup>16</sup> Fonblanque to Malmesbury, Belgrade, 19 September 1852, F.O. 78/900, No. 15, and Fonblanque to Malmesbury, Belgrade, 4 October 1852, F.O. 78/900, No. 18.



vated by the fear of Austria from British economic competition in Serbia.<sup>17</sup> Under conditions of the complete splitting up between the Great Powers, it was in the interest of Foreign Office for Serbia to remain peaceful during the Ottoman-Montenegrin conflict. The movement in favour of the alliance with Montenegro was felt in Serbia as Omer Pasha's campaign lasted for quite a long time. The official Austria and Russia did not officially exert any pressure in this direction, but Bessim Pasha was sure of a conspiracy in favour of Montenegrins in Serbia and Bulgaria.<sup>18</sup> The appeals to the Serbian people for helping Montenegrins were also coming from the pages of Serbian newspapers, and instead of being censored their editors were finally only cautioned by the military commander of Timișoara.<sup>19</sup> The Austrian policy in Serbia was represented by the Consul General Colonel Teodor Teja Radosavljević, who exerted in time great influence on the circumstances in Serbia. Until the meeting of the Emperors Nikolay I and Franz Joseph I in Olmütz in September 1853 Austria remained in alliance with Russia, whereas due to its geographic nearness it unavoidably exerted a prevailing influence on the Principality of Serbia. This is why during the Holy places crisis and the Danube war the complex relations between Vienna and St Petersburg, ranging from the alliance to the threshold of war, made Serbian policy indefinite, indecisive and imprudent in many ways.

However, no unrests broke out in Serbia during the Montenegro crisis, and that is why Fonblanque thought it necessary, in order to preserve the Porte's authority in the country and the influence of Western consuls on Serbian authorities, to make certain concessions to the Principality. He considered, first of all, that the Prince should be rewarded by the right to title succession in his family. The British Consul believed that it was not necessary to go too far in this and limit the people's right to elect its rulers, if necessary. Territorial expansions "in the direction of Niš", offered earlier as prospects, Fonblanque saw as a kind of limited reform of these regions that would put them under the

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<sup>17</sup> Fonblanque to Rose, Belgrade, 2 January 1853, F.O. 78/942, Copy No. 1.

<sup>18</sup> The Porte seriously considered the possibility of an uprising in Bulgaria even in the summer of 1852. J. Ristić, 86.

<sup>19</sup> Fonblanque to Rose, Belgrade, 2 January 1853, F.O. 78/942, Copy no. 1. Ilija Garašanin, the Prince's Prime Minister at that time, wrote to Jovan Marinović how Montenegro before and during the crisis in fact „carried out another folly of its leader“. D. Stranjaković, *Ilija Garašanin*, Kragujevac: Jefimija 2005.

Christian administration.<sup>20</sup> Finally, the dissatisfaction in Serbia was also the result of internal reasons, due to which the buying up of the Turkish estates outside the fortresses had to be speeded up. Fonblanque believed that the very presence of Turks in some parts of the Principality under direct Ottoman administration represented a “passive obstruction of the progress”.<sup>21</sup>

A week later, however, the British Consul did not write any longer about possible concessions to the Principality and its ruler. The Porte and its Western friends could not, obviously, grant the reward as fast as Russia could exert the punishment.<sup>22</sup> Contrary to the Austrian diplomacy, the Russian one had not only a greater influence, but also much greater and more urgent problems to be solved in Serbia.

### *The Fall of Garašanin*

The Russian Consul General in Belgrade expressed the dissatisfaction of his diplomacy with the Prince's Prime Minister already in the beginning of 1853. When one of the diplomats from the Russian Embassy in Constantinople requested from Konstantin Nikolajević, the Serbian Agent in Constantinople, Garašanin's dismissal, the fate of this Serbian politician became part of the main European crisis plot.<sup>23</sup>

Prince Menshikov arrived to Constantinople on 28<sup>th</sup> February 1853. This Russian diplomat's mission lasted for about three months and its task was the smoothing over of the relations between Russia and the Ottoman Empire. The word “smoothing over” should be, however, understood as an euphemism for the dictate which the proud Tsar's nobleman - army commander imposed to the Porte from the very beginning. At first, the Ottoman government unreservedly obeyed Menshikov's demands, but when even this was not enough, the Russian diplomat procured the removal of the Grand Vizier Fuad-Effendi

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<sup>20</sup> The British Consul wrote that the residents in this area had anyhow been dangerous and sunk into lawlessness. Fonblanque to Rose, Belgrade, 2 January 1853, F.O. 78/942, Copy No. 1.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*: the question of the market tiling, 1855.

<sup>22</sup> Fonblanque to Rose, Belgrade, 12 January 1853, F.O. 78/942, No. 2.

<sup>23</sup> „The emperor cannot allow Garašanin at the head of the Serbian government, who is Kossuth's and Mazzini's disciple“, was said to Nikolajević on this occasion. The Serbian agent immediately complained about this to Colonel Rose, the charge d'affaires of the British Embassy. Rose – Russell, 23 March 1853; J. Ristić, 94–95; D. Stranjaković, *Vlada Ustavobraniteljja*, /in Serbian: *The Constitutionals and Their Rule*/. p. 203.

himself. Total submission to the demands made by the Russian diplomacy did not bring any respite to the Porte. After the fall of the Grand Vizier the deposal of Ilija Garašanin from the post of Prime Minister in the Government of the Principality of Serbia must have certainly seemed as something incidental to the omnipotent Menshikov.

Ilija Garašanin had not been to the liking of Russia, the protecting power of the Principality of Serbia much earlier than when he became the Prince's Prime Minister in December 1852. During the spring of 1852 when the ruling Constitutionalist regime was shaken by one of its numerous crises, Garašanin, as the Minister of the Interior, issued a legal Act, known as *The April Circular*. With this Act each opposition to the *government and authority* was also formally made illegal.<sup>24</sup> It is understandable that the stable circumstances in the Principality of Serbia could not be to the liking of the Russian diplomacy which was the important mainstay of the "*Pretending [Obrenović] dynasty*", and whose greatest loyal supporter in Serbia, Vučić, was at this moment in the opposition.<sup>25</sup> When Avram Petronijević, the Prince's long-standing Prime Minister died in Constantinople at the end of May 1852, the Serbian government remained without its prime minister for almost half a year. The delay in selecting the new Prime Minister was a crisis in itself, expressively shown by the fact that the regime in the meantime felt uneasy even before an ordinary church gathering like the one held that summer by the monastery Vračevšnica. Having finally been appointed as the Prime Minister in the government, Garašanin did not pay any attention to earlier Russian dissatisfaction, but, less than two weeks after this appointment, on the 6. October 1852, he undertook an unconceivable step until then and had rebellious Vučić retired. The protests following this act were formulated in a letter sent by the Russian State Chancellor Count Nesselrode himself, that reached Prince Aleksandar in December 1852 through the Serbian Agent at the Porte.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> D. Stranjaković, p. 176.

<sup>25</sup> In the addition to the English edition of Ranke's *The History of Serbia*, Cyprian Roberts states that Levishine won Vučić's confidence already in 1849. Roberts quoted the brothers Simić and Petronijević as Russian followers, and the only obstacle to their influence he saw in the work of the so called *People's Party* and in Ilija Garašanin. C. Roberts *Slavonic Provinces of Turkey*, p. 381; L. Ranke, *The History of Serbia*, London, 1852.

<sup>26</sup> J. Ristić, p. 93.

Garašanin was already known as the partisan of France and Great Britain. As soon as the April Circular was made public, he went to Paris, and then to Switzerland. Under the pretext that he was travelling for medical treatment purposes he met in Paris the leaders of the Polish emigration through whom the President of the French Republic, Prince Louis Napoleon himself received him.<sup>27</sup> One of the purposes of started negotiations was the import of arms into Serbia. The Tsar's government, whose relations with France had been in crisis for a longer time, did not suit him at all. Therefore, a direct demand for his deposition was not long in coming. At the end of December 1852 Tumanski, the Russian Consul in Belgrade, handed over the unofficial letter of Baron Liven to Prince Aleksandar. The Baron friendly advised the Serbian Prince to dismiss Garašanin and get Vučić back into the service.<sup>28</sup> The letter that Ristić called friendly caused official reactions in Serbia. The Duke Knićanin from Kragujevac, as well as the Ottoman commander of the Belgrade fortress Bessim Pasha and the French Consul Ségur were consulted about the answer. Extremely commendable about Garašanin, the letter was handed over to the Russian Consul after certain consideration by its signer Prince Aleksandar. This was obviously justified as it surprised the Russian diplomat, while it left the impression of an "arrogant answer" on Jomini, later Russian writer of the diplomatic history.<sup>29</sup> It seems that Prince Aleksandar soon regretted it, as usual, but this did not affect Garašanin's position, which reflected, above all, the balance between the Great Powers. Austria and Russia longed from the beginning for Garašanin's departure from the post of the Prince's Prime Minister. The attitude of the Ottoman Empire, also including France and Great Britain, his quite silent tutors at that time, was benevolent towards Garašanin. Whereas the Porte had no power, its protectors had not been willing enough for that.<sup>30</sup> The economy was the prevailing topic of the report of the British Consul in Serbia during the last days of 1852. Fonblanque informed the British Embassy in Constantinople only on 12<sup>th</sup> January 1853 about the first signs of the dissatisfaction of the Russian Consulate with the "official direction" of the Principality policy conducted by Garašanin.<sup>31</sup> The situation in which the Prince's Prime Minister

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<sup>27</sup> J. Ristić, 90.

<sup>28</sup> J. Ristić, p. 93, D. Stranjaković, p. 194.

<sup>29</sup> J. Ristić, p. 94.

<sup>30</sup> D. Stranjaković, pp. 215–218.

<sup>31</sup> Fonblanque – Rose, Belgrade, 12 January 1856, F.O. 78/942, No. 2.

found himself would not be quite clear unless the international circumstances in the beginning of 1853 were not taken into consideration. The first Omer Pasha's expedition to Montenegro was getting closer to its victorious result exactly at the end of January 1853. Extensive offensive of the Ottoman Army aimed to unconditionally conquer Montenegro was prevented by the Russian and Austrian diplomacies. Bessim Pasha, the commander of the Belgrade fortress, guessed that there existed a widely interwoven plot against the Ottoman authorities in Serbia and Bulgaria. The writing of the newspapers from Novi Sad about the need for All-Serbian uprising against the Porte prompted even the Austrian general with the seat in Temišoar to publicly calm down the dissatisfaction of the public with the Ottoman Empire. At the same time the suspicious British Consul was convinced that the true goal of the Austrian diplomacy, hidden behind the instigation of Montenegrins to war was, actually, the prevention of the commercial plans of Great Britain.<sup>32</sup> The British diplomat thought that Austria probably suspected that the establishing of new commercial channels would cause damage to the Trieste trade. Fonblanque believed that the Austrian, and perhaps even the Russian disinclination towards Serbia was owed more to the economic reasons than to its passivity in the Montenegrin crisis. Serbia deserved the Sultan's benevolence because of its attitude towards the Great Powers' conflict brought about by the war between the Ottoman Empire and Montenegro. The concessions that the British Consul saw as an adequate reward for the Prince's loyalty would essentially remain the official British view on promoting the position of the Principality throughout the Saint Andrew's Assembly. The Serbian Prince was promised the likelihood of granting the right to title succession for the Karadjordjević family, and the Principality – a certain favourable loan and the annexation of neighbouring regions in the direction of Niš. The British Consul General considered that the internal problems the Serbian authorities were faced with were not less important. The question of the Turkish estates in the Principality remained unsolved so far. Without the solution of this problem the Europeization process of the country demanded by the Christian population was delayed.<sup>33</sup> In the conflict among the subjects of the Ottoman Empire the mediation of all Great Powers was essential. Fonblanque's proposal to the Constantinople Embassy was to

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<sup>32</sup> Fonblanque – Rose, Belgrade, 2 January 1853., F.O. 78/942.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*



*Aleksandar Karadjordjević,*  
The National Museum, Belgrade

solve the problem by establishing an *ad hoc* commission which would include, in addition to the Belgrade pasha and the Prince's Prime Minister, the consuls of the Great Powers. The predominance of the Austrian and Russian influence would be thus finally forestalled.<sup>34</sup>

In the middle of January it was still impossible to perceive any changes in the political circumstances in the Principality in the British Consul's reports. Fonblanque continued to prove to the Colonel Rose the inaccuracy of Omer Pasha's accusations as to the prevalence of anti-Ottoman feelings in Serbia. Finally, in his report of 12th January Fonblanque informed his superiors about the dissatisfaction displayed by the Russian diplomats towards Garašanin's policy and to some of his decisions concerning the state administration.<sup>35</sup> On this occasion the Prime Minister received only a secondary place in the report because the Consul General was almost in fear from the perspective of the alliance between Austria and Russia, established during the Montenegro crisis. In such a balance of power the Western powers would have been powerless and the neutral Serbia would almost certainly become its first victim.

The international range of the crisis about Garašanin became obvious to Fonblanque already on 16<sup>th</sup> January 1853. The news reached him then that Prince Aleksandar received the *Rescript* from the Russian government. The official Russia corroborated the accusations of its Belgrade Consul concerning the Prince's Prime Minister. Anxious and certainly confused Prince immediately tried to make inquiries about the true motives for the *Rescript*, turning to none other but the Russian Consul. However, the Serbian monarch was then faced with the Russian diplomat's full ill-disposition who even twice refused to receive him giving banal excuses, while leaving him to wait for a long time on the third occasion. Fonblanque learned that the Prince was welcomed with a "sharp tone" and "warning phrases". The very appointment of Garašanin to the position of the Prince's Prime Minister represented for the Russian Consul a plain demonstration against Russia, a simple consequence of the foreign influence success. The proud Consul Tumanski demanded from the Prince to appoint the new Prime Minister. In addition to Garašanin's removal, the Russian diplomat asked for the dismissal of Jovan Marinović, Head of the Prince's Office, whom Fonblanque considered to be the most talented of younger Serbs educated in Europe. The Russian diplomat's motive for the doubts were his

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> Fonblanque, Belgrade, 12 January 1853, F.O. 78/942, No. 2.



allegedly more frequent visits to foreign consulates. A list of Tumanski's accusations on Garašanin's account was somewhat longer. The first accusation was based on his *too big* inclination towards the political emigrants who escaped to Serbia. The Russian diplomat also believed that during his Paris visit Garašanin had paid a special importance to the meetings with Prince Adam Czartoryski and other proscribed Poles. Finally, in the eyes of the Russian diplomacy the relations between Russia and Serbia were burdened by the placement of Franja Zah, the Pole from Galicia to the post of the director of the Military Academy.

The experienced consul Fonblanque immediately assessed the situation. The Serbian ministers were against the Russian demands, as well as the members of the State Council. Her Majesty's Consul, however, was aware that the united opinion of the Serbian leaders did not automatically mean the readiness to get into the conflict with a protecting power. All Serbian politicians were convinced that each opposition to Russia would be futile and that was also why their opinion was reduced to the private circle. In his report Fonblanque expressed almost regret that such an attitude had not been recorded anywhere, so that it could serve as a precedent in the future.<sup>36</sup> Prince Aleksandar reconciled himself to the fate. At the meeting with Garašanin he reviewed the diplomatic circumstances the Principality found itself in and even asked him "who he considered to be the most competent among the highest state officials to replace him".<sup>37</sup> The Prince's Prime Minister, however, refused to give notice under pressure, claiming that he was not prepared to take upon himself a big responsibility for the violation of the rights guaranteed to Serbia by international treaties. And despite everything, he did not fail to mention Konstantin Nikolajević at the end of the conversation, the Serbian Agent in Constantinople, as a man who possessed much more the abilities essential for carrying out the duty of the Prince's Prime Minister than the other possible candidates.<sup>38</sup> Fonblanque saw in Garašanin's proposal a premeditated manoeuvre directed against the interests of the Russian diplomacy and quite certain appointment of Aleksa Simić to his position.

The first meeting of the Prince and Garašanin from the beginning of the crisis was, according to the British Consul's knowledge, more dramatic than

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> At that time Garašanin and Nikolajević were exceptionally politically close, that will be discussed later. R. Ljušić, *Knjiga o Načertaniju*, /in Serbian: *The Book about Načertanie*/, Belgrade, 1993, pp. 103–7.



the situation itself. During the next audience Garašanin was advised to try and reach an agreement with the Russians. The Prime Minister gave the Prince his answer only at the session of the State Council, maintaining that he would not even try to straighten out the relations with the foreign dignitary because he thought that in this way he might make him even angrier, or humiliate himself beyond all limits.

Only at this moment the British and the French Consuls realized that they should exert the influence themselves on the political conditions in the Principality of Serbia.<sup>39</sup> Aware that no greater influence was possible to be made on the indecisive monarch and the State Council, two diplomats tried to act in favour of the policy of their countries regarding the Ottoman Empire. In their separate talks with the Prince each pointed out to him at first, not at all comfortingly, that their advices should not be taken as anything more than “confidential and personal expressions of benevolence”. They did not give any guarantees to the unfortunate Prince, but pointed out to the illegality of the Russian pressures, underlining their unacceptability. They depicted the submission to the Russian dictate with the darkest possible colours – as a risk to the Serbian ruler. The French Consul Ségur went a step further promising the Prince that by playing *va tout*, the government composed only for Garašanin’s removal sake would be condemned to the disapproval of the official France. Ségur threatened that the next government would fall within two months only under the French pressure. Fonblanque put before the Prince seemingly a less unpleasant choice: he asked him whether the uncertain benevolence of the Russian diplomacy was more valuable to him than certain dissatisfaction of the Porte and the lack of any kind of English and French support. It had to be clear to the British Consul General how limited the influence of Great Britain could be on the development of events, so he offered to the Prince only the prospects of greater benevolence of the Porte in the future. However, despite everything he kept ardently convincing the Prince that the concessions to Russia could not be a solution. Convinced that the Prince’s fear had a decisive influence on the giving way of the official Serbia, he tried hard to achieve the same effect with threats. The circumstances were such that even the delay in Garašanin’s displacement might seem to be a success of the Western powers.

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<sup>39</sup> Relying on the documents of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ljiljana Aleksić concluded that Fonblanque „remained reserved“ in the crisis about the dismissal of Garašanin. Lj. Aleksić, p. 56.

The British Consul was assuring the Serbian ruler that the removal of external pressure would cause internal unrests. Garašanin's dismissal, under the pressure of Russia as well, the protector of the Serbian rights, would not be solely political but also a constitutional issue. The followers of Vučić and Obrenović would surely rebel but now to defend the Constitution. Consul Fonblanque was pleased to record how his warnings strongly affected Prince Aleksandar's already existing anxieties, who had heard the news that the exiled Prince Miloš had invited his son, Prince Mihailo to return urgently to Bucearest from Vienna "because something important is going to happen in favour of their interests".<sup>40</sup>

When Bessim Pasha, Commander of the Belgrade fortress, visited the present Prince's Prime Minister during those days, it seemed to the British Consul that this was just the moment when there was a small chance for Garašanin to remain at the head of the government for at least one more day.<sup>41</sup> When arriving Pasha met the Prince's dragoman on the stairs whom he addressed without any diplomatic tact at all:

"Tell your Master that you have left me in the home of the greatest friend of Serbia, the man who knows how to reconcile the interests of his fellow-countrymen with the rights of their Suzerain and my Master... If such a man is dismissed, only in order to pacify the enemies of the Porte, I would rather request to be recalled than I would allow myself to live in the Russified province of Turkey."

Under such a pressure the Prince found the strength to courteously refuse the Russian demands. In his answer he stated that the fulfilling of these demands would be contrary to his views of the duties of the Prince.

Although Fonblanque mentioned several times in his report that his influence on Serbian circumstances was limited, he considered that he was to be given credit for the personal changes in the State Council, which were unfavourable to Russian interests. The positions already vacated at the time of Garašanin's appointment to the post of the Prince's Prime Minister, were now filled in with no delay, but without the Russian influence. Under uncertain

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<sup>40</sup> Fonblanque, Belgrade, 12 January 1853, F.O. 78/942, No. 2.

<sup>41</sup> „At a moment when there seemed scarcely a chance of that Primates continuance in office for another day“. Fonblanque – Col. Rose, 16.01.1853., F.O. 78/942, Copy No. 3.

circumstances the Russian Chancellor, Count Nesselrode himself exerted the pressure on Prince Aleksandar. Fonblanque still believed that the Montenegrin catastrophe contributed to the general ill feelings towards the Russians. “The Serbs are obliged to convince themselves about the danger brought about by acting according to Russian suggestions.” Taking into consideration his twelve-year-long consulship in Serbia, Fonblanque thought that the greatest challenge to the Russian influence in this region was in question.<sup>42</sup>

Count Nesselrode’s letter brought again Prince Aleksandar into an awkward situation. This is why he decided to let all factions in the country know that the measures he accepted represented a concession to the Russian demands. The British Consul considered even such an attitude as favourable, in view of the fact that in addition to reports about the debacle of the Russian policy in Montenegro, Garašanin’s dismissal would bring another problem to the Prince. Aware of the discords that existed earlier between Prince Aleksandar and Garašanin, Fonblanque still feared that the dismissal might be only postponed. In his interpretation of the Russian action the British Consul observed a significant violation of the international position of Serbia, including the Ottoman Empire as well: primarily, Russia should have expressed its dissatisfaction with Garašanin, if appropriate at all to the Porte because one-sided pressure on Serbia in order to dismiss one state official represented the violation of the 1838 Constitution, protected by the official Russia.

The decisive blow on Garašanin took place only in the middle of March 1853 in Constantinople, and it was delivered by Prince Menshikov himself. Colonel Rose in his letter of 11<sup>th</sup> March 1853 informed the State Secretary Lord Russell about his talk with the Serbian Agent at the Porte.<sup>43</sup> Nikolajević left the impression of extreme disturbance while informing the British diplomat about the omnipotent Prince Menshikov’s demand, ordering the Serbian Prince to dismiss Garašanin immediately. Garašanin was on this occasion designated as

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<sup>42</sup> At that time the unity between the Prince and the Council was reached, that would last throughout the next two years. Some later historians did not pay greater attention to this, but this event left a deep impact on the contemporaries. Forty years later Milan Hristić published certain documents relating to the crisis that corroborated this newly established unity, quoting Garašanin’s dismissal as „one more proof about the perfidious and despotic policy of Russia towards Serbia“. M. Hristić, *Jedan listak iz diplomatske istorije Srbije, Ruski upliv iz 1853*, /in Serbian: *One Page from the Diplomatic History of Serbia, Russian Influence in 1853*/, Belgrade, 1893. p. 24.

<sup>43</sup> Rose – Russell, Constantinople, 11 March, 1853, Copy No. 93, Ristić J., “Srbija i Krimska vojna”, *Istorijski spisi*, Beograd 1940, p. 94.

a Kossuth's and Mazzini's disciple for whom it was inadmissible to remain at the head of the Serbian government.<sup>44</sup> The ominous threatening tone of this demand was rendered by one unnamed Russian diplomat who, in a separate talk, openly presented to the Serbian Agent at the Porte the dark alternative to Garašanin's dismissal. He claimed that Russia would bring about a mutiny in Serbia, or some other just as big catastrophe. Nikolajević finally emphasized that Garašanin was completely innocent of all accusations.

Instead of a reply, Colonel Rose asked the Serbian diplomat to pay him a visit the next day (11<sup>th</sup> March). Even then he could not offer him any more useful political advice than the one Fonblanque had given to Prince Aleksandar two months ago. Nikolajević was advised to recommend in the next letter to his ruler to answer the Russians courteously and with respect, but also to point out the fact that their demands defied the Serbian Constitution. The Constitution whose guarantor was Russia as well, allowed for the dismissal of state officials subject to court order only and, ultimately with the consent of Constantinople. In short, Rose recommended to the Serbian Prince to refer the Russian diplomacy to the Porte. He claimed that Prince Menshikov would get there the occasion to present the accusations against Garašanin, prove his eventual deeds against the interests of Russia, Ottoman Empire and the institutions of the Principality of Serbia and obtain a quick, full, but also a legal satisfaction.

In his struggle over Serbia Rose lacked the "powerful influence" of the British Ambassador Stratford de Redcliffe. He believed that his return and the influence he had on the Prince of Serbia would contribute to the just outcome for a minister "who expressed sincere and beneficial inclination towards the rights of the Porte and the British interests". Despite everything, Rose saw a certain gain in Menshikov's action towards Serbia: it disclosed true intentions of the Russian diplomacy and, what he considered even more significant, it showed the means which it was prepared to use in order to achieve them.

The British good intentions and advice did not make Prince Aleksandar's position at all easier. Quite the opposite, referring to the Constitution and the rights of the Porte made giving in to the Russian demands more unpleasant. When Fonblanque received a copy of Rose's letter to Lord Russel, he immediately went to Prince Aleksandar and repeated the advice Rose had

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<sup>44</sup> J. Ristić, p. 95.

given somewhat earlier to Nikolajević.<sup>45</sup> Fonblanque himself saw in such tactics only one possible advantage – gaining in time. When taking leave from the British Consul Karadjordjević, however, found the strength to say that he would rather become a private person again than to turn into “a Russian peasant with the title of the ruling Serbian Prince”.<sup>46</sup> The embittered Prince saw the only support in the justness of the Serbian problem and the British moral support. This support was obviously not meaning much, as Fonblanque had even been unable to guarantee him that the omnipotent Prince Menshikov would not succeed in extracting a Ferman disadvantageous for Serbia from the Sultan. The British Consul, despite everything, considered that the diplomatic circumstances in Serbia were favourable for British interests also stating that he had perfect relations with three Consuls General of Great Powers in Belgrade, including the Austrian Consul, as well as with all influential political leaders in the country.<sup>47</sup>

However, the British Consul General only deceived himself because, despite everything mentioned above, the situation got suddenly disentangled and contrary to his wishes. In his report to Clarendon of 26<sup>th</sup> March he could only express his embitterment.<sup>48</sup> According to his report, the Prince’s decision about Garašanin’s dismissal was made all of a sudden, contrary to the British and French advice, after a very short talk with Tumanski. The Russian Consul in the decisive moments emphasized first that he was speaking on the basis of instructions received from the Count Nesselrode and Prince Menshikov, and then threatened again with the rebellion. He portended loudly that the consequences of the people’s uprising would be undoubtedly fateful, not only for the Serbian ruler himself but for his entire family as well. After that Prince Aleksandar found the strength to ask only for some more time to pass the final decision. The Russian Consul was unrelenting at first in this as well, and demanded from the Serbian ruler to make a decision on the spot. After longer endeavours Prince Aleksandar succeeded in getting one whole day, during which he had to, without further pressures, somehow end the crisis. He immediately met with Garašanin, almost pleadingly indicating to him that his

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<sup>45</sup> Fonblanque–Clarendon, Belgrade, 22 March, 1853, Copy No. 18, F.O. 181/283.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> Fonblanque- Clarendon, Belgrade, 26 March 1853, F.O. 181/283, Copy No. 20.

resignation would spare him serious unpleasantnesses. The British Consul had nothing but praises for Garašanin, “a very noble Serbian leader”, who stated that he would never take part in fateful agreements at the expense of the state’s rights. The next session of the Prince’s government, whose ministers were not Garašanin’s followers, also proved the rightness of such Garašanin’s attitude. The Government issued the statement about its reticence from the involvement in the crisis due to very sensitive circumstances. With such an attitude it obviously did not help Garašanin, but therefore brought all the responsibility for the dismissal of the Prime Minister back to the Prince. Isolated and faced with ominous threats, early in the morning on 26<sup>th</sup> March Prince Aleksandar informed the Russian Consul that his request was accepted. Garašanin was soon dismissed, officially on account of bad health, while Aleksa Simić was appointed to the post of the Prince’s Prime Minister.

Prince Aleksandar’s indecision and delayed compliance did not bring him the sympathy of the official Russia, but embittered therefore the British. Consul Fonblanque stated that formal excuses and referring to the Porte should be a sufficient protection for the Serbian Prince. He interpreted the concessions to the Russian diplomacy only as a violation the Sultan’s Suzerain’s rights. He even wished for the Sultan’s revenge that would maybe one day befall “the disloyal vassal”. The British Consul in Belgrade found the support of the official Britain to the Porte as the only appropriate answer to the new political circumstances, that should support in future the Russian policy towards the Principality of Serbia. He considered that the first step in this direction would be the vetoing of any kind of further appointment of Acika Nenadović (Azo Nenadovitch), whom he saw as covetous “spiritus movens” of the Prince’s most recent policy.

Her Majesty’s Consul General also stated still angrily that the crisis had again revealed to him the true character of the Prince. He used to inform frequently the Ambassador in Constantinople about this, but now in his report to Minister Clarendon he thought it necessary to repeat: “...that Prince Karadjordjević’s loyalty to the Porte would disappear each time when the Sultan’s enemies succeed in arousing his fears”.<sup>49</sup>

The reaction to Fonblanque’s report arrived only two weeks later, both from London and Paris.<sup>50</sup> In his letter of 13<sup>th</sup> April the British Ambassador in

<sup>49</sup> Fonblanque – Clarendon, Belgrade, 26 March 1853, F.O. 181/283, Copy No. 20.

<sup>50</sup> Cowley – Clarendon, Paris, 13 April 1853., F.O. 181/283, Copy No. 234.

France Cowley informed Clarendon about the attitude of the French Minister of Foreign Affairs Drouyn de Lhuys. The Emperor's Minister notified the British Ambassador about the "unsatisfactory" news that had just arrived from Belgrade. According to De Lhuys's knowledge, after the successful removal of Garašanin, the Russian diplomacy extended even more its demands from Serbia. The removal of other ministers had also been asked for, particularly of the Minister of the Interior.<sup>51</sup> The news received indicated that Prince Aleksandar was not the only one who was in trouble. The State Council even answered the Russian demands protesting against the Russian interference into the internal policy of the Principality of Serbia.

The experienced Cowley had the impression that the French Minister was not pleased with such an act of the Serbian State Council. He therefore limited himself to using the State Council's refusal as an argument in favour of the allegations that Serbia was not just a dependent Russian captive as sometimes depicted. De Lhuys agreed with that but also asserted that the situation in the European East was such that it was essential to condemn each action that might be considered offensive to Russia. De Lhuys confided to the British Ambassador that Prince Menshikov's mission had also the aim to, as far as possible, weaken the European provinces of the Ottoman Empire which had become considerably stronger during the past years. The French Minister allegedly believed that the further progress of the European provinces could become a hindrance to the Russian plans.

Less than a week later the talks about the similar topic were held now in London between the Earl of Clarendon, Her Majesty's Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Count Walewski, the French Ambassador in Great Britain.<sup>52</sup> Walewski had by that time received himself the report of the French Consul General in Belgrade. The instructions sent to Belgrade differed much more from the attitude that Drouyn de Lhuys had presented to Cowley. They instructed the Western diplomats that it would be necessary to encourage Prince Aleksandar again and advise him not to comply with the new demands from the Russian diplomacy. Direct interference of Russia into the internal affairs of the Principality and threatening talk of the Russian Consul was diplomatically

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<sup>51</sup> As Aleksa Simić actually became the next Prince's Prime Minister, it seems that it was the question of incorrect information.

<sup>52</sup> Clarendon – Cowley, 18 April 1853., F.O. 181/283, Copy No. 113.

pronounced by Minister Clarendon as “neither wise nor just”. The first step against the actions of the Russian diplomacy would be, as he saw it, devoting of the entire attention of the British Ambassador at the Porte to the Serbian crisis. Understandably, the British counter-action had to be in this case carried out in cooperation with the French Ambassador in Constantinople. At the end of the letter the British minister expressed almost prophetic trust in Redcliffe’s political and diplomatic abilities, stating, without further instructions, that his perfect knowledge of the circumstances in the East would enable his independent and fast reactions for the benefit of the Porte’s interests in Serbia.

It could be said that the crisis about Garašanin’s dismissal was ended for the British diplomacy with the instructions sent to Her Majesty’s Ambassador in Constantinople on the same day, 18<sup>th</sup> April 1853. At the beginning of his instructions Clarendon emphasized that Garašanin’s removal and the demands for dismissing some other state officials caused great dissatisfaction in the Serbian people. He thus ordered Redcliffe to tell Prince Menshikov that the prolongation of such policy of the Russian diplomacy would have harmful consequences. All conditionals suddenly disappeared from the generalized diplomatic language. To substantiate his instructions the British minister added that Count Walewski had informed him about similar instructions dispatched to the French Ambassador at the Porte.

During this time a limited number of politicians and state officials close to the Prince, the Government and the State Council were involved in the entire entanglement caused by Garašanin’s dismissal. Garašanin’s dismissal, explained in the official newspapers by his bad health, was followed by silence. Only Serbian newspapers in the neighbouring Austria were reporting very quickly, regularly and accurately about the entire case. Despite the fact that the Serbian public on both banks of the rivers Sava and Danube was prevalingly inclined towards Russia, even *Srbski dnevnik* (*The Serbian Daily*) supported by Russia, was not prepared to criticize dismissed Garašanin. This newspaper’s reporter pronounced the Russian demands put to the Serbian authorities as “exceptional, big and strange”, while the former Prince’s Prime Minister was described as one of “the steadiest and the most educated Serbian officials”.<sup>53</sup> Nevertheless, although he mentioned that Russia had never waged a war solely on account of Serbia, the author of the article in *Srbski dnevnik* concluded how

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<sup>53</sup> *Srbski dnevnik* /In Serbian: *Serbian Daily*/, Novi Sad, 29. 3.1853, no. 25.



Russia, contrary to France and Great Britain, was the only ally of Serbia that was close and whose influence was fateful. Such an attitude describes in many ways the character of the foreign policy motives of the Principality of Serbia in the forthcoming months.

### *Austrian Occupation*

Prince Aleksandar chose the most painless way to remove Garašanin. He had dismissed him first, and then had him retired with the explanation that it was allegedly done on account of his bad health. Garašanin parted in peace with the Prince and immediately went abroad.<sup>54</sup> The diplomatic crisis continued in Constantinople until May 1853 and the final failure of Menshikov's mission. In June 1853 the Russian Army occupied Wallachia and Moldavia. The public in Europe immediately recognized in this demonstration the beginning of the implementation of Tsar Nikolay's I plan about the division of the European Turkey. The role of Austria remained extremely unclear in the ensuing diplomatic tension and confusion. Only with the aid of the Russian Army the Habsburg monarchy succeeded to suppress the Hungarian Revolution in 1849. Siding with Russia would be, however, too risky and detrimental anyway for the Austrian Empire. By this act the front of the future war would be moved to Lombardy, by all means the most significant region of Austrian interest in Europe and Austria would then have to bear almost all the burden of the warfare. However, if Russia happened to win the war, the disappearance of the Ottoman Empire, regardless of possible gains, would lessen the Austrian interest at the Balkans, and would make Austria a Russian enemy in the future. It was almost impossible to conceive for the Habsburg's Court to side with Great Britain and France, not only because of their political differences, but also because the Austrian Eastern borders would be transformed into a long and difficult front, without any guarantees for the future. The Russophile inclined Austrian General Headquarters, overestimating the power of the Russian Army, did not perceive any possibilities for the defence in the assumed war against its Eastern neighbour. The general belief was that Austria in this case would not only become the battlefield of the European war, but would probably turn into the charred remnants of a revolution.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> J. Ristić, *Srbija i Krimska vojna*, /In Serbian: *Serbia and the Crimean War*/, p. 96.

<sup>55</sup> A.J.P., Taylor, 65.

The conflict between Russia on one side, and the Ottoman Empire, France and Great Britain on the other, was becoming tenser and tenser. After Menshikov's departure from Constantinople the two empires broke up their diplomatic relations. On June 1<sup>st</sup>, 1853 the allied fleet had sailed into the Sea of Marmara, and a month later the Russian Army crossed the river Prut and occupied Walachia and Moldavia. Since the times of Peter the Great it had not happened that the Russian Army occupied these principalities or attacked the Ottoman Empire without a prior agreement with Austria. In the summer of 1853 Europe believed that St Petersburg acted in agreement with Vienna. The attempt of Austria at mediation, that ended with a proposed compromise contained in the *Vienna Note* enabled, in fact, an honourable withdrawal of the parties in conflict and the maintenance of the previous status. Finally, however, actually the question of the Russian protectorate over the Ottoman Christians led to the collapse of these endeavours. The collapse of the *Vienna Note* was, among other things, the defeat of the pro-West oriented Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs Count Buol. Thus, at the time when the crisis did not still turn into the war, the military party in Vienna had got a certain advantage that, together with the eventual future Russian military successes, would have probably orientated Austria in favour of Russia.

Garašanin also suspected Austria from distant Liège.<sup>56</sup> Mistrustful of the true motives of the Austrian General Gyulai's mission, in the talk with the younger Count Orlov he concealed his dilemma whether the goal of the mission was warding off Russia from the war or the agreement about joint operations. To the Russian nobleman's provocative question whether he considered that the Austrians would enter Serbia in case of war, Garašanin gave a level-headed but direct answer that this was exactly the issue and the core of the Serbian distrust in Russian intentions because only Russia could permit such an act.<sup>57</sup> The European diplomatic conflict commenced after the Russian occupation of the Danube principalities threatening to turn into a real war at any moment.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Garašanin to Marinović, Liege, 24 June (6 July) 1853., St. Lovčević, (edit.), *Pisma Ilije Garašanina Jovanu Marinoviću*, knjiga I, 1848-1858, Zbornik za istoriju, jezik i književnost srpskog naroda, I odeljenje, knj. XXI /in Serbian: *Ilija Garašanin's Letters to Marinović*, book I, 1848–1858, Collection of Papers for History, Language and Literature of the Serbian People, I department, vol. XXI/, Belgrade, 1931, pp. 88–93.

<sup>57</sup> Orlov replied that he did not consider that even if the war broke out it could in any way concern Serbia and her interests. *Ibid*, 91.

<sup>58</sup> Garašanin assessed the events in Serbia from abroad: „We, the Turks and Austrians would surely see no good out of it, but let the Russians, English and French choose whatever they like, now when they had a stroke of good luck.“ *Ibid*, 92.

The first news about possible entrance of the Austrian Army into the Principality of Serbia was sent to the British Embassy in Constantinople on 24<sup>th</sup> July 1853.<sup>59</sup> Fonblanque informed his superior – Redcliffe how the Austrian Consul in Serbia had let the Belgrade Pasha know about his government's intention to occupy Serbia in case of breaking out of any kind of unrests. The news that two Austrian brigades were already prepared to enter the Principality gave the Consul's announcement the threatening tone. The sign for the occupation of Serbia could be given, according to the Austrian Consul's statements, by the Belgrade Pasha, the Serbian Prince or himself. However, total alarm was caused only by the news allegedly coming from the Belgrade Pasha communicated to the British Consul by the Prince's Prime Minister, Aleksa Simić. It pointed out to the Austrian resoluteness not to wait for the real unrests to break out in the Principality of Serbia, but to occupy it at its convenience. Convinced that the concentrated units of the Austrian Army were sufficient for the immediate undertaking of the invasion, Fonblanque was not sure whether the instructions to the Belgrade Pasha would arrive in time. The information available to him personally indicated that the greatest concentration of the Austrian Army was in the region of Oršava, where he recognized the tendency of the Austrian General Headquarters to prevent the advance of the Russian Army from Walachia. The Serbian government restricted itself to an embittered protest with the Austrian Consul, but with the Porte as well.<sup>60</sup>

It seemed obvious to Fonblanque that the motive for the Austrian action had been Prince Mihailo's letter addressed to the Serbian people.<sup>61</sup> The British diplomat was convinced that Austria intended to "perfidiously exploit" the

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<sup>59</sup> Fonblanque – Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, Belgrade, 24 July, 1853, F.O. 120/281, *Extract*.

<sup>60</sup> Garašanin believed that the Austrian act was the product of the plots of the Austrian general Maierhoffer concerning Prince Mihailo: „It would be better if Maierhoffer measured the rivulets in Italy and Hungary, and almost all over the empire, than in Serbia and Bosnia“. Garašanin to Marinović, Liege, 16 July (28 July) 1853, *Pisma...*, /in Serbian: *Letters...*, no. 33, p. 103.

<sup>61</sup> In the beginning of the 1853 summer the agitation could be felt in Serbia, the Obrenović's followers started with their work on the population. The exiled Prince Mihailo found it necessary to send the letter (of 2/14 July 1853) to the members of the State Council stating that he would not return to the throne against the will of the people and by means of an overthrow. Those opposed to the Obrenovićs saw a political ruse in this gesture of the former Prince. J. Ristić, *Srbija i Krimska vojna*, /in Serbian: *Serbia and the Crimean War*/ pp. 99–100.



*Prince Mihailo Obrenović,*  
The National Museum, Belgrade

crisis ensued over the banished Prince's letter. At first, his reaction was irrec-  
oncilable. He claimed that "the purpose now indicated by Austria with regard  
to Serbia, is even a less excusable aggression than the Russian one in Moldavia  
(and) Wallachia".<sup>62</sup> As far as Fonblanque knew Austria accused the Serbian  
authorities of rendering support to the political emigrants who remained in  
the Principality. To the British Consul who was proud of his own participation  
in the Hungarian Revolution, these accusations seemed extremely groundless.  
Fonblanque stated that not only there were no more Hungarian emigrants  
in Serbia but the very benevolence of the Ottoman authorities towards them  
made the Serbs identify as enemy.<sup>63</sup>

General alarm soon broke out in Serbia. The government, together  
with the State Treasury, immediately went to Kragujevac. The enthusiasm for  
defence prevailed in Belgrade while, according to Fonblanque's knowledge,  
nearly two thousand armed peasants were gathered in the country, around  
Milanovac. Despite the above preparations, Her Majesty's Consul General in  
Belgrade claimed that no bigger obstacles stood in the way of the Austrian oc-  
cupation.<sup>64</sup>

In the files of the Embassy of Great Britain in Vienna almost all dip-  
lomatic correspondence was collected with regard to the crisis in relations  
between Austria and Serbia, that suddenly developed during the summer of  
1853. The lack of more significant activity of the British diplomacy in con-  
nection with this crisis, judging by the data from the Vienna Embassy, points  
out to the Foreign Office's probable attitude that the crisis itself had exceeded  
the actual initial plans of the Austrian diplomacy. Redcliffe had announced  
the beginning of the crisis in his report to Clarendon.<sup>65</sup> The British diplomat  
learned what the Belgrade Pasha's report was about and the protesting letter of  
the Serbian Government immediately after their arrival to Constantinople. By  
that time he had already been in possession of Fonblanque's report of 24<sup>th</sup> July  
1853. Redcliffe hurriedly wrote to his minister without previous consultation

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<sup>62</sup> Fonblanque – Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, Belgrade, 24. July, 1853, F.O. 120/281, *Extract*.

<sup>63</sup> Fonblanque – Redcliffe, Belgrade, 26 July, 1853, F.O. 120/281, *Extract*.

<sup>64</sup> Marinović wrote to Garašanin in the same tone about the enthusiasm of  
the people for defence. Garašanin Marinoviću, Trst, 31. julij (12. avgust) 1853, br. 36,  
*Pisma...*, p. 115. /in Serbian: Garašanin to Marinović, Trieste, 31 July (12 August) 1853,  
no. 36, *Letters...*, p. 115/.

<sup>65</sup> Redcliffe – Clarendon, Therapia, 31 July 1853, F.O. 120/281, Copy No. 184.

with the Porte. He was, nevertheless, convinced that there was no way of its agreeing to the occupation. Moreover, during his talk with the Serbian Agent at the Porte he was told that the Austrian entry into Serbia could in fact lead to the uprising. At the end of his report, the experienced diplomat did not try to put out before Clarendon any conclusion based on the information available to him. He summed up his attitude towards the events about Serbia in the following dilemma: Austria either tried to play some kind of a diplomatic game with Russia, or its government had abandoned the hope that it would be possible to move out the Russian Army from the Danube principalities with negotiations.<sup>66</sup>

Four days later Redcliffe could write to his minister something more about the events in Serbia. It was true that Austria would keep a watchful eye on the circumstances in the Principality but he claimed that it was not certain to be occupied.<sup>67</sup> Something like that did not seem possible to him even when the movements of the Austrian Army were taken into account, as well as the doubts that were simultaneously aroused by Prince Mihailo's letter (mistakenly quoted as Miloš) and Mayerhofer's Mission.<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, the concurrence of events gave significance to the movements of the Austrian troops only in the part along the border with Serbia, otherwise visible along the entire border with the Ottoman Empire. In addition, an important element in the entire crisis for the British Ambassador was the fact that absolute peace prevailed in Serbia. This is why the Grand Vizier Reshid Pasha supported the resistance of the Serbian authorities to the possible forceful occupation. It was true, as Redcliffe lamented, that the Grand Vizier did not have time to consult the British Embassy due to the nature of the crisis, but the Porte's moves later received his approval.

Redcliffe was convinced that the principles guiding the Austrian diplomacy in exerting pressure on Serbia were disputable, as well that it would be impossible to apply them without damaging the independence of the Ottoman Empire. In case of attempted occupation the danger of bloodshed would be also certain as the Serbs would undoubtedly offer resistance. Finally, the entry of the Austrian Army into Serbia would remove formal obstacles for the interference of Russia - the "protecting power" of the Principality. The influential British Ambassador advised "caution and wisdom" to the Porte. On one

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<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> Redcliffe – Clarendon, Therapia, 4 August 1853, F.O. 120/281, Copy No.188.

<sup>68</sup> G. Jakšić, and D. Stranjaković, p. 146.

hand, it would not be good at all to offend Austria, and on the other, it would be necessary to ensure the loyalty of the Serbs, but not at the cost of giving too much power to the small Principality.

One meeting between the Grand Vizier and the British Ambassador finally determined the policy of the Ottoman State towards the crisis ensued over the occupation of Serbia. It was then agreed not to ask for an explanation from the Austrian Government for its earlier threats to Serbia, but to let it know discreetly that its intentions, that could be guessed, were inappropriate and risky. It had to be pointed out to the Austrian diplomacy how the existing peace in Serbia was a sufficient proof of the future stability. The Grand Vizier and the British Ambassador also agreed at this meeting that the Porte should offer Austria a concession as well reflected in the form of a cautious movement of the Ottoman Army towards Serbia and the reinforcement of its garrisons. The Porte decided to appoint a special commissioner for the execution of the mentioned activities. The President of the Austrian Government, Baron Bruck was also informed about the outcome of this agreement. However, the Grand Vizier did not succeed in refraining from asking the Austrian internuncio at the Porte for an explanation. The explanation he finally received was obviously expected, because the Austrian diplomat claimed that his government's offer was only a principled precautionary measure.

Redcliffe was convinced that the existing crisis imposed clarification instead of a resolution. There were several factors in his report to Clarendon that would be difficult to reconcile one with the other. The actions of Russia made the events in European Turkey even more complex. The Serbs themselves, although presently disinclined towards Russia, had nevertheless aspirations to independence. The British diplomat was slightly afraid that the very possibility of the war could give rise to such their hopes. Even weak support of the Ottoman Empire itself, as well as possible Austrian invasion would make the Serbian authorities turn to their protecting power – Russia. During his occasional talks with the Serbian Agent at the Porte, Redcliffe advised, as a rule, the authorities of the Principality to look for the support in the Porte, thus offering Serbia better prospects for its progress than to come into closer relations with Austria or Russia. It was clear to Redcliffe nonetheless that such advice might not mean much if the Porte continued to feel distrust and envy towards all the Christians.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*



After that the Council of Ministers met in Constantinople. The intention of Austria to occupy Serbia was on the agenda. In his confidential report dated 4<sup>th</sup> August 1853 Redcliffe described his attempts to soften the inflexible attitude of the Porte towards Austria.<sup>70</sup> Surprise and the distrust toward Austria prevailed at the session. In spite of Redcliffe's influence, the ministers were convinced that Austria acted in agreement with Russia. In his confidential report to the State Secretary Westmorland, the British Ambassador admitted that no reproaches could be made against Constantinople for its determination to help in the defence of Serbia. After the Porte had finally and officially adopted the plan of activities for Serbia, Redcliffe believed that his endeavours succeeded in making the Ottoman declaration friendly and more considerate. The ingenious diplomat saw that the best role for the Austrian Army was the maintenance of order on the border of the Habsburg's monarchy.

The rumours started spreading across the diplomatic battlefield. Fonblanque quickly sent the report about the prevailing belief in Belgrade how the Porte permitted Austria to occupy Serbia under certain conditions. In the attempt to convince himself into the contrary beyond any doubt, Redcliffe asked to be received by the Grand Vizier.<sup>71</sup> Two days later the Serbian Agent informed him about his Government's apprehensions from possible consequences of the assumed agreement between Austria and the Ottoman Empire. An ordinary peasant rebellion, maybe even an invented one, could in this case serve as a pretext to the Austrian occupation of the Principality. The British Ambassador tried to pacify his collocutor on this occasion as well. He parted from Nikolajević encouraging him in vain that the only correct and useful policy for Serbia was its steadfast loyalty to the Porte. This conversation, however, prompted Redcliffe to write immediately his instructions to Reshid Pasha, according to which the adopted measures should be implemented taking

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<sup>70</sup> Redcliffe – Westmorland, Therapia, 4 August 1853, Confidential, F.O. 120/281. At the end of August the British public received completely different news from Constantinople. According to them, the Russo-Austrian plans about the occupation of Serbia and the restoration of Prince Miloš were prevented by the Porte's, and primarily Reshid Pasha's resoluteness. An ostensibly similar ultimatum that colonel Radosavljević submitted to the Belgrada Pasha, Baron Bruck himself had sent through his interpreter to the Porte. Reshid Pasha's resoluteness not to give in had allegedly resolved the fate of the Principality. *The Manchester Guardian*, Constantinople 11 August, 27 August 1853.

<sup>71</sup> Redcliffe – Clarendon, Therapia, 4 August 1853, F.O. 120/281, No.184.



into consideration both the character of Serbs and the internal relations in the Principality. He sent the diplomat Alison with instructions to present several British proposals to the Grand Vizier. The British Ambassador recommended to Reshid Pasha not to enter any kind of agreement with the Austrians, but to declare himself against possible arbitrary occupation of Serbia. The Austrian diplomacy should be acquainted in detail with the precautionary steps undertaken by the Porte for the maintenance of peace in the Principality. As the second step the Grand Vizier ought to send a letter to the Serbian Prince reflecting encouragement, recognition of the Serbian ruler's policy, as well as a public clarification of the Porte's attitudes. Only the third step should be sending of the observation troops in the immediate vicinity of the Principality borders. It would be important that this army should not be divided into more than two contingents. Simultaneously, the Porte's commissioner should be sent to Belgrade, a person known to the Serbian public from before, and the Belgrade fortress garrison should be symbolically reinforced with one battalion.

All Ambassador's proposals were immediately accepted by the Ottoman Grand Vizier.

Even Garašanin far away from Serbia was also convinced in the responsibility of Austria for this crisis. It was only from his correspondence dated 11<sup>th</sup> August that one could make out that Austrian intentions were "partly disclosed".<sup>72</sup> The Serbian leader accused Austria of insincerity, proving that its readiness to defend the Serbs from themselves was cynical, when formerly it did not wish to help them even against the Turks. Despite his personal discords with the official Russia, Garašanin recommended to Marinović to appeal to Russia. "God himself knows how the things stand there now when I am writing this letter", he wrote consumed with worry, apprehensive that by the time the letter arrived to Belgrade Serbia would not probably be free any more.

The Crimean War and, in particular, the preceding months witnessed a lot of invisible, sometimes imaginary crises. Whatever the entanglement over the Austrian occupation could be called, it was however the diplomatic action of the British Ambassador that seemed to have made a turning point. Indefatigable Redcliffe soon had separate talks with the Austrian internuncio and the Serbian Kapou-Kehaja. The Austrian diplomat represented his government's

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<sup>72</sup> Garašanin to Marinović, Trst, 30. jul (11. avgust) 1853, *Pisma...*, str. 110, 111. /in Serbian: Trieste, 30 July (11 August) 1853, *Letters...*, pp. 110, 111/.

action as a support to the Serbian Prince. He kept assuring his British colleague that it was the matter of a message sent to those factions in Serbia that were plotting revolution.<sup>73</sup>

Redcliffe had the impression that the Serbian Agent also regained his trust into the Porte's intentions after his talk with the Grand Vizier. On the other hand, he deemed it necessary to request exactly from the British diplomat the postponement of the Belgrade garrison reinforcement, as well as that arrival of the Porte's commissioner was to be adjusted with the activities of the Serbian government.

On the basis of these talks Redcliffe concluded that with wise approach it would be possible to implement all necessary measures without exposure to danger and unrests. Still, the Austrian intentions were bringing a ray of doubt into his mind. He asked himself why the Austrian government was so agilely undertaking the precautionary measures when on all occasions it defended, with so much trust, the peaceful intentions of Russia. Redcliffe's distrust towards Austria was of a long standing. When the crisis regarding the Austrian intentions to occupy Serbia was in question, he became convinced that the real danger was eliminated only after extensive discussions.

The diplomatic clarification took place later, at a higher level. Redcliffe informed his minister about this only ten days later. The British Ambassador in Constantinople learned what the explanation about the latest events was given by the President of the Austrian government Baron Bruck to Reshid Pasha.<sup>74</sup> The Austrian government accused Serbia through its internuncio that it plotted, together with the Bosnians and Montenegrins, to create the Kingdom of Slavs. The Austrian authorities therefore asked for an explanation even the exiled Prince Miloš who, defending himself in vain from accusations, soon found himself in isolation and under the police supervision. Baron Bruck also complained to the Grand Vizier about the French Consul in Belgrade whom he accused of supporting Serbian intrigues. When Redcliffe asked Nikolajević to answer the charges, he assured him that it was only the matter of certain improvements of the present political or, more precisely, administrative status

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<sup>73</sup> Garašanin claimed that he was himself the subject of Austrian suspicions. Already on 11 August he wrote to Marinović about the Austrian imputations he had learned about, according to which he „put up the emigration flag“ in Switzerland (where he stayed for treatment). *Ibid*, p. 112.

<sup>74</sup> Redcliffe–Clarendon, Therapia, 16 August 1853, F.O. 12/281, Copy No. 197.

of the Principality. The Serbian Agent let Redcliffe know that Consul Ségur, in fact, enjoyed neither trust nor favours from the Serbian ruler.<sup>75</sup>

Lastly, the crisis was also discussed in the capital of the French Empire. The Austrian ambassador Hubner notified the Minister of Foreign Affairs of France about his minister's views.<sup>76</sup> Buol sent a message to de Lhuys that the official Austria would support Fonton's mission in Serbia. The goals of the mission, in his opinion, ought to be the improvement of administration in Serbia and its "cleansing from revolutionary elements". The Austrian hopes for the French assistance in reaching this goal were indicated to the French minister. The official Austria also tried to disclose its positions. Its Ambassador denied all accusations about rendering the Austrian protection to the Obrenović family. The Austrian diplomat claimed that the Austrian army would enter Serbia only to protect the Porte from internal unrests.

De Lhuys's answer was just as principled as indirect. He agreed with the Austrian views on giving necessary support to the ruling Prince and emphasized that the administration reforms in the Principality should be postponed, if necessary at all. He was assuring the Austrian ambassador that France was, in any case, also against any revolution. However, de Lhuys asked himself what the official Austria considered a revolution. Without giving an answer he asked for revolutionaries in Serbia to be identified and their offences disclosed. He explained that it could be that what Austria saw as a "revolution" the others might call it a simple "improvement of the state administration". The French minister also added that a bigger mistake could not be made than to consider France an enemy of liberal institutions.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>75</sup> At the time when the crisis about the occupation had already been smoothed over, Garašanin was still overcome by sinister forebodings. The news reaching him spoke about the concentration of Austrian troops on the border with Serbia and the withdrawal of the just arrived Ottoman forces. Garašanin even bitterly ridiculed the Ottoman policy. He lamented: „... and now we are surrounded by the armies worse than Bonaparte at his defeat..." and claimed: „I am convinced that on this piece of land [Serbia] there exists the best sort of peace today in Europe, and do they want to unsettle it even such as it is?" Garašanin Marinoviću, Beč, 5. 17. avgust 1853, *Pisma...*, br.38, str. 118. /in Serbian: Garašanin to Marinović, Vienna, 5/17 August 1853, *Letters...*, no.38, p. 118/.

<sup>76</sup> Cowley – Clarendon, Paris, 18 August 1853, F.O. 120/281, Copy No. 613.

<sup>77</sup> Already on August 18 it was clear even to Garašanin that the Austrian threat had disappeared. He received final confirmation by the Russian ambassador in Austria himself, Baron Mayendorff. During the talk held on 19 August the Russian version of the past crisis was presented to Garašanin but on this occasion his relations with the

When Her Majesty's Minister of Foreign Affairs Clarendon sent final instructions to Constantinople on 18<sup>th</sup> August 1853, it was obvious that there was no danger of war in Serbia.<sup>78</sup> The Foreign Office approved later Redcliffe's measures concerning the Serbian crisis. Clarendon considered it useful to inform the Constantinople ambassador about the Vienna government assur-



Edouard Drouyn de Lhuys

Russian diplomacy were, allegedly, smoothed over. Mayendorff openly described the suspicions of Vienna and St Petersburg that in fact the faction he headed, consisting of supposedly young and revolutionary elements, aspired to restore Prince Mihailo. Of all foreigners and emigrants in Serbia, the Russian diplomat mentioned on this occasion only Orelj, a certain Swiss in service in Serbia. *Garašanin - Marinoviću*, Beč 7/19. avgust 1853, *Pisma...*, br. 40, 122–3. /in Serbian: *Garašanin to Marinović*, Vienna 7/19 August 1853, *Letters...*, no. 40, 122–3/. It is interesting that the documents of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs do not offer even anything like a dramatic picture of the crisis that could be reconstructed based on the British documents, Lj. Aleksić, p. 64.

<sup>78</sup> Clarendon – Redcliffe, London, 18 August 1853, F.O. 120/281, Copy No. 171.

ances that the Austrian intentions were exclusively made in good-will. It was a paradox that the Vienna diplomacy justified its action by the defence of the Austrian territory from possible uprising movement directed against the Sultan's authority. The British minister ended his instructions by underlying how the goal of Fonton's mission was to let the public in the Principality know that Russia opposed any movement in Serbia directed against the Prince or the Suzerain power.

*Russo-Turkish War on the Danube 1853-1854*  
*Serbia as a Possible War Ally of Russia and Austria*

In the middle of December 1853 the reporter of *The Illustrated London News* came to Serbia. He attended the celebration of St. Andrew The First Called, met Fonblanque and travelled through the Eastern Serbia, the region expected to become then the frontline of the future European war. He sent an interesting essay from Belgrade and Negotin about the circumstances in Serbia, published at the beginning of 1854 in two issues of *The Illustrated London News*.<sup>79</sup> Perhaps the most concise definition of the Principality of Serbia and its international position at that moment was given in the introduction of this essay.

“There are, here and there throughout Europe, small states or principalities, of which the existence would soon be problematical were it not that their situation renders them an object of desire to more than one powerful neighbour.<sup>1</sup> Servia is one of these. It is needless to enter here into the contending and clashing interests of Turkey, Austria and Russia; it is sufficient to bear in minds that Servia obeys the Porte as its suzerain, pays tribute to it, yet holds its head up as if it were really independent, and could defy at once the diplomacy of Russians, the bayonets of Austria, and scimitar of the Turk. “Where is Servia?” once said a Parisian dandy to a travelling noble of this country. “Where is Servia! As well might I ask you “Where is Paris?” was the reply. The Servians, in truth, believe that their neutrality is the make-weight that keeps all parties even; and that declaration on their part for one side would be fatal to the other, and involve the whole of Europe in instant war.”<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> *The War in the East*, “The Illustrated London News“, 31 December 1853, p. 598; *The War on the Danube*, “The Illustrated London News“, 14 January 1854, pp. 34–35.

<sup>80</sup> *The War in the East*, “The Illustrated London News“, 31 December 1854, p. 598.

The situation in Serbia the British reporter was writing about was a consequence of the six-month-long foreign-political plots starting, it could be said, when the Russian troops entered the Danube principalities and due to the summer crisis in Serbia. The British Consul in Belgrade was not particularly convinced into the certainty of the Austrian occupation of Serbia. He believed that the Austrian troops would cross the Sava and the Danube in case of a specific coincidence of events. Still, he even saw the summer of 1853 as the period of weakness of Austria and for that reason he considered the sequence of Vienna's moves as unpredictable. This was why he wrote to Redcliffe on 22<sup>nd</sup> July that there was no doubt that the motive for concentrating the Austrian troops at the border could not be anything else but the Emperor's government fear that the Hungarians would start mass crossing the border to join the Ottoman army as volunteers.<sup>81</sup> The Austrian forces were far from the border and foreign diplomats thought that the events in Serbia were not the reason for their state of alert. At this time one of incidents frequently, as a rule, preceding wars, took place in Smirna and the official Austria manifested great solidarity with those victims. According to the news available to Fonblanque even distant United States had allegedly sent their consul to Belgrade.<sup>82</sup> The British Consul, strangely enough, saw this Washington's move solely as the competition to his own influence on the circumstances in Hungary, convinced that the American Consul in Belgrade would try to give support to the Hungarians. It is interesting that Fonblanque did not consider American plans possible on the basis of growing rivalry between Great Britain and the USA, as well as the closer relations of Washington and St Petersburg that very nearly led to the war alliance of these two countries in 1854.<sup>83</sup> Somehow at that time Fonblanque's fascination with Kossuth ceased: the cold British diplomat objected to his revolutionary zeal and extensive plans. When he learned of his fantastic proposal to the Porte to buy war steamships for 45,000 dollars from certain American merchant and break with them the connection between the Russian Black Sea fleet and Sebastopol, Fonblanque did not believe any more in Kossuth's good intentions towards Great Britain, and even less in his seriousness.

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<sup>81</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 22 July 1853, F.O. 78/943, No. 42.

<sup>82</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 30 July 1853, F.O. 78/943, No. 46.

<sup>83</sup> Even three hundred armed volunteers from Kentucky applied as reinforcement to the Russian Army at the Crimea. W. Baumgart p. 48.

Kossuth's insincerity could be easily forgotten in case of Austria's siding with Russia. The striving of the Serbian authorities to get neutrality for Serbia was equally met only with condemnation, primarily because the question of Serbian participation in the war would be put forward in case of victorious Russian offensive against Constantinople. Therefore, the British and French diplomacies considered Serbian demands for establishing of neutrality as a clear expression of loyalty to St Petersburg. The Serbian policy, in general, seemed to the experienced diplomat as a well devised, but clumsily performed intrigue. Exactly at that time the expelled Prince Mihailo married the Countess Julia Hunyady. The former ruler's pretensions to the Serbian throne were known, while the kinship with the loyalist Hungarian nobility and having the Russian deputy for a godfather made such pretensions politically inevitable in case of a joint action of Austria and Russia.<sup>84</sup> Fonblanque was especially dissatisfied with the policy of the constitutionalist oligarchy that, in his opinion, followed the old Petronijević's plan "to play a many-sided game". Fonblanque, nevertheless, refuted their skill for the implementation of such policy formerly possessed by phanariots. He firmly believed that if they had had it, they would have undoubtedly turned towards the North, because all significance of Belgrade relies on its attractive power regarding the regions of Slavonia, Srem, Bosnia and Bulgaria. Only with the 1848 Revolution the Austrian authorities recognized the real impact of Serbia on nine million of Slavs who, according to the Consul's estimate, lived in this monarchy. Fonblanque, however, was assuring Redcliffe that still the occupation of the Principality of Serbia could hardly be a solution of this problem. A conclusion one logically comes to indicates that the preservation of integral Ottoman Empire is maybe largely in the interest of the Habsburg monarchy itself.

The Austrian diplomacy still went on with its complex diplomatic game in the Principality. Unofficial newspapers published the telegrams from Serbia stating that counsellors inclined to Russia brought pressure to Prince Aleksandar to leave the throne. Though untrue, these news aimed to leave the impression on the Austrian public that the Prince was a supporter of Vienna, but on the Serbian and foreign public – that the ruler had a sufficient number of followers that his dethroning would undoubtedly lead the country into the

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<sup>84</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 5 August 1853, F.O. 78/943, Copy No. 48.

civil war.<sup>85</sup> Fonblanque, nevertheless, stated that the Prince could not count on more than two hundred followers out of the entire population of Serbia. The only certain thing with him was that he was inconsistent, attempting to get support only from the Great Powers and, in the British Consul's opinion, the best way to influence him was that the one wishing to get such an influence for himself had to keep him in power. The British Consulate kept receiving the news that the end of the Russo-Turkish war would unavoidably mark the beginning of the dynastic clashes in Serbia.

The summer crisis in case of the Principality of Serbia reached its peak when Fonton, the Russian State Counsellor (Privy Council), serving until then in the Russian Embassy in Vienna, arrived to Belgrade. According to later historiography, the relations between Russia and Serbia, tense since October 1852, were reconciled with Fonton's mission and the Russian diplomacy accepted the Serbian neutrality in the forthcoming war.<sup>86</sup> Still, at the time of Fonton's setting foot in the Principality the Russian army war strategy and the Austrian policy towards the war had not been completely defined as yet. The struggle over them within the political elites of the two empires lasted until the autumn. Fonton came to resolve earlier entanglements resulting from Garašanin's dismissal and ensuing events. Focused on earlier events his mission did not pay special attention to the role of Serbia in the forthcoming events. He recommended to the Serbs the agreement with Austria and mutual unity, but unofficially he called for getting armed and preparing for the forthcoming war. Fonton hoped for a great inflow of Serbian volunteers if the war broke out while following his country's unspecified policy, he lobbied against any kind of changes. This was why he publicly invited Serbia to remain peaceful. As

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<sup>85</sup> It seems that the Austrian diplomacy was behind such news, as at that time the sending and publication of private telegrams with the political content was forbidden by the Austrian laws. *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> Ristić has later written about the confusion Fonton's mission caused with the Serbian authorities. J. Ristić, 101–3. Prince Nesselrode sent to the Serbian ruler a letter on this occasion, motivated by the death of Tumanski, the Russian Consul General in Serbia whereas the true reasons were - the wish to convince the Serbian authorities into the Russian benevolence, lack of Russian interest to take part in the forthcoming war, as well as to confirm the concordance of the Russian and Austrian policy towards it. The content of the letter was published in Britain only in the middle of December, after its appearance in the Austrian press, thus causing certain political tension. *Prince Nesselrode to Prince Alexander*, "The Morning Herald", 13 December 1853.



somehow at that time the French unofficial envoy Bure found himself in Belgrade, who communicated the attitude of his government that Serbia should remain outside the current crisis, the Serbian collocutors could get the impression that both Russian and French diplomacies were in agreement as to their wish for Serbia to remain neutral.<sup>87</sup> Fonblanque did not believe in the peaceful intentions of Fonton's mission which, allegedly, the Serbian authorities did not doubt at all.<sup>88</sup> It is true that the action of the Russian diplomacy might mean the postponement of the military intervention from the Russian or the Austrian side. Fonblanque saw this postponement only as a tactical move: he warned Redcliffe that the only purpose of the Russian diplomacy action had been to shift the initiative in the forthcoming conflict with the Porte to the Serbian side. The British Consul General in Belgrade was in the possession of the knowledge that Fonton would ask Serbia to stop paying the tribute as the first step towards the breaking up with the Ottoman Empire. Fonblanque proposed to have a series of diplomatic moves set against the Russian action thus putting up a multitude of formal obstacles before the Fonton's mission. First of all, as the Russian diplomat otherwise carried out the duty of the Counsellor in the Privy Council, in the British Consul's opinion, his mission could be legal only if he was sent to Serbia as an official of the Russian Consulate in Belgrade.<sup>89</sup> Still, if the Russian diplomacy was able to remove the mentioned obstacle, the fact that the Porte did not approve of the Fonton's mission left room for Fonblanque to exert pressure on the Serbian government and to consider in advance the Russian intentions as subversive. He denied the Russian envoy any kind of right to discuss the politics in Serbia which was, although under the Russian protectorate, still a part of another state. This was why he energetically advised the Serbian leaders to refuse any talks whatsoever of political nature with their Russian guest. How much the Constitutionals were taken by surprise and unsure before Fonton's arrival could be illustrated by the complete lack of any readiness of Aleksa Simić, the Prince's Prime Minister who, in his talk with Fonblanque, even asked whether he was allowed to listen in silence to the guest's address regardless of its possible contents.<sup>90</sup> He did obtain the approval for such behaviour.

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<sup>87</sup> G. Jakšić, D. Stranjaković, p. 148

<sup>88</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 11 August 1853, F.O. 78/943, Copy No. 50.

<sup>89</sup> Ristić wrote how Fonton was the counsellor in the Russian Embassy in Vienna. J. Ristić, p. 101.

<sup>90</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 12 August 1853, F.O. 78/943, Copy No. 54.

Still, Austria and Russia were not Aleksa Simić's only worry. He was soon forced to ask, through Jovan Marinović, to meet the British and French Consuls. He complained to Ségur about dangerous concentration of Ottoman troops from Niš in the direction of Novi Pazar and Montenegro. The Serbian Prime Minister considered that even if they remained at the positions taken, they would endanger the peace in Serbia. Ségur showed no understanding for the Serbian authorities' fear of their own people. He reproached Simić for hypocrisy, claiming that the Ottoman army was only trying to defend Serbia, as best as it could, exclusively threatened by Austria and Russia. Still in doubt of the sincerity of his collocutor he drew his attention to the fact that in case of the Austrian army entrance, he would lower the flag in front of the Consulate and leave the Principality. The situation became extremely strained and unpleasant, so that Fonblanque himself thought it necessary to react with moderation and try to encourage the Prince's Prime Minister.<sup>91</sup>

Fonblanque proposed his superiors to respond to Fonton's mission with great diplomatic tact, by sending an Ottoman mission headed by a higher-rank official.<sup>92</sup> In spite of all his activities, the arrival of the Russian envoy and the welcome he received in Belgrade perplexed the experienced British diplomat. Numerous Serbian officials came to greet Fonton, not only the leaders of the Constitutionalist regime but the secondary employees as well who were not obliged to do so.<sup>93</sup> The Russian envoy went through Serbia in the uniform, and he asked the foreign consuls to join him – in plain clothes for some reasons. The rebellion in the provinces of Serbia the Western Consuls feared from, did not take place. Fonton everywhere preached peace and advised the maintenance of the existing status and loyalty to Constantinople.<sup>94</sup> Fonblanque could be satisfied: at the reception in the French Consulate on the occasion of newly established holiday the Russian envoy behaved very courteously to the Pasha, friendly to the Western Consuls and in a conspicuously cold way to the Austrian Consul.<sup>95</sup> In his conversation with Fonblanque he expressed without reluctance the present Russian foreign policy concept, that would later prove

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<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 11 August 1853, F.O. 78/943, Copy No. 50.

<sup>93</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 16 August 1853, F.O. 78/943, Copy No. 52, J. Ristić, str. 103.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 16 August 1853, F.O. 78/943, Copy No. 52.

to be fully credible. The Russian envoy admitted that the occupation of Serbia was considered as a possibility after the occupation of Wallachia and Moldavia. He emphasized, however, that the Austrian diplomatic initiative had stopped further development in that direction as Buol's proposal made prospects for peace certain.<sup>96</sup> Only if the Porte refused the peaceful solution, the Serbian Prince would be required to take stand on Gorchakov's Note sent to the Princes of Wallachia and Moldavia.

Fonton left a very favourable impression on the British Consul in Serbia. It is true that Fonblanque soon started to describe him in his official reports as a Russian "quasi-commissioner". However, he underlined how Fonton was a pleasant person, whose manners reminded him of Butenjev's, the Russian diplomat he obviously liked best, but surpassing him in refinement and human qualities.<sup>97</sup> After Fonton's mission it was clear to the British Consul that its causes were not in the need to clarify or promote the Russo-Serbian relations. The reason was moderation of the Russian party in the Principality and establishing of new and more prudent policy, because it became clear to St Petersburg that Austria would not openly side with Russia in the war. Also Vienna was not at all willing to let Tsar Nikolay I decide on eventual spheres in the division of the Ottoman Empire, but that they already in advance considered Serbia as its own part. This was why Fonblanque wrote to Redcliffe that Austria was presently greater danger to the British interests in Serbia. Reviewing his own impressions, Fonblanque stressed that Fonton's mission reduced its goals to the conservative aspect of the Russian foreign policy. The Russian envoy was, allegedly, most interested in whether Serbia was really "corrupted by republicanism under the influence of Polish and Sardinian agents".<sup>98</sup> After the lack of the Austrian support the contradiction between the actions of the Russian diplomacy and its real interests, was obvious: in Serbia Vučić had accused the intrigues for the dissatisfaction that were allegedly spread throughout the country by the French and the British Consuls through Garašanin,

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<sup>96</sup> With the Vienna note of 31 July 1853 the Austrian diplomacy succeeded in reaching in a short time a compromise agreement between Russia and the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire undertook to respect the provisions relating to religion of the Kuchuk Kainardji and Edirne Treaty, as well that the status of the Holy Places in Palestine would not be changed without prior agreement by Paris and St. Peterbourg. W. Baumgart, p. 14.

<sup>97</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 20 August 1853, F.O. 78/943, Copy No. 53.

<sup>98</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 27 August 1853, F.O. 78/943, Copy No. 55.

while Fonton himself tried to assure the Western diplomats how Russia, in case of war with the Ottoman Empire was asking Serbia only for neutrality. However, Fonblanque could now go to the limits of his mission in the defence of the Ottoman sovereignty. He explicitly let the Russian envoy know that each Russian demand regarding the position of Serbia in the conflict between St Petersburg and Constantinople was simply interference into the internal affairs of the Porte and violation of the Ottoman Empire sovereignty. The British Consul, however, had the information at his disposal that the Serbian neutrality represented some kind of tacit consensus between Russia and Austria. According to the agreement, for whose alleged existence he somehow learned about, in case of the Ottoman troops entering Serbia, the joint military intervention of Austria and Russia in the Principality would follow. This was also the reason for concentrating the Austrian forces on the Danube, as well as the arming of Serbia from Austria itself.<sup>99</sup>

#### *Serbia in the Russo-Turkish War on the Danube*

If the entry of the Ottoman army into Serbia, the vassal Principality of the Ottoman Empire, would be a sufficient pretext for the allied action of the Austrian and Russian armies, whose cooperation in Wallachia and Moldavia had not taken place, then the question of the defence of Serbia was of the major importance for Constantinople and its Western allies. This was why Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, already at the end of August 1853, requested a comprehensive report from the British Consul in Belgrade about the possibilities for the defence of the Ottoman army in Serbian towns.<sup>100</sup> In his detailed report Fonblanque expressed satisfaction with the combat morale of Bessim Pasha, the commander of the Belgrade fortress. Everything else required a lot of money and effort. In case of a joint Russo-Austrian-Serbian siege, i.e. the worst variant the British Consul also considered as the most certain one, the existing Belgrade garrison would be insufficient, in his estimate. There were only 1,800 soldiers in the fortress in 1853, that was almost three times less than at the time of the acquirement of autonomy and hardly two hundred soldiers more than at the time when it was least numerous and during the most stable peace in the first half of the nineteenth century. Fonblanque considered that

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<sup>99</sup> *Ibid*, J. Ristić, p. 107–8.

<sup>100</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 5 September 1853, F.O. 78/943, Copy No. 56.

the garrison should be increased to 4,000 soldiers and even 400 artillerymen, while the defence should be reinforced with large-caliber cannons and a supply of at least five tons of gunpowder.

It was only three weeks after Fonton's departure that the British Consul could inform the ambassador in Constantinople about the consequences of the Russian diplomacy latest action in Serbia.<sup>101</sup> The British Consul no longer thought that the most important thing was that Serbia had not rebelled against its Prince and the Ottoman sovereignty. He was more interested in the equality of Great Britain with Russia in the Principality. He was comparing Fonton's status with the status Calhoun, the British Consul in Moldavia, had enjoyed in Serbia several years ago, whom Petronijević denied many honours. Fonblanque did not see the Russian turn towards Serbia as a withdrawal any more, but as a suitable manoeuvre by St Petersburg to dissociate itself from Prince Mihailo's letter, thus regaining full influence on Prince Aleksandar Karadjordjević.<sup>102</sup> The only potential benefit was a certain distancing between Russia and Austria, as Fonton was prompting Serbian officials equally against the Austrian, French and English influence. Fonblanque was convinced that Austria had been obviously preparing for war mostly because of its internal policy, afraid of possible secession of its own Slavonic regions. Vienna, supposedly, considered that something like that could be prevented only with the annexation of the Ottoman Slavonic provinces to the Habsburg Empire.<sup>103</sup> As an expression of fear from internal unrests and preparations for the future war, the British diplomats also perceived the sudden decision of the Austrian government to move the Saint Stefan's crown, the symbol of the Hungarian sovereignty, from Budim to Vienna. Colonel Radosavljević himself, the Austrian Consul in Belgrade, stated before Fonblanque that his government would not be able to remain neutral if the Ottoman preparations for the religious war against Russia continued.<sup>104</sup>

In Ilija Garašanin's letters, as well as in the biographies of this renowned Serbian statesman, his connections with the British diplomacy were rarely

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<sup>101</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 13 September 1853, F.O. 78/943, No. 58.

<sup>102</sup> D. Stranjaković p. 255.

<sup>103</sup> Fonblanque to Clarendon, \_\_\_\_\_, F.O. 78/943, No. 44; Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 13 September 1853, F.O. 78/943, No. 58.

<sup>104</sup> Fonblanque ironically asked himself whether this meant that the marching in of the Russian forces into the Danube principalities with the icons of the Madonna Aegyptiaca, under the units' symbols, lacked any religious tension. *Ibid.*



*Teodor-Teja Radosavljević,*  
The National Museum, Belgrade

mentioned, and his relationship with Consul Fonblanque was completely ignored.<sup>105</sup> It is not possible from Garašanin's correspondence to establish with certainty whether there existed a special plan of meetings with the Russian diplomats at the time of his stay in Austria for medical treatment in the summer of 1853. It is certain that he met there the influential Count Orlov's son, while he had a long meeting with Mayendorf, the Russian ambassador in Vienna, at which all issues that had remained open during the preceding year between St Petersburg and Belgrade were discussed. Judging by the correspondence between the British Consul in Belgrade and the Embassy in Constantinople and Foreign Office, Garašanin's visit to Austria was prepared on Fonblanque's advice and with his agreement.<sup>106</sup> The British Consul General found it necessary and useful for Garašanin to deny in his talk with the Russian officials the accusations portraying him as a dangerous republican. Upon Garašanin's return, the British Consul was pleased to be able to report that Garašanin had even the occasion to point out to Mayendorf also about the inadmissible behaviour practised, except for Tumanski, by his predecessors Levishin and Danilevskii, towards the Serbian Prince and his ministers as their subordinates. In reply to all this Garašanin gave the examples of very positive behaviour of the French and British Consuls, and Mayendorff unhesitatingly expressed the belief how the future Russian diplomatic representatives in Serbia should exactly follow their example.

The conflicts between the Turkish and Russian armies broke out on the Danube frontline already in October.<sup>107</sup> Although Small Wallachia, bordering with the Principality of Serbia, was not occupied by the Russian forces, just out of consideration to Austria, the Ottoman troops rushed to attempt, crossing the Danube at Vidin, to cut out the communication of the Russian army with Serbia. The behaviour of official Serbia became then important for the representatives of the Western powers in Belgrade, in addition to allegedly insignificant issue of the Russian subjects residing in Serbia.<sup>108</sup> Fonblanque thought that, in case of the outbreak of the war, the war regulations had to be applied

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<sup>105</sup> D. Stranjaković, p. 261.

<sup>106</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 30 September 1853, F.O. 78/943, No. 61.

<sup>107</sup> W. Baumgart, pp.94–5.; P. Shroeder, pp. 81–3. Ristić was writing about this only superficially, devoting greater attention to the Russo-Turkish war after January 1854. J. Ristić, p. 108–9.

<sup>108</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 3 October 1853, F.O. 78/943, Copy No. 63.

to those several Russian citizens who happened to be in Serbia, the same ones that would be applied in the other parts of the Ottoman Empire as well. However, the British diplomat seemed not to be interested in the first place in the consequences of the conflict for the Serbian-Russian relations. This was why he proposed Redcliffe, in case of Austria entering into the war, that after the war Britain had to endeavour to revoke all those commercial agreements with Serbia restraining the British economic interests in the Principality.

Finally, on 9<sup>th</sup> October 1853 the news about Gorchakov's ultimatum addressed to Omer Pasha arrived from Constantinople.<sup>109</sup> And the war could formally begin. Fonblanque informed Clarendon, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, about the reliable news at his disposal that an agreement had been reached between Russia and Serbia according to which the Principality would enter the war with the Ottoman Empire at the invitation of Russia.<sup>110</sup> In the British Consul's knowledge, the Russian diplomacy would in return be prepared, even in the absence of war, to do everything necessary to improve the conditions in the European Turkey, while the Ottoman Empire would, supposedly spontaneously, soon grant independence to Serbia. The British Consul was convinced that the Austrian government had not been informed about this agreement as it would obviously be contrary to the Austrian interests on the Balkans.

The situation that developed contained numerous dangers threatening the very existence of the autonomy of the Principality of Serbia. Despite this, there were politicians in Belgrade who tried to get long-term benefits for their country out of this strange coincidence of events. Strictly formally, the war and the forthcoming break up of diplomatic relations inevitably had to lead to the annulment of the treaty between St Petersburg and Constantinople determining and guaranteeing the status of Serbia. Nevertheless, such an outcome, though expected, still did not take place. The Serbian politicians could see an unpleasantness in Fonton's mission, primarily because he was sent to Serbia as a Russian commissioner and without the approval of the Porte. However, when Fonton's stay resulted in neither unrests in Serbia, nor in dangerous re-

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<sup>109</sup> Fonblanque to Pisani, Belgrade, 9 October 1853, F.O. 78/943. *Srbski dnevnik* in its edition of 21 October informed that a meeting of the Cabinet members with the Queen was held in London, at which the decision was supposed to be made about the entry into the war., *Srbski dnevnik*, /In Serbian: *The Serbian Daily*/, Novi Sad, 21 October 1853, no. 83; W. Baumgart, p. 94.

<sup>110</sup> Fonblanque to Clarendon, Belgrade, 24 September 1853, F.O. 78/943, Copy No. 4.



action from the Ottoman Empire and its Western allies, some of them saw in this a legal vacuum in which Serbia could tacitly obtain independence in conducting its foreign policy.<sup>111</sup> Clarendon was informed that the first step in the direction of such Serbian independence should be Mouchin's appointment as the head of the Russian Consulate in Belgrade. Mouchin was, like Fonton, the Russian State Counsellor and he was supposed to come to Belgrade in place of Tumanski, who had already been withdrawn in the spring. This was supposed to be a concession to the Serbian authorities, as well as an occasion for the representative of a power without diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Empire on one part of its territory, to continue working, upon submitting his credentials to the Serbian Prince instead of to the Commander of the Belgrade fortress. Fonblanque proposed again a moderate reaction. In his opinion, the Porte must not allow Mouchin to remain in Belgrade because it had to arrest him immediately once the war formally broke out, without consideration for the consequences. Nevertheless, the British Consul himself recommended to the Serbian officials to behave towards Mouchin in the same way as towards Fonton, to accept meetings with him, but to refuse political discussions at the same time.<sup>112</sup> It was clear to Fonblanque that the educated Serbs mostly thought ill of the Ottoman prestige because of their firm belief that the forthcoming war undoubtedly had to end in the Russian victory, after which Serbia would become independent federal kingdom gathering all surrounding regions.<sup>113</sup> This was exactly why the influence of the Russian Empire had to be defeated. This defeat, however, could not only come as an inevitable result of the victory of the Ottoman armies on the Danube.

On 21<sup>st</sup> October the new Commander of the Belgrade fortress finally arrived to Belgrade. The first impressions of the Western consuls about Izzet Pasha were more than favourable.<sup>114</sup> On the other hand, the Pasha was very ill, and that was why a part of his duties was expected to be carried out by his

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<sup>111</sup> Fonblanque to Clarendon, Belgrade, 16 October 1853, F.O. 78/943, No. 48.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> „...he possesses a fair proportion of oriental astuteness, – accompanied by the firmness engendered by habitual command, and a prescribed circumspection.“; Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 24 October 1853, F.O. 78/943, Copy No. 69, 10 A.M. At that time certain British newspapers reported about the increase in number of the Serbian Army. *The Servians*, "The Morning Herald", 2 November 1853.

eighteen-year-old son, already a Pasha himself. This young man, in addition to French and Italian, spoke even English to Fonblanque's satisfaction. Izzet Pasha was authorized to proclaim the previously received ultimatum of the Porte to Prince Gorchakov, the Russian military commander in Bucarest, demanding the withdrawal of the Russian army from Wallachia and Moldavia. The Ottoman Pasha's authority, who was in the position to keep contact with the Russian army in Wallachia (which was mainly divided from the Ottoman army on other borders by the already established fronts), considerably suffered on account of Mouchin's stay in Belgrade. Another unpleasant demand from the Porte soon arrived to Belgrade. The Ottoman Minister of Foreign Affairs, in his letter of 28<sup>th</sup> October, demanded from the Prince of Serbia to proclaim the state of hostility towards Russia. In his reply, forwarded to Constantinople from the safe Kragujevac only a week later, Aleksandar Karadjordjević expressed political principles that Serbia would comply with in the forthcoming war years. The loyalty and the inclination of Serbia toward the Porte were, in his words, undisputable, but on no account they should either be allowed to transgress the framework of the existing international treaties, or they could be applied in the mutual war between the two protecting powers. In his opinion, the only way out was his country's strict neutrality.<sup>115</sup>

During this time Mouchin, although still only the Tsar's official, staying without credentials close to the Belgrade fortress and visiting daily the Serbian dignitaries, openly influenced the Serbian policy. At the time when the ultimatum had already been submitted, he was publicly looking for a new house for his Consulate that would be out of the reach of the mixed police, contrary to representative missions of other European powers. The Russian envoy's behaviour caused great worries to the Serbian authorities as well. In reply to a slightly naïve question by the Serbian Minister of the Interior whether the official Serbia would be compromised by his stay in Belgrade, Mouchin only coldly replied that the Principality was owing only tribute to the Porte.<sup>116</sup> Despite giving almost revolutionary advice to the Serbian government, Mouchin

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<sup>115</sup> *Alexander Georgewitsch to the Sultan*, Kraguiewatz, 6 November, „The Morning Herald“, 1. December 1853. The attitude of the Porte had been quite different, but in the period after the Fonton's mission the Porte was prepared to comply with the French and British advice, and therefore, contrary to earlier plans, did not send its commissioner that summer to Serbia. D. Stranjaković, pp. 255–7.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*

was much more conciliatory when talking with the Western consuls. Thus he received Fonblanque in his civilian clothes, and the talk between the two representatives was cautiously led in order to avoid questions regarding his position in Serbia and the relations between Britain and Russia. Despite its triviality and complete informality, Fonblanque considered that this talk should be repeated in keeping with the diplomatic conventions of that time. Nevertheless, he intended to receive Mouchin somewhere outside the building of the British Consulate.

The Serbian relations with Porte and the Western powers were filled by deep controversy. According to Fonblanque's and Ségur's general impressions, Serbia was almost fully inclined toward Russia, and for that reason the very hoisting of the Russian flag in front of the Consulate in Belgrade would only represent a sign for general uprising in the Principality against the Ottoman authority. Nevertheless, at the end of October 1853 the Foreign Office informed Fonblanque that the Serbian Agent at the Porte had announced the Serbian offer that 25,000 Serbian soldiers would also join the Sultan's army in the forthcoming war.<sup>117</sup> When Fonblanque attempted to find out something more about this offer, the Serbian government readily refuted it, and its further policy convinced the British Consul that it was only a diplomatic testing issue. The Serbian government was accelerating the preparations of the country for "armed neutrality" in case of war. It was clear to the Western consuls that the Serbian authorities' policy, formulated in this way, also meant the retaining of the existing relations with Constantinople and St Petersburg in the case of war. Such policy represented the establishing of the true independence of the Principality.

This was the reason why the competition of Great Powers over their prestige in Belgrade became an issue of details. Fonblanque thought that the Porte had to persevere in its demand for the expulsion of the Russian subjects from Serbia, and the establishing of all signs of the Ottoman authority in the country. No detail was insignificant enough to slip the Consul's interest: he

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<sup>117</sup> Fonblanque to Addington, Belgrade, 26 October 1853, F.O. 78/943. The news about the offer came from the French Embassy in Constantinople. Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 11 November 1853, F.O. 78/943, Copy No. 83. The historiography has not mentioned this offer. Lj. P. Ristić, p. 36. *Srbski dnevnik* (*The Serbian Daily*) that was under strong Russian influence, wrote that Serbia at the time of greatest crisis enjoyed the support „from all sides to remain neutral“. *Srbski dnevnik*, /In Serbian: *The Serbian Daily*/ Novi Sad, 21 October 1853, no. 83.

noticed that the Prince's Prime Minister wore the least formal, morning suit at Izzet Pasha's reception, and that the Prince received Mouchin although he was dressed on this occasion in full glitter of his Consul's uniform, as well as that during the reconstruction of the Prince's Court the Serbian ruler used the office from which only the frame with the calligraphically written name of the Sultan Abdul Mejid was taken out.<sup>118</sup> The Serbian politicians close to the Western consuls proposed to convene the Assembly as a possible way out of the situation the country was in. Traditionally against the Prince and the Council, the National Assembly would, as they believed, change the general direction of the Serbian policy, due to which the Russian influence, conservative as a rule and indisposed towards democratic movements, would probably suffer.<sup>119</sup> The French Consul Ségur was for such a solution. On the other hand, Fonblanque, relying on his rich experience with the Serbian assemblies, claimed that it was exactly the holding of the Assembly one should avoid in case of Serbia. He believed that the convening of the Assembly would be dangerous for the Prince, but it would be more useful for Russia because the people's representatives would either establish the alliance of Belgrade with St Petersburg or, in case of exceptional moderation, cut all connections with Constantinople.<sup>120</sup>

The activities of the Austrian diplomacy probably represented the most serious obstacle to the influence of Western powers on the Serbian authorities. Fonblanque firmly believed that the Austrian Consul in Belgrade worked in agreement with Mouchin and that the question of the European Turkey division continued to be one of the goals of Vienna. Colonel Radosavljević announced that he would offer protection to those few Russian subjects in the Principality in case of war, and in the talk with Izzet Pasha he still expressed his expectations for reaching the peaceful solution of the existing crisis. Since the Commander of the Belgrade fortress shared the general opinion of Constantinople politicians that the peaceful solution was impossible without damaging effects to the Ottoman Empire interests, he only defiantly an-

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<sup>118</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 3 November 1853, F.O. 78/943, Copy No. 79.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>120</sup> „It is, by much, the most docile people I ever knew“, he described the Serbian people in his report to the ambassador in Constantinople, recollecting how Petronijević in 1842 got the population of entire districts roused with the untrue news that the Prince had become a Russian prisoner, only after arrival to Belgrade, that same crowd, at his instigation, deposed the ruler they had recently been ready to come to rescue. *Ibid.*

swered Radosavljević that the peace would be undoubtedly reached, but after the war.<sup>121</sup> Fonblanque dreaded the military collaboration of the Russian and Austrian armies together with the Serbian forces, and he saw the production of siege cannons in Kragujevac as a direct announcement of the siege of Belgrade.<sup>122</sup>

The protection Austria was ready to offer to the Russian subjects in Serbia represented an unpleasant obstacle both to the Ottoman authority and the British and French plans. Although only seven subjects of the Tsar of Russia, in addition to Mouchin, resided in the Principality, the British Consul in his reports acidly commented how none of them were involved in commerce or any other private business. However, even Mouchin could remain in Serbia under the protection of Austria, who was given such a chance just by the fact that he had no *Berat* about his appointment, so that he was staying in Belgrade in the capacity of a private person, that had previously hindered him.<sup>123</sup> The Porte itself did not wish to go further than to half-way measures, so Fonblanque and Ségur considered that the removal of Mouchin from Belgrade, in spite of his activities being just as efficient from nearby Zemun, would be a worthwhile success.<sup>124</sup>

The British and French Consuls agreed that the Serbian authorities should not be pushed into the fear and despair. The departure of Mouchin from Belgrade was considered as the most important goal, while the question of the Austrian influence, in their opinion, was less significant in view of the known unpopularity of Austria with the National Party and, in general, the people in Serbia. Still, it did not take Fonblanque long to lose his patience with

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<sup>121</sup> *Ibid*, 5 November.

<sup>122</sup> According to the information available to the British Consul in Belgrade, during his visit to the cannon factory the Prince asked the French engineer Lubry, who was in charge of the manufacture of cannons, whether it would be possible to start with the production of the twentyfour-pounds-cannons (in addition to the current six-pounds ones). Lubry answered positively, knowing in advance the amount of necessary costs. As the Principality had no fortresses that had to be defended by such cannons Fonblanque came to the conclusion that the Prince's interest was imposed by planned siege of the Ottoman fortresses within its borders. *Ibid*. About Serbia and the Belgrade fortress, see: *Servia*, 16 November, „The Times“, 28 November 1853; about the manufacture of cannons in Serbia at that time, see: D. Stranjaković, p. 236.

<sup>123</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 10 November 1853, F.O. 78/943, Copy No. 80. The contemporaries, however, did not describe Mouchin's position as dramatic to such an extent. J. Ristić, p. 112.

<sup>124</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 10 November 1853, F.O. 78/943, Copy No. 81. J. Ristić, p. 113.

Aleksa Simić, who tried in every possible way to free Serbia from all obligations and thus procure certain advantages. Faced with the refusal, the Prince's Prime Minister would apparently sink into resignation whenever the neutrality of Serbia suggested to be the result of its leaders' lack of will that was, however, the natural consequence of fear from the Russian retribution, Austrian pressures, Ottoman threats and anxieties from the internal unrests.

Fonblanque informed Redcliffe on 11<sup>th</sup> November about such a talk.<sup>125</sup> The Prince's Prime Minister tried to prove to the British Consul how it was possible for Serbia to remain neutral in the expected war. Fonblanque quoted the authorities in the classic law substantiating the thesis that the vassal state inevitably had to side with its suzerain, but Simić promptly replied how a group of Serbian State Counsellors had recently, in a well-founded manner, refuted the mentioned arguments. The British Consul did not know how to reply to these words in a controlled way so, allowing himself to be utmost ironic, asked whether the Prince's Prime Minister trusted more Grotius or Acika Nenadović. Notwithstanding, Fonblanque continued to exert pressure on Simić, claiming that the news about the incidents on the southern borders of Serbia were invented and refusing the possibility of Russia conquering the two most powerful world powers.<sup>126</sup> If it remained loyal to the Porte, the British Consul asserted, Serbia might hope both for the confirmation of the annulment of *Fermans* determining its autonomy and a guarantee of its status on a wider basis.<sup>127</sup> A different policy would remove the Principality from the

<sup>125</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 11 November 1853, F.O. 78/943, Copy No. 83.

<sup>126</sup> Great Britain and France. *Ibid.* *The Times* reporter from Belgrade reported on 14 November about Mouchin's arrival to Serbia and the entire diplomatic entanglement regarding his mission and appointment. He called the problem in which the Serbian authorities found themselves the „Gordian knot“. *Servia*, Belgrade, 14 November, *The Times*, 24 November 1853.

<sup>127</sup> The French Ambassador at the Porte who was the first, according to Fonblanque, to formulate such an offer to the Principality, was implying here the guarantees of the Great Powers. Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 11 November 1853, F.O. 78/943, Copy No. 83; J. Ristić, p. 115–6. Matija Ban's testimony corresponds with Fonblanque's reports. According to them the idea about the *Ferman* one-sidedly confirming the old privileges to Serbia came from Segir. The French Consul General originally stated that Serbia should become only a region of the Ottoman Empire, but the resolute Ban's and later Garašanin's and Marinović's resistance made him change his opinion. M. Ban, „O meni za Krimskog rata“, Hartije Matije Bana, kut. I, ¼, str. 2. /in Serbian: About Myself during the Crimean War, Matija Ban's Papers, box I, ¼, p. 2/.

re-confirmation of its status, formerly closely linked to Russia and its influence in Constantinople.

It seemed that such arguments had no effect on the Serbian authorities. The Constitutionalist's concerns toward Russia were so deep that even the newly-appointed Belgrade Pasha felt some understanding for them. Therefore, Izzet Pasha had, bypassing the Serbian authorities, requested Mouchin to leave the Ottoman territory.<sup>128</sup> The answer he received sent the hot potato back to the Serbian authorities: the Russian envoy claimed that he had been accredited with the Serbian Prince, and whom such a request should be directed to. However, the British Consul denied publicly such arguments, and he rejected the excuse that Mouchin had arrived to Belgrade before the outbreak of the war, asserting that the Russian envoy had arrived only after the breaking up of the diplomatic relations between Constantinople and St Petersburg. The Prince got himself into a tight corner, being again in the situation to make decisions about the issues over which he had not much power, or the nerve to bear the consequences of a bad assessment.

Judging by the report he sent to the British ambassador in Constantinople, Fonblanque seemed to have left much greater impression on Prince Aleksandar than on the Prince's Prime Minister two days ago. Since he had nobody he could share his dilemmas with, the Prince had himself asked for a meeting, and in reply to the Consul's arguments he could only cry out helplessly: "But I am afraid of Russia – what if it overpowers in the forthcoming war?"<sup>129</sup> Fonblanque, nevertheless, remained persistent, but more in his endeavour to convince the Serbian ruler than in the attitude which was since long undoubtedly firm. The Prince finally announced that he would ask Mouchin, through Simić, to leave Serbia. Fonblanque was certainly pleased by the Serbian ruler's statement that he would not consult other foreign representatives about this issue, so its almost with pleasure that he reported how the Prince had not accepted his advice to arrange a similar meeting with Ségur. That same day the French Consul was informed about the Prince's decision by Jevrem Nenadović, the Prince's father-in-law.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 13 November 1853, F.O. 78/943, Copy No. 84.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>130</sup> At that time *The Times* wrote commendably about the national party in Serbia, stating that its leaders fully understood Aberdeen's policy that was prepared to

Confronted with such an attitude of the Serbian authorities, Mouchin agreed to leave Belgrade.<sup>131</sup> The formulation about the “temporary departure” was primarily chosen to avoid the disturbances in the country. Although only several days ago he had seen Mouchin’s removal as his and Ségur’s most important goal, Fonblanque nevertheless now thought that too little was achieved and that the question of other Russian citizens was not solved. He stated that it was exactly the indecision of the Porte that had enabled Mouchin to acquire certain “semi-official” status, and that the entire crisis had just passed its most dramatic stage, having only been postponed for some time.

Fonblanque was right in his assessment that Mouchin’s moving to Zemun was only one step back for the Russian diplomacy. This step could easily become only a manoeuvre by which the Russian diplomacy completely involved the Austrian diplomacy into its own plans. Mouchin continued to visit the town of Belgrade and to meet with Prince Aleksandar and Simić.<sup>132</sup> The Prince himself readily replied to Izzet Pasha’s protests that Mouchin was crossing to Serbia under the protection of the Austrian passport. The Russian envoy even sent a protest to the Belgrade Pasha from Zemun, stating that the Russian protectorate over Serbia did not cease with the beginning of war, as well as that the Russian citizens in Serbia enjoyed the Austrian protection.<sup>133</sup> Fonblanque considered that Mouchin managed in imposing himself in this way, not only

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withstand and suppress the Russian predomination for the sake of general wellbeing and emancipation of the Ottoman Christians. *Servia*, Belgrade, 16 November, *The Times*, 28 November 1853. Stranjaković distancing himself by not having researched the British documents, pointed out to the prevailing influence of the French Consul General and his diplomacy on the Serbian one at that time. D. Stranjaković, p. 259. and 261.

<sup>131</sup> Even several decades later Jovan Ristić in his study *Srbija i Krimska vojna* /In Serbian: *Serbia and The Crimean War*/ stated that Mouchin left Belgrade at the Belgrade Pasha’s request. J. Ristić, 112; *The Morning Herald*, Belgrade, 14 November, 22 November 1853; *Srbski dnevnik* wrote that the Russian envoy Fonton was coming again. *Srbski dnevnik*, /In Serbian: *The Serbian Daily*/. Novi Sad, 14 November, 1853, no. 90.

<sup>132</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, 18 November 1853, F.O. 78/943 Copy, 87. On the same day *The Morning Herald* reported that even 15,000 Turkish soldiers were sent to Serbia, not only to prevent the entry of the Russian Army via Small Wallachia, but primarily to observe the moves of Austrians „whose faith is never pure“. *The War, The Morning Herald*, 18 November 1853.

<sup>133</sup> Mouchin to Izzet Pasha (Gouverneur de la Citadelle de Belgrade), Semlin le 10/22 Novembre 1853, F.O. 78/943.



because of the Austrian support but also due to the split in the Ottoman diplomacy. He also had the news at his disposal that the Ottoman ambassador in Vienna himself, Arrif Effendy, had approved of Mouchin's stay at the border.<sup>134</sup>

The siding of Austria with Russia seemed, from the viewpoint of the British Consul General, as quite obvious. According to the news available to him, the Austrian troops were concentrated to a larger extent on the Sava and the Danube than on the border towards Russia and the Danube principalities. In addition, the Austrian authorities tolerated Mouchin's diplomatic activities from Zemun and had even provided him with the passport, whereas, on the other hand, they did not refrain from objections in the case of a completely private stay of the British captain Heneage in the same town.<sup>135</sup> The German and Austrian newspapers inclined toward Russia were presenting the rebellion in Serbia as an inevitability. Since Austria had for already six months been announcing disturbances in Serbia as a sufficient pretext to occupy the Principality, Fonblanque considered the articles reporting about the inevitability of an uprising in Serbia as simple forgeries made to disturb the spirits.<sup>136</sup> The fact that at that time it was impossible for a private person in Austria to send a political telegram was in favour of such his viewpoint, while the news entitled *From Zemun* or *From Belgrade* were sent just in this way.<sup>137</sup>

The new, and it may be said, final crisis in the relations between the Great Powers was precipitated after the Russian naval victory over the Turks at Sinop on 30<sup>th</sup> November 1853. The destruction of the Ottoman Black Sea fleet brought France and Great Britain into a true war. The declaration of war was

<sup>134</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 26 November 1853, F.O. 78/943, Copy No. 90.

<sup>135</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 29 November 1853, F.O.78/943, Copy No. 92.

<sup>136</sup> The reporter of *The Times* from Oršava reported on 21 November 1853 that even six million Serbs were waiting for their leaders' call to rise up in arms against the Ottoman Empire. *The War on the Danube*, Vienna, 21 November, *The Times*, 2 December 1853.

<sup>137</sup> Aleksa Simić's denial: Belgrade, 23 November/5 December 1853. *Allgemeine Zeitung*, Belgrade, 27 Nov., No. 331. One such article was first published in a Belgian newspaper in order to gain in authenticity, and only later it was reprinted in *Allgemeine Zeitung*. „L'Independence Belge“, 21 November 1853, No. 325. This Belgian newspaper wrote about the intention of Austria to occupy Serbia in case of conflict with the Ottoman forces from Bosnia. How great the tension was shows the fact that the report arrived to Vienna on 28 November at 15.30, by telegraph, about an alleged battle between the Serbs and the Bosnian Turks near Užice, in which five hundred casualties were registered. *Austria*, Vienna, 28 November, *The Times*, 3 December 1853.

postponed for several months although it meant only a formality as far as their participation in the war operations was in question. At the end of November the reporter of *The Times* from Vienna wrote about the great pressure exerted on the Serbian authorities by Ségur, the French Consul General to cut off from the Russian influence. According to his writing, the official Austria considered that the armed neutrality would be the best solution for Serbia, as well as that the French agent had gone beyond his authorizations. On the basis of such news the British public could get an impression that the official Austria had publicly sided with Russia.<sup>138</sup> Mouchin's stay in Zemun, "only ten leagues from Belgrade", seemed to Fonblanque extremely dangerous. The British Consul General accused him of finding ways even from Zemun to act instead and on behalf of Prince Aleksandar. In these days the Sultan received a letter which was supposedly written by the Serbian prince about the relations of Serbia with the Porte. The friendly tone of the letter otherwise not permissible in relations between the vassal and the suzerain, led Fonblanque to believe that the letter had not been written by one of the Prince's secretaries but by Mouchin personally, because Clarendon and Fonblanque himself had been mentioned in the letter. Besides, it was more likely for the Russian envoy to make a mistake and quote Belgrade as the place the letter had been written in – although Prince Aleksandar had been in Kragujevac at the time.<sup>139</sup>

The question of Russian citizens in Serbia and the loyalty of the official Serbia to Russia was the Western consuls' most important preoccupation during the last month of 1853. They were especially interested that Platon Simonović, the Head Education Supervisor in the Principality who had lived in Russia for a long time and where he had retired at a high position of the

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<sup>138</sup> *Austria*, Vienna, 27 November, *The Times*, 2 December 1853. The newspapers from Frankfurt also wrote about this, reporting the attitude of the Austrian internuncio at the Porte that the Serbian neutrality was in fact in the interest of Austria, while the Porte was prepared to make Serbia enter the war even by a military intervention. „Post Ampt. Gazzete“, Vienna, 27 November 1853, in *The Morning Herald*, 5 December 1853.

<sup>139</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, 6 December 1853, F.O. 78/943, No. 94. Serbia found itself under great pressure to enter the war. The news from 1 November reached even distant London about the alleged Montenegrinian mission sent to Smederevo, that unsuccessfully worked on the establishing of the alliance between Serbia and Montenegro in the forthcoming war. *The Morning Herald*, Stagnevitch, 15 December 1853.

Tsar's Counsellor, should go with Mouchin.<sup>140</sup> Fonblanque went so far as to consider Simonović equal in rank with Mouchin, thinking that his far reaching influence on the Principality was potentially even more dangerous for the interests of the Ottoman Empire. He stated that thanks to Simonović's work the Serbs would finally become Russified.

After the battle at Sinop the war became inevitable at last. This was exactly the reason why the loyalty of the Serbian authorities to the Porte had to go through two significant tests during December. It was not any more the matter of secret meetings of the highest dignitaries with the Russian envoys at the time when the Western consuls also kept certain contacts with them. These were not any more defiant but useless individual spiteful acts, when the Serbian dignitaries at the official receptions kept "forgetting" to pin up the Ottoman decorations, showing off the Russian ones at the same time. The holidays of St Andrew The First Called and St Nicholas were getting near: the former represented the day when in 1830 the *Hatisherif* was read determining the autonomy of the Principality of Serbia; and the latter, in addition to the fact that this Patron Saint's Day (*Slava*) was celebrated by a large number of Serbian families, was also the Tsar's name-day. Surprisingly, everything went well for the holiday of St Andrew the First Called. The British travellers who found themselves in Belgrade at that time, attended the liturgy held in the cathedral (*Saborna crkva*) on this occasion. One of them wrote in the letter published in *The Illustrated London News* how, despite general expectations, the Metropolitan omitted the name of the Russian Tsar in his prayer, restricting himself to mention only the Ottoman Sultan's name.<sup>141</sup> It was a great surprise, but no unrests broke out and after the end of the religious service the people noisily dispersed.<sup>142</sup>

The hopes that some significant changes took place in Serbia did not last long after all. Only a week later, on St Nicholas day, the same Metropolitan mentioned in his prayer the names of both rulers: the Protector and the Suzerain of Serbia. The British Consul expected such an outcome. Since he knew the circumstances in Serbia, he had rushed on the eve of the holidays to

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<sup>140</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 26 November 1853, F.O. 78/943 Copy, No. 90.

<sup>141</sup> *The War in the East*, „The Illustrated London News“, 31 December 1853, p. 598.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid*; Fonblanque to Clarendon, Belgrade, 12 December 1853, F.O. 78/943, No. 63.

talk to Colonel Radosavljević, the Austrian Consul General in Serbia whom he considered to be the only one who could exert the influence on the Serbian authorities and Metropolitan Petar, who was also the Austrian subject.<sup>143</sup> Fonblanque's efforts were in vain. Colonel Radosavljević attended the liturgy, and it took the Serbian prelate one full minute just to enumerate many Tsar's titles. The British Consul noticed that it had already become the Prince's custom to remove himself from Belgrade to Kragujevac, the provincial quiet second capital, whenever he had a premonition of a crisis and the Great Powers' pressures.<sup>144</sup> During this time the Belgrade newspapers wrote that the Prince was loyal to the Porte, while Simić was trying to postpone the ruler's return fearing for the future of his pro-Russian policy.

The confusing policy of the official Serbia and all the more obvious uncertainty of Russia gave courage to the Belgrade Pasha conciliatory until then. Fonblanque had to dissuade him from his not so prudent intention to issue an order and, despite the Austrian protection, expel the Russian citizens from Serbia. Such an action would only make the Serbian hatred for the Turks deeper, which the British Consul General believed was impossible to overcome.<sup>145</sup> He could then inform Redcliffe about the contents of Nesselrode's letter brought to Prince Aleksandar by Fonton several months ago. According to Fonblanque, the Russian Chancellor had informed the Serbian ruler that Russian and Austrian interests in Serbia were identical. This was sufficient for the mistrustful British diplomat to conclude that it was all the same to the official Russia whether the Principality would be occupied in future by its own or the Austrian army. Fonblanque believed that this was exactly the contradiction that protected Serbia: however close its relation with Russia was, Austria could not allow Russia, without great danger for itself, to occupy Serbia, the Ottoman territories towards Montenegro and to come out to the Adriatic sea. At the same time, the Austrian occupation would be almost equally unpopular in Serbia as the Ottoman one. He thought that Austria could rule Serbia only by the "force of bayonets".<sup>146</sup> Still, in spite of the Russian and Austrian assurances that the Serbian neutrality in the forthcoming war would politically just suit them, the Russian diplomacy certainly could not be satisfied with subdued and

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<sup>143</sup> Fonblanque to Clarendon, 19 December 1853, F.O. 78/943, No.65.

<sup>144</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, 14 December 1853, F.O. 78/943, No. 97.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*

unreliable behaviour of the Serbian government. When the expelled Prince Miloš's activities became again the subject of mistrust of the Constitutionalist regime, the official Belgrade immediately turned to Russia. The Russian answer was negative and even "out of proportion".<sup>147</sup>

In the last week of 1853 the British Consul General still considered that Austria was prepared to allow the powerful Russia a considerable advantage, thus becoming itself more dependent. Popov, whose departure from Belgrade only a month ago had been considered as a Russian concession, returned to Zemun. Now, except for Mouchin, this experienced diplomat also kept frequently crossing over to Belgrade, he was doing it secretly only this time, and in all likelihood, illegally.<sup>148</sup> Nesselrode's letters were not covered up in Belgrade any more, so that even the British Consul General himself considered it necessary to warn the officials that it would be diplomatically imprudent to publish the Russian Chancellor's letter describing the Maierhoffer's mission, sent to Serbia by the Vienna government shortly before Fonton's arrival, in a completely different way in relation to the official Austrian explanation. He was explaining to his Serbian collocutors that if the Porte only realized that the Serbian authorities had already for months been aware of the joint activities of Russia and Austria as well as of their insincerity, Constantinople could interpret this as much worse offence and Serbia would be seen as a disloyal vassal, than it was the case of two powers which in Constantinople they neither could nor dare be completely sincere with.

On the last day of 1853 a dramatic report was sent to Clarendon from Belgrade according to which Mouchin, in a separate talk with the Serbian Prince, had announced the entry of the Russian army into Serbia. These news were confirmed both by the information from the Belgrade Pasha and verified news available to the British Consul General in Serbia.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> *The Morning Herald*, Belgrade, 16 December, 27. December 1853.

<sup>148</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, 24 December 1853, F.O. 78/943, No. 98.

<sup>149</sup> Fonblanque to Clarendon, 31 December 1853, F.O. 78/943, No. 69. Nonetheless, the situation was not as dramatic as it could seem to the British Consul General in Belgrade, or to the belatedly informed British public. The strategic occupation of Wallachia and Moldavia showed many weaknesses of the Russian army, including the fact that the Russians could not count on the agreement with Austria, without which they never undertook a campaign on the European possessions of the Ottoman Empire. The war taking place between November and January on the Danube ended in the Russian defeats near Kalafat and Cetat. The Ottoman troops were stationed

*Serbia the Vice-Realm*

“The only use of a plenipotentiary is to disobey his instructions. A clerk or messenger would do if it is necessary strictly to follow them.”

Lord Palmerston

The ill-disposition of the British diplomacy and its representative in Belgrade towards the Prince and Constitutionals had represented a constant in the relations of these two countries long before the war between Russia and the Ottoman Empire broke out in 1853. At the beginning of the war the open ill-disposition and refusal were shown by each and all representatives of the British diplomacy not only toward the unreliable and weak Prince, his powerful entourage and corrupted and arbitrary oligarchy, but also toward the expelled Obrenović family, whose Russophile inclinations found favour with the people. The Serbian leaders, no matter how different and mutually in quarrel, were linked together by the still insufficiently strong thread to be called the national program, but sufficiently present to be noticeable not only to the British Consul General, but also to the visitors who visited this Principality for the first time.<sup>150</sup> They all agreed that the Principality should be enlarged, primarily towards the south. Thereby, more historical than ethnic principle was emphasized according to the spirit of that time, claiming that in this way the Medieval Serbian Empire would only be renewed.<sup>151</sup> Fonblanque did not much believe in such arguments, and the fact that the realization of these Serbian aspirations would at best mean the division of the European Turkey, as well as that this could be most easily carried out with the help and under the protection of Russia made him their greatest enemy.

The outbreak of the Russo-Turkish war in 1853 marked the beginning of great hopes for the majority of Serbian politicians. The Russian victories

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in Small Wallachia from the beginning of January 1854. This war, called by Bernard Lory as „false“ reached its peak in the spring, when the Russian army sieged Silistria on the Danube without success. The Russian army finally withdrew in June 1854, as demanded by Count Nesselrode and Marshal Paskyevič in the end of 1853. W. Baumgart, pp. 93–102; B. Lory, „La Serbie et la Guerre de Crimee“, *Ilija Garašanin (1812–1874)*, Zbornik radova sa međunarodnog naučnog skupa održanog 9. i 10. decembra 1987, povodom 175. godišnjice rođenja, Beograd, 1991, str. 83–4. /in Serbian: Proceedings of Papers from the International Scientific Meeting held on 9 and 10 December 1987, on occasion of the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth, Belgrade, 1991, pp 83-4/.

<sup>150</sup> *The War in the East*, „The Illustrated London News“, 31 December 1853, p. 598.

<sup>151</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 03 September 1854, F.O. 78/1009.

during the first decade of the nineteenth century enabled an autonomous existence of the Serbian insurgent state. After the victories in the Russo-Turkish war in 1829 Serbia was granted autonomy by the peace treaty provisions, and later the long-promised territorial expansion. The general belief prevailed in Serbia that this war as well could not be ended any differently. Fonblanque thought that there was not much one could do in order to change such an attitude of the Serbian leaders. He hoped even less that the deep-rooted Russophile disposition in the people could be made harmless. At that moment he had nice words to say for two Serbian politicians only, Garašanin and Marinović, while the Serbian public was convinced that France and Great Britain had only a few loyal followers in the Principality.<sup>152</sup> Nevertheless, relying on his eleven-year-long knowledge of the circumstances in Serbia, Fonblanque considered that two facts were certain: he firmly believed that, despite momentary alliance of Russia and Austria, none of them had any interest in creating the enlarged, and even less the independent Serbian state; as well as that the interpretation of the Porte – according to which the agreements between Russia and the Ottoman Empire were annulled with the beginning of the state of war, together with them the autonomy of Serbia – would have similar catastrophic consequences, same as the division of the European Turkey. He saw the solution in the British initiative. As it intended to support the confirmation of autonomous rights of Serbia, Wallachia and Moldavia, he assumed that, with the foreign support, Garašanin and the group of his followers whom the Western contemporaries called a patriotic (national) party, would be able to rule Serbia and gradually change its Constitution. Fonblanque was convinced that prudent reforms and the enlargement of Serbia would not only strengthen the Ottoman frontline against Russia but also weaken the aspirations of other Balkan Christians for establishing independent states. It seems that the idea about the territorial expansion and constitutional reconstruction of Serbia struck Fonblanque in the beginning of autumn of 1853. Already in September he was inquiring about the ethnic composition of Bulgaria, prompted by the appearance of a linguistic map on which the South-Slavonic regions of Austria were marked and which he believed to be the product of the Russian propaganda directed against Vienna. He wrote then to Clarendon how the Serbian politicians considered that

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<sup>152</sup> *Srbski dnevnik*, Novi Sad, 28. mart 1853, br. 25, str. 2. /in Serbian: *The Serbian Daily*, Novi Sad, 28 March 1853, no. 25, p. 2/.





The Linguistic Map, Provided by Fonblanque, MPK 1/191, PRO, KEW

the river Iskar was the natural border of the Serbian ethnic territory in the East.<sup>153</sup> In the middle of November when the Russo-Turkish hostilities on the Danube had already started, and the crisis over the Russian Consul Mouchin reached its peak, Fonblanque thought that the time had come for the diplomatic initiative of the Western powers. In numerous negotiations, with the exertion of the ever increasing pressures on the Serbian authorities to call off their hospitality to Mouchin, the French ambassador in Constantinople was the first to inform the Serbs about the prospects for the confirmation of autonomy and its “wider basis”.<sup>154</sup> Since he succeeded at a dramatic meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> November, despite the Belgrade Pasha’s readiness to personally call off the

<sup>153</sup> Fonblanque to Clarendon, \_\_\_\_\_ September 1853, F.O. 78/943, No. 44.

<sup>154</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 11 November 1853, F.O. 78/943, Copy No. 83.



hospitality to the Russian Consul and thus free the Serbian authorities of this unpleasantness, to persuade the Prince and Simić to ask Mouchin themselves to leave the territory of Serbia. Fonblanque used this occasion to negotiate, without consulting Redcliffe and Clarendon, with the Serbian leaders the program about the extension and reform of the Serbian state, as well as the rearrangement of its relations with the Ottoman Empire.<sup>155</sup>

Five days later he informed Redcliffe that he reached an agreement at the separate meetings with the Prince and Prime Minister Garašanin about the entire project of the reconstruction of Serbia and the European Turkey.<sup>156</sup> Fonblanque needed the Prince's authority, as uncertain as it was, in order to present Garašanin to his superiors as a negotiator on an equal footing. Thus the Prince stated at the meeting that he had himself recognized the extreme pro-Russian orientation of Simić, authorizing Garašanin to continue the talks with the British Consul General. The extent to which he was unsure himself in the step he had just undertaken showed his care that nobody, even Simić himself, was to be acquainted at any costs with the negotiations underway. Fonblanque and Garašanin immediately agreed upon three starting points thus simplifying the negotiations. Garašanin agreed that the program should be for tactical reasons in the competition of the powers in conflict, as well as out of consideration to Austria, implemented only after the end of the war, and that the raising of Serbia into the rank of independent state would be premature and dangerous. Fonblanque, however, tacitly accepted that Serbia would, in exchange for its expansion and the reform of the Constitution, offer loyalty instead of alliance, because its participation in the war had not been mentioned either in the project or in accompanying letters, as well that internal reforms should be carried out in accordance with the National principle (*the National Advantage*), regardless of Prince Aleksandar's personal ambitions.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 13 November 1853, F.O. 78/943, Copy No. 84.

<sup>156</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, 18 November 1853, Copy No. 85. It was Phyllis Auty who pointed out to the existence of this document. The document was not especially presented on this occasion, but later researchers did not pay greater attention to it. Due to a typing error the author in the text dated the plan as of 8 November 1853, while its correct quotation was given in the comments. Ph. Auty, p. 422.

<sup>157</sup> Probably thinking of the question of the hereditary right to the throne by the family Karadjordjević.

The *Provisions* added to his report to the Ambassador in Constantinople on 18<sup>th</sup> November 1853 were, in fact, Fonblanque's and Garašanin's proposition for the creation of the Vice-Realm of Serbia within the Ottoman Empire. The idea of the establishing of Serbia as the Vice-Realm and the Ottoman Empire as a dualistic monarchy had not been these two politicians' original idea. Five years ago, at the time when the Western Europe had been caught in a wave of revolutions Nikolajević, the Serbian Kapou-Kehaja in Constantinople, had made a proposition for the establishing of the Serbian Vice-Realm on a similar basis.<sup>158</sup> Contrary to the offered proposition which was, similar to Marinović's project, stopped at its first step and remained limited to the correspondence between young Serbian politicians, Fonblanque-Garašanin's project represented nevertheless the second step in this direction, when both the official Serbia and the British diplomacy were included into the realization of the plan and when the Porte as well, although indirectly, was informed about its contents. Contrary to the Nikolajević's project, this one implied a limited expansion of the Principality, but also its internal reform that would suit both the interests of Garašanin's political group and, in the British Consul General's opinion, the Ottoman and British interests. The first provision of the project dealt in fact with the question of the internal structure of the future state. It was envisaged for Serbia to get a role and status in Europe that Egypt received on the other periphery of the Ottoman Empire. In this way the Serbian kingdom would be renewed, the Sultan would nominally have the royal title, while the Christian Vice-Roy would continue to rule its vassal state. The Constitution of this Vice-Realm would be an improved version (an improved organic law) of the Turkish 1838/9 Constitution, according to which the authority of the State Council would be diminished in favour of the "democratic element". In this game about the decreasing of the influence of the oligarchic council, infamous for its Rusophile orientation, the creators of the project tried not to go too far and rely

<sup>158</sup> R. Ljušić, *Knjiga o Načertaniju*, str. 104–107. /in Serbian: *The Book about Načertanie*, pp. 104-107/. It seems, however, that Nikolajević was not informed about the negotiations and the content of the project agreed upon by Fonblanque and Garašanin. There is no trace about it in Nikolajević's correspondence, and Jovan Ristić in fact ascribed the project-memoir from 1854 to the Serbian Kapou-Kehaja in Constantinople, determining the minimum of the Serbian demands. The memoir asked for the establishing of the independent Serbia and its expansion to the territories of the Serbian Despotic state and its access to the sea at Bar and Ulcinj and the autonomy of the church. This project was presented to the Russian diplomacy. J. Ristić, *Srbija i Krimski vojni...*, 131–2. /in Serbian: *Serbia and the Crimean War...*, 131-2/.

on equally loyal Russia and, as a rule, more self-willed and reckless institution of the National Assembly.<sup>159</sup> They saw, therefore the solution in the democratization of the existing executive institution, namely the State Council and local municipal bodies.<sup>160</sup> In this case, Great Britain and France, the Christian powers friendly toward the Ottoman Empire, would guarantee the status of Serbia.<sup>161</sup> The Ottoman army would leave all second-ranked fortifications in the Vice-Realm.<sup>162</sup> It could pass through Serbia without staying when the situation was peaceful, on the shortest way to Bosnia, without the right to occupy towns on its passage.<sup>163</sup> The composition of the Belgrade garrison remained an open issue, under the condition that the parties bound themselves that it would not be possessed by any other army, by the Austrian or Russian in any case, without the prior agreement of the “Sultan and King” and notifying the protecting powers. The Serbian standing army would be limited to 8,000 soldiers, and its entire composition would have two drafts and it would be significantly more numerous, but the Sultan could ban the mobilization under doubtful circumstances.

The widest religious tolerance would be established in the Vice-Realm, but the Orthodox Church would be established as the state religion. The Constantinople Patriarch would be at the head of the church hierarchy as a spiritual head and the Vice-Roy as a secular one.<sup>164</sup> Civil Code would be improved and simplified according to the model of the Code Napoleon, whereas the Criminal Code would also be simplified and free of legal ambiguities.<sup>165</sup>

The question of the territorial expansion of Serbia represented naturally the most interesting segment of this agreement. Roughly, Serbia would expand toward the South and the East, in such a way that its territory at that time would be increased for almost three times.<sup>166</sup> The borders of the Serbian

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<sup>159</sup> Fonblanque considered the traditional Serbian Assembly to be an ochlocratic institution, immature to participate in politics. Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 3 November 1853, Copy No. 79.

<sup>160</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, 18 November 1853, Copy No. 85, Proposition 1.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid*, Proposition 2.

<sup>162</sup> Smederevo, Sokol... *Ibid*, Proposition 6.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid*, Proposition 5.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid*, Proposition 7.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid*, Proposition 9.

<sup>166</sup> After 1833 the territory of the Principality of Serbia amounted to 37,740 km<sup>2</sup>. According to Fonblanque–Garašanin’s proposal, the territory of the Vice-Realm would amount to about 90,000 km<sup>2</sup>. Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 13 November 1853, F.O. 78/943, Copy No. 84, Proposition 3.



The Serbian Vice-Realm

Vice-Realm would be set in accordance with the ethnic and, to a lesser extent, geographic principles. The border would follow the course of the Danube up to the mouth of the river Iskar, and from there upstream to its source near Sofia.<sup>167</sup> The direction of the bordering line to be drawn from there to the West was not clear. The project still envisaged annexing the region of Novi Pazar to Serbia, and a rather unclearly defined region of Upper Albania. It was logical to take that the mountain massive of Šara imposed itself as a border, so that the regions of Peć and Prizren would be included into the territory of the Vice-Realm, that held a very significant place in the Serbian tradition and their annexation to Serbia represented an unavoidable part of all plans for the renewal of the Serbian state. A greater part of the Kosovo and Metohija region would be in any case included into the envisaged Vice-Realm, because Fonblanque thought Serbia should have the access to the sea because it was the most important prerequisite for the emancipation of its economy and the protection of the British interests at the Balkans. The project thus envisaged for the Vice-Realm of Serbia to have access to the Adriatic Sea coast, starting from the south of Lješ (Alessio) to the north-western access to Ulcinj (Dulcigno), in the length of about fifty kilometers. Lješ and Ulcinj would become free ports for all countries in alliance with the Ottoman Empire, while the import customs duties, if different from customary, would be equalized.<sup>168</sup>

North from Ulcinj the new borders would be joined to the Montenegrin borders, incorporating this region into the territory of the Vice-Realm.<sup>169</sup> This “predatory small state”, whose low significance was reversely proportionate to its possible impact on the peace in the Europe would be thus neutralized.<sup>170</sup> Fonblanque accepted such a solution of the Montenegrin question primarily having been won over by Garašanin’s arguments, according to which the population of this poor region, whom the historical fate, cruel nature and arid

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<sup>167</sup> Fonblanque accepted the arguments of some Serbian collocutors according to whom the region in which the population speaking Serbian language came as far as Nikopolj, while a little further to the East it was considerably intermixed with the Wallachian, Turkish and the Greek languages. Fonblanque to Clarendon, \_\_\_\_\_ September 1853, F.O. 78/943, No. 44.

<sup>168</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 13 November 1853, F.O. 78/943, Copy No. 84, Proposition 8.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid*, Proposition 4.

<sup>170</sup> *Srbske novine*, 3/15. mart. 1853, br. 27, XX god., str. 97. (in Serbian: *Serbian Daily*, 3/15 March, 1853, no. 27, XX yr., p. 97).

land turned into robbers by trade, would immediately mix with the population of Serbia. Garašanin claimed that prudent colonization policy would lead in even two thirds of Montenegrins leaving their homeland in a short time and settle all over Serbia. The Montenegrin question would be solved in this way, and Montenegro, whose leaders had previously persistently refused even the notion of their country being a part of the Ottoman Empire, would get formal status acceptable to the Great Powers as a part of the autonomous Vice-Realm. From the northern part of Montenegro the border would extend toward Bosnia, and reaching the old border of the Principality of Serbia on the river Drina .

The last Provision shows, nevertheless, the true goal of the project and far-reaching consequences of its implementation, counted on by Fonblanque and Garašanin. Contrary to the other projects for the creation of the Serbian independent state, this time the regions of Bosnia and Herzegovina would not be incorporated in it, as well as the regions of Macedonia populated by the Slavonic and Serbian population. Nevertheless, exceeding by far the Serbian ethnic territories, the Serbian Vice-Realm would be bound to encourage, together with its suzerain and protecting powers, the immigration of the neighbouring Slavonic and Christian population to its territory.<sup>171</sup> This would be a unique national reform of the European Turkey, where the exchange of population, important for Serbia, and fairly advantageous for the Ottoman Empire interests as well, would be carried out. The Turkish element would be strengthened in the other European possessions of the Empire, the future emancipation of Bulgarians and Albanians made more difficult, and their cooperation with the Serbs made impossible. In addition to all this, Serbia created by the good will of the Porte, and squeezed in between Roumelia and Bosnia, would turn its national aspirations toward Austria, the ally of Russia.

Fonblanque-Garašanin's plan did not have a match in its comprehensiveness among contemporary state and reform programs presented to the foreign diplomacies. Much later, at the end of January 1854, Aleksa Janković in his conversation with Orlov spoke about the pretensions the Principality expected as a reward for joining the war on the side of Russia. Three demands that Janković presented put the evacuation of towns into the first plan, and only in case of victory – the expansion of Serbia toward Bosnia and “Old Serbia”,

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<sup>171</sup> *Ibid*, Proposition 10.

and its proclamation for the independent kingdom.<sup>172</sup> The Russian diplomat did not take any obligations toward the Serbs but, in case of Serbia entering the war and its victory, such concessions were seen as certainly hopeful. The Russian party in Serbia presented similar demands in its correspondence with Fonton. Nevertheless, while Fonblanque's project was made and offered at the time preceding the peak of the diplomatic crisis, the Russian party's move came too late. When in May 1854 Stefan Stefanović Tenka forwarded his project for the division of the European Turkey to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in St Petersburg, the fate of the war on the Danube had already been decided to the damage of Russia.<sup>173</sup> Contrary to Fonblanque-Garašanin's plan, none of the above mentioned propositions implied the internal reform of Serbia.

Despite being excellently devised, and the time for making it public carefully chosen, the project for the establishing of the Serbian Vice-Realm was condemned to failure. Judging that it would be possible to carry it out only after the war, its authors omitted to mention that even in this case it would be possible to do so successfully only if, in addition to Russia, Austria was defeated as well. However, already in the autumn of 1853 it became clear to the leaders of the British diplomacy that Austria in the forthcoming war would not only remain out of it, but that finally the faction inclined toward the Western powers would prevail in its government. Besides, the Principality of Serbia was not ready to contribute by itself to the success of its Suzerain and its allies, and the near future would find its leadership even more undecided and more than suspicious because of its obvious and very imprudent connections with Russia. This was why already in the beginning of December Redcliffe in his report to Clarendon considered Fonblanque's initiative to be without approval, and the project for the creation of the Vice-Realm as unrealistic.<sup>174</sup> The British Amba-

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<sup>172</sup> Aleksa Janković – knezu, Beč, 1./13. februar 1854, J. Ristić, str. 129. /in Serbian: Aleksa Janković to the Prince, Vienna, 1/13 February 1854, J. Ristić, p. 129/.

<sup>173</sup> Tenka's plan envisaged taking away of the European possessions from the Ottoman Empire and their division among Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria. According to this plan Serbia should border Bulgaria with the rivers Iskar and Mesta, Greece - at the borders of the antique Macedonia - and the mountains of Prokletije. It is interesting that according to this plan Serbia gets an access to the Aegean Sea, from the mouth of the river Mesta to Kavala (including the Mount Athos and Thessaloniki), but not to the Adriatic Sea, although it would include the regions of Skadar and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Finally, Montenegro would not be annexed to Serbia. D. Stranjaković, *Plan Stefana Stefanovića Tenke o podeli evropske Turske iz 1854. godine*, „Politika“ 1–4



sador at the Porte claimed that there was no “immediate need” for such an activity, and that its implementation would give rise to new hopes and hand over the Serbs to the Russians. In his talk with Reshid Pasha Redcliffe mentioned the confirmation of the already existing autonomy of the Principality as immediate steps for the pacifying of Serbs, its equalizing with Wallachia and Moldavia and offering the prospect of constitutional reforms. This was followed by Redcliffe’s sharp warning to the Serbian agent at the Porte how essential it was for Serbian interests that the Principality remained in peace. Explaining to Clarendon the purposefulness of such a move, Redcliffe emphasized that after his talk with Reshid Pasha the Porte had already started preparing a *Hatisherif* to confirm the autonomy of the Principality of Serbia.

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maj 1937, str. 13–14. /in Serbian: *Stefan Stefanovic – Tenka’s Plan on Division of the Turkey-in-Europe of 1854*, *Politika*, 1–4 May 1937, pp. 13-14/. Contemporary Russian historian Jomini, otherwise versed in the St Petersburg’s diplomatic archives, did not mention Tenka’s project. Jomini, *Etude diplomatique sur la guerre de Crimée (1852–1856)*, par un ancien diplomate, Paris, 1857.

<sup>174</sup> Redcliffe to Clarendon, 3 December 1853, F.O. 78/941/a, No. 366.



## CHAPTER THREE

### **ANNUS BELLI – 1854**

#### TURNING POINT IN THE WAR. THE ORIENTATION OF AUSTRIA

In February 1854 the State Counsellor Jeremija Stanojević was dispatched to one of the five newly established military districts. Five State Counsellors put themselves at the head of the people's army in the regions determined for that occasion. The Serbian government hoped that in case of trouble it could count on about one hundred thousand men under arms. Stanojević, aware of the seriousness of that moment, sent the following dramatic circular to the local authorities:

“... you may inform everybody that it is the wish of His Highness the Prince to use, together with his government (*Praviteljstvo*), all possible means to protect the people and our Fatherland from the war and the bloodshed, and at the same time to get the people ready for the defence of our most beloved Fatherland so that it would be able, in case of attack on any part of this land and our freedom paid in blood, to offer strong resistance worthy of the Serbian people ....

... The Turkish army is situated around our borders or not far from them and it watches us. From the Austrian side again the Austrian army has the same task. From the side of Wallachia the Russian armies, still in war with the Turks, have got closer to our borders. And from other sides, through political ways, a special and serious interest is directed at us and our acts. We are being threatened: if a smallest unrest takes place in our country, or if it seems to the participants of the war that we have violated the prescribed laws, these armies will attack our Fatherland and conquer us by the force of arms.

It is said that if one, whoever's foreign army it might be, would step on our land, the other two would immediately do the same. In this way our Fatherland will become a universal battlefield, a hearth of bloody war, so that our general wellbeing would be destroyed and wrecked, the political being of

Serbia finally humiliated, and horrible ruin, misery and disaster for the entire Fatherland, the entire people would take place<sup>1</sup>.”

Although everything pointed out to the certainty of the impending entry of the Russian army into Serbia, the beginning of 1854 did not bring anything new. Moreover, the rumours began in the Principality about possible Russian withdrawal from Wallachia and Moldavia. The Russian followers tried to deny such news, saying how the arrival of one Russian unit in the eastern parts of Serbia was possible even under certain circumstances. They kept stating that Serbia must not accept changes of any kind in the formal definition of its autonomy, asserting that not only the annulment of the Russian protectorate but any change of previous *Hatisherifs* would contribute to the future practical annulment of the Serbian sovereignty itself.<sup>2</sup>

The news spreading in Serbia about the Russian withdrawal were not groundless. The Porte, that had fully recovered diplomatic initiative already in the spring last year, and during the autumn, in spite of the defeat at Sinop, led irreconcilable and belligerent policy to the utmost, rushed to inform officially both the Serbian authorities and the foreign consuls about the ultimatum given to Prince Menshikov by the Western powers.<sup>3</sup> Izzet Pasha enthusiastically made it public how the commander of the British fleet after the allied war ships sailed into the Black Sea had given Prince Menshikov an ultimatum, actually demanding the liberation of the Romanian principalities. Even Fonblanque was not prepared to believe in the Porte's news, refusing even the mere thought that the British fleet could bombard the commercial cities, or negotiate the question of the Danube principalities with Menshikov, who had not even been authorized for something like that.<sup>4</sup> It is not certain whether he shared his doubts with the Serbian prince as well, but the latter rushed to

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<sup>1</sup> J. Stanojević 24, 12./24. februar 1854, J.S., AS. /in Serbian: J. Stanojević 24, 12/24 February 1854, J.S., AS/ Leopold Ranke wrote: „That was a significant event impossible to forget in the history of the nineteenth century, that the unarmed people – with just a little opportunity to display its military power – decided at the time of the great European crisis to undertake the measures to defend its independence with arms and all its might, because without the independence of arms there is no political independence at all on this Earth.“ p. 395

<sup>2</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 31 December 1853, F.O. 78/1008, Copy No. 101.

<sup>3</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 9 January 1854, F.O. 78/1008.

<sup>4</sup> W. Baumgart, pp. 107–8.

the Belgrade Pasha to personally express his doubts into the accuracy of the received news. In this way, he only additionally compromised himself before the Porte. It seemed as if Fonblanque felt compassion for a moment toward the Serbian ruler, who was overpowered not only by weaknesses but was frequently showing a surprising lack of resourcefulness in sensitive diplomatic issues. This was why he had a meeting with him and advised him not to follow the Russian advice any more exclusively aimed to upset his relations with the Porte. He described to the Serbian ruler that the *Hatisherif* about the confirmation of the Serbian privileges was an expression of the Sultan's benevolence, while he called further maintenance of regular relations with Russia a "treason". He was again forced to listen to the Prince lamenting how, in case of one-sided annulment of the Russian protectorate over Serbia, his position would become untenable. The Serbian prince whisperingly complained of the strong pressure of the "Russian advocates" Simić and Tenka, who were sitting at that moment in the next room. Finally, one more promise followed that the official Serbia would not undertake anything without the prior agreement with Fonblanque himself.

The Serbian authorities were not as a rule too sincere with the Consuls of Great Britain and France. Small things of a formal nature made this insincerity obvious. Thus the Prince apologized to Fonblanque for not inviting him to the New Year reception, justifying himself by his injured foot. The British Consul, however, noticed the lack of customary congratulatory visits made earlier by the President and the members of the State Council. Some Serbian ministers paid him a visit, but there were dignitaries who justified their non-appearance by fear.<sup>5</sup>

Contrary to Vučić, who was considered by all means to be the most significant Russian follower in the country, the influential Duke Knićanin himself, commander-in-chief of the Serbian army, asked Fonblanque to receive him. However, one could not expect from the commander of Serbian volunteers in Southern Hungary to have a different attitude from Vučić. Knićanin was very worried; he gave the British Consul General his estimate of the balance of powers in the forthcoming war, that was obviously based on the Russian propaganda and his imagination.<sup>6</sup> Allowing the possibility of

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<sup>5</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 31 December 1853, F.O. 78/1008, Copy No. 101, 2 January, 1854.

<sup>6</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 11 January 1854, F.O. 78/1008.

Western powers having the predominance at the sea, he refuted the seriousness of the expectations that a million of Russian soldiers would be checked before Constantinople. He believed that the war on the territory of Russia had to end ingloriously, the same as the campaign of Napoleon I, but he was more sure that its flame would spread all over Europe, which six million Russian and one hundred thousand Persian soldiers would run over and turn into ashes. However, it was not easy to impress Fonblanque, particularly with the figures that were questionable already at the time of Russian occupation of Wallachia and Moldavia. The West learnt a lesson from the Napoleonic wars. Russia should also use this as its attack on Europe or India could end in the same way as well. The British Consul General, however, did not believe that the Russian army was capable to carry out full mobilization. The soldiers had to be fed and at that moment, according to the information he had, the Russian army was on the brink of hunger. Knićanin became shaken, but not enough so as to cover up the real reason for his visit. He tried to win over the British Consul General for the viewpoint according to which, in his opinion, the capitulation of Serbia would not only be justified in case of Russian invasion but the Western powers should then prevent the Ottoman army to enter the territory of Principality. Fonblanque did not even deign to give a true answer, limiting himself to the statement that Constantinople, in addition to validly estimating the future events, was even prepared to react energetically and quickly.

Several days later Garašanin informed the British Consul General that the previous talks had deeply impressed the Prince and the Duke. Fonblanque, however, considered that the “network of Russian intrigues” was so dense and firm that it would be difficult to save Serbia from the forthcoming “immense obstacles”.<sup>7</sup> He also received the news that one Russian division would enter the region of Negotin in March, and that the Serbian forces deployed around the river Timok, instead of resisting it, would act as a rear guard of its flanks. Serbia had to be prepared for such occasions, and the links between it and Russia cut off as much as possible. Fonblanque thought that the removal of Mouchin from Zemun, as well as of two Russian subjects Simonović and Momčilović from Belgrade, was a prerequisite for this.<sup>8</sup> Izzet Pasha endeavoured to deal with this question with a plenty of tact, offering Prince Aleksandar to decide

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<sup>7</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 16 January 1854, F.O. 78/1008.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, *Srbija*, „Srbski dnevnik“, 31 mart (12. april) 1854, br. 26. /in Serbian, *Serbia*, „Serbian Daily“, 31 March (12 April) 1854, no. 26/.



*Stevan Petrović-Knićanin,*  
The National Museum, Belgrade

by himself how and to what extent he would carry out the Porte's order to expel the Russian subjects. The answer he got compromised the Serbian Prince, but it freed him from pressure to a certain degree: the Prince justified himself by the fact that all Russian subjects in Serbia were under the Austrian protection.

The first news also arrived about the crossing of the Russian units into the Principality of Serbia. Although they soon proved to be untrue, they did not cause any greater excitement in Belgrade. The foreign consuls could only notice a very mild nervousness in the Austrian Consul General's reaction who had previously claimed that the very presence of the Russian subjects in Serbia, having only been a consequence of the Austrian protection only, was exactly the guarantee that the Russian army would not attack the Principality. Now, contrary to this, he was thinking of withdrawing this protection and allowing the Ottoman and the Serbian authorities to expel them.<sup>9</sup>

The Porte's *Hatisherif* was expected in Belgrade, but due to the belief that the big war would follow the confirmation of benefits itself was considered to be insufficient. The Russian propaganda was lively and offered Serbia the prospect of great gains.<sup>10</sup> Soon even the usually anxious Prince Aleksandar considered it appropriate to talk with the Western consuls about them. In his talk with Fonblanque he kept mentioning how Russia offered territorial expansion to Serbia, and to his family the right of title succession, defending himself from possible accusations for disloyalty stating that this would be granted to Serbia by the Porte itself after the war.<sup>11</sup> He also asked the British Consul General to consider, together with Garašanin, possible concessions to Serbia acceptable to the Ottoman Empire and its allies. There was no other course open for Fonblanque but to consent, convincing Clarendon that he was doing something like that only because the negotiations were strictly confidential and that he would include his project about the protection of British commercial interests in the Principality into the required document. This time he intended to regularly inform Clarendon and Redcliffe about the course of the talks. His goal was to make the granaries of the mid-Balkans accessible to the British trade, avoiding the obstacle of Austrian customs, and stimulating the British economy and the emancipation of the Serbs at the same

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<sup>9</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 16 January 1854, F.O. 78/1008, and Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 24 January 1854, F.O. 78/1008.

<sup>10</sup> D. MacKenzie, pp. 147-8.

<sup>11</sup> Fonblanque to Clarendon, Belgrade, 26 January 1854, F.O. 78/1008.

time. He believed that the influence of Russia and Austria on the Principality would weaken in this case.<sup>12</sup>

At last on 27<sup>th</sup> January 1854 Ethem Pasha arrived to Belgrade bringing with him the *Hatisherif* of the Porte confirming the autonomy of Serbia and annulling the Russian protectorate over it.<sup>13</sup> The Ottoman dignitary immediately demanded from the Serbian authorities to organize that it was formally read before the gathered dignitaries from all districts of the Principality and the people's leaders. Such a demand met with a general disapproval, and for that reason the reading ceremony was postponed for more than two weeks. The Western consuls had again their hands full to prepare the formal receiving of the *Hatisherif*. The majority of Serbian leaders was publicly willing to accept the *Hatisherif*, but only an amended one, and in such a way that it stated that Russia maintained its protectorate over Serbia, and the Principality – the right to remain strictly neutral. Fonblanque considered such an attitude a worse solution than the direct declaration of war to the Porte, but nevertheless, he had to get all of his collocutors convinced into this, including Garašanin as well. And again all eyes were focused on Prince Aleksandar, whom Fonblanque this time as well unambiguously stressed how the war would soon break out on the territory of Serbia as a consequence of the refusal of the *Hatisherif*.

Ethem Pasha left a very favourable impression on Fonblanque. Although it was difficult for the British consul to be fascinated by some Serbian or Ottoman issue, he was in fact impressed by the personality of the Ottoman emissary, whom he described in his letter to Redcliffe as “educated and loyal”.<sup>14</sup> Even if Ethem Pasha did not possess “capability, keenness and firmness”, he

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Fonblanque to Clarendon, Belgrade, 29 January 1854, F.O. 78/1008. Even on 17 January *The Times* reported that two **Hatisherifs were prepared for Serbia: one annulling the Russian protectorate and the other guaranteeing all the rights to Serbia confirmed by earlier treaties.** The source of *The Times* expected that the Porte, if Prince Aleksandar succeeded to keep Serbia away from the war, the family Karadjordjević would be granted the right to title succession after the signing of peace. *Servia*, Belgrade, 28 December 1853, *The Times*, 12 January 1854. The **Hatisherifs dated in the „last days of December 1853 (last days of the month of REBJUL-EVAL 1270)“** confirmed in one document the Serbian rights from the earlier Russo-Ottoman agreements and made the Principality of Serbia equal in rights with Wallachia and Moldavia (whose privileges originated from the old times – XVI and XVII centuries). The translation of the Ferman text see in J. Ristić, p. 116. /in Serbian/

<sup>14</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 8 February 1854, F.O. 78/1008. The Serbian public, naturally, welcomed the pasha coldly, while the Russophile circles expressed



could acquire them right in cooperation with him. The Serbian authorities were against the gathering of a larger number of national leaders in Belgrade. The officials justified themselves by the need for the district dignitaries to remain in their regions at the time of immediate danger of war. The British Consul General considered that the reason was in the Constitutionalist's fear that one such meeting could turn into a National Assembly. The dissatisfaction and deep Russophile feelings would make the gathered people's representatives unpredictable to an extent sufficient for the Prince and his environment to become seriously afraid for their power.

It seems that this question became a true obstacle, which temporarily cooled the relations between the Porte's emissary and the Serbian officials. The fact that a week after his arrival Ethem Pasha discussed the existing problems at the meeting with Garašanin and Marinović is self-sufficient. The Serbian authorities were so helpless that they asked the British Consul General to attend this meeting in order to intercede in their favour. Fonblanque considered the Constitutionalist's anxieties to be insufficiently grounded in this case, but anyhow he advised Ethem Pasha to limit his request to the presence of the heads and leaders from the nearby districts. This intervention brought him the sympathies of the Serbian dignitaries, who were coming up and congratulated him during the ball organized in honour of the Princesses. And the Prince obliged himself for the umpteenth time that after such an expression of friendship and trust he would cut all connections with the Russian diplomacy. As many times before Fonblanque soon had on hand the information that this vow was broken already the next day when Mouchin was again received by the Serbian ruler and his Prime Minister.

The Russian envoy did not advise any more the shaken Prince to simply refuse the *Hatisherif*, but he tried through him to break the unity of the small diplomatic corps in Belgrade.<sup>15</sup> He asserted that if the protectorate was taken

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even infantile hostility towards him. *Srbski dnevnik* called this dignitary „Smeten Pasha” („Confused Pasha“). Also, Matija Ban, who after the announcement of the emancipation of the Ottoman Christians wrote an ode in honour of the Sultan, had to leave the position of the professor at the Lyceum and withdraw from public life. *Srbski dnevnik*, Novi Sad, 13 January 1854, no.4, and *Srbski dnevnik*, Novi Sad, 6 February 1854, no. 11. /in Serbian/. *Donaufurstenthumer*, „Winer Zeitung“, Mittwoch, Den, 01. 03. 1854, No. 49.

<sup>15</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 8 February 1854, F.O. 78/1008.; *Servia*, 09 January, *The Times*, 18. January 1855.



away from Russia, and its diplomatic representatives had no right to attend the *Hatisherif* reading ceremony then it would be logical for the representatives of other great powers to be absent, because otherwise it would mean that they would themselves take the protectorate over the Principality. Mouchin thought that he would thus achieve two goals: primarily, he expected the division of the diplomatic corps, and then the Austrian and Prussian representatives, officially neutral, would refuse to attend the ceremony; and after that, he hoped that the Porte's document would lose its significance it otherwise would have had. Fonblanque considered that the raised question was out of place because the Serbian autonomy had been established at the time when there had been no foreign consuls, and he himself had officially been present during the reading of the *Hatisherif* about the appointment of Prince Aleksandar. He did not consider this issue to be important and was prepared not to come to the ceremony only in the absence of invitation, or because it was to be held in the palace and not in the fortress, at the invitation of the Belgrade Pasha, as before.

The arrival of the *Hatisherif* did really for a moment remove the immediate danger of the occupation of Serbia. However, the diplomatic tensions did not cease. Simić did not hide his inclination towards Russia, and confided to one of the district heads, who was to all appearances close to Fonblanque, that the Serbian neutrality was temporary and that at a convenient time it would turn into the war alliance with the Russian army. At the same time, Ethem Pasha entertained the thought of having Mouchin arrested. The British Consul General succeeded in dissuading him from this intention, pointing out to the fact that the Russian emissary was under the protection of Austria. He advised Ethem Pasha to completely reveal, by means of the diplomatic pressures, the role of the Austrian military authorities in Mouchin's activities, and impede in this way the diplomatic position of Vienna in the European politics.

Before the *Hatisherif* was formally accepted in Serbia, Fonblanque had had to listen once again to the Prince's lamentations and assurances that earlier mistakes, a result of Russian advice, would not be repeated. Finally, on 14<sup>th</sup> February 1854 he was able to inform Clarendon about the resolution by which the Prince and State Council accepted the Porte's *Hatisherif*.<sup>16</sup> The British

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<sup>16</sup> Fonblanque to Clarendon, Belgrade, 14 February 1854, F.O. 78/1008. *Srbski dnevnik*, /in Serbian: *The Serbian Daily*/ 3/1. February 1854, no.10. Only a day earlier *The Times* published the news that despite the general dissatisfaction in Wallachia towards the Russian occupation authorities, there was a noticeable mass response of Greeks, Bulgarians, Arnauts and „several Servians“ joining the volunteer units, while

Consul General believed that the shortcomings of granted privileges were found exactly in the fact that they did not officially define the neutrality of the Principality. He explained how this looked more like a framework within which the Serbian authorities could maintain peace in the country than the recognition of the state sovereignty.<sup>17</sup>

Ethem Pasha's departure did not mean the end of troubles for the Serbian authorities. Soon the news was published in the European newspapers how the Porte's emissary asked from Belgrade a full payment of tribute for four years in advance.<sup>18</sup> Even the British diplomacy could not declare these news with certainty as untrue, so that Fonblanque was forced to rely on his good relations with Ethem Pasha, assuring his superiors of their inaccuracy. Even a small number of newspapers in the Principality did not remain quiet. Thus at the end of February in the annex of the semi-official *Srbske novine* (*The Serbian Newspapers*) an article appeared about the alleged uprising on the Ionian Islands, the only part of the Balkan peninsula under the administration of Great Britain. The British Consul asked for an explanation, but the obliging Marinović only confirmed that it was the matter of the translated news from *Ost-Deutsche post*, as well that the articles more inclined toward Britain would be published in future.

In the beginning of March 1854 Mouchin decided to leave Zemun and go to Bucharest. This news was a relief to the Belgrade Pasha and Belgrade Western Consuls, and it coincided in time with the announcement of the British Cabinet's resoluteness not to enter the war with Russia prior to the legal determination of the rights of the Ottoman Christians and their raise to a certain level.<sup>19</sup> The reactions in Belgrade were unexpected to such an extent that Fonblanque remarked that this news left a deeper impact than it would have been the case with the capture of "the entire Russian Black Sea fleet".<sup>20</sup> Prince Aleksandar now stated in his exaltation that it was the matter of a moral victory of Great Britain and France, and some Serbian politicians started openly to express their loyalty to two great powers.

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the former Prince of Serbia Miloš came nearer to the border in order to organize the overthrow in Serbia, once the Russians crossed the Danube. *The Times*, Vienna, 9 February, 14 February 1854.

<sup>17</sup> Fonblanque to Clarendon, Belgrade, 25 February 1854, F.O. 78/1008.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 5 March 1854, F.O. 78/1008, 6 March, P.S.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

*Turning Point in the Austrian Policy*

From the British diplomatic archives it may be concluded that the policy of Austria was the greatest unknown question in the crisis that reached its peak by the breaking out of the Russo-Turkish war in 1853. Only half a year before Austria had been on the verge of occupying Serbia. It seemed now that the Austrian army, threateningly concentrated on the banks of the rivers Sava and the Danube, assembled so as to co-act with the Russian army in a given moment. In case of a joint invasion of the Austrian and Russian armies into Serbia, the region of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in which lived numerous population loyal to the Ottoman state, would be neutralized, while the Danube frontline would be rendered senseless by rapid breakthrough of the occupying forces towards the Adriatic Sea and unpredictable advances along the river Vardar valley.<sup>21</sup> The entire operation in the Black Sea waters, as well as the defence concept of the Ottoman Empire applied throughout the Crimean War would be thus made senseless.

Fonblanque considered it certain that the Austrian army would intervene on the Ottoman territory. His only dilemma was whether they would act in alliance with or against the Russian forces, not doubting that this conflict would take place on the Ottoman territory and exclusively to the damage of Constantinople. Such an attitude was corroborated by the news about Ban Jelačić's statement. The Austrian general who was "too proud to be discreet", allegedly announced that Austria would soon invade all Ottoman regions along the Sava and the Danube, explaining this decision by the Emperor Franz Joseph's resoluteness not to allow Russia to "go beyond certain limits".<sup>22</sup> Fonblanque feared the too strong Austrian military garrison in Ancona and was urging whole-heartedly the activities of the Wallachian immigrants for the organization of the uprising against the Russians in Small Wallachia.<sup>23</sup> Contrary to the above, the British Consul General more and more came to believe that Austria, convinced of the Russian weakness, was increasingly distancing itself from St Petersburg. The Belgrade Pasha soon had at his disposal the information that the Russian subjects in Serbia would be deprived

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<sup>21</sup> In the spring of 1854 Marshal Paskyevič and General Jomini claimed that they were corresponding with Tsar Nikolay I, and that „one can go to Constantinople either with Vienna or via Vienna“. J. Ristić, p. 118. /in Serbian/

<sup>22</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 16 January 1854, F.O. 78/1008.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

of the Austrian protection, as well as that in case of the Russian occupation of Negotin the Austrian army would cross over into Serbia to occupy the convenient strategic positions for the forthcoming war with Russia.<sup>24</sup> A week later the Austrian Consul General Radosavljević still kept delaying the withdrawal of the protection to the Russian subjects residing in Serbia.<sup>25</sup> Fonblanque was now of the opinion that Austria was so isolated and irresolute that the Porte could freely withdraw the *Berat* about his appointment from its Consul General. When Aleksa Janković was sent to Vienna on 22<sup>nd</sup> January as the unofficial diplomatic representative of Serbia, whom Fonblanque described as a notorious Russian follower, the Western Consuls were convinced that his most important task there would be to maintain the contact with the Russian ambassador. The British Consul General believed that this information was confirmed when he heard that the Russian diplomat Popov, at secret meetings with the Prince and Simić, had spoken about the likelihood of creating the Serbian kingdom under the protection of Austria and Russia.<sup>26</sup> During this time reinforcements were constantly coming to the so called observation corps in Banat, and war steamships of the Austrian fleet were expected in Zemun, while the ships of the Danube company were given the menacing order under the threat of penalty to gather in Zemun before 10<sup>th</sup> February.<sup>27</sup>

Thus, just before the very proclamation of the Porte's *Hatisherif* the Austrian army was only a step away from the military occupation of Serbia. There was a widespread belief that the eventual rebellion in Serbia had to be exactly the result of its intrigues. The British Consul assumed two possible outcomes of the existing tensions: the first, according to which the Austrian army would enter the Principality to prevent the reading of the *Hatisherif*, under the pretext of the danger of the uprising in the country; and the second, according to which after the Russian forces enter the territory of Serbia, the Austrian army would itself occupy a part of the country. Fonblanque, nevertheless, was more inclined to believe how Austria had no intention of protecting the Ottoman rights, but only to collect "its own part of the booty".<sup>28</sup> He could hear from the Austrians more and more frequently the statements according

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 24 January 1854, F.O. 78/1008.

<sup>26</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 31 January 1854, F.O. 78/1008.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 8 February 1854, F.O. 78/1008.

to which “the Belgrade citadel is a Kaiserlich property” only temporarily given up to the Ottoman Empire.<sup>29</sup>

Late in the afternoon of 8<sup>th</sup> February 1854 Count Coronini, the Commander of the Austrian observation forces, visited Belgrade.<sup>30</sup> In the discussion with the Belgrade Pasha he did not offer adequate explanations regarding the intentions of the Austrian army. He visited the British Consulate unannounced, but he did not find Fonblanque there. The extent of the omnipresent tension could be testified by the fact that during a short conversation the members of the Consul’s family themselves put questions to him, not in the least discreet, about the purpose of his visit and the intentions of the official Austria. He limited himself only to indicate menacingly how the purpose and the duration of his stay would be determined by the forthcoming events. Aziz Pasha soon informed the British Consul what he talked about with Coronini. The Austrian army commander had allegedly asked for an official explanation why the Ottoman troops had not been withdrawn from Bosnia as yet, and had even asked when this would be done.<sup>31</sup> The young pasha was so worried after this talk that he consulted Fonblanque how to adjust defence activities plans of the Ottoman army with those of the Serbian. Fonblanque immediately returned a visit to Coronini. The impression he had after the talk was, as he himself admitted later, primarily exterior and very superficial. Coronini seemed to be a politically ambitious and insincere collocutor. Although unsure of his capability to repeat this absurd dialogue from which he had more impressions left than memories, the Briton assessed that “Austria wishes to impose itself as the carrier of balance between Russia and the Western powers, that will side with the aggressor power whose victory will bring it benefit”.<sup>32</sup> The future proved he was right. The change in the Serbian

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<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* The Vienna *Lloyd* kept reporting that the escaped revolutionaries from 1849 were finding refuge in the Slavonic provinces of the Ottoman Empire. Its commentators under the titles „Mutiny“ and „Treason“ announced that the bloodred flag of the future mutiny endangering Austria could actually be seen from Zemun. The steps of the Austrian diplomacy dating from the Leiningen’s mission seemed completely fruitless, while the Russian triumph now seemed as its greatest defeat. *Austria*, 17 February, „The Times“, 22 February 1854.

<sup>30</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 8 February 1854, F.O. 78/1008. It is interesting that Ristić and Stranjaković did not mention his visit.

<sup>31</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 15 February 1854, F.O. 78/1008.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

authorities' attitude to the Porte's document, which Fonblanque considered to be the result of recent Russian defeats and united stance of the Western powers, brought about a certain change in the attitude of the official Austria, as he smartly observed.<sup>33</sup>

The change in the attitude was not final yet. The Austrian newspapers continued writing about even 200,000 soldiers on the southern borders of the Empire, not announcing their possible transfer to Transylvania and Galicia. It was expected in Belgrade that in case of the Russian troops entering Serbia, the Austrian army would immediately occupy Smederevo and Šabac, whereas Belgrade would be left aside due to the presence of a strong garrison and foreign diplomats.<sup>34</sup> Mouchin, who had until recently been getting ready to finally leave the territory of Austria, soon started coming to Belgrade again.<sup>36</sup> The assurances of the Austrian diplomacy were then futile that the Russian invasion on Serbia was actually prevented by their intervention. Fonblanque would rather look for its cause in a very cold winter and the ice that made the sailing on the rivers impossible.

In the beginning of March Austria started even officially to admit how its readiness to occupy Serbia was exclusively preconditioned by the agreement of the Porte and Western powers.<sup>36</sup> Austria was now offering even to withdraw its protection over the Russian subjects, but Fonblanque advised the Foreign Office not to approve the Austrian occupation. In case the need arose for the Austrian military intervention, Fonblanque thought that a neutral opinion would be essential to estimate such a need. In addition, it is interesting that he – claiming that the Ottoman pasha lacked the information (that he himself was giving him), the French Consul General the experience and the knowledge of the Serbian provinces and the Austrian and Prussian Consuls the credibility and authority – personally recommended himself as an arbiter into whose hands the fate of the Principality could be safely entrusted. It is understandable that Austria was not willing to completely give way. The Austrian Consul General, Radosavljević, had just at the beginning of March requested from local authorities to bring before him all Austrian subjects and immigrants

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<sup>33</sup> Fonblanque to Clarendon, Belgrade, 14 February 1854, F.O. 78/1008.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 21 February 1854, F.O. 78/1008.

<sup>36</sup> Clarendon's letter of 2 March 1854. Fonblanque to Clarendon, Belgrade, 18 March 1854, F.O. 78/1008.



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during his journey through the provinces of Serbia. All those residing in the Principality without necessary documents, or who were proclaimed as political offenders should be arrested and handed over to the Austrian authorities. As the extradition of escaped convicts was a customary practice between the two countries, this request represented a provocation for the Serbian authorities.<sup>37</sup> If the compliance with Ottoman orders was previously a condition for the non-

<sup>37</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 10 March 1854, F.O. 78/1008. The reporter of *The Times* from Vienna wrote on 15 March about the justified need of Austria to secure its southern borders. However, in explanation of the Western powers' policy he stated that the Austrian occupation of the parts of the Ottoman Empire, even if carried out to preserve the balance with other Great Powers disrupted by the war, would not only be unacceptable to London and Paris, but would unavoidably damage Vienna. *Austria*, „The Times“, 21 March 1854. Matija Ban claimed that there existed a secret agreement between Vienna, Constantinople and the Western powers about the temporary Austrian occupation of the regions adjacent to the borders. After strong Serbian resistance and preparations for the defence this plan was abandoned, first by the Porte. M. Ban, 'O meni za Krimskog rata', kut. I, ¼, str. 3, ASANU. [in Serbian: M. Ban, 'About Myself During the Crimean War', box I, ¼, p. 3, ASANU].

occupation of Serbia by the Austrian army, after this request it seemed that the fate of the Principality became exclusively dependent on the ill-will of the official Austria. Simić appealed to the Belgrade Pasha, asking him to mediate with Coronini. Aziz Pasha, having the British Consul General's support, went personally to Zemun on account of this problem. The Austrian authorities gave in then, though not publicly: Radosavljević's journey through Serbia was not postponed, but it was agreed that only those Austrian subjects who had no reason whatsoever for anxiety would await him in Serbian towns. All other issues were left to be resolved between Vienna and Constantinople.<sup>38</sup>

The Serbian authorities thus handed over of their own free will a part of their sovereignty only in order to avoid taking sides in the forthcoming war. However, the Porte's prestige was confirmed only for a moment: in this same talk Aziz Pasha was notified that the decision had already been made for the Austrian army to occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina, whereas the fate of Serbia depended on whether the peace would be maintained. The British diplomacy, however, now had the guarantees about the Austrian behaviour, and that was why Fonblanque could already less distrustfully look at the Austrian army on the Sava and the Danube. It seems that he himself was already a little indifferent as to whether the Austrian army would enter the Principality. At a meeting, that he called "sincere", Segir and himself seemed to have indicated something like that to Garašanin.<sup>39</sup> The former Prince's Prime Minister started immediately stating, in such a case, that every Serb would become "a guerillero", and Serbia would be drenched in blood. However, he soon composed himself, aware that threatening with despair was not the best policy of all, and confirmed that the occupation temporarily carried out by the British and French toops would be welcome.<sup>40</sup>

The war brought about numerous unexpected turns into the relations between Serbia and Austria, which were extremely dramatic during the entire nineteenth century. Thus in the beginning of April 1854 the Serbian government entered into the negotiations with the Austrian government about

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<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Fonblanque to Clarendon, Belgrade, 28 March 1854, F.O. 78/1008.

<sup>40</sup> Already at that time the Western observers were able to farsightedly conclude that regardless of how and who Austria united with, and the moves it made, it must be at a loss in the end. *Austria*, „The Times“, 24 March 1854.





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the import of 10,000 rifles and some artillery.<sup>41</sup> The negotiations had begun only several weeks before Prince Aleksandar would send a *Memorandum* to the Grand Vizier, Earl of Clarendon and the head of the French diplomacy in which he officially complained of belligerent and invading intentions of Austria towards his country.<sup>42</sup> Kosta Magazinović recorded how Garašanin and Marinović themselves were the authors of the *Memorandum* text that left a strong impact on the Great Powers and cooled off the relations between Austria and Serbia for the last time during the war.<sup>43</sup> The Prince agreed to such a step after a meeting with the Grand Duke Albrecht, that he experienced as humiliating afterwards, but once the contents of the *Memorandum* were made public, the relations with Austria became truly tense. However, despite the fact

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<sup>41</sup> The negotiations about this purchase started already in the beginning of October of the previous year. J. Ristić, p. 106. /in Serbian/. Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 3 April 1854, F.O. 78/1008. Augsburg Gazzete wrote at the end of March that Austria had reached the agreement with Serbia and Montenegro, according to which these principalities had to retain full neutrality, and in turn they could count on the Austrian support in the internal and foreign policy and the protection from the forthcoming war. *Austria*, „The Times“, 31 March 1854.

<sup>42</sup> *Prevod Memoranduma* od 5/17. aprila 1854, ASANU 7515. /in Serbian: *The Translation of the Memorandum* of 5/17 April 1854, ASANU 7515/.

<sup>43</sup> *Memoari (Životopis) Koste Magazinovića*, ASANU 9288, str. 37. /in Serbian: *Memoirs (Biography) of Kosta Magazinović*, ASANU 9288, p. 37/.

that the Serbian *Memorandum* had a short political effect, this was the first document from Serbia that was officially translated, though from the French, and included into the official papers of the British Parliament.<sup>44</sup>

Still, the Prince and the Serbian authorities were not well informed so far as the events in the world were concerned. Already on 8<sup>th</sup> April one could read *The Times* how Napoleon III and Hübner easily agreed to approve the policy of Austria and France until the present day. The order of steps in the period to come was clearly defined: in case of the Russian crossing of the Danube, the Austrian army would concentrate troops on the borders of Serbia and Bosnia, and if it succeeded in crossing the mountain Balkans, Austria would declare war to Russia.<sup>45</sup> In spite of everything, the Serbian government continued trying to buy from Austria a great quantity of arms, investing into this a considerable amount of money which had already started to be collected through a special tax. The Western consuls were quite confused: Austria was prepared to arm Serbia although aware that these arms, if the war broke out, would rather be used against the Ottoman and its own army than against Russia. On the other hand, the Serbian government was willing to spend the hard-collected money in Austria. The question of distrust became actually an obstacle. The Austrian government had asked for guarranties that the arms would not be used against it, and the Serbian government was not ready to go far in undertaking of formal obligations towards Austria, counting perhaps on the fact that it would be able to make the artillery itself.<sup>46</sup> And so the preparations for the war went

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<sup>44</sup> The Prince of Servia to the Earl of Clarendon, Belgrade, 18 April (Reed by 28 April) 1854, F.O. 78/1008. The letter was dated 5/17 April 1854: House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Memorandum addressed by the Servian Government to the Sublime Porte Respecting the Occupation of that Principality by Austrian troops (Presented to the House of Commons by Command of Her Majesty in pursuance of their Address of June 22 1854), Vol. LXXII, pp. 190/287, D5/D11. The American readers of the „New York Daily Tribune“ learned about the *Memorandum of the Serbian Government* and its influence on the British policy at the end of July 1854 from the pen of Karl Marx himself. „This protest of the Serbs brilliantly shows at the same time how enthusiastically the people of Wallachia awaited the entry of Austrians into the Wallachia“, concluded this learned spectator of the European circumstances. G. Ernjaković, (editor), *Karl Marks – Fridrih Engels, Dela*, tom 13, Beograd, 1976, str. 270–271. /in Serbian: *Karl Marx-Fridrich Engels, Works*, vol. 13, Belgrade, 1976, pp. 270-271/.

<sup>45</sup> *France*, „The Times“, 8 April 1854.

<sup>46</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 3 April 1854, F.O. 78/1008.

on. Fonblanque himself could feel in Serbia the general expectations of the Russian army entry, and the Austrian side continued with the construction of communications around Zemun and with the appointment of completely compromised officers, in view of the Porte, to the high positions in the observation corps.<sup>47</sup> In the middle of April the crisis reached its zenith. *The Times* in London published the news from its Vienna reporter on 11<sup>th</sup> April according to which the Russian troops entered on the Serbian ground near Radujevac. The entry of the Austrian army was then expected and, it could be said, justified.<sup>48</sup> Similar news also kept arriving in the following days, but soon it became certain that the Russian troops were only building the bridge on the Danube. Obviously false, these news were justified by the alleged passing of a certain Russian unit through the territory of the Principality. It did not come to the occupation of Serbia, though it was on the verge of happening, perhaps first of all because the battle between the Russian and Turkish armies soon took place near Cetat, when the Russian army was defeated and forced into retreat.<sup>49</sup> The war danger over Serbia started gradually to fade away. Already in the middle of May the Austrian military pressure was directed toward Montenegro, Herzegovina and Northern Albania. The Montenegrin Prince Danilo issued the proclamation on 16/28<sup>th</sup> April 1854 calling for the general war against the Ottoman Empire.<sup>50</sup> Faced with the war and political reality, the Montenegrin ruler quickly withdrew and readily exchanged the Russian protection for the Austrian one. However it may be, one dramatic period for Serbia came to an end, but only after the Russian occupation of Wallachia and Moldavia became unsustainable.

#### *The Russian Withdrawal from Wallachia and Moldavia*

The withdrawal of the Russian army from Wallachia and Moldavia was the expected news in the European capitals, but the connections of the Serbian authorities with the Russian commanders and diplomats, as well as occasional

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<sup>47</sup> What colonel Stratimirović was like in the eyes of the British Consul General. Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 17 April 1854, F.O. 78/1008. Westmorland, the British Ambassador in Austria, wrote in the beginning of April that the Austrian troops would probably enter Serbia in two days only. He stated, however, that they would not do this without the agreement with the Western allies. *Austria*, „The Times“, 10 April 1854.

<sup>48</sup> *The Russians in Servia*, „The Times“, 11 April 1854.

<sup>49</sup> *Austria*, „The Times“, 25 April 1854. W. Baumgart, p. 96.

<sup>50</sup> *Austria*, „The Times“, 3 May 1854.

defiant demonstrations of loyalty to Russia by the Serbian dignitaries, did not end.<sup>51</sup> The Western consuls were particularly annoyed by the question of the status of the Head School Supervisor Simonović, who was even given the deadline until 29<sup>th</sup> April by the Ottoman authorities to leave the territory of the Principality, and the Serbian government offered to pay his salary regularly throughout his absence.<sup>52</sup> Despite all doubts aroused by the Russian withdrawal from Small Wallachia and increasingly pro-Western behaviour of Austria, the Russian emissaries still kept on passing through Serbia. One of them brought the proclamation of Tsar Nikolay I to Montenegro, and occasionally there were cases of Serbian leaders who did not know how to hide their enthusiasm for Russian plans before the Western consuls. So Milivoje Petrović, more known as Blaznavac, on his return from Metz, where he had attended the military school, strangely enough passed through St Petersburg.<sup>53</sup> As soon as he arrived to Belgrade he visited the French Consul General and stated before him how Count Nesselrode was determined to carry on with the war for a full quarter of a century, whereas, in Petrović's opinion, France entered the war with no interests of its own, simply tricked by the "vile Albion".<sup>54</sup>

The Porte finally adopted a very moderate attitude concerning the question of Simonović. It was not prepared to use force although the Western consuls had already threatened the Serbian authorities with the Austrian

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<sup>51</sup> The Prince and the Serbian leaders did not miss the opportunity to present themselves on official occasions adorned with Russian decorations, noticeably omitting to add to them the decorations given by the Sultan. Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 25 April 1854, F.O. 78/1008.

<sup>52</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 11 April 1854, F.O. 78/1008.

<sup>53</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 3 May 1854, F.O. 78/1008, Copy No. 26. About the schooling of Blaznavac see: V. Pavlović „Srpski studenti u Parizu, 1839–1856“, *IC*, knj – XXXIII, Beograd, 1986, str. 191–2. [in Serbian: V. Pavlović „Serbian Students in Paris, 1839–1856“, *HJ*, bk – XXXIII, Belgrade, 1986, pp. 191–2].

<sup>54</sup> Matija Ban pointed out later that it was actually Petrović, as a leader of the Russian faction in Serbia, who had coined the plan together with the Russian government about the uprising in the Slavonic provinces of the Ottoman Empire at the moment when the Russian army crossed the Danube. However, despite the fact that the Russian troops fought on the right banks of this river by Šumla and Silistria, the uprising had not finally taken place. M. Ban, 'O meni za Krimskog rata', Hartije Matije Bana, I, ¼, str. 1, ASANU / (in Serbian: M. Ban, 'About Myself During the Crimean War', box I, ¼, p. 3, ASANU/.

army.<sup>55</sup> The Prince's nephew Djordje soon arrived to Belgrade who had until then served as an officer in the Russian army. Despite all protests by the British and French Consuls General, the Belgrade Pasha himself personally finally received young Karadjordjević, although he had neither previously submitted his resignation to the position in the Russian army, nor renounced his status of the Ottoman subject.

At the time when the rumours were circulating in Belgrade that a Russian foothold was organized in the East of Serbia and that some military material was transferred there, a certain Russian colonel arrived to Zemun.<sup>56</sup> This time the Austrian authorities refused to issue him the permit to cross over to Belgrade, but therefore his collocutor, a high official from the Ministry of the Interior went to meet him in Zemun. A special envoy of the Serbian government – Atanasije Nikolić set off for Wallachia at that time.<sup>57</sup> The British Consul General knew from the beginning that the true goals of Nikolić's mission were to start negotiations with Fonton in Wallachia.<sup>58</sup> In addition the Serbian-Turkish relations were exposed to the most difficult challenges experienced so far. The readiness of the Porte not go to the end in the persecution of Simonović was not welcomed in Serbia. The persecution of Matija Ban, with the participation of students as well, indicated that Simonović and the official Serbia were involved in a true anti-Turkish incident.<sup>59</sup> The British Consul had the information that Simonović himself stood behind the persecution of Matija Ban, who had allegedly ordered the students to attack him physically, as soon as an occasion arose, not fearing any consequences.<sup>60</sup> The predictions of the old and sick Izzet Pasha and the Western consuls again completely differed. While the Pasha only complained of the Prince's Prime Minister Simić's environment loyal to the Russians, Fonblanque believed that the Serbian policy would not be significantly affected by the removal of the Russian party leader. The British Consul General did not mention the possibility of the Prince's abdication as yet,

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<sup>55</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 7 May 1854, F.O. 78/1008.

<sup>56</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 12 May 1854, F.O. 78/1008.

<sup>57</sup> A. Nikolić, *Biografija Atanasija Nikolića*, ASANU br. 7380; J. Ristić, str. 120–1 /in Serbian: *Atanasije Nikolić's Biography*, ASANU no. 7380; J. Ristić, pp. 120–1/.

<sup>58</sup> Nikolić officially had to buy 300 Transilvanian horses for the Serbian army, but he did not succeed in this. Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 12 May 1854, F.O. 78/1008.

<sup>59</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 12 May 1854, F.O. 78/1008.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

but the analogy itself between the Prince and his Prime Minister was enough in itself that entertaining such thoughts was not far from him. "The National Party" was not numerous and it was isolated, and its leader Garašanin stated that even in the case of an offer to head the government or the Ministry of the Interior, he could not accept it because of his very small influence caused by the work of the Prince's camarilla and the Russian loyalists. He kept assuring the British Consul General that in the existing circumstances he had more influence as a private person.<sup>61</sup>

At that very time when the Western consuls began to believe in all the more certain Austrian occupation of Bosnia, and even Serbia, as a possible and even useful solution, the Serbian authorities seemed to have lost all tact in their policy of keeping the balance between the Great Powers. It was not only that in front of the abandoned Russian Consulate remained a twenty-meter-high mast on which glittered the colours of the Russian tricoloured flag, and the imperial two-headed eagle shined on the top, and not only were the meetings of the Serbian politicians with the Russian diplomats frequent and conspiratorial, but the eternally irresolute Prince started to behave in a very cold way with the Western consuls. When Calghoun, the British Consul in Wallachia, arrived to Belgrade on his way to Bosnia, the Prince refused to receive him under the rather unconvincing pretext of a headache.<sup>62</sup> At the end of May the Serbian officials failed to visit the British Consulate on occasion of the Queen Victoria's birthday.<sup>63</sup> The British Consul who set great store to diplomatic etiquette and with great persistence had been leading the dispute regarding the insult to the British flag several years ago, could not forgive this to the Serbian officials. At the time when the Serbian government sent five State Counsellors to the provinces to prepare the people for the worst, it became certain that it was more belligerent than the Serbian peasantry.<sup>64</sup> Under the pressure of the people the number of days in a week planned for obligatory manoeuvres were reduced from three to two. A bad image of the military power of Serbia known since long deteriorated even more in the eyes of the Western consuls. The old Fonblanque's thesis that the combativeness of the Principality inhabitants depended on their chances for plunder seemed credible. The courage could

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<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 7 May 1854, F.O. 78/1008.

<sup>63</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 24 May 1854, F.O. 78/1008.

<sup>64</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 12 May 1854, F.O. 78/1008, 25. May.

only be inspired by a war of conquest, into which Serbia would undoubtedly enter after the fall of Šumla and Silistria.<sup>65</sup> The British Consul General accused the Prince's nephew and Milivoje Petrović for the predominance of the militant party among the Constitutionalist. The Prince and the State Treasury were also moved to Kragujevac, followed by notorious Simonović.<sup>66</sup> According to Fonblanque's information there were 150 cannons at the disposal of the Serbian army that would primarily psychologically than in reality, unavoidably improve the prospects of Serbia in a possible war. There was nothing left for the British Consul General but to reproach bitterly the Porte for having more trust in the Serbian Kapou-Kehaja in Constantinople than in his well-meant warnings regarding the Serbian program of getting armed.<sup>67</sup>

Just at that time a foreign political event overshadowed the circumstances in Serbia. The French troops disembarked in the Port of Piraeus on 25<sup>th</sup> May, thus starting the three-year-long period of military occupation of the most important harbour in the Kingdom of Greece.<sup>68</sup> The fourth century since the fall of Constantinople ended just a year before, at the time when Prince Menshikov had already left it. Throughout numerous Greek regions under the Ottoman occupation millenarian prophecies spread, and the majority of the Greek politicians believed that the moment had come for the realization of the "Megale Idea". Even King Otto considered that the Western allies could be won over for the creation of one big Greek state, as a counter-balance to the Russian influence. When he did not succeed in doing this, he thought, like other Greek statesmen, that the plan from the time of the War for Independence could be implemented. As J.V. Kofas shrewdly observed, the official Greece was convinced that all bad consequences might be avoided if the war was led by "the

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<sup>65</sup> Fonblanque to Clarendon, Belgrade, 27 May 1854, F.O. 78/1008, No. 28.

<sup>66</sup> The reporter of the London *Times* reported on 15 May from Vienna that an emergency state had been introduced in Serbia after the last battles between the Russian and Ottoman armies at the Danube. *Austria*, „The Times“, 20 May 1854.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.* When it is the question of getting Serbia armed, the difference between the British and the French policy towards Serbia is noticeable. The fact that the French government was included from the very beginning into the question of cannons could be explained by a great inflow of the French capital in almost all European countries in the middle of the nineteenth century, even before the beginning of the Crimean War. France became a serious competitor of Great Britain, predominant until then, even in the Ottoman Empire. S. Faroqhi, p. 772.

<sup>68</sup> W. Baumgart, *The Crimean War*, p. 53

Greeks and not Greece”. However, contrary to the Greek revolution period, at the time prior to the Crimean War, in addition to the rebellious Greeks, there was also Greece on which the pressure could be exerted and which could be punished.<sup>69</sup>

It seems that Serbian politicians had no illusions that in case of any more serious crisis, the Principality would be directly put in danger. With the departure of the Prince and the government to Kragujevac the tempers cooled off in Belgrade. The British Consul regretted that Garašanin had left the capital with the Prince, because the inclination of his other collocutors towards the Western powers suddenly increased. One Fonblanque’s man of confidence from the “rank of tradesmen” assured him during the talk that if the British and French Consulates were closed, the Austrian authorities would immediately close the Customs down and in that way practically seize one half of the foreign goods on the way to Belgrade.<sup>70</sup> Even Matejić, who was in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in charge of Marinović’s duties during his mission in Paris, considered it appropriate to inform the British Consul General how the Russian party in the country was extremely weak, and that the total military activities were, in fact, dissuading Austria from its intention to occupy Serbia and thus endanger the Ottoman sovereignty. Matejić claimed how the Russians were certain to lose, but Fonblanque knew that the Serbian public mostly overestimated Russian prospects and had contempt for Austrian intentions, no matter how certain it was that the Russian army was losing the war, and that the Austrian troops were gradually moving towards Transilvania.<sup>71</sup>

The Russian withdrawal from Wallachia and Moldavia was in progress when the Austrian Grand Duke Albrecht arrived to Zemun.<sup>72</sup> The Austrian role in dissuading Russia from further offensive on the Balkans was already certain, so the British diplomacy became much more inclined to the Austrian activities

<sup>69</sup> J. V. Kofas, *International and Domestic Politics in Greece during the Crimean War*, New York, 1980, p. 48.

<sup>70</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 28 May 1854, F.O. 78/1008, No. 32.

<sup>71</sup> The reporter of *The Times* from Vienna praised in his report published at the beginning of June how principled the Serbian prince was and the success of his neutral policy. The Serbian authorities completely distanced themselves from the policy of the Prince of Montenegro before the Western consuls. *Austria*, „The Times“, 5 June 1854.

<sup>72</sup> W. Baumgart, p. 103; Garašanin – Marinoviću, 28. maj 1854, *Pisma...*, str. 180–182; J. Ristić, str. 142. /in Serbian: Garašanin to Marinović, 28 May 1854, *Letters...*, pp. 180–182; J. Ristić, p. 142/.



toward Serbia. Clarendon considered it necessary to inform the Consul General in Belgrade how the British Cabinet had reliable information that the Austrian army would not enter Serbia without reason, and if the occupation nevertheless took place then, as he stated, it would be of use to the Ottoman Empire.<sup>73</sup> The Porte itself seemed not to be convinced into the good-will of Vienna. At the reception organized in Zemun the Serbian prince was not the only cause of tensions, because the Belgrade Pasha, under the pretext of illness, sent his emissaries who, however, were shown no official honours. The Serbian prince needed some persuasion to come and when he finally agreed, he came decorated with the Russian medals. Unexpectedly, the Grand Duke's coldness did not lead to some greater incidents. The Prince was seated at the table on his right side as the eldest dignitary present, and the Grand Duke Albrecht, completely in accordance with his military appearance spent the evening without escort and any special protection.<sup>74</sup> The relations among Austria, the Ottoman Empire and Serbia did not, however, become less understandable and threatening: the Russian agents continued to travel through Serbia without any obstacles, and one of them, hiding under the rank of priest, was brazenly received by the Prince and Simić. The Grand Duke Albrecht, who refused to dine with the Belgrade Pasha emissaries, while sailing by the Belgrade fortress, did not live to be greeted by the salute of honour fired from its walls. The pretext according to which Serbia would lead the war only "to defend itself" Fonblanque now considered as an inappropriate justification for intrigues that the Russian diplomacy and the Serbian officials spread against Austria and the Ottoman Empire.<sup>75</sup>

The middle of June brought about certain progress in favour of the Porte and the Western powers, that did not go unnoticed by the attentive eye of the British Consul General in Belgrade. The Minister of Foreign Affairs in Constantinople was deposed, while Maierhoffer, one of the most prominent

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<sup>73</sup> Clarendon to Fonblanque, Foreign Office, 7 June 1854, F.O. 78/1009, No. 6. *The Times* published on 12 June the news that the Porte agreed with the temporary Austrian occupation of Montenegro. Even the direction of possible Austrian advance through the small Principality was determined. Official Constantinople, however, considered that the agreement did not refer to the occupation of Herzegovina, Bosnia and Serbia as well, except in the case of need and with the agreement of all allies. *France*, „The Times“, 12 June 1854.

<sup>74</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 8 June 1854, F.O. 78/1009, No. 33.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

Austrian high officers, who was also close to Russia, was sent to the new position in far away Berlin.<sup>76</sup> Therefore, Simić considered it necessary to let Fonblanque know, more resolutely than before, that there would be no uprising in Serbia. It was important to the Prince's Prime Minister to win the British Consul over because Segir had already forwarded a negative report about the attitude of the official Serbia to his government. This was not met with great understanding, the British Consul had even informed the ambassador in Constantinople that Serbia had received the expressions of benevolence and support for its policy from one of the highest places in the Russian diplomacy. He had the information according to which Count Nesselrode himself had written to the Prince that "he will be forgiven even a hundred insults he could make against the protecting power, only because of the ardour with which the Serbian people prepared for the war".<sup>77</sup>

It could be, nevertheless, believed that the Serbian officials would not by themselves make any move that would lead their country into the war. Soon the State Counsellors were withdrawn from the provinces preparing for the defence of the Principality.<sup>78</sup> But, as the preparations for the war were completed and the Serbian people remained confused and armed more than ever, Fonblanque recommended that this last move should not be entrusted to anyone else but to Austria. Namely, the helpless Porte could not disarm the people, arrest the Russian agents and still perform some trifle, but in the eyes of the British Consul very important duty, such as, for instance, the bringing down of the mast in front of the former Russian Consulate and taking away of the Russian decorations. Even Simić was left speechless by Fonblanque's new interpretation of the international law, according to which the relation of Austria toward Serbia was not as one state to another, but as the Ottoman Empire toward its minister Reshid Pasha, allegedly dismissed because of the pro-Russian policy he led.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.* Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 14 June 1854, F.O. 78/1009, No. 35.

<sup>77</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 26 June 1854, F.O. 78/1009, No. 36. Jovan Ristić in his study *Srbija i Krimska vojna* /in Serbian: *Serbia and the Crimean War*/, written several decades later, stated that the Russian diplomacy had already at that time condemned official Serbia because of her neutrality even openly showing dissatisfaction. J. Ristić, p. 149.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> Reshid Pasha was Stratford de Redcliffe's protégé who considered that he would be the most capable one of carrying out internal reforms in the Ottoman

Vienna soon heard of the contents of the April *Memorandum* which the Prince and the Serbian government had addressed to the Porte, and to the official Britain as well.<sup>80</sup> So *Allgemeine Zeitung*, so far frequently inclined to Russia, wrote how the Serbs “lived with their pigs”, while *Srbske novine* conciliatory stated that Serbia had been put under arms many times since 1815, but the Serbian army had never crossed the borders of Serbia.<sup>81</sup> And in effect, it seemed that in Serbia, whose authorities were otherwise, as a rule, torn apart by serious internal quarrels, now complete unity prevailed. Garašanin, who only in the talk with the British representative agreed with great difficulty that the disarmament of the Principality would be useful, claimed that both the Chairman of the State Council and the director of the Belgrade police believed that even the downfall would be better substitution for the Serbs than the disarmament.<sup>82</sup> In the beginning of July the Grand Duke Albrecht and general Hess held a review of seven thousand Austrian soldiers in Zemun.<sup>83</sup> In his talk with Fonblanque Hess declared how the “situation significantly deteriorated” after the publishing of the *Memorandum*, that was why the getting under arms could be now interpreted only as an act of rebellion. He announced that if

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Empire. Although he succeeded in getting him back to his old position, Redcliffe had to admit only a year later that he was wrong in his assessment. W. E., Mosse, „The Return of Reschid Pasha. An Incident in the Career of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe“, *English Historical Review*, 1953, Vol. 68, No. 269, p. 572.

<sup>80</sup> The Prince of Servia to the Earl of Clarendon, Belgrade, 18 April (Reed by 28 April) 1854, F.O. 78/1008. The letter was dated 5/17 April 1854. *Memorandum*, 5/17 April 1854, ASANU, No. 7515 /in Serbian/. Kosta Magazinović stated in his memoirs that Jovan Marinović had drafted the *Memorandum* at the proposal of Garašanin. *Memoari (Životopis) Koste Magazinovića*, ASANU, br. 9288. /in Serbian: *Kosta Magazinović's Memoirs (Biography)*, ASANU, no. 9288/.

<sup>81</sup> The British Consul did not find it even necessary to remind his superiors about the 1848/49 events. *Srbske novine*, 1/12. jul 1854. /in Serbian: *The Serbian Newspaper*, 1/12 July 1854/.

<sup>82</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 1 July 1854, F.O. 78/1009, No.38. The reporter of *The Times* from Vienna reported in the beginning of July that the official Austria did not demand the retaining of the protectorate. However, Austria would not allow establishing of tyrannical rulings of local Ottoman pashas on its borders. *Austria*, „The Times“, 1 July 1854. At that time Garašanin considered that full unity of forces between his own and Aleksa Janković's followers, on one side, and those of Acika Nenadović on the other one, was necessary. Garašanin – Marinoviću, 20. junija/2. jula 1854, *Pisma...*, str. 194–5. /in Serbian: Garašanin to Marinović, 20 June/2 July 1854, *Letters...*, pp. 194–5/.

<sup>83</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 3 July 1854, F.O. 78/1009, No. 40.

the population of the Principality was not disarmed, he would certainly get the authorization to occupy the Principality. The British Consul considered it fitting to advise the Austrian general to repeat all this to the Serbian emissaries.<sup>84</sup> The Serbian side seemed to have less tact than the Austrian one. Nobody else but Acika Nenadović was sent to Zemun, notorious since earlier for his inclination towards Russia.<sup>85</sup> He presented the already used justification to the Grand Duke, making the Porte partially responsible for arming Serbia.<sup>86</sup> Grand Duke Albrecht, however, quickly broke up the meeting. Diplomatic outwitting seemed to him completely inappropriate after the publishing of the Serbian *Memorandum*. He considered the applying of the Serbian government to Austria after such an insult as impertinence. He coldly and sharply made such his attitude clear to the Serbian envoy and cut down the talk that had just started. This time the Duke's departure was followed by the twenty-one-cannon salute, exactly as envisaged for official occasions. Contrary to the expectations, the Austrian units did not cross the Sava and the Danube a day later. The threat of Austrian occupation, that had been incessantly hovering for a full year over the Principality of Serbia, did not come near its realization on this occasion.<sup>87</sup> Mentioned in anticipated and probably informal agreement with Russia in the summer of 1853, the occupation became relevant at the time when the Russo-Turkish war on the Danube blazed up in the autumn and winter, threatening again in the spring and summer of 1854. Nevertheless, it became certain in July that the Austrian army would go towards the East to Wallachia and Moldavia, where the Russian army was hurriedly evacuated from.

Finally, on 18<sup>th</sup> July the Porte's orders for urgent disarmament of Serbia arrived to Belgrade. Now, even Simić could not avoid to solve such an issue. Seemingly reconciled with the inevitability of its implementation, he avoided to discuss the details. Despite knowing for certain that the disarmament of the people, to whom the arms were liberally distributed, and the money for it previously taken through a special tax, would be carried out only in case of

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<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> J. Ristić, 142–3.

<sup>86</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 3 July 1854, F.O. 78/1009, No. 40.

<sup>87</sup> In 1854 the Ottoman authorities were completely against the Austrian intervention. In the beginning of July the Belgrade Pasha wrote to Prince Aleksandar thanking him on the Sultan's behalf for his „loyalty, resoluteness and absolute allegiance during the crisis.“ *Austria*, „The Times“, 13 July 1854.



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foreign occupation.<sup>88</sup> Garašanin was not now the only Serbian politician the Western consuls could negotiate with. Even Vučić, the symbol of the Russian party in the Principality, who had no interest in either keeping the Prince on the throne by avoiding the conflict or his adversaries in power, after the meeting with the British Consul in Oršava, allegedly accepted his arguments, promising that he would personally endeavour to assure certain Serbian leaders into their validity.<sup>89</sup> During this time Lubri left Kragujevac because of his disagreement with the Prince about the program of the cannon manufacture, but therefore the manoeuvres continued all over the Principality with the collection of high taxes for the army. The Prince's Prime Minister soon claimed that it was necessary for Serbia to join the Porte and its allies.<sup>90</sup> The British Consul was

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<sup>88</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 14 July 1854, July 18, F.O. 78/1009, No. 41. About armament see G. Jakšić, D. Stranjaković, pp. 151–2. /in Serbian/

<sup>89</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 1854, 16 August, F.O. 78/1009, No. 42.

<sup>90</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 20 August 1854, F.O. 78/1009, No. 43. Garašanin was of the opinion that it was the question of onesided concession of official France to Austria. Garašanin Marinoviću, Grocka, 8./20. septemvarija 1854, *Pisma...*, str. 262. /in Serbian: Garašanin to Marinoviću, Grocka, 8/20 September 1854, *Letters...*, p. 262/.

not specially willing to believe him. The turn for Serbia to commit itself in this war came at the moment when the war had already been moving away from its eastern borders. The Western consuls' collocutors claimed in these talks how Great Britain and France in their policy of literal preservation of the Ottoman sovereignty did not leave any room for the possibility of the renewal of the Serbian kingdom. Fonblanque kept retorting with the question about the character of the difference between the British and the Russian policy towards the Principality. Tsar Nikolay I publicly bound himself that Serbia, Wallachia and Moldavia would retain the same status even in the case of the Ottoman Empire breakdown. Russia had only "furthered widespread illusions" contrary to Great Britain and France that were always ready to "support reasonable and practical demands".<sup>91</sup>

All attempts for Garašanin to enter the government again remained unsuccessful at that time. The precondition to get reconciled first with Austria was unacceptable to this prudent and proud Serbian politician, while he considered his heading the Ministry of Foreign Affairs hardly feasible and realistic, with the self-willed Prince and his entourage.<sup>92</sup> Fonblanque thought how it would be more useful for the former Prince's Prime Minister, who anyway occasionally advised Simić, to occupy a nominally subordinate position in the government, and later even take over the Ministry of the Interior. It seemed that Garašanin considered such plan as acceptable, so that if it succeeded, he would even undertake the obligation to remove, one after another, all the problems that had until recently interfered with the relations of Belgrade with the Porte and its allies.<sup>93</sup> However, the British Consul was not convinced that the appointment of Garašanin to such an influential position in the Serbian government could itself more significantly change the policy of the Principality. International preconditions should be created for something like that, and for that reason he proposed to Redcliffe to establish, after the Austrian occupation of Wallachia and Moldavia, a specific counter-balance in

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<sup>91</sup> ... While Russian had often been seen to favor some delusion – when objects of her own were likely to be furthered in the interval between the hallucination and the disenchantment – and, in illusion quite to the point. *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.* Garašanin Marinoviću, Grocka, 13./21. septem. 1854, *Pisma...*, str. 263–264. /in Serbian: Garašanin to Marinović, Grocka, 8/20 September 1854, *Letters...*, p. 262/.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

Bosnia, Serbia and Bulgaria.<sup>94</sup> For this purpose he proposed the opening of several British military and commercial stations on the Adriatic Sea. Colonel Radosavljević had also entertained with similar, though even more radical ideas. Just at that time, probably on his own initiative, he tried to win Fonblanque over for the idea that the Consuls of Britain, France and Austria, with their countries' support and in the capacity of special commissioners, take over the governing of Serbia. Fonblanque doubted the seriousness of the mover, but not the practicality of his proposal, stating that these three powers could successfully rule Serbia, under the condition that Russia and less interested Prussia were excluded. Nevertheless, it was clear to him that the Austrian diplomacy was striving to exchange the Russian influence with its own, as well as that the Austrian army was at many points within reach of Serbia, while the allied troops were far away from the Austrian borders.<sup>95</sup>

#### *The Beginning of the Austrian Supremacy*

At the end of September the unofficial Serbian envoy Aleksa Janković returned from Vienna.<sup>96</sup> The experienced politician, born as an Austrian subject and known for its loyalty to Vienna, immediately started to discreetly promote the idea about the establishment of the formal (vicarious) Austrian protectorate over Serbia, instead of the annulled Russian one.<sup>97</sup> While the Vienna newspapers wrote about the certainty of Serbia entering the Austrian political orbit, the Prince, unwillingly as customary, admitted to his foreign collocutors how after all the turns his policy had only one card left – the Austrian one.

The official Serbia remained inconsistent until the very end in its relations with other powers. While gradually distancing from Russia, it was

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<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.* In May the official Austria offered the Western allies to occupy Skadar, from where, when necessary, it could occupy certain Greek regions or Montenegro. W. Baumgart, p. 103.

<sup>95</sup> During this time the French and British forces won two significant victories at Crimea. In the middle of September they started with the siege of Sevastopol to last one full year, and the outcome of the entire war would depend on its fate, although this was not completely clear to the contemporaries. W. Baumgart, pp. 121.

<sup>96</sup> J. Ristić, *Propast oligarhije*, str. 234–5. (in Serbian: J. Ristić, *The Fall of Oligarchy*, pp. 234-5).

<sup>97</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 20 September 1854, F.O. 78/1009., No. 47; Lj. Ristić, p. 58. /in Serbian: Lj. Ristić, p. 58/.

approaching Austria not only because of political or military pressures, but also in the hope that in this way it would not completely break up with any of the parties in the current war. The Serbian government tried, at the same time, to satisfy, as much as possible, its Suzerain as well. If political concessions were not particularly favourable for official Serbia, the bribe could easily take their place. The Chairman of the State Council of the Principality defined the rules of the policy towards the Porte in a very simplified way, saying: "Do as Mouchin says, and give a tip to the Porte that will poison it at the end."<sup>98</sup> Therefore, the Serbian government and the Prince sent the total of three thousand ducats to Marinović in Paris only for the purpose of buying a suitable present for the powerful Reshid Pasha's daughter-in-law.<sup>99</sup> Fonblanque firmly believed that the unresolved status of Simonović and keeping of more and more ill Izzet Pasha at the position of the commander of the Belgrade fortress was a direct consequence of the systematic corrupting of the Porte by its Serbian vassals.<sup>100</sup> To entrust Marinović with such, at a first glance, not so important task meant, on the other hand, another prepared turn in the Serbian diplomatic activity. Marinović thus had the occasion to personally bring the expensive present to Belgrade, because several weeks later he was recalled from Paris.<sup>101</sup> However verbally loyal they were to Austria and the Ottoman Empire, the Serbian officials continued to be more than ready to make different concessions to Russia. The rumour spread that Marinović earned a bad reputation because of his meetings with the French dignitaries. Fonblanque, however, claimed that such meetings had taken place earlier as well, but that his recent visit to London was crucial for Marinović's fate, where he met the Earl of Clarendon, the head of the British diplomacy.<sup>102</sup>

<sup>98</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 12 September 1854, F.O. 78/1009.

<sup>99</sup> *Srbija*, „Srbski dnevnik“, 22 avgust/3 septembar 1854, br. 67. /in Serbian: *Serbia*, „Serbian Daily“, 22 August/3 September 1854, no. 67/. This news was taken over by „The Times“ as well. *Austria*, „The Times“, 4 September 1854. It is interesting that more detailed British or French sources about Marinović's mission have not been found until present. Lj. Aleksić, p. 69. /in Serbian/.

<sup>100</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 12 September 1854, F.O. 78/1009.

<sup>101</sup> One part of the Serbian public suspected what his unofficial role in Paris was. The news that he sent his notice while on his way was commented by old demands to retire him together with Garašanin and move them out of politics. *Srbija*, „Srbski dnevnik“, 7/19. novembar 1854, br. 89. /in Serbian: *Serbia*, „Serbian Daily“, 7/19 November 1854, No. 89/.

<sup>102</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 20 September 1854, F.O. 78/1009, No. 47.





”British Soldier after the 1855. Winter”, *Sedmica*

After the first victories at the Crimea, greater interest of the British diplomacy for the Principality of Serbia ceased. Nevertheless, Fonblanque followed the development of events, convinced that his influence was still greater than the actual presence of the British state and its army on the Balkan Peninsula. The official Serbia succeeded to refuse occasional requests from the Porte for financial aid for its war endeavours with much less effort than earlier pressures that would inevitably lead into the armed conflict with Russia or the occupation of the Principality. The official Belgrade even saw it suitable to justify the refusal for helping its Suzerain by the alleged disagreement of Great Britain and France with such “violation of the Serbian neutrality”. Fonblanque, naturally

rejected such pretexts, but he had no occasion any more of exerting great pressure on the Serbian authorities.<sup>103</sup>

The fate of Serbia was now more in the hands of Austria, and it seemed as if the British diplomacy, also less and less interested in the fate of Serbia, was trying to protect its own interests using the resentfulness of Austria towards other Great Powers. It was the victory of the allied army at Alma (20<sup>th</sup> September 1854) that exactly gave rise to such behaviour. The attitude of Austria in the 1853-1854 war resulted in the withdrawal of Russia from the Balkans and its defensive on the Russian territory where the war moved to. Therefore, it was actually Austria that had to recoil from any Russian success, and to try even more to suppress the Russian propaganda among its population. Fonblanque had nothing nice to say for the editing policy of *Srbski dnevnik* (*The Serbian Daily*), the influential newspaper published in Serbian in Novi Sad. In the issue from 21<sup>st</sup> September the newspaper reported about the decisive defeat of the allied army and fleet that allegedly took place at the Crimea.<sup>104</sup> The

<sup>103</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 23 September 1854, F.O. 78/1009.

<sup>104</sup> Fonblanque to Clarendon, Belgrade, 29 September 1854, F.O. 78/1009, No. 38. *Srbski dnevnik*, 9/21. septembar 1854. /in Serbian: *The Serbian Daily*, 9/21 September 1854/.

British diplomatic representatives claimed that such propaganda not only harmed the interests of the Ottoman Empire and the Western powers, but most of all Austria itself. This was why the British ambassador in Vienna, Lord Westmorland himself was soon instructed to lodge the protest because of the writing of *Srbski Dnevnik*.<sup>105</sup> The answer came from the Austrian newspapers inclined toward Russia accusing Fonblanque and Segir of trying to make a pashalic out of the Principality of Serbia.<sup>106</sup>

The Serbian public experienced the Russian defeats at the Crimea mainly as their own: the twenty-one-cannon salute from the Belgrade fortress marking the victory at Alma unpleasantly surprised both Prince Aleksandar and the Wallachian Prince Stribei, who happened to be in Serbia at that time.<sup>107</sup> The dejection of Serbs caused ill feelings with the Western consuls. When the Prince's birthday was celebrated in October, Fonblanque considered that the omission of official British congratulations would be a valid answer to the Serbian authorities who only several months ago had not deemed it appropriate to congratulate him on the occasion of Queen Victoria's birthday.<sup>108</sup> Fonblanque was isolated in such a decision, but therefore Segir had to bear the scene of Prince Aleksandar, now prompted by the camarilla, wearing though less defiantly but still conspicuously, the full splendour of the high Russian decorations.

In the autumn of 1854, the new bishop, soon after graduation from the Ecclesiastic Academy in Russia arrived to Šabac<sup>109</sup>. What the British Consul knew about this twenty-eight-year-old bishop was extremely unfavourable, primarily for the Serbian authorities.<sup>110</sup> The answer he received to the question

<sup>105</sup> Fonblanque to Clarendon, Belgrade, 18 November 1854, F.O. 78/1009, No. 42.

<sup>106</sup> „Trieste Gazette“ and „Ost Deutsche Post“.

<sup>107</sup> Fonblanque to Clarendon, Belgrade, 1 October 1854, F.O. 78/1009, No. 39.

<sup>108</sup> It is interesting that such an omission occurred only a month after the Prince and the Council appealed to Clarendon and the British Parliament to render protection to Serbia from Austria. Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 11 October 1854, F.O. 78/1009, No. 55.

<sup>109</sup> The future Metropolitan Mihailo. It is interesting that Metropolitan Petar several years ago actually saw Miloje Jovanović (future Metropolitan Mihailo) and Jovan Ristić as his possible successors. Dj. Sljepčević, *Istorija Srpske pravoslavne crkve. Od početka XIX veka do kraja Drugog svetskog rata*, Beograd, 1991, str. 355, 358. /in Serbian: Dj. Sljepčević, *The History of the Serbian Orthodox Church. From the Beginning of the nineteenth century to the End of the Second World War*, Belgrade, 1991, pp. 355, 358/.

<sup>110</sup> Fonblanque to Clarendon, Belgrade, 26 October 1854, F.O. 78/1009, No. 42.

about the new bishop's knowledge and experience was that he had extremely great "religious ardour". Distrustful Fonblanque saw in the work of the new bishop an extended hand of the Russian diplomacy and the plot in which in Serbia, after the archbishop – the Austrian subject, now the Russian one should be inaugurated.<sup>111</sup>

Truly, it seemed that those few followers of France and Great Britain disappeared in Serbia. Upon his return from Paris, Jovan Marinović remained only for a short time at the position of the head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The proposals that Serbia, at the time when the war moved away from its borders, should at least moderately side with the Western powers were rejected. Even Garašanin, who stayed in Grocka for a long time after his return from abroad, came to Belgrade in order to visit his friend and secretly learn about all those news which could not have been mentioned in the correspondence.<sup>112</sup> Remaining only very shortly in Belgrade he visited Fonblanque even twice. The experienced Serbian politician did not know how to hide his despair before the Briton. He stated that if Austria entered into the war with Russia within the next several months, the occupation of the Principality of Serbia would also become unavoidable. He was sure that if this happened, Serbia would "sink into barbarism" for a longer time. The departure of foreign teachers and tutors from Serbia seemed to confirm that he was right in all these gloomy expectations.<sup>113</sup>

The political elite of the Principality of Serbia was not worried much by the threat of the Austrian occupation. Many Serbian politicians were convinced that Austria, Prussia and Russia had reached an agreement about the future joint protectorate of all Great Powers over the Principality.<sup>114</sup> Despite persistent refutations by the Western consuls, it was believed that it

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<sup>111</sup> The russification of Serbia through the church represents a relatively unexpected assessment as the reports about the **independence of the Serbian people** from the Church prevailed in earlier years. *The Illustrated London News*, 14 December 1853, p. 598.

<sup>112</sup> Naturally, these talks were not mentioned in the correspondence between the two Serbian politicians. Garašanin – Marinoviću, Grocka, 11./23. noem. 1854, i *Isti* Grocka, 27. noem./ 9. dek. 1854, *Pisma...*, str. 269–273. /in Serbian: Garašanin to Marinović, Grocka, 11/23 Nov. 1854, and *Ibid*: Grocka, 27 Nov./ 9 Dec. 1854, *Letters...*, pp. 269–273/.

<sup>113</sup> Fonblanque to Clarendon, Belgrade, 20 November 1854, F.O. 78/1009., No. 43.

<sup>114</sup> See: *Pisma...*, napomene, str. 270. /in Serbian: *Letters...*, remarks, p. 270/.

would be illegal to deny the right of participation even to the defeated Russia in the collective guarantees that the Great Powers intended to give Serbia.<sup>115</sup> Two Ottoman pashas present in Belgrade also acted against the Western powers' interests. After Bessim Pasha, Fonblanque claimed that the Ottoman administrators belonging to the "old school" came to Belgrade, who harboured distrust towards all Christian powers.<sup>116</sup> Reminders that Great Britain and France paid for the Ottoman army did not particularly impress the aged Izzet Pasha, but the Pasha's attitude towards Austria and other powers left room for the Serbian authorities to consistently hope that they would succeed, on the division between the Great Powers, not only to preserve the neutrality but also to expand the borders and raise the status of its state.

Nevertheless, the end of immediate danger of war and the prevailing influence of one Great Power in Serbia had one bad consequence as well. The traditional conflicts between the Prince and the State Council existing without break during the past eleven years, disappeared in the 1853-1854 period. Now a certain peace and the change in the political orientation of the state gave rise to new rivalries, which began with the Prince's intention to dismiss the government. Fonblanque wrote to Clarendon already on 2<sup>nd</sup> December about the meeting with a certain Serbian official (Servian employee) who asked him to pass to Clarendon the Serbian wish to have a foreign prince enthroned under the protection of Great Britain and France.<sup>117</sup> Fonblanque did not reveal this official's identity, who was considered to be sufficiently influential so as to send a word about something to the head of the British diplomacy, claiming that several Serbian leaders were behind the mentioned plan. The time of celebration of St Andrew The First Called and St Nicholas did not bring new tensions. A number of details were left out that made the Russian influence on the Principality obvious. These days even the mast in front of the Russian Consulate was pulled down. Everything passed peacefully although the citizens present were shouting insults against Great Britain. The only difficulty was to

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<sup>115</sup> Fonblanque to Clarendon, Belgrade, 2 December 1854, F.O. 78/1009, No. 44.

<sup>116</sup> Fonblanque to Clarendon, Belgrade, 20 November 1854, F.O. 78/1009, No. 43.

<sup>117</sup> Fonblanque to Clarendon, Belgrade, 2 December 1854, F.O. 78/1009. Relying on national and French sources some authors place the crisis in relations between the Prince and the State Council, as well as the idea about bringing a foreign prince on the Serbian throne in the year 1855. G. Jakšić i D. Stranjaković, pp. 155–6. /in Serbian: G. Jakšić and D. D. Stranjaković, pp. 155–6/.

find a volunteer who would for a great reward of one ducat cut down the last symbol of the Russian state in the Principality. Finally, one of the passers-by undertook this task, but it turned out that he was an Italian.<sup>118</sup>

The end of the year was marked by the final triumph of the Austrian influence in Serbia. The Western diplomats could be satisfied with this because the Russian influence was suppressed, and the Serbian aspirations checked. However, either the British or the French diplomacies could not get the merit for this, or for the success of the Ottoman army on the Danube. The same as with the evacuation of Wallachia and Moldavia, Serbia also rejected Russia thanks to the resolute change in the Austrian policy. And while many people in Serbia still deceived themselves counting on the possible change in the Austrian and Prussian policies in case of victory of the Russian army, Prince Aleksandar returned from Vienna prepared to constitute a new government that would not only be in the interest but also at the pleasure of Vienna.<sup>119</sup> According to reliable information, after the arrival to Belgrade he first acquainted the Austrian Consul Radosavljević with the composition of that government.<sup>120</sup> Judging by its supposed composition, it could be said that the envisaged government was formed only according to the ideas of the Prince and his closest followers. It was, almost without exception, constituted from the Serbian ruler's relatives. The Prince's Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs had thus to become Konstantin Nikolajević, the Serbian Kapou-Kehaja in Constantinople and Aleksandar Karadjordjević's son-in-law. The position of the Serbian Agent in Constantinople was supposed to be taken over by Avram Petronijević's son, who himself was soon to become the ruler's son-in-law. Jevrem Nenadović, the Princess Persida's father, would take over the Ministry of the Interior. The position of the Minister of Finance was envisaged for Acika Nenadović, notorious with the Western consuls, and the Ministry of Justice should be headed by another Nenadović – Anastas.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 13 December 1854, F.O. 78/1009, No. 66; Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 19 December 1854, F.O. 78/1009, No. 67. *Memoari (Životopis) Koste Magazinovića*, ASANU, br. 9288, str. 37–9, i *Srbski dnevnik*, 12. decembar 1854, br. 99. /in Serbian: *Kosta Magazinović's Memoirs (Biography)*, ASANU, No. 9288, pp. 37–9, and *The Serbian Daily*, 12 December 1854, No. 99/.

<sup>119</sup> J. Ristić, *Propast oligarhije...*, p. 240. /in Serbian: J. Ristić, *The Fall of Oligarchy...* p. 240/.

<sup>120</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 10 December 1854, F.O. 78/1009, No. 65.

<sup>121</sup> Fonblanque described him as „a dwarf of evil propensities“. *Ibid.*

When informed about the intended composition of the new government, Radosavljević immediately understood that nepotism was the main principle in its constitution. He saw in this the sign of the ultimate weakness of the Prince's power, that from the moment of the new government appointment it should be completely relying on Austria. This was why he considered that the extent of its power was essential for its stability and sustenance. He dissuaded Prince Aleksandar carefully, using the same arguments the Russians had at one time. The government composed of the Prince's relatives would serve, as he claimed, to the Western powers to endanger the very survival of Karadjordjevićs in power at the Porte.<sup>122</sup> Radosavljević asked the Prince to make certain changes in his plan. He proposed two changes that would make the government more Austrophile, bringing it at the same time greater influence with the people. Thus, Aleksa Janković should become the Minister of Justice and the Duke Knićanin – the Minister of the Interior.<sup>123</sup>

The British Consul believed that the most important goal of the Austrian diplomacy now was to neutralize the political influence and thwart commercial interests of Great Britain. For the time being, Russia ceased to be the forbidden topic in Serbia. Even later everlastingly cautious Jovan Ristić, then the twenty-four-year-old employee who had recently returned from his studies in Berlin and Paris, published the Panslavic manuscript that drew the attention of ever-alert Fonblanque with its theses about the moral downfall of the West and the new light that would start coming from Serbia.<sup>124</sup> It could be said that it was actually the representatives of Great Britain and France who became undesirable. The British Consul kept receiving the news from several sides how the Austrian Consul was frequently advising the Serbian officials to avoid communication with the Western consuls. Thus in one year only the British-Austrian relations in Serbia made a full circle: the doubt from the summer of 1853 was followed by distrust and hostility in the autumn and the winter of 1853-54, to turn into warmer and even partnership relations with

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<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 10 December 1854, F.O. 78/1009, No. 65, 22. November. This combination, however, lasted for a short time. S. Jovanović, *Ustavobranitelji ...*, str. 245. /in Serbian: S. Jovanović, *The Constitutionalists...*, p. 245/.

<sup>124</sup> [He argued]: „that Old Europe was worn out, and the warmth of civilization could only be imparted to it again by the blaze of intelligence which irradiates Servia!“ *Ibid.*; V. Pavlović, str. 190–194. /in Serbian: V. Pavlović, pp. 190–194/.

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the Russian withdrawal and the change in Austrian policy. Finally, with the establishing of the Austrian domination the distrust became again a common denominator for all relations. This was why Fonblanque's statement did not seem strange when he could not recall an occasion during the preceding ten years when Austria had been inclined towards Great Britain and France.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.* Just then *Srbski dnevnik* in Novi Sad wrote with noticeable malice about the ill humour of Lord Redcliffe in distant Constantinople whereas „his lady frequently sheds tears, while both of them are grieving over the loss and shedding of beautiful English blood in front of Sevastopol turrets“. *Srbski dnevnik*, 12/24. decembar 1854, br. 99. /in Serbian: *The Serbian Daily*, 12/24 December 1854. No.99/.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### **ANNUS PACABILIS – 1855 SERBIA LEFT TO AUSTRIA AND TO ITSELF**

“Almost during the entire year we parted from several days ago we had expected the moment in which the flame of war would seize our hearths, but until present we were so lucky and crossed over peacefully all the depths of this very entangled Eastern question. With the removal of the war theatre, the dangers of war moved away from us and sunk in deep silence we were expecting to hear the powerful word of any conference about our fate...”

*Srbski dnevnik (The Serbian Daily)*, 27<sup>th</sup> January 1855, No.7

In 1855 the period of complete peace began on the Balkans. The evacuation of Wallachia and Moldavia was completed, Tessalia and Macedonia were pacified and Montenegro was incorporated into the Austrian political orbit.<sup>1</sup> With the removal of the war theatre to the far away Crimea, lacking land borders with Russia in Europe, the Ottoman Empire seemed to be less interested in Serbia. The Austrian political supremacy in the Principality seemed a logical outcome of the one-year-long crisis, and in any case it could not seem more threatening than the occupation of Wallachia and Moldavia, already carried out with the permit from the Porte. The disappearance of the immediate Russian danger made the constantly cautious Western consuls in Belgrade worried. After the two-year-long crisis when the centre of the European conflict was on the Balkans, thus making Serbia the focus of the international attention, the Principality was now again put back on the margin of Europe, becoming merely a periphery of the Empire whose fate had to be decided somewhere else.

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<sup>1</sup> W. Baumgart, pp.100–106; P. Shroeder, p. 174; J. Ristić, p. 149./in Serbian/



Immediate consequences of this change were the renewed change of Fonblanque's attitude toward Austria and the end of his concord with the French Consul.<sup>2</sup> Worried by disturbed balance of forces between Austria and the Ottoman Empire, in the beginning of 1855 he started to think about the gradual internal reform of the Principality. He had no illusions that his notion could be carried out without the complete removal of the Russian and suppression of the Austrian influence in Serbia. Aware of the fact that the long siege of Sevastopol decreased the already limited influence of the Western powers, the British Consul proposed to start with the cautious and slow procedure for Garašanin's return into the government only after its inevitable fall. Distrustful towards the representatives of other Great Powers in Serbia, he still believed that a significant influence could be achieved through young Aziz Pasha, who was now completely loyal to him, in spite of all earlier criticisms. The end of the foreign political tensions brought Fonblanque into conflict with Ségur. There is no doubt that Great Britain and France had a joint goal in the defence of the Ottoman Empire, but their foreign political priorities kept changing during that time. In the beginning the French motives were inspired by the hatred and rivalry towards Russia, while Great Britain stepped into the conflict more cautiously, prompted by its own interest to preserve the Ottoman Empire. The roles changed during the war: whereas the British public opinion led the Cabinet to the radical hostility towards Russia, Napoleon III recognized the future ideal French ally in the weakened Russian Empire.<sup>3</sup> Thus the French Consul in Belgrade started now to plot intrigues about his British colleague in an effort to turn the Belgrade Pasha against him, while the French government actively participated in the program of the arming of Serbia.<sup>4</sup> The relations were disrupted at the moment when the clarification of any misunderstandings between the Western consuls was still more than likely. Ségur had already earlier been planned for transfer and Fonblanque could, therefore, give vent

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<sup>2</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 4 January 1855, F.O. 78/1095, No. 2.

<sup>3</sup> P. Shroeder, pp. 313–4.

<sup>4</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 4 January 1855, F.O. 78/1095, No. 2. However, this was not an isolated conflict: it lasted in Constantinople before and after the Crimean War, reaching its peak in the conflict between Stratford de Redcliffe and Thouvenel (Antoine Edouard Thouvenel). L. M. Case, „A Duel of Giants in old Stambul Stratford Versus Thouvenel“, *Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 35, No. 3, p. 271.

to his ill-temper towards him. The new French Consul who was supposed to arrive would anyway, according to the predetermined opinion, initiate different policy towards the Principality.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to the personal changes in the government from December 1854, the Prince's plan to constitute a new government and present the new direction of the state policy as his personal triumph, did not succeed. His political isolation once more manifested itself in full for the New Year (according to the Julian calendar). The Austrian Consul was not in Belgrade at that time, and other foreign diplomatic representatives and Serbian leaders were so ill-disposed towards him, that he decided himself to withdraw to Kragujevac to avoid the unpleasant fact that many of them would not appear for the congratulations at the Court. Thus the Prince, who earlier used to run away to Kragujevac in face of the ultimatums by the Great Powers, suddenly started doing this because of his own unpopularity. Now Garašanin also started to behave conspiratorially in his talks with the British Consul. Aware of the immediate foreign danger for the Principality, during the first period of war he gave preference to the change of the status and the expansion of Serbia instead of to the internal reforms, working almost as a rule, in agreement with the irresolute ruler.<sup>6</sup> In the beginning of 1855 he realized that only the internal reforms would be feasible in Serbia. He considered the Prince's deposition as a first step in this direction, without which it would be impossible to achieve other plans.<sup>7</sup> Even ever-cautious Fonblanque did not wish to refuse to talk about this with the man of such a great trust, as Garašanin. He immediately warned him that the Sultan had an exclusive right to dismiss and appoint a new ruler in Serbia. Although he was of the opinion that Garašanin and Marinović were the logical candidates among the Serbs, Fonblanque was convinced that they would not be acceptable to Vienna, just as Vučić and Simić would not be in Constantinople's favour. This was why during the talk he was the first one to open the possibility of a foreigner coming to the Serbian throne. On the other hand, Garašanin who still feared the entry of the Austrian army into Serbia, saw in such a change only a progress to be welcomed.

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<sup>5</sup> It was believed that Ségur was transferred to Baghdad as a punishment. *Srbski dnevnik*, 24. jul 1855, br. 58. /In Serbian: *The Serbian Daily*, 24 July 1855, No. 58/

<sup>6</sup> See page 66.

<sup>7</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 10 January 1855, No. 3.

The removal of Knićanin and Janković from the government brought new enemies to Prince Aleksandar.<sup>8</sup> Instead of the two Austrian followers, Marković and Magazinović were appointed, whose political orientation did not much differ, but they enjoyed significantly lower reputation with the people. Even Aleksa Janković, known as an Austrophile and the Prince's man, now went into the extreme opposition. He kept stating how the entire system was so corrupted that it was on the very edge of destruction, while accusing the Prince of the absence of any care for the interests of the people.<sup>9</sup>

The news reaching the British Consul in Belgrade were upsetting. The reliable sources from different sides agreed that Prince Aleksandar, persuaded by his surroundings led by the influential Nenadovići, had even decided to invite on his own the Austrian army into Serbia. This was why Fonblanque seized each opportunity to simply present his view of the way out of the existing crisis the regime in the Principality found itself in. Therefore, even during an ordinary talk with the Prince's Prime Minister (*Predstavnik*) Simić, whom he was advising in regard to "administrative and fiscal issues", he mentioned that for the stabilization of situation in Serbia it would be best for the Prince to reach an agreement with the leaders of the national party.<sup>10</sup> Fonblanque had the reliable information that the Prince had reached an agreement with the Austrian diplomacy prior to the holding of the Vienna Conference.<sup>11</sup> This was

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<sup>8</sup> Reporter of *The Times* from Vienna reported that after the above mentioned removal from the post the Russian party again prevailed in Serbia. *Austria*, „The Times“, 2 February 1855.

<sup>9</sup> He stated that the Prince had for years neglected his public obligations, taking and keeping the money from the civil list. He had, allegedly, collected an amount equal to 180,000 pounds sterling. Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 10 January 1855, F.O.78/1095, No. 3, 13. January; Č. Antić, „Neke britanske vesti o Svetoandrejskoj skupštini“, *Zbornik za istoriju Matice srpske*, 63/64, Novi Sad, 2001, str. 249. /In Serbian: Č. Antić, Some British News about the Saint Andrew Assembly“, *Proceedings for the History of Matica Srpska*, 63/64, Novi Sad 2001, p. 249/.

<sup>10</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 25 January 1855, F.O. 78/1095, No. 6.

<sup>11</sup> The Vienna Conference lasted from 16 March to the end of April 1855. Under the mediation of Dryoun de Lhuys the Conference offered the agreement on neutralization, that is the limitation of war fleets in the Black Sea. As significant changes took place both in Russia and in Great Britain (Tsar Nikolay I died, while Palmerston replaced Aberdeen at the head of the British Cabinet), it was expected that the final agreement would be reached. The negotiations failed, and the siege of Sevastopol continued, while De Lhuys was removed from his post. A.J.P. Taylor, pp.74–77; Lj. Aleksić, str. 83. /in Serbian, p. 83/.

why, under the pressure of the Count Buol himself, the Serbian authorities broke off with the conspicuous and symbolic Russophile policy. On the other hand, the Prince allegedly submitted to the Austrian diplomacy the counter-conditions for his complete subordination. Austria, therefore, should exert its influence at the Conference for the fulfillment of four requests, that could be rather called the aspirations of the Prince himself than of his Principality.<sup>12</sup> Austria was expected to advocate for the granting of the right to title succession to the Karadjordjević family, the change of the Constitution reducing the power of the State Council (allegedly imposed by the Russian diplomacy), the Prince's right to banish fifteen Serbian leaders, among them Garašanin, Vučić and Marinović, and the evacuation of the Ottoman garrisons from the fortresses.<sup>13</sup>

The Austrian diplomacy soon let Prince Aleksandar know that he could not expect the support before giving more firm guarantees of his loyalty. Thus Radosavljević asked Simić for urgent personal changes in the government, the appointment of Knićanin and Janković and removal of Acika Nenadović.<sup>14</sup> This request was followed by a threat that caused one more return of the unfortunate Prince from his shelter in Kragujevac. It was clearly pointed out to Simić that the lack of cooperation of the Serbian authorities might lead to the agreement between Vienna and St Petersburg, resulting in the return of Mihailo Obrenović to the throne. Although Radosavljević argued that such a move would not be met by more serious opposition from the Porte and its allies, Fonblanque considered his threats as trivial and insufficiently prudent. At the end of January the British Consul General invited Matić, the head of the department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who was notified that the official Britain considered incorrect the interference of foreign powers in the constitution of the new government. He again stated how Great Britain would

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<sup>12</sup> The reporter of *The Times* from Vienna stated, relying on the writings by the Austrian newspapers, that the Serbian leaders were worried believing that the Principality would be passed over at the Congress. The Austrian sources stated that the official Serbia wished the joint protectorate of the Great Powers over Serbia, or to put it better the guarantee of the Serbian rights, as Serbia could, allegedly, protect itself on its own. *The Times*, 14 March 1855.

<sup>13</sup> The British Consul was not sure whether this included the Belgrade fortress as well. Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 25 January 1855, F.O.78/1095, No. 6.

<sup>14</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 1 February 1855, F.O. 78/1095, No.7.

continue not to interfere with the internal circumstances in the Principality.<sup>15</sup> The Prince, however, found it necessary to ask Aziz Pasha for the protection, who had no other way out but to complain to the British Consul.<sup>16</sup>

Prince Aleksandar thus did not get the political assistance from Austria which seemingly he wanted more than he actually needed it. On the other side, the State Council also got roused, determined to preserve its power. The Prince was requested by a special resolution to demobilize the standing army and to bring back the State Treasury from Kragujevac under the full control of the State Council. As the period of fairs was getting close, Fonblanque warned the Serbian government of possible unrests and, as a good example, drew the attention to the invitations of the “national party”, unreservedly supporting the preservation of the existing state.<sup>17</sup> He still believed, however, that in spite of diminished military danger from Austria, the prevailing Austrian influence in Serbia was not any more the guarantee of stability. The Austrian Consul himself, in his opinion, was so compromised by his political inconsistency that no one believed him anything, even Baron Bourqueney otherwise positively inclined.<sup>18</sup>

However, the Serbian authorities had no choice. Despite the news about the additional mobilization of the Russian army, nobody had any illusions that Russia considered Serbia as its ally on the Balkans.<sup>19</sup> That was why Timotej Knežević, an official close to Prince Aleksandar, was now sent to Vienna. The true aim of his mission was only the question of the recognition of the right to title succession for the Prince’s family, while publicly he went there to negotiate the railway construction and the exploitation of the Majdanpek mine.<sup>20</sup> The

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<sup>15</sup> Aleksa Simić – knezu, 13./25. januar 1855, Hartije D. Stranjakovića, 14233/b - 334, ASANU. /In Serbian: Aleksa Simić to the Prince, 13/25 January 1855, Papers of D. Stranjaković, 14233/b - 334, ASANU.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 18 February 1855, F.O. 78/1095, Copy No. 8.

<sup>18</sup> Radosavljević within the period of several days threatened the Prince with the overthrow, and attended the wedding of his daughter. *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Contrary to Montenegro and Greece. Certain Russian documents from this period omitted to mention Serbia even as an autonomous region within the Ottoman Empire. *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Fonblanque later learned that Knežević was in fact sent because count Buol asked the Prince to send him somebody who could present the Serbian demands before the Conference. Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 17 March 1855, 20. March, F.O. 78/1095, No. 13.

mission of Matija Ban, who arrived to Constantinople in January 1855, was less known. After a series of difficulties he had experienced during 1854, Ban resigned from his position and went into a secret diplomatic mission at the Porte. Although financed by the state, he stayed in Constantinople in the capacity of a private person who presented an extensive project of the new status of Ottoman Slavs to the Porte, the Western ambassadors, and the public as well.<sup>21</sup> Ban's idea was that the emancipation of Christians should be performed primarily within the legal and political framework, only he was more in favour of the allocation of certain rights to local self-governments and the regions populated by them. *Journal de Constantinople* published the excerpts from this plan, and when talking to its author, it was most favourably commented on by the Grand Vizier Reshid Pasha himself. Ban succeeded to win over the French, Italian (Piedmont) and Prussian ambassadors for his plan, but Redcliffe, about whom he later wrote that he was "omnipotent in Constantinople" at that time, prevented its official acceptance, arguing that the principle of nationality should not be accepted in the Ottoman Empire at any cost.<sup>22</sup>

The Serbian foreign policy entered the year of 1855 as completely defined. This was why the news about the death of the Russian Tsar caused surprise and sadness in the public, but nothing more than that.<sup>23</sup> Fonblanque recorded how it was frequently thought in Belgrade that with the arrival of the new tsar to the Russian throne the possibility would be opened to end the war by an agreement. The Serbian public continued to be inclined to Russia, but it was more than ever against the war.<sup>24</sup> For that very reason it was possible for some other power to represent a somewhat changed Russian policy in Serbia. Such possibility was sporadically indicated in the Consul's thoughts during the two-year-long diplomatic crisis and the war. Nevertheless, although he saw

<sup>21</sup> M. Ban, „Les Slaves de Turquie“, Hartije Matije Bana, I, ¼, str. 9–61 /in Serbian: Papers of Matija Ban, I, ¼, p. 9–61, Archieve SASA/.

<sup>22</sup> M. Ban, „O meni za Krimskog rata,,“, Hartije Matije Bana, I,1/4, str. 63. /in Serbian: M. Ban. „About Myself During the Crimean War,,“,Papers of Matija Ban, I,1/4, p. 63, Archieve SASA/.

<sup>23</sup> Tsar Nikolay I died on 18 February/2 March 1855. Thanks to the telegraph, the news about his death reached London from St Peterbourg in four hours only, while half a century earlier (1801) the news about his grandfather's death, Tsar Pavle, travelled for full three weeks. *Mrvice*, „Šumadinka“ 1855, 18. mart 1855, god. V, No. 23, str. 92. /in Serbian: *Snippets*, „Šumadinka“ 1855, 18 March 1855, yr. V, No. 23, p. 92/.

<sup>24</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 10 March 1855, F.O. 78/1095, No. 12.

Austria earlier as an exponent of the Russian policy, from the end of 1854 he considered that Prussia was exclusively representing the Russian interests. The King of Prussia and the top military leaders were particularly in favour of the Russian policy, that was why it was considered that Berlin adopted the road to neutrality exclusively by the fear that if it entered into the war on the side of St Petersburg, the frontlines from the Danube and Crimea would be transferred to the Rhine. Fonblanque believed that the Prussian Consul Merroni became an unofficial representative of Russia in the Principality. The article on Serbia, published in the Berlin newspapers behind which was the Prussian King's adjutant, the influential general Gerlach, discussed all the problems that the joint protectorate over the Danube principalities would one day bring to the advocates of the Ottoman sovereignty. An anonymous author, who as the British Consul suspected, was Merroni himself, stated that a true closeness existed between Prussia and Serbia, just because both of them had proclaimed complete neutrality during the Crimean War.<sup>25</sup> Fonblanque argued how all those who considered that Serbia was entitled to neutrality negated, in effect, the sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire. Such his attitude, however, was not supported by the small diplomatic corps excepting the French representative only, who at the moment did not even have the rank of the Consul.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> *Neue Preussische Zeitung*, Berlin, 8 March 1855, No. 56. In his monograph *Serbia and Turkey in the nineteenth century* Leopold Ranke wrote about the Crimean War also on the basis of several Merroni's reports. In the summer of 1854 the Prussian diplomat visited a village close to Belgrade, where he was warmly received primarily because he was introduced as "representative of the Russian Tsar's brother-in-law, whom they (Serbs, NB ČA.) always called 'our tsar'". L. Ranke, *Srbija i Turska u devetnaestom veku*, Beograd, 1892, str. 396. /in Serbian: L. Ranke, *Serbia and Turkey in the Nineteenth Century*, Belgrade, 1892, p. 396/.

<sup>26</sup> The British Consul even complained about the insincerity of the French diplomacy. During Ségur's stay in Serbia he learned by sheer chance that the French engineer Mondain was not a botanist as they were officially introducing him, but a military advisor and creator of the Principality defence system.

*Constitutional Reform and the Introduction  
of Parliamentarism*

“Her Highness the Queen of England is the richest because she has two houses. The French Emperor must satisfy himself with two chambers. Saxo-Weimer Herzogs are satisfied even with one chamber. The King of Prussia and the Austrian Emperor have cabinets, the Sultan has the Porte, and the Pope the Chair.”

*Šumadinka*, 8/20<sup>th</sup> April 1855, vol. IV, No. 30, pp.120

It seems that it became obvious in 1855 that the reforms were necessary for the future of Serbia. Almost all policy makers in Serbia had the same opinion for their own, different reasons, and the Great Powers agreed, more or less, that there was a need for changes. Fonblanque, however, belonged to the rare ones whose view of the changes was not completely determined by the current political interests. According to him, it was not any more essential to change Serbia just to protect better the British interests, and to strengthen the allies in the case of war with Russia or Austria.<sup>27</sup> In future it was necessary to protect, now from Serbia itself, the sensitive political balance on the Balkans. This was why he proposed, in a special report to Clarendon, constitutional changes that would decrease political tensions in Serbia, and make its political orientation even more moderate.<sup>28</sup> The British Consul’s proposal essentially implied to change the nature of only one institution prescribed by the Turkish Constitution from 1838. The division of power envisaged by the Constitution between the Prince, the State Council and the Assembly was not in force any more. In Fonblanque’s opinion, under the external influence the institution such as the Assembly continued to exist almost only formally, while the country, always in conflict, was ruled by the Council oligarchy and the Prince. And just as the Prince’s limited capabilities made impossible even the implementation of the capacity of the Constitutionally envisaged monarchical power, in the same way, in the British Consul’s opinion, the powerful State Council, estranged from the people and conservative in its oligarchic nature, was incapable of overcoming serious internal and international crises Serbia was passing through. Fonblanque saw the solution for the existing constitutional crisis in literal implementation of the Constitution and establishing of the Assembly as a permanent instead of

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<sup>27</sup> As he proposed in his November project in of 1853.

<sup>28</sup> Fonblanque to Clarendon, Belgrade, 21 March 1855, F.O. 78/1095, No. 11.



temporary institution. Aware of the disadvantages of big assemblies which, without prior democratic elections and previously determined procedure, were attended by several thousand of agitated peasants, Fonblanque considered that the Assembly should now be organized as a representative body. Such a parliament would be composed of seventy deputies, elected from all seventeen districts in the Principality and the Belgrade Township. Aware that wide strata of Serbian population were firmly loyal to Russia and, as a rule, exceptionally suggestible, Fonblanque considered it necessary to limit the mandates of such an assembly to counselling and controlling. In fact, besides the centres of power around the Prince consisting of army commanders and the powerful clique of Nenadovićs and the State Council supported by the civil servants' oligarchy protecting the rights granted by the Turkish Constitution, now the institution of the Assembly would be established. This new institution would draw its authority from the democratic legitimacy, and its power would be based on the knowledge of circumstances and the right to an official attitude. As great achievements of such interpretation and additional, minimal legislative precise introduction of the Turkish Constitution, the British Consul saw the establishing of a democratic "valve" for decreasing of tensions in the people, as well as for the creation of an educated parliamentary elite, present in politics, that would suppress exceptionally strong influence of the Russophile clergy.

Although far-sighted, the British Consul's reforming ideas were not only misunderstood by the Foreign Office, as expected, but they were not enthusiastically accepted by a small number of Serbian politicians close to him.<sup>29</sup> Even Garašanin thought that it would be more useful to temporarily change the balance of powers between the Prince and the State Council in favour of the ruler. In his talk with Simić he argued that reducing the number of counsellors was "a glass of poison that had to be drained". The solution was only in the Western powers' pressure on the Porte not to grant the family of Karadjordjević the right to title succession, as well as the irretrievable preference to one of the conflicting sides in the internal political struggles in the Principality. The only way to protect the Ottoman authority, in Fonblanque's opinion, would be the appointment of a foreigner as the ruler of Serbia.

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<sup>29</sup> Fonblanque was embittered: „One of the unpleasant duties of a diplomatic representative in the poorly civilized country is that only several people of political significance live in it, whose acts more frequently deserve only comment, but not praise. This is why my task is often repulsive.” . Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 29 March 1855, F.O. 78/1095, No. 17.

The Serbian authorities were not popular with the other Great Powers either. In April 1855 the indisposition of Austria and Russia was again fully felt when, in separate talks with Count Buol and Gorchakov, Knežević's attempts were resolutely refused.<sup>30</sup> Buol again referred to the *Memorandum* from the last year, which he considered to be an expression of distrust and hatred of the official Serbia towards Austria. On the other hand, the Russian Embassy in Vienna considered that the French and British influence finally prevailed in Serbia. Such an observation, naturally, primarily indicated to a complete absence of Russian influence on the Serbian circumstances, but it came out during the talks that Knežević had with Gorchakov that St Petersburg was not interested in future winning over of the Serbian authorities. The absence of the Serbian support during the first stages of the war, therefore, took away all prospects for Serbia to rely on Russia in the near future. At the same time, the Porte gave Serbia a perspective of, at least, indirect participation in the forthcoming negotiations, asking the Prince to appoint his representative, who would have an advisory role in Ali Pasha's delegation.<sup>31</sup> The Serbian ruler was ordered by a letter from the Vizier to appoint one of the candidates from the official list who would be unconditionally accepted. The Prince had to choose from Ilija Garašanin, Aleksa Simić and Jevrem Nenadović. Fonblanque believed that the Prince would rather choose his father-in-law than Garašanin, who was unacceptable to Austria and Russia, or Simić who was ill.<sup>32</sup> The choice of Nenadović, however, could greatly endanger the Prince, because there were some people in Serbia who stated that the Principality had the right to lead its foreign policy independently, as well as because the limited freedom of action and possible failure of Nenadović's efforts would harm more the ruler than the failure of another person on that position. The British Consul thought that the Serbian authorities should still appoint their own representative in the

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<sup>30</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 7 April 1855, F.O. 78/1095, No. 20.

<sup>31</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 30 April 1855, F.O. 78/1095, No. 24. Safi-paša-knezu, 7/19. april 1855, Hartije Dragiše Stranjakovića, 145233/b-344. /in Serbian: Safi Pasha to the Prince, 7/19 April 1855. Papers of Dragiša Stranjaković, 145233/b-344/.

<sup>32</sup> Already in March Simić left Serbia for treatment. „Šumadinka“, 11. mart 1855, god. IV, No. 21, str. 84. /in Serbian: „Šumadinka“, 11. March 1855, vol. IV, No. 21, p. 84/ When Simić submitted his resignation at the end of the year, he did this, in Garašanin's opinion, because of the Prince's bad attitude towards him. *O ostavci Alekse Simića*, I.G. 948, AS. /in Serbian: *About the Resignation of Aleksa Simić*, I.G. 948, AS/.

Ottoman delegation, both in order to remain in good relations with the Porte and to protect the autonomous status of the Principality. He also reported about the failure of the two-year-long efforts of the “national party” to change the regime, promoting the opinion about the need for the change of tactics and the future unconditional support to the existing Serbian authorities.

The agreement defined by the protocols of the Vienna Conference did not resolve the unstable and not so clear situation in Serbia. When the news about the offered agreement arrived to Belgrade, Garašanin found it necessary to express his anxiety from the possible Austrian occupation. Prince Aleksandar did not hide his dissatisfaction even from the British Consul because during the negotiations Russia had displayed complete lack of interest in Serbia.<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, even without serious support Serbia gained certain guarantees by the Vienna Conference proposals, that would get a clear political form one year later. Thus the Annex C of the Second Protocol determined that the Principality might be occupied only pending an agreement by the Great Powers. Fonblanque found comfort in the Article 6 of the Agreement giving the Porte the exclusive right to enter Serbia with its army, but even this sovereign right was conditioned by the Annex 3 of the Protocol for prior approval of the Great Powers.<sup>34</sup> In his report to the Ambassador at the Porte the British diplomat tried to point out how the balance between the Great Powers in Serbia after the war, if it ended by provisions in the Vienna Conference conclusions, would be identical to the one from spring 1853.

The achievements of the Crimean War for Serbia were, as a rule, the result of circumstances, and not of the plan or the skill of the Serbian authorities. However, even chance achievements could not change the impression of the complete political retreat. The conflicts within the Constitutionalist oligarchy in 1855 continued from where they had been checked in the middle of 1853. The fateful division had been burdened two years ago by the deaths of Avram Petronijević and Stojan Simić, and in 1855 by the death of another Serbian leader the regime leaned on and whom increasingly isolated Prince Aleksandar relied on. When Stevan Petrović Knićanin died on 26<sup>th</sup> May 1855, the sorrow set in Belgrade and Serbia.<sup>35</sup> The Duke’s funeral was the only possible occasion

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<sup>33</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 23 May 1855, F.O. 78/1095, No. 29.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 28 May 1855, F.O. 78/1095, No. 31; S. Jovanović, *Ustavobranitelji ...*, str. 256. /in Serbian: *Constitutionalists...*, p. 256/

to somehow demonstrate the Austrian-Serbian friendship caused by the memories of war in the Southern Hungary.

The diplomatic isolation of Serbia was obvious more than ever, so that even the Queen's birthday caused completely different reactions than a year ago. Almost nobody from the officials missed to congratulate the Her Majesty's Consul General on this occasion, although he himself, being very proud, did not either remind anybody of this or officially invite.<sup>36</sup> Fonblanque had reason to assume that this unexpected cordiality was to be primarily due to the behaviour of the British delegation at the Vienna Conference. However, there could not be much use from such a sudden change because the British policy towards Serbia had already been determined, while the people favouring Russia got so agitated that the highest political authorities had to give a public announcement. The inconsistency of the official Serbia was not the only one that contributed to such a situation. Ali Pasha, the Ottoman negotiator at the Vienna Conference, stopped in Belgrade on his return to Constantinople.<sup>37</sup> It seems that everything that was happening around the Ottoman Pasha during his short stay was, first of all, an underhand and unpleasant intrigue. He first heard that the insubordinate State Council refused the Prince's proposal to allot a certain amount of money for the purchase of a gift for himself. Insulted, at least publicly, he refused to accept any present whatsoever, but he also omitted to meet the foreign diplomats, stressing in this way the Ottoman suzerainty over Serbia. Even the Prince's efforts to provide a gift for him did not improve his mood towards the Serbian ruler. He talked with him for several minutes only, and a whole hour with Garašanin. Fonblanque was informed that the topic of the talks was the possibility of the Austrian occupation, as well as favourable prospects for the progress of Serbia, under the condition of the Prince's dismissal.

The conflict between the Prince and the State Council was becoming more and more serious.<sup>38</sup> Garašanin thought it necessary to inform especially Ali Pasha about this, and the Western diplomats began to see possible harmful consequences in the emerging crisis not only for the Principality but for the interests of their own states.<sup>39</sup> The policy of the State Council could be described

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<sup>36</sup> Only Metropolitan Petar forgot to come to the congratulations. Fonblanque to Clarendon, Belgrade, 24 May 1855, F.O. 78/1095.

<sup>37</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 28 June 1855, F.O. 78/1095. No. 36.

<sup>38</sup> Aleksa Simić - Stefan Stefanović Tenka, 23.6./5.7. 1855, Hartije D. Stranjakovića, /in Serbian: Papers of D. Stranjaković/14233/b-347, ASANU.

<sup>39</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 24 June 1855, F.O. 78/1095, No. 39.

more as an act to spite the Prince. When the Serbian ruler, in order to improve the relations with Austria, offered to build a Roman Catholic church and to finance its maintenance, the Council readily refused his proposal. Helpless in face of the self-willed Council, the Prince soon declared that certain laws, in his opinion, were not good enough, and he would therefore consider them invalid in future.<sup>40</sup> A new crisis was starting to emerge. The question was why it took some laws more than a decade to become bad, and what were the actual authorizations of the State Council if the ruler was empowered to annul the laws. Garašanin and Fonblanque advised moderation to the Prince, pointing out how the Serbian authorities needed concord more than ever before the passing of important decisions about the status of the Principality.<sup>41</sup>

The Serbian officials nervously awaited the decisions of the European Areopagus, anxious that Austria would be granted the protectorate over Serbia. The policy of Vienna towards the Principality was confusing even the experienced foreign consuls who followed in wonder how the regular crises in the relations between the two countries were alternating with the deliveries of the Austrian arms.<sup>42</sup> Garašanin, who was just getting ready to travel to Paris and London, believed that Austria could take the protectorate over Serbia only with the approval of France and Great Britain, and Fonblanque confided to him, in rare moments of sincerity, how in that case “two, or at least one consul” would leave Belgrade.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, 28. June 1855. For instance, the Council decided to recall Knežević from Vienna, refusing to recognize the costs he had made there (515 ducats, 1 forint and 12 kreutzers). Aleksa Simić to the Prince 24.6./6/7. 1855, Hartije D. Stranjakovića, /in Serbian: Papers of D. Stranjaković/14233/b-348, ASANU.

<sup>41</sup> Fonblanque considered that more lasting reconciliation was out of place: „... never did true reconciliation grow where wounds of deadly hate had sunk so deep“. *Ibid*.

<sup>42</sup> Fonblanque believed that it was the question of the same political negligence as when Spain supplied gun powder to the Netherlands. *Ibid*.

<sup>43</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 27 July 1855, F.O. 78/1095, No. 41. The Vienna reporter of *The Manchester Guardian* reported in the beginning of August that the Great Powers had not as yet reached the political agreement about the future status of Serbia. There, allegedly, existed two plans, one made at the Porte and supported by Austria, while Garašanin was the author of the other one, reportedly enjoying the French support. Although the former Prince's Prime Minister was known for his hostility towards Russia, *The Manchester Guardian* reporter was convinced that Great Britain itself would agree with the Ottoman proposal. *Austria*, „The Manchester Guardian“, 15 August 1855.

Bernard des Essarts, the new French Consul General arrived to Belgrade in the middle of August.<sup>44</sup> Des Essarts was very well received in Serbia. The Serbian politicians thought that his appointment was a symbolic beginning of a new policy of Paris towards Serbia, while Fonblanque, who was quite personal as a rule when his relations with colleagues were in question, was won over by an indirect praise addressed to him by the newcomer, stating as in passing that Bourqueney and Count Walewski were amazed by his reports shown to them by Westmorland and Clarendon in Constantinople and London.<sup>45</sup> The British Consul reckoned that he would easily succeed to put des Essarts in a



Alexandre F. J. Colonna, Count  
Walewski

somewhat subjected position, in which he had unsuccessfully attempted to place his predecessor long time ago. Among other things, it was necessary to acquaint des Essarts with the immediate past of the Austro-Serbian relations, because after the talk with the Count Buol in Vienna he readily believed how actually the Serbs from the Principality were really the ones prepared to unite with the Hungarian revolutionaries at a suitable moment. At last, in the summer of 1855 Fonblanque got a chance to finally define the Austrian policy towards Russia. During the past two years he tried to explain it as the secret alliance or open hostility, only to establish after the complete withdrawal of Russia from the Balkan Peninsula that it was the question of ambivalent relations directly dependent on the prevailing current in Vienna and which were hostile, with regard to short-term goals, while the long-term goals mainly coincided.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Bernard des Essarts was earlier the French consul in Warsaw. *Srbski dnevnik*, 24. jul 1855, br. 58, str. 3; Garašanin-Marinoviću, Beograd, 1/13. julija 1855, *Pisma...*, str. 289. /in Serbian: *The Serbian Daily*, 24 July 1855, No. 58, p. 3; Garašanin to Marinović, Belgrade, 1/13 July 1855, *Letters...*, p. 289 /

<sup>45</sup> Fonblanque to Clarendon, Belgrade, 19 August 1855, F.O. 78/1095, No. 26.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

It was not long before the British Consul got the chance to affirm his opinion in the report to Clarendon about the relations between Vienna and St Petersburg. Colonel Radosavljević returned from Vienna with the instructions excluding more extensive reforms, as well as practical implementation of some joint protectorate. He recommended restraint in conflicts to the Prince and the State Council, and he undertook the task himself of reconciliation of the factions in the country.<sup>47</sup> He did not hide that in case of failure, he would not shrink from achieving the stability in agreement with the Russian party. Aziz Pasha, des Essarts and Fonblanque jointly replied to this, by advising the Prince to leave the decision to the Porte. Prince Aleksandar thus found himself faced with the choice whether to let the unfavourably inclined Russian diplomacy to impose the government or to surrender to the ill-disposition of the obviously much less influential Porte in Serbia. He finally agreed with the Pasha and Western consuls but nobody believed that this would last long.<sup>48</sup>



”British Heroism in a Battle with Russians”, *Sedmica*

True invectives against the British consuls in the Danube principalities soon began to appear again, in spite of censorship, in the Austrian newspapers.<sup>49</sup> Such a situation was not changed even by the fall of Sevastopol, that was made public on 13<sup>th</sup> September 1855 by the triumphal one-hundred-and-one-cannon salute from the Belgrade fortress.<sup>50</sup> Although he had been

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*; Aleksa Simić to the Prince, 12./24. August 1855, Hartije D. Stranjakovića, /in Serbian: Papers of D. Stranjaković/14233/b-362, ASANU.

<sup>48</sup> Fonblanque to Clarendon, Belgrade, 5 September 1855, F.O. 78/1095, No. 44. At the end of the summer 1855, Garašanin wrote to Magazinović from Paris, assessing that the conflict between the Prince and the State Council was primarily the consequence of their lack of resistance to foreign influences. D. Stranjaković, *Ilija Garašanin*, Kragujevac: Jefimija 2005.

<sup>49</sup> „Oesterreichische Zeitung“, No. 334.

<sup>50</sup> Fonblanque to Clarendon, Belgrade, 13 September 1855., F.O. 78/1095, No. 31. The last two footholds in Sevastopol were captured on 9 September, while the city was completely conquered on 12 September. W. Baumgart, p. 162.



assured only three days ago that Serbia would let the Porte decide on the constitution of the government, Aziz Pasha had to be persuaded not to ask from the Belgrade authorities to keep the city festively illuminated all night. On the other hand, Prince Aleksandar, who was trying during all this time to offer proofs of his loyalty to the Ottoman Empire, did not find it fit to congratulate the Pasha and the Western powers' consuls on this great victory.<sup>51</sup>

At the moment of the decisive victory of the allied arms at the Crimea the relations of their representatives in Belgrade with the Serbian officials were so undefined and cold, that they themselves thought it necessary to postpone further talks until Garašanin's return from Paris.<sup>52</sup> The British-Serbian relations were additionally burdened by the unsolved murder of the British subject Cramer, as well as by the support rendered by the British diplomacy to the Porte regarding the construction of the railway through the Principality. They did not change much even when Garašanin returned in the middle of November. Although the Prince had earlier been in regular contacts with his former Prime Minister and received advice from him, he left him now to wait, and then he behaved in a perceptibly cold way to him. The impression, in general, was even more unfavourable because Count Buol had personally received Garašanin in Vienna and gave him full credit as "one of the most important politicians willing to serve Serbia."<sup>53</sup> Official Austria even stated that the joint protectorate of Great Powers was practically already established over the Principality of Serbia. Distrustful towards the Austrian diplomacy, Fonblanque advised his superiors to be reserved and doubtful when the goodwill of Vienna was in question. Only several days later it proved that, although the Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs held Garašanin in high esteem, this did not mean that the Austrian Consul General in Serbia was instructed to support his return to the head of the government. Colonel Radosavljević stated

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<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*, 16. September

<sup>52</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 25 October 1855, F.O. 78/1095, No. 48.

<sup>53</sup> Fonblanque to Clarendon, 27 November 1855, F.O. 78/1095, No. 35, Political, No. 47 (to the Porte). Konstantin Nikolajević wrote to Aleksa Simić from Constantinople that the French Ambassador told him that the Western powers had reached an agreement with Austria about the establishing of a government which would include Janković and Garašanin. It seems that such a combination was not welcomed even by Garašanin, close to the Serbian Kapou-Kehaja. Nikolajević - Simić, Constantinople, 14/26. November 1855, Fond Konstantina Nikolajevića, III/11,5/13, ASANU (AII SANU). /in Serbian: Fund of Konstantin Nikolajević, III/11,5/13, ASASA (formerly in AII SASA/).



that Garašanin, now much closer to Austria, would be a suitable person for the cooperation with Aleksa Janković, whom he saw as Simić's natural heir at the head of the government.<sup>54</sup> The Western consuls felt outwitted. The earlier agreement with the Austrian diplomacy had been that Garašanin should come to the position of the Prince's Prime Minister, and that Austria should exert its influence in the government through Janković. Now, with the aid of Janković, Austria gained the influence on the Prince's surroundings and the Russian party, sufficient to constitute the government without greater obstacles.<sup>55</sup>

### *End of 1855 and the New Government in Serbia*

The British Consul in Serbia already in the middle of November offered the Foreign Office to talk about the starting points of the negotiations with Sir Hamilton Seymour, the former British ambassador in St Petersburg, who had been dispatched to Vienna some time ago.<sup>56</sup> Fonblanque's notion of the reforms in the Ottoman Empire differed from the official concept of the British diplomacy: he did not believe that the emancipation of the Ottoman Christians and the implementation of certain liberal reforms would bring a more lasting peace, and he was, therefore, in favour of the thesis about the need for establishing of autonomous Christian states on its European periphery.<sup>57</sup> It was not possible to get Serbia back under the full Ottoman authority and Fonblanque was sure that it would be equally harmful to give it considerable territorial expansion, independence and leave it in the present status. The agrarian character of the country, its modest material resources and the low cultural level of the people all led the British Consul to adopt the view that the progress of Serbia was not possible. If it was left in the present condition, it would continue to be "the Russian colony in the middle of Europe", an obstacle to the railway construction, development of trade and an instigator of rebellion in the surrounding regions. This was why he proposed a moderate territorial expansion of the Principality (as he had proposed two years ago)

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<sup>54</sup> Fonblanque to Clarendon, Belgrade, 18 November 1855, F.O.78/1095, No. 36, No. 50.

<sup>55</sup> Aziz Pasha and Radosavljević agreed that Acika Nenadović was actually the „root of all evils“ in the Prince's surroundings, but Fonblanque did not miss that for Janković he suddenly stopped being only a "malevolent ox" and became "the man of supreme ideas". *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> Fonblanque to Hammond, Belgrade, 16 November 1855, 78/1095.

<sup>57</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 7 October 1855, F.O. 78/1095, No. 46.

and establishing of the House of Representatives, as the third factor of power. In his report to Redcliffe sent on 7<sup>th</sup> October he again presented his view about the reforms on the Balkans. Starting from the fact that Wallachia and Moldavia played the role of an object in the competition of Great Powers during the preceding decades, he thought that in the future Serbia would be a uniting factor for all neighbouring regions, except Wallachia. He argued that the struggle for the uniting of four million of Serbs and other South Slavs would only be checked once another two autonomous South-Slavonic states were established.

It is interesting that Fonblanque now paid special attention to the question of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which in the proposal for the expansion and reform of the Serbian state of 18<sup>th</sup> November 1853 he had simply omitted. Contrary to Garašanin, who without doubt considered Bosnia as a Serbian region, or his colleague Calghoun from Bucharest who when transferred to this region took only Turkish interpreters with him, Fonblanque was fully aware of the complexity in the resolution of its status. According to his knowledge, the Moslem population in Bosnia was more numerous than the Christian (orthodox and catholic).<sup>58</sup> Although the Bosnian Moslems themselves admitted that they had Christian roots, their return to the old religion or the annexation of their country to Serbia would mean the loss of privileges and the abolition of feudalism. The British Consul was certain that such prospects would turn the Bosnian Moslems into irreconcilable opponents of this idea. On the other hand, an excessive power of one of the autonomous regions within the Ottoman Empire would endanger not only its integrity but the British interests as well. According to his proposals, it was therefore necessary to establish a counterbalance to the enlarged Serbia in the form of autonomous Bulgaria to the East of the river Isker, with the centre in Šumla on the Danube, and with Bosnia to the West of the river Drina and Montenegro, with Mostar as its capital. However, all this had to be, in Fonblanque's opinion, long-term goals

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<sup>58</sup> This assessment was not quite correct. At that time the territory of the Old Herzegovina (later North-Western Montenegro) with its Orthodox population was also a part of the province, so that in the beginning of the nineteenth century the number of Orthodox population came close to the number of Moslems, while the Christians, the Catholics and the Orthodox were somewhat more numerous than the Moslems. T. Stojanović, *Balkanski svetovi – prva i poslednja Evropa*, Beograd 1997, str. 180. /in Serbian: T. Stojanović, *The Balkan Worlds – the First and the Last Europe*, Belgrade, 1997, p. 180/.

of the West in its mission for the preservation of the Ottoman Empire integrity in Europe. The first step in the immediate future would be, undoubtedly, the establishing of the political stability in Serbia. The prerequisites for this were to resolve the question of the Turkish estates outside the walls of the Belgrade fortress and to appoint a government more inclined to Great Britain and France.<sup>59</sup>

The appointing of the government inclined to the Western Powers was certainly the most difficult task. Even if they succeeded in bringing it about with Prince Aleksandar by pressures and promises, Fonblanque and des Essarts were certain that it would be met with the united opposition of Austria and the Ottoman Empire, as well as that it would enjoy very small authority with other Serbian leaders and the people inclined to Russia. On the other hand, Garašanin knew very well that all the aid that London and Paris could give him would be verbal support by the two consuls. With awakened ambitions of Constantinople and the Austrian armies in Wallachia and Moldavia, such a support would be far from enough.<sup>60</sup> How much the circumstances about the constitution of the new government were complicated, was best described by the Austrian Consul Radosavljević. Commenting a rumour he had allegedly heard, according to which “the national party” was trying to appoint a foreign prince in place of Prince Aleksandar, he asserted that its authority would not become greater at all. If he allowed Garašanin to depose the old Prince, Radosavljević boasted that the Vienna government would in any case impose a new prince to Serbia on its own.<sup>61</sup>

Relying on his long-standing experience serving in Belgrade, the British Consul tried to find a model by means of which the Serbian authorities could come out of the stalemate position they found themselves in and gain a little more backing in the people as well as resistance to the external influences. Temporary weakening of the Russian influence and the Austrian and Ottoman pressures to limit the Serbian autonomy were making it possible for Great Britain and France to come into the defence of the Serbian

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<sup>59</sup> He claimed that the existence of the Turkish estates in the Belgrade township prevented its further development. Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 7 October 1855, F.O. 78/1095, No. 46.

<sup>60</sup> „The Efforts of Europe to Save Turkey and Determine the Status of the Principality“ (1855), I.G. 986, AS; R. Ljušić, *Knjiga o „Načertaniju“*, str 87–8. /in Serbian: R. Ljušić, *The Book about Načertanie*, p. 87–8. /

people rights. Nevertheless, it was necessary to keep a sense of proportion in all this. The protection of the principle of nationality did not only imply the support of requests for territorial expansion of Serbia and extension of its autonomy, but its internal reform as well. However, such reforms, carried out according to the principle of nationality, were as a rule, of a democratic character. In order to change the Constitution of Serbia in that direction meant additional definition of the institution of the Assembly and granting it greater empowerments. Great Britain and France did not usually favour such a solution because the Russian party would then gain a new influence on the Serbian policy, while the institution of the Assembly itself, composed of several thousands of always armed peasant deputies, would be the source of disturbances and future rebellions. The British Consul General in Belgrade believed that the maintenance of the existing situation would almost certainly have the same consequences. This was why he again proposed to Clarendon to establish the House of Representatives, as the third pillar of power in the Principality. In his report from 9<sup>th</sup> December 1855 he presented his idea in detail, having already announced it in the 1853 Constitution draft and the 1854 Memoir.<sup>62</sup> According to Fonblanque, the House of Representatives would consist of seventy deputies, four elected from each of seventeen districts of the Principality, while the Belgrade township would elect two deputies. The House of Representatives did not obligatorily have to replace the National Assembly, but it would certainly take over its empowerments. The Assembly would have a three-year-long mandate and the obligation to be in session for at least four weeks per year. The national representative body conceived in this way would be both unacceptable for Russia and against the interests of Austria. However, the Consul was convinced that the agreement of St Petersburg could be obtained after the allied victory, while Austria could satisfy itself with the counterbalance that the new democratic institution would have in

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<sup>61</sup> Fonblanque to Clarendon, Belgrade, 18 November 1855, F.O. 78/1095, No. 36, No.50, 30. November.

<sup>62</sup> Fonblanque to Clarendon, Belgrade, 9 December 1855, F.O. 78/1095, No. 39. In his plans for internal reform Ilija Garašanin did not pay greater significance to the Assembly as the institution. In one of the drafts made immediately after the conclusion of the Paris Peace, he envisaged, as if incidentally, that National Assemblies should not be convened in future, except in extraordinary cases such as the election of the Prince's family. IG-865, AS, R. Ljušić, *Knjiga o „Načertaniju“*, str. 80. /in Serbian: R. Ljušić, *The Book about Načertanie*, p. 80./

the institutions of the Prince and State Council. The interest of Great Britain would be protected by the establishment of the lasting peace in the Principality and the prevailing of “the national party” in the national representative body, which Fonblanque had no doubt of.

On the other side, the establishing of the national representative body was not the only change that the Crimean allies thought it necessary. As far as the Serbian ruler was concerned, Aziz Pasha and Fonblanque mutually agreed that a personal change was necessary.<sup>63</sup> Still, their wishes would be difficult to achieve: they energetically refused the Austrian arch dukes as possible foreign candidates, while only three Serbs were thought to be worthy of the princely title. In addition to obvious Fonblanque’s and Ségur’s candidates Garašanin and Marinović, now the Porte’s candidate was mentioned for the first time – captain Miša Anastasijević. The deposal of the Prince that numerous Serbian leaders, mostly those inclined to Austria, were mentioning in the talks with foreign consuls for almost a year the allied consuls started to consider seriously only at the moment when Vienna had already gained complete influence on the Serbian circumstances.<sup>64</sup> It seems that such political combinations came not only too late but Prince Aleksandar must have known something about them, who had already made his insubordination known to the Western consuls, boasting then of the Austrian protection.

The relations between the Prince and the Western consuls became particularly tense when the article from the Russian newspaper *The Northern Bee* (*Abeille du Nord*) was reprinted in the *Srbske novine*. Des Essarts recognized in the text and the threatening editor’s comment nothing less than the invitation to murder of his emperor.<sup>65</sup> He immediately lodged a protest with the Prince, who promised to sanction the censor, but not the editor as well. Only after further pressures he agreed to dismiss both of them, although he did not announce any further steps on this occasion. This was why it happened that Lazić, after dismissal from the position of censor, remained at the head of

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<sup>63</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade 9 December 1855, F.O.78/1095, No. 51.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> It was mentioned in the text that a successful assassination of the French sovereign would open the door towards the conclusion of the peace. Fonblanque to Clarendon, Belgrade, 10 December 1855, F.O. 78/1095, No. 41. *Srbske novine*, 22. novembar/4. decembar 1855, br. 133. /in Serbian: *The Serbian Newspaper*, 22. November/4. December 1855, no. 133 /



*Miša Anastasijević,*  
The National Museum, Belgrade

Consistorium, and the former editor, Popović, remained in the state service. Young Jovan Ristić came to the position of the editor, known from earlier for his inclination towards Russia. In addition to all this, des Essarts and Fonblanque received the full translation of the article only a week after the dismissal of those in question. Having read it in full they found many more motives for the protest, but the question had already been closed.<sup>66</sup>

There was nothing left for the British Consul but not to forget the Prince's insult believing that it had been premeditated. He informed the ambassador in Constantinople about it as well as Seymour, the special British envoy in Vienna, assessing the Prince's behaviour in his reports as "treason" and "accessory to treason". It could be said that, such his opinion was, as usual, not met with full support in the Foreign Office. Thus the Serbian politicians had received the Austrian interpretation of the talk held in London by the State Secretary Clarendon and the Austrian ambassador Count Colloredo, even before Fonblanque himself got the official information regarding this. Although its authenticity was soon denied by the Belgrade Consulate, the alleged Clarendon's statement that "Serbia is not worthy of the British attention" was received with joy in Belgrade.<sup>67</sup>

Finally, at the very end of the year, the new government was appointed. As expected, Aleksa Janković was appointed for the Prince's Prime Minister. Foreign consuls were totally embittered by the composition of this government: Radovan Raja Damjanović, known for his inclination to Russia and Austria, was appointed for the Minister of the Interior, while Milivoje Petrović, who had been returning from Paris to Belgrade via St Petersburg during the war,

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<sup>66</sup> Fonblanque to Clarendon, Belgrade, 12 December 1855, F.O. 78/1095, No. 42. The Serbian public also showed an extreme revolt because of the pressures of the French Consul General and the Belgrade pasha. It was stated that "neutrality means being neither anybody's nor everybody's", and that was why *Srbske novine /The Serbian newspapers/* in the third edition after the incident published the translated article from *The Times* which was very offensive for Russia. However, the Serbian public did not understand that in addition to objections for the loyalty of the official Serbia toward Russia its very neutrality was challenged. *Srbski dnevnik*, 8./20. decembar 1855, br. 97, str. 2. /in Serbian: *The Serbian Daily*, 8./20. December 1855, no. 97, p. 2. /

<sup>67</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 23 December 1855, Copy No. 57.

became the head of the police. Fonblanque could only report how “Austria is now ruling with Serbia both in its own and in the name of Russia.”<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Aleksa Janković was at the head of the government from 16 December 1855 until 29 May 1856. N. Rodić, Lj.Iv.Jović, *Vlade Srbije 1805–1998*, Beograd, 1998, str. 39. /in Serbian: Lj.Iv.Jović, *The Governments of Serbia 1805–1998*, Belgrade, 1998, p. 39/. The entanglements and pressures relating to the appointment of Aleksa Janković lasted for a full year. Already during summer the Vienna newspapers wrote about the long abandoned idea of establishing a ministry composed of the Prince’s people from the National Party, thus provoking weak Prince Aleksandar to hasten with the appointment of the new government and yield to the Austrian demands. *Srbski dnevnik* 28. avgust 1855, br. 68. /in Serbian: *The Serbian Daily* 28. August 1855, no. 68. /

<sup>69</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 29 December 1855, F.O. 78/1095, Copy No. 60. Several days later Radovan Damjanović was appointed to the State Council together with the Prince’s aide-de-camp Živko Davidović (instead of Knićanin and Stevan Stojanović). Ukaz Savetu Knjaž. Srbije, No. 563, 9/21. Dekembar 1855, Hartije D. Stranjakovića, 14233/b-368, ASANU. /in Serbian: The Decree to the Council of the Principality of Serbia, No. 563, 9/21 December 1855, Papers of D. Stranjaković, 14233/b-368, ASANU/.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### ANNUS PACIS – 1856 CONSTANTINOPLE CONFERENCE AND THE PARIS CONGRESS

It was a paradox that just at the end of 1855, after the military and close to the final diplomatic triumph of the allies over Russia, the influence of France and Britain on the Serbian authorities reached its lowest level during the entire Crimean War. Having appointed the government inclined to Austria and convinced of the full support of Vienna, the Prince stopped behaving indifferently and concedingly. As he had never been consistent in his policy, such change resulted in replacing his earlier listlessness before the Western consuls with ill temper. With the establishment of the pro-Austrian government any possibility for either the return of Garašanin and his sympathizers to power, or at least their participation in its work remained closed for some time. Convinced of the significance of Serbia as a link between Austria and Russia, Fonblanque could now rely only onto the State Council, the institution he criticized as much as the Prince's personality. He counted on only four of its members, believing more into their opposition to Russia than hoping to be thanked for the British support for their appointment. However, at the moment when the Prince had a loyal government, the full Austrian support and the obedience of the dejected Russian party, the State Council remained the only and insufficient political counter-balance.

The clash between the Prince and the State Council flared up when its Chairman Stefan Stefanović Tenka objected to the Prince's intention to appoint Acika Nenadović to the position of the Minister of Finance.<sup>1</sup> The Prince

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<sup>1</sup> The State Council announced by a special resolution that it would end any further conflict with the ruler. The Prince was warned that by appointing Nenadović he violated the Art. 6 of the Law on State Council. The counsellors warned that with such a policy, the Prince also violated the articles 9, 10, 11 and 12 of the Constitution,

rejected the demands to comply with the Constitution when the appointment of ministers was in question, accusing Tenka of being under the influence of French and British ruses. The ruler and the State Council were mutually so opposed that they could only agree in principle about leaving of the final judgement to the Porte. Even such an attitude served only for their continuous mutual accusation of disloyalty and treason of the Ottoman Empire. The British Consul thought that the Porte's intervention could re-establish the balance of powers in the Principality and limit the Austrian influence.<sup>2</sup> The Porte, however, did not consider such activity as useful, and perhaps even possible, while the Foreign Office did not seemingly consider that a special action was at all necessary in Serbia before the final negotiations.

The Prince's aversion was most frequently displayed in most formal details. During the war he gave vent to his dissatisfaction by demonstratively ignoring the diplomatic etiquette by failing, during the crisis in the relations, to congratulate the British Consul on one of the allied victories, or Queen Victoria's birthday. Now, he did not congratulate him the New Year. Nevertheless, as the war had already ended, this motivated the State Council to send representative delegations to the British and French consulates for congratulations. The counsellors who came in a particularly large number to the British Consulate read to Fonblanque a special congratulation card wishing the English Queen a long and happy reign, the victory to her arms, as well as a long and prosperous reign to the Sultan. It seems as if this greeting was written to please the proud British diplomat: in addition to its loyalty to the Porte, the State Council considered that the task of Serbia was full enjoyment of its rights and the progress in its material welfare and education. They also stated that it was himself they saw in all this as the most important mediator and supporter.<sup>3</sup>

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thus endangering the status of the Principality and its "mission and pledge". Adresa Državnog saveta knezu Aleksandru od 11./23. decembra 1855. /in Serbian: The Address of the State Council to Prince Aleksandar of 11/23 December 1855/

<sup>2</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 29 December 1855, F.O. 78/1095, Copy No. 60.

<sup>3</sup> „We come, Sir, to offer our heartfelt congratulations to you, as representing the Government of the Illustrious Queen of England. – May Her Majesty's reign be long and Prosperous, and may God grant success to Her Arms! We Pray, with like fervour, for the health, Prosperity and Power of our Great Lord and Suzerain, The Sultan.

You are acknowledged to know our position thoroughly, and as having striven constantly for the just distribution of Rights, and the advancement of our material interests through enlightenment. It is by your mediation alone we can hope for

Inclined to the active policy in Serbia, Fonblanque answered them in an almost revolutionary spirit, expressing pleasure that the Serbian people were defending their rights through the State Council. Thus, it was only several months after proposing considerable diminishment of its empowerments that the British Consul changed his attitude towards this oligarchic institution.

A smaller number of counsellors came to the French Consul, and their address, according to the news that reached Fonblanque, had not been so enthusiastic and resolute. In addition, des Essarts was not willing to take part in the rivalries between the Prince and the Council, so he told the visitors how the constitutionality and the progress of Serbia depended “only on them”. He, naturally, did not have the Belgrade Pasha’s and his British colleague’s support in such an attitude. In his first report to Redcliffe in 1856 the British Consul just again moved the question of the Prince’s deposal. He did not mention the possibility of a foreigner coming to the Serbian throne, moreover he was prepared to introduce his candidates Garašanin and Marinović as ideal holders of the executive power. Aziz Pasha’s candidate, captain Miša Anastasijević, seemed to him as an ideal pivot, around whom all parties could be united due to his wealth and non-involvement in old political conflicts.<sup>4</sup>

Before the beginning of the Paris Peace Congress the British diplomacy was obviously the most consistent advocate of the continuance of the war.<sup>5</sup> However slow and dramatically it entered the war in the East, Britain, contrary to France, had clearly defined interests in the Ottoman Empire, with no intentions of linking them to its general European policy. The British goals had finally become so high that their achievement implied complete removal of Russia from the Balkans and its pulling away from the Mediterranean. It was difficult to get the support of allies for something like this, and it was impossible to arouse their wish to continue with the war.<sup>6</sup> Fonblanque was aware of that as well. The complete defeat of Russia, he considered to be an essential precondition for the changing of the political orientation of Serbia, did not take place, and now the leaders of its Russophile population

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extrication from the difficulties we are now surrounded by, – and we supplicate you to use your faculty with unreserved energy.” Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade 2 January 1856, F.O. 78/1197, No. 1.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> W. Baumgart, p. 215, W. Baumgart *The Peace of Paris 1856*, Santa Barbara, 1981, pp. 101–107.

<sup>6</sup> P. Shroeder, pp. 243–5.; Lj. Ristić, str. 48. /In Serbian: Lj. Ristić, p. 48/

readily sided with Austria, presenting the outcome of the war as a diplomatic manoeuvre. A belief even prevailed in Serbia that Prince Aleksandar remained on the throne only thanks to his opposition to France and Great Britain.<sup>7</sup> Even old Vučić, for whom his contemporaries were already saying that he was ill and mentally feeble, hastened to Vienna to visit the Russian Embassy. Already in the beginning of the year he invited the Serbs to side with the Prince, arguing that he received this order from Tsar Aleksandar II himself. The Russian party was prepared even to allow certain changes in the Constitution in the ruler's favour.

The true picture of the Russian defeat came to full light only several days later after the first news about the peace negotiations. The Prince's surrounding was both surprised and confused and only the Austrian support left it necessary room to survive. Radosavljević was convincing the Prince and his followers on several occasions that Austria, in addition to the right to title succession, would secure several more important concessions to Serbia.<sup>8</sup> Despite this, the British Consul in Belgrade expected that finally the British and French garrisons would be the ones to be dispatched to Belgrade, Smederevo, Novi Pazar and Aleksinac. However, it did not come to such an order of events.

The Peace Congress was finally held in Paris on 25<sup>th</sup> February 1856.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, as the questions relating to the status of Christians in the

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<sup>7</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 23 January 1856, F.O. 78/1197, No. 4.

<sup>8</sup> Radosavljević used to write to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs only in cases when the Prime Minister was a Serb from Serbia. If the Ministry was headed by a Serb from Austria, he would address him personally as "the ministry", thus pointing out to the changed status of Serbia and its dependence on Austria. Fonblanque thought that he had fully seen through the policy of Vienna, stating: "...at Saraievo, the Austrians trust to truculence, at Bucharest, to force, and at Belgrade, to intrigue." Fonblanque to Clarendon, Belgrade, 28 January 1856, F.O. 78/1197, No.6.

<sup>9</sup> The Peace Congress ensued only after Russia had accepted Austria's ultimatum on 16 January. The basis for the Peace Congress had already been established by peace proposals of the neutral powers in 1853-4. It was now necessary only to persuade the sides in conflict to conclude the peace. Despite the capture of Sevastopol by the Allies in 1855, at end of the year the Russian army conquered Kars, strategically important town in the east of Asia Minor. The threats of the Allies that Kronstadt would be the next target were of no avail. The Russian side could count on the delay as two hundred thousand allied soldiers fell victims to illnesses and exhaustion. The commitment of the Austrian and Prussian neutral powers made the turning point in the war. The Peace Congress in Paris was attended by the representatives of six Great Powers and the Ottoman Empire, who concluded the peace agreement in the course of thirty five

Ottoman Empire and the future autonomy of the three principalities had already been resolved during January at the Constantinople Conference, the Paris Congress remained in the second plan in the British Consul General's reports. A part of the peace process, significant from the aspect of Serbian aspirations, was finally sanctioned by the Sultan's *Hatihumajun*, that arrived to Serbia at the end of February 1856. It seems that the British Consul was the only one who saw the achieved political outcome as a complete victory. The Austrian diplomatic pouch, by means of which the document was sent from Constantinople to Belgrade, had disappeared somewhere on the way in a raging river, and the Serbian Kapou-Kehaja in Constantinople did not even deem it necessary to send one copy to the Prince and the government. Aziz Pasha, under the influence of his father Izzet absent from Belgrade at that time, turned a deaf ear to Fonblanque's proposals that the ceremony of the reading of the *Ferman* should be accompanied by the greatest festivities. For Ottoman officials *Hatihumajun* was already too big a concession that would take away all the glitter from each victory, regardless of how majestic it may be.<sup>10</sup>

The negotiations in Constantinople, by whose decisions Serbia had for the second time since 1853 been equalled in its status with Wallachia and Moldavia, took place far away from the public eyes, and it was no wonder that older writers of the Serbian diplomatic history had not written about them. These negotiations between the British, French and Austrian ambassador (internuncio) on one side, and the Grand Vizier on the other, are known because on this occasion the contents of the Sultan's *Hatihumajun*, finally published on 18<sup>th</sup> February 1856, was agreed upon.<sup>11</sup> To a certain extent that was the preparation for the joint action in Paris. Clarendon only forwarded some Redcliffe's reports to Cowley, the British ambassador in Paris. The basic issues related to the three principalities, that had to be discussed in Paris, had already been defined in Constantinople. It is interesting that the French

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days at five general sessions. W. Baumgart 203–10; J. Ristić, *Srbija i Krimska vojna*, str. 164. /in Serbian: J. Ristić, *Serbia and the Crimean War*, p. 164./

<sup>10</sup> Fonblanque stated that the annulment of the Russian protectorate over Serbia and the pretensions over the Ottoman Christians represented the greatest outcome of the war: „a greater moral triumph over Russia of the Sultan's own hand, than the retaking of Kars or the demolition of Nicholaieff by his own troops would have been, in the sense of military success.“ Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 1 March 1856, F.O. 78/1197, No.13.

<sup>11</sup> Lj. Ristić, Napomena 72, str. 342. /in Serbian: see ft. 72, p. 342/.



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ambassador remained completely passive during certain sessions, leaving to the ambassadors of Britain and Austria to discuss the reforms with the Ottoman representative interested in making as small as possible changes. One proposal for reforms in the principalities, containing fifteen articles, was thus adopted.<sup>12</sup> In addition to the first “big agreement”, there was a “small” one of three articles only relating to Serbia.<sup>13</sup> The first article of the “small agreement” determined eight out of fifteen articles of the agreement joint for Wallachia, Moldavia and Serbia, while the articles 2 and 3 contained the provisions exclusively relating to Serbia. They were so formulated that they left to the Porte the freedom to continue, in agreement with the Prince’s government, taking care about the defence of Serbia, and in this connection the garrisons in seven Serbian towns were retained. In addition to joint guarantees of

<sup>12</sup>Redcliffe to Clarendon, Constantinople, 12 February 1856, No. 167; Clarendon to Cowley, F.O. 146/620. Jovan Milićević was the first to present the contents of these agreements here, after finding them in the Vienna archives. In his study, however, he did not establish a clear connection between their contents and the Paris Peace Treaty, and later changes in Serbia (1858). He also did not elaborate the question of the influence of the British diplomacy on the course of negotiations and their outcome. J. Milićević, „Položaj Srbije uoči Pariskog mira 1856“, *Istorijski časopis* (IČ), II SANU, knj. XXIII za 1976, Beograd, 1976, str. 253. /in Serbian: “The Position of Serbia at the Eve of the Paris Peace 1856”, *Historical Journal*, (IJ), II SANU, bk XXIII for 1976, Belgrade, 1976, p. 253

<sup>13</sup>Appendix 2.

six powers to be determined in Paris, and the free navigation on the Danube that had to be defined in complex negotiations with Austria and Russia, one more question important for the future of Serbia was opened on this occasion – the change of the Constitution. Nothing special was said about the nature of the proposed changes, but it was indicated that in indefinite future a people's delegation would negotiate them at the Porte. As such a form had already been seen at the time when at the end of the thirties of the nineteenth century the present constitution of Serbia had been written in Constantinople, it may be assumed that on this occasion as well such negotiations would have the anti-Prince character and in view of the not so clearly defined nature of the Serbian delegation – possibly the anti-Council. The end of the Constantinople negotiations brought about another achievement: Redcliffe could finally report, regarding the role of the principalities in the future policy of the powers towards Russia, that an agreement was reached with the French ambassador at the Porte. Owing to frequent disagreements between France and Great Britain at that time, it was logical that Redcliffe sent a special report about this news to his minister.<sup>14</sup>

It seemed that with the Constantinople negotiations the question of the nature of changes that should take place in Serbia was essentially resolved. And while this Principality, when its international status was in question, was fully made equal with Wallachia and Moldavia, the envisaged internal changes remained undetermined to a great extent. The question of the deposal of the ruler could not obviously have the same weight in Bucharest, Iasi and Belgrade. Redcliffe had extensively written to Fonblanque about this referring to one of his earlier reports. The British ambassador in Constantinople stated that none of the national candidates to the Serbian throne enjoyed sufficient support from the people, as well as that the families Obrenović and Petrović (Karadjordjević) continued to be the only serious pretenders to the highest power in Serbia. He saw the conflict between the Prince and the State Council as not in the least principled struggle for supremacy where it was very possible that “the Prince goes to the autocrats because your friend Garachanin goes to the people”. Redcliffe thought that one should be most practical regarding the changes in Serbia, and completely in compliance with the Serbian requests.

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<sup>14</sup>Redcliffe to Clarendon, Constantinople, 13 February 1856, No. 171; Clarendon to Cowley, F.O. 146/620.

The Serbian authorities presented, without plan and agreement, three requests that somewhat encroached on the sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire, asking for the evacuation of the Ottoman garrisons from the towns, neutrality in some future war to be led by the Ottoman Empire, and the right of making agreements with other states. Although he considered these requests as natural, in the opinion of the British ambassador in Constantinople, each of them was subject to significant objections.<sup>15</sup> However, despite doubting the extension of the autonomy and, in general, making of some of the mentioned concessions to Serbia, Redcliffe proved to be the only advocate of the Serbian interests during the negotiations in Constantinople. It is most interesting that such his behaviour, although not mentioned in the diplomatic correspondence, soon became known to the Serbian newspapers previously greatly disinclined to the British ambassador at the Porte. The discussion lasted from 23<sup>rd</sup> February to 7<sup>th</sup> March 1856, particularly about the third clause of instructions to the Ottoman negotiators in Paris. Although the Conference participants agreed that the Ottoman Empire should defend its entire territory on its own, none of them could agree on the strengthening of the Ottoman troops in the principalities. The Austrian internuncio thus proposed that Wallachia, Moldavia and Serbia should build themselves the fortifications on the outer borders of the Empire, and they would be responsible for their defence in the future. When the Porte's representatives energetically refused this, Stratford de Redcliffe surprised them with a new proposal, that could only seemingly have some isolated consequences. He put forward the possibility of replacing the Ottoman garrison in the Belgrade fortress with the Serbian crew. Although unexpected, Redcliffe's proposal immediately met with the full opposition from the Austrian and Ottoman representatives. The Sultan himself had allegedly repeated on several occasions that he would never allow something like that. Nevertheless, the Serbian public continued to hope, having great expectations from the forthcoming congress.<sup>16</sup>

Serbia was discussed at the Paris Congress in the middle of March 1856. The Principality had no diplomatic representative in the French capital at that time, and the contemporary historians considered the attitude of its authorities towards the negotiations as simple party politics, unworthy of the

<sup>15</sup> Redcliffe to Fonblanque, Constantinople, 19 February 1856, F.O. 352/43c.

<sup>16</sup> *Turska*, „Šumadinka“, 20. marta/1. aprila 1856, god. V, No. 23, str. 180. /in Serbian: *Turkey*, „Šumadinka“, 20 March/1 April 1856, yr. V, No. 23, p. 180/.



unity allegedly displayed in the country during the first two years of war.<sup>17</sup> The course of discussion about the status of Serbia clearly showed how much significance Serbia had lost in the eyes of the European politicians since the fall of 1853. The question of the status of Serbia was discussed at the thirteenth, fourteenth and the sixteenth sessions of the Congress (12/24<sup>th</sup>, 13/25<sup>th</sup> and 14/26<sup>th</sup> March 1856). Count Walewski, the French representative, read the articles relating to the Principality of Serbia, to be immediately followed by Clarendon's conclusion that they should be entered one after the other in the Protocol. Thus the political dependence of Serbia on the Ottoman Empire was confirmed, as well as earlier Hati-sherifs determining its autonomy, and the freedom of worship, legislation, commerce and the navigation.<sup>18</sup> The Principality was placed under the joint protectorate of six Great Powers, where none of them could independently military intervene, while the Ottoman garrisons were retained in seven Serbian towns. Finally, Serbia was given the prospect of unclear constitutional reform, under the mysterious formulation "amendments that may be shown as necessary in the institutions of Serbia could be undertaken only by a general agreement of the Sublime Porte and other negotiating powers."<sup>19</sup> Two days later, at the session registered as

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<sup>17</sup>J. Ristić, *Srbija i Krimski rat*, str. 170; Idem, *Propast oligarhije*, str. 241; G. Jakšić, D. Stranjaković, str. 153–4. /in Serbian: Ristić, J. *Srbija and the Crimean War*, p. 170; Idem, *The Fall of Oligarchy*, p. 241; G. Jakšić, D. Stranjaković, pp. 153–4./

<sup>18</sup>Just before the end of the war, despite the political crisis an economic development was noticeable in Serbia. After the conclusion of peace the Ottoman Empire became, throughout the decades, more and more dependant on the import from Serbia and the Danube principalities. In the next two decades the export from Serbia into the Ottoman Empire increased to the extent which was equal to the total increase during its earlier years of autonomous existence. Faroljhi S. ..., p. 831.

<sup>19</sup>„Protokoli konferencija“; XIII protokol „Šumadinka“, 12. maj 1856, str. 291. /in Serbian: „Conference Protocols“; XIII protokol „Šumadinka“, 12 May 1856, p. 291/. Ljubodrag Ristić stated that actually the question of internal reforms in Serbia was omitted from the final peace agreement, probably also owing to the behind-the-scenes work of the Ottoman negotiators, Ali Pasha and Mehmed Jamil-bey. Lj. Ristić, str. 52. Gabriel effendi Norodounghian, *Recueil d'Actes internationaux de l'Empire Ottoman. Traites, conventions, arrangements, declarations, protocoles, process-verbaux, firmans, berats, lettres, patents et autres documents relatifs au droit public exterieur de la Turquie*, III, 1856–78, Paris 1902, pp. 70–79. Ljiljana Aleksić ascribed the abandonment of individual listing of Serbian concessions in the peace treaty and the leaving out of the formulation about the internal reform in agreement with the people's will to the conservatism of the French diplomacy. It seems that the equalization with the Danube principalities prevented, in fact, the creation of the great state of Serbia within the

Protocol XV, the question of Montenegro was shortly considered. The Russian representative repeated that St Petersburg had no special political relations with this "region", while Ali Pasha emphasized again the Porte's allegation that it was the matter of the sovereign territory of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>20</sup>

The end of the war and certainty of solutions that the Peace Congress should legally make valid brought again to the front the mutual resentfulness of the foreign consuls, the Belgrade Pasha and the Serbian authorities. It seemed as if the Austrian protection lost in its significance, with the certainty of the joint protectorate over Serbia. Thus Prince Aleksandar soon got the idea to obtain the new rights for his family and the Principality, instead of through the mediation of Vienna, by appealing to the Congress of Great Powers. There were four requests in question: in addition to the right of title succession, the Prince continued to insist on the establishment of the formal neutrality for Serbia, the right to independent conclusion of international agreements and the evacuation of certain fortresses.<sup>21</sup> The Western consuls were convinced that the first three requests were impossible to carry out at the moment. Fonblanque himself stated that the families of Karadjordjević (Petrović) and Obrenović were totally compromised with the Serbian people, and that the granting of the right to title succession for the former, or the return of the latter family, would represent a fairly useless task for the Western diplomacies. On the other hand, the neutrality and complete independence in the foreign policy that the Principality actually enjoyed even during the war, could not certainly be formally recognized by those same Great Powers engaged in the war in order to preserve the Porte's rights intact. The last request seemed to the Western consuls to be even the most acceptable one. Šabac, Smederevo and Sokol were indefensible from the strategic point of view, while the Belgrade fortress remained isolated, at the mercy of Austria. In the demolishing of the Belgrade fortress Fonblanque saw numerous and prospective benefits: the Danube trade would be improved, possible Austrian interference reduced, and even Prince Aleksandar in the absence of a better candidate to the Serbian

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Ottoman Empire, also including Bosnia and Bulgaria, to which, allegedly, Garašanin and the French diplomats agreed upon in 1852. Dr. Aleksić, however, completely omitted to take into consideration the joint acting of the British and French diplomacy relating to the question of Serbia, as well as their differences. Lj. Aleksić, str. 86.

<sup>20</sup> „Šumadinka“, *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 1 .March 1856, F.O. 78/1197, No.12.

throne, could strengthen his power. He also claimed that the Porte would be willing to hand over the Belgrade fortress to the Serbs for only 160,000 to 200,000 pounds.

It was possible to corrupt the Porte but, in the absence of a more consistent policy regarding it, its Pashas in Belgrade frequently used to very enthusiastically demonstrate their religious fervour. If the Islam fanaticism was to be displayed on the example of the construction of the Roman Catholic chapel in Belgrade, the entire plot that the Crimean War had caused the Eastern policy would come to light. The Serbs enjoyed religious autonomy, but the Pasha considered it correct to protect the rights of the Belgrade Turks. At the same time the Roman Catholic chapel was built in the area where the Turkish population lived, and the Belgrade Pasha had a certain authority, and that was why the newly established religious tolerance, proclaimed by the *Hatiumajun*, was put to test in Serbia just in the case of the attitude towards the rights of the allied proteges. In the mutual accusations between the Prince and his Prime Minister on one side, and Aziz Pasha on the other, the Serbian side was acknowledged to be right for the first time during the past several years.<sup>22</sup>

The attempts of the Serbian authorities to draw some benefits from the conflict between the Belgrade Pasha and the Western consuls were not profitable. When the new authorities were soon established in Wallachia and Moldavia, Prince Aleksandar and his government became anxious. Having been neutral in the war and indifferent towards the fate of the Roman Catholic chapel, they now hoped to get the support of the British and French consuls. Janković even appealed to Fonblanque to personally support the Serbian interests in Constantinople.<sup>23</sup> However, Fonblanque and des Essarts were not able to offer sufficient guarantees to the worried Prince. Contrary to the Austrian diplomacy, whose power in Serbia was inversely proportionate to its influence on the Crimean allies, the British diplomacy in Serbia found little true interest, so that despite his good knowledge of the circumstances, good predictions and personal interest, Fonblanque could only recommend to his Serbian collocutors the moderation and the respect of the constitutionally prescribed rights of jurisdictional and executive power. He was himself expecting the decision from Constantinople with uncertainty. The Serbian authorities, therefore, found it simpler to rely again on big promises given by

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<sup>22</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 11 March 1856, F.O. 78/1197, No. 16.

<sup>23</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 5 April 1856, F.O. 78/1197, No. 20.

Radosavljević. Before his departure to Rudnik the Austrian Consul, according to Fonblanque's knowledge, offered new assurances to the Serbian Prince. He stated that Austria had succeeded in forestalling certain intentions of France and Great Britain manifested at the Conference in Constantinople, and that even now he had a decisive influence on the Peace Congress in Paris.<sup>24</sup> He was convincing Prince Aleksandar that the Austrian Emperor, allegedly grateful for the role the Principality of Serbia played during the Hungarian revolution (1848-1849), would personally intercede for the family Karadjordjević to be established as the Serbian dynasty. However, the French Consul des Essart found out from another source that the Austrian representatives had not even mentioned such requests during the negotiations.<sup>25</sup>

There was one aspect of the Paris Congress decisions that was of particular influence on Serbia and the Balkans in the future and which was ascribed great significance at that time in Serbia. It concerned the establishing of the free navigation on the Danube.<sup>26</sup> In the absence of other, more visible concessions, the Serbian public experienced the question of the free navigation as an indirect permission for Serbia to have an access to the sea, while the membership of the Principality in the *Coastal (permanent) Danube Commission* was considered as a recognition of partial independence in the foreign policy.<sup>27</sup> In the not numerous Serbian political and economic public the question of the free navigation received the preference over all other questions just in the spring and the summer of 1856. Nevertheless, despite the fact that the greatest part of the navigation on the Danube until the beginning of the Crimean War

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<sup>24</sup> Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 13 April 1856, F.O. 78/1197, No. 22.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> It refers to the articles XVII and XVIII of the Paris Treaty. Lj. Ristić, 53.

<sup>27</sup> Two commissions were formed on this occasion: *The European Danube Commission*, consisting of the representatives of France, Austria, Britain, Sardinia, Prussia and Russia (one of its tasks was the regulation of the Danube from Isacchea to its delta within two years), and *The Coastal (Permanent) Danube Commission*, consisting of the representatives of Austria, Bavaria, Würtemberg, Turkey, Wallachia, Moldavia and Serbia. W. Baumgart, p. 207. The institutions established at that time are still in existence, but their seats are in the USA, and it seems that they are the most long-lived inter-state institutions in the history. The Paris Congress presented the national principle (although without much success in the beginning) as the most important one. The Commission of the coastal states respects in the same way the actual situation. Owing to this, the representative of the Republic of Serbian Krajina became its member in the middle of the nineties of 20<sup>th</sup> century.



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had actually been in the hands of the British companies, the first ship that, in accordance with the proclaimed free navigation, arrived to Belgrade was the French steamship "Lione".<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> An official welcome was arranged for the steamship, and Jovan Ristić, then the official in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, went on board as an escort of honour. Srbija, „Šumadinka“, 24. jul 1856, teč. V, br. 68./In Serbian: „Šumadinka“, 24 July 1856, Vol. V, No. 68./

## CONCLUSION

The Crimean War ended far from the Principality of Serbia and seemingly without any greater significance for the country. Contemporaries did not believe that Great Britain exerted much serious influence on the circumstances within Serbia. Among the Great Powers, Great Britain had long seemed to be the least interested one in Serbian affairs. Strong formal support rendered by Britain to the Ottoman Empire, as well as recollections of earlier periods in mutual relations, such as 1837-1839 and 1851-1852, led the political public in Serbia to follow the political and diplomatic activities of London with distrustfulness during the Crimean War. Later historiography judged the mutual relations of the two countries mostly not relying on the British sources.

The history of Serbia during that period is currently interpreted with considerable deference to period sources. With the exception of Ilija Garašanin's correspondence, almost all contemporary sources were unanimous regarding the course of war and its outcome. Regardless of the prevailing partiality towards Russia, throughout the war almost all newspapers, the majority of Serbian politicians, and the Prince all aspired to maintain neutrality. However, by 1853 expectations that a coalition of states would enter the war against the Ottoman Empire awakened a true disposition towards war in the Principality. Nevertheless, already in the winter of 1854 the only goal of all factions in Serbian politics was the defense of the country. Austria's supremacy was brought about by a crisis between Austrian-Serbian relations; however, the outcome of the war and Serbia's attitude throughout it proved that Serbia could exist as an autonomous state even without Russian protection. Furthermore, Serbia's upholding of armed neutrality throughout the course of the war revealed her

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<sup>1</sup> Already during 1856 the real change in the international position of Serbia became obvious, as well as a greater interest of foreign states in it. Lj. Ristić, „Belgijski

as a truly independent state for the first time.<sup>1</sup> The outcome of the war further strengthened Serbia's international status. A joint protectorate of the six Great Powers and the Ottoman Empire was established over the Principality, which required the unanimous consent of the usually warring Serbian Protecting Powers before any military or political intervention was undertaken within Serbia. The entry of Serbia into *The Coastal (Permanent) Danube Commission*, considerably increased her influence in foreign policy, historically considered one of the bastions of Ottoman sovereignty. The status granted to Serbia in the Paris Peace Treaty enabled the peaceful transition of her constitutional system during the following years, as well as the occupation of seven towns without the military intervention of either Vienna or Constantinople. Ultimately, the Serbo-Turkish wars of 1876 and 1877-1878 were made possible primarily through the international status of Serbia established in 1856, and the internal reforms carried out between 1858 and 1869.<sup>2</sup>

In spite of everything, later historians have frequently taken the view that the Crimean War was a period of extreme weakness for Serbia. They have claimed that her greatest success was not entering the war, the outcome of which was decided without any formal influence from Serbia. On account of this, Belgrade was most likely incapable of achieving the successes reached within only a couple years by Turin, Bucharest, and Iasi. Some historians have ascribed these failings to internal Serbian discord,<sup>3</sup> some to Russian policy; the majority have come to the conclusion that Serbia's interests were pushed aside due to the disrupted balance of power among the Great Powers at the expense of St. Petersburg.<sup>4</sup> The majority of historians, however, have disregarded two significant facts. First, the Principality of Serbia was the only one of the four Christian Balkan states with internationally recognized status not occupied during the Crimean War. Wallachia and Moldavia were under Russian and

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opunomoćeni ministar Blondel u Beogradu 1856“, IČ XXXVIII, Beograd, 1991, str. 289–294. /in Serbian: “The Belgian Plenipotentiary Minister Blondel in Belgrade 1856“, IJ XXXVIII, Belgrade, 1991, pp. 289–294./.

<sup>2</sup> D. Goldfranc, ... see the last chapter.

<sup>3</sup> J. Ristić, *Srbija i Krimski rat*, str. 153. /in Serbian: *Serbia and the Crimean War*, p. 153/

<sup>4</sup> J. Milićević, *Srbija 1839–1858, Istorija srpskog naroda V/1, Od Prvog ustanka do Berlinskog kongresa 1804–1878*, Beograd, 1994, str. 280. /in Serbian: *Serbia 1839-1858. The History of the Serbian People V/1. From the First Serbian Uprising to the Berlin Congress 1804-1878*, Belgrade, 1994, p. 280/.



later Austrian occupation, while a strong French garrison governed Greece out of Piraeus. Second, Serbia maintained her neutrality through the readiness to defend herself, as well as a firm resoluteness to remain at peace. Serbia, therefore, could not be in the good grace of any of the Great Powers. The National Principle was successfully used throughout the Crimean War, understandably employed by the warring parties themselves, or by those states whose national unity could bring immediate benefit to the Western allies. In order to become one of the Great Powers and achieve unification, Piedmont paid with its contingent of 15,000 soldiers, who participated in the Crimean War since 1855. France furthered her interests at the expense of Austria and Russia through the unification of Wallachia and Moldavia.

This was not the case with Serbia. Much more time would have to pass before the Principality would be able to lead an independent foreign policy. It would be difficult, however, to expect that Serbia was capable of waging war by herself, driven by an independent foreign policy. Serbia's participation in the Crimean War, on any side of the conflict, would put her in complete isolation and bring her into conflict with at least two regional Great Powers. Regardless of Serbia's developing status, she would not have the courage to do so until 1914. Serbia never entered a war without first securing the consent or tacit approval of either Russia, Austria, or both. In addition to this, the Principality of Serbia had to emancipate herself in order to be able to independently participate in international alliances: up until 1853 the only enemy that existed for Serbia was the Ottoman Empire.<sup>5</sup> It was only after 1856, and especially after achieving independence in 1878, that Serbia's attitude changed somewhat, if not fundamentally. The alleged entrance of 25,000 Serbian soldiers on the side of the Western Allies, announced in 1854 by the Serbian agent at the Porte, was impossible. For one, Serbia was incapable of sending such a large army outside of her borders and furthermore, the Serbian people would never tolerate a war against Russia. Russian diplomats' hopes to call up 60,000 Serbian volunteers were also unfounded, primarily due to the first reason. However, Serbia could not expect any great gains by abstaining from the conflict.

British-Serbian relations were not burdened by such issues. During the Crimean War, Serbia was truly not just "incidental news" for the British

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<sup>5</sup> *Srpski dnevnik*, Novi Sad 28. marta 1853, br. 25. /In Serbian: *The Serbian Daily*, Novi Sad, 28 March 1853, no. 25.

public, as frequently depicted by historians studying Serbo-British relations. The British public followed events in the Principality on a day-to-day basis up until the beginning of 1855, even as the Foreign Office kept its own close watch on the situation in Serbia. Redcliffe's assessment of Russian plans made in autumn 1853 proved to be completely correct. The assessment called for the continuation of Serbian neutrality, leaving her aside, recognizing that the situation was actually in the interest of the Allies and only formally encroached on the Porte's sovereignty.<sup>6</sup> In contrast to his superiors, Fonblanque much more enthusiastically considered Serbia's potential role in the current war, as well as the future expansion of the Serbian state and the development of its internal regime order. He was one of the rare diplomats of the 1840s and 1850s who predicted the significant role the Principality of Serbia would play in the future and the unification of the Southern Slavs. The Fonblanque-Garašanin project called for the creation of a Serbian Vice-Realm, and represented one of the most original political proposals for the federalization of the Ottoman Empire. Only upon first glance and superficially did this plan resemble the earlier proposals of Nikolajević and Garašanin. The question of ethnic demarcation and access to the sea was present in earlier plans as well. The British diplomat had a dominant influence on the creation of the project's provisions. These included the question of relations with Constantinople, the presence of Turkish garrisons within some towns, the shelving of plans to annex Bosnia and Herzegovina, the depopulation of Montenegro, the transfer of Muslim populations in exchange for the Serbian and Christian populations of Bosnia, the Vardar valley, and Bulgaria; as well as the announced creation of autonomous Turkish or Muslim-majority regions in Eastern Bulgaria and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Fonblanque was the first to argue for the establishing of a democratically elected people's representative body within the Serbian internal political system. In Serbian historiography there has existed a widespread belief that Garašanin was a "passive" participant during the creation

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<sup>6</sup> Redcliffe was ready already in October 1853 to accept Omer Pasha's assessment stated in his talks with Pisani. The Ottoman army leader claimed that the Russian entry into the Principality of Serbia would not achieve a more significant military success because the Ottoman forces at its borders were very strong. It seems that the Ottoman military circles were convinced that the Serbian neutrality was an expression of disloyalty towards the Porte, as well as of the weakness of the Serbian and Russian armies. Pisani to Redcliffe, 7 October 1853, F.O. 78/939.

of the *Načertanie*, when allegedly František Zach was the author of the pro-memoirs.<sup>7</sup> The discussions with Fonblanque and the plan composed on this occasion represent one of the highest successes of the foreign policy activities undertaken on this basis and demonstrate its political pragmatism. The farsighted nature of the aforementioned concept is supported later by the fact that Milovan Milovanović, the Serbian Minister of Foreign Affairs, published an article in the book *Servia By Servians (Srbi o Srbiji)* in 1909 considering the possibility of the enlarging Serbia on the so-called ethnic principle, drawing up borders surprisingly similar to those proposed by Thomas Grenier de Fonblanque.<sup>8</sup>

The British Consul General in Belgrade, however, was not alone in his plans. This is illustrated by the fact that during the Constantinople negotiations the British Ambassador at the Porte was the one to propose significant privileges to Serbia, including changes of the Constitution and the establishment of a people's representative body.<sup>9</sup> British diplomats were of the same opinion when it came to discussing the expansion of trade. Nevertheless, the lack of good transportation infrastructure prevented the realization of planned cooperation in the pork meat processing and the wheat trade.<sup>10</sup> Fonblanque endeavored to change this situation, however, the official British position was primarily concerned with the expansion of her own maritime trade.

As is the case with every big war, the Crimean War awoke large anxieties and excessive hopes. While it was true that the further development of relations between Serbia and Britain was premature, their intensity, character, and influence were highly significant and of much greater importance than it is usually considered. Our historical awareness of this period has primarily relied

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<sup>7</sup> A. Radenić, *Počelo je u obaveštajnoj službi Austro-Ugarske, Mit o Garašaninovom Načertaniju*, „Politika“, 30. i 31. decembar 2000, 1. i 2. januar 2001. /in Serbian: *It All Started in the Austro-Hungarian Intelligence Service. The Myth about Garašanin's Načertanije*, „Politika“, 30 and 31 December 2000, 1 and 2 January 2001, Dr. Andrija Radenić, *Spoljna politika Srbije u kontroverznoj istorijografiji, od Načertanija do stvaranja Jugoslavije*, Beograd 2006, /*Foreign Policy of Serbia in Controversial Historiography, from Načertanije to Creation of Yugoslavia*, Belgrade, 2006/.

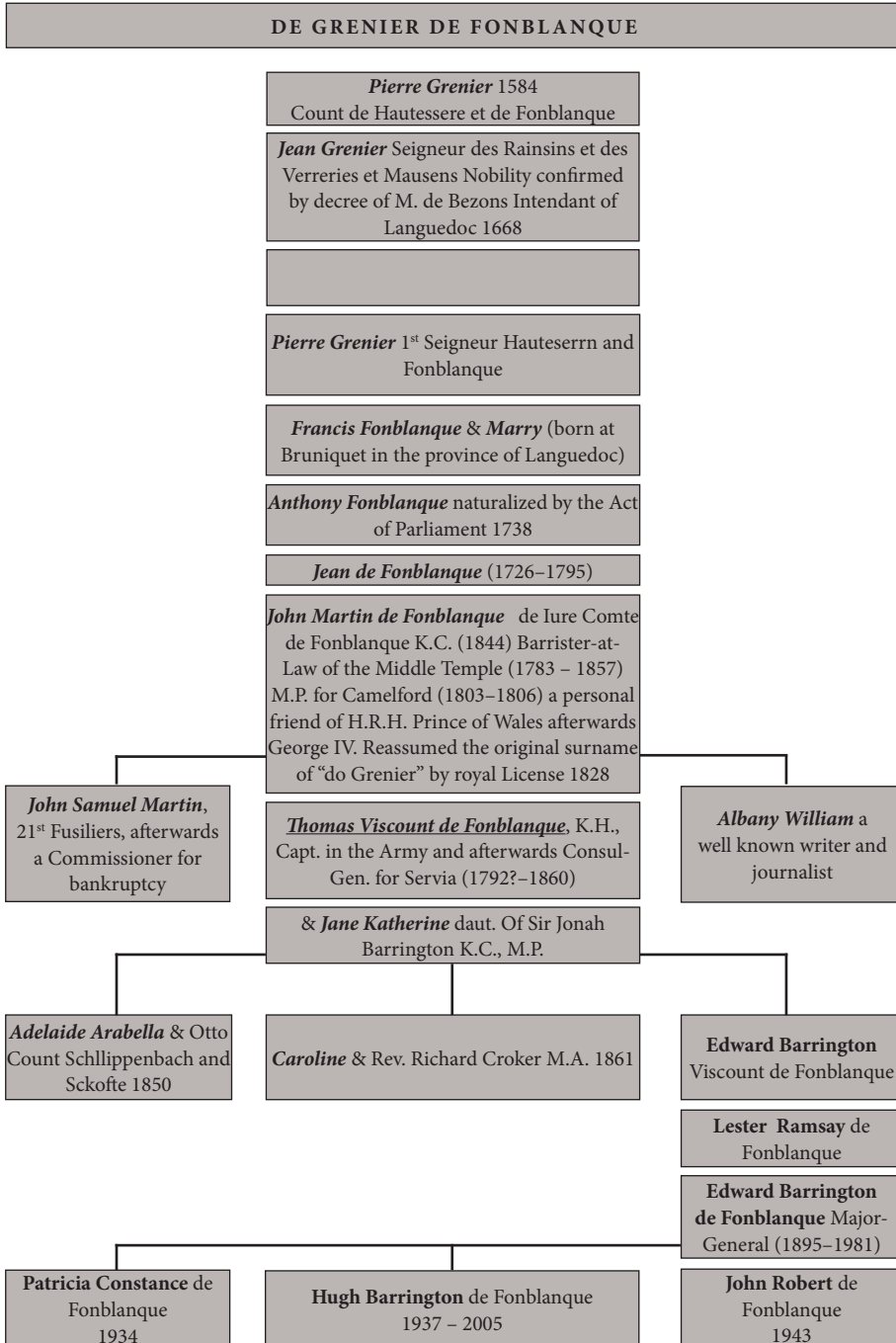
<sup>8</sup> A. Stead, *Servia by Servians*, London, 1910. (Map No. 1)

<sup>9</sup> Fonblanque to Clarendon, Belgrade, 9 December 1855, F.O. 78/1095, No. 39.

<sup>10</sup> Fonblanque to Addington, Belgrade, 13 April 1854, F.O. 78/1008; Fonblanque to Redcliffe, Belgrade, 10 December 1854, F.O. 78/1009, No. 65; Fonblanque to Clarendon, Belgrade, 19 August 1855, F.O. 78/1095, No. 26.

on the sources and memoirs left by the Serbian generation of politicians still maturing in the 1850s, the resignation experienced by Garašanin regarding his independent work and high expectations, as well as the recollections of later politicians who were unabashed Russophiles during the Crimean War. It was only later, in the background of the war and having learnt its lessons, that many of these politicians accepted the idea of the usefulness of independence and the neutral policy followed by the Principality of Serbia at the time.

British influences prevailed in Serbia throughout the course of the Crimean War. Nevertheless, this happened at the time while the Serbian leadership chose neutrality in order to conceal its own weakness, and the Western powers supported only those national movements that could be turned against Russia. Despite all this, the consequences of the Crimean War were very far-reaching for all of its numerous active and passive participants. As seen, Serbia was much more affected by these consequences than it was initially supposed, while British policy towards Serbia during the period was most likely of the greatest significance.



PROPOSAL FOR THE CREATION  
OF THE SERBIAN VICE-REALM OF 1853.

Fonblanque to Redcliffe, 18. November 1853, F.O. 78/943, Copy 85.

My Lord

It appears that my representations to the Prince of Servia have made the desirable impression.

Yesterday, His Highness sent to say that feeling now convinced of M: Simitch's bias being too distinctly Russian, he earnestly wished me to confer with M: Garschanin on the stipulations to be submitted to the Porte, for the extension of Servia and her Privileges.

I need scarcely assure Your Excellency that M: Garaschanin and I entered upon these considerations with reference to the National advantage – and in the interest of progressive improvement – without much considering how our consequent propositions might quadrate with those ambitions – views by which we know Prince Alexander to be mainly attracted. The Servian Ex-Minister agreed, that any scheme for making Servia a Sovereign State, at once, would be premature, and the sure cause of a commotion ending in no practical good. He assented, likewise, to my postulate, - that nothing, of even reasonable magnitude, affecting change in Servian – Institutions [.]

M: Garaschanin on the stipulations to be submitted to the Porte, for the extension of Servia and her Privileges (... ) ought to be presented at a moment like this, when the inevitable opposition of Austria might drive the Cabinet of Vienna to some extremity it does not otherwise contemplate. Therefore I

trust that if Your Excellency is pleased to recommend the project to the Porte's Consideration, at a suitable time, the minute of it may be intermediately kept under the lock of the Grand- Vezir's Portfolio. The Prince is anxious that M: Simitch should not get scent of the Project, and would equally keep it from the knowledge of his own son-in law, the Servian Agent to the Porte.

What M: Garaschanin and I agree in submitting, are the enumerated Propositions which follow.

### [PROPOSITIONS]

1. That Servia should be raised to the condition of a Tributary-Kingdom, the Sultan always retaining the Kingly title, and a Vice-roy (of Servian birth) reigning over the country in accordance with an improved organic-law – a law rather diminishing the present authority of the Senate, and admitting (in a manner to be determined –on hereafter) more of the Popular element than has hitherto found place in Deliberative and Municipal-Bodies.
2. That the concession of the Sultan and King shall be guaranteed by Christian-states in amity with the Sublime Porte more especially Great Britain and France.
3. That the territorial extension of Servia shall comprehend the River Iskar (in Bulgaria) from its' embouchure (?) at the Danube up to its' source, Novi Pazar and such a portion of Upper-Albania as will gave it a small and well-defined Border beyond the Ports of Alessio and Dulcigno.
4. (Expletive ?) The Montenegro would thus become incorporated with Servia and Mr. Garaschanin is confident there would ensue such a fusion between the Populations as to exclude all apprehensions of predatory – excesses on the part of the ill-famed Mountaineers. (By granting patches of Land, sporadically, to the Montenegrines, two-thirds of them would be induced to quit the arid country of their Birth or Refuge).
5. The Turks to retain a positive right-of-way for their Troops marching to or from Bosnia and the Herzegovina; but they will pass on with all convenient speed, - give notice of their coming, – and are not to occupy any town, village or Palanka in Servia,- unless in the event of a foreign invasion.
6. Semandria, Sokol and the other strong-places of the secondary-order, to be evacuated by the Turks, - the Servian executive having the liberty to demolish or to repair them; and with the previous sanction of the Sultan – and King,

forts and Redoubts may be constructed at the other Places, for the defence of the newly-acquired frontiers. The standing Army of Servia is not exceed eight-thousand men of all Arms. A landwehr, of the first and second Ban may be formed; but the Sultan and King may put His Veto on its' embodiment, under any doubtful circumstances. The composition of the Garrison of the Belgrade – citadel is to remain for the present, an open question; - well understood that it never can, in any case, be formed – even in part-of Austrian or Russian Troops; neither can any Foreign Levies be permitted in Servia without formal consent of the Sultan and King being obtained, and simultaneously notified to the Protecting-Powers.

7. Religious-toleration to be established, on the broadest and most secure bases, for Christians of every denomination. The Greek-Church is, however, to be maintained as the Religion of the State, and the only one to be endowed by it. The Patriarch at the Constantinople will be recognized as its' spiritual-chief, and the Vice-roy as its; Temporal-Head.
8. Dulcigno and Alessio to become Free-Ports for the commerce of all Nations in alliance with the Ottoman Porte. The Tariff of Importation-Duties, to be levied beyond the radius, will be framed on a very moderate scale.
9. The Civil-Code of Servia to be simplified, on the model of the Code Napoleon; the Criminal-Statutes will be revised and divested of their theoretical hardness.
10. The Immigration, for proletary purposes, of Bulgarian, Bosnian and Herzegovinian Christians will be encouraged by the Servian-Government to the extant and under the conditions which may be prescribed by the Sultan and King. –

Such, my Lord, are the outlines of a Plan which, if regularized and adopted, will exclude any danger of Russian prepotency, and Austrian cupidity in this direction at least for many years to come.

At the close of our consultation, M: Garaschanin reminded me, that is I[f] had not succeeded in getting four Anti-Russians into the Senate, Servia would, at this critical conjuncture, be without hope of any favour from the Porte.

I have, [etc.]

T. de Gr. de Fonblanque



(...Copy of a Despatch from Mr de Fonblanque to Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, No. 85, dated Belgrade Nov. 18<sup>th</sup> 1853.)

At the Prince of Servia's request, M: de Fonblanque has consulted with M: Garaschanin as to the extension of territory and privilege which the Porte may be (...) upon Servia.

Mr. de Fonblanque gives the outlines of the Plan which was deemed the most desirable – the elevation of Servia in rank of a Tributary Kingdom, the Sultan always retaining the Kingly title, - and the limits of Servia to (...) the Adriatic Ports of Dulcigno and Alessio, which will be free for the commerce of all nations in amity with the Porte.

Stratford de Redcliffe – Lord Clarendon (Ambasada u Parizu),  
Constantinople, 12. February 1856, FO 146/620, Copy No. 167

My Lord

At the final Conference, which took place yesterday, at the Grand Vizirs Home, the propositions respecting Walachia and Moldavia, which had been previously adopted by my two Christian Colleagues and myself, were reconsidered in concert with the Turkish Ministers.

I am happy to inform your Lordship that with some few amendments and the addition of suggested with reference to the judicial Department, they were accepted by the Portas Representatives. A copy of the Entire Series (?), comprised in Articles to the number of thirty, is inclosed herewith.

A Paragraph respecting the construction and occupation of fortress in either Principality was reproduced by the French Ambassador and adopted as a separate proposition, not annexed to the Articles, by the Grand Vizir and his Colleagues. A copy at it is sublimed herewith to your Lordships examination.

We did not separate without writting down our joint decisions respecting Servia, its' future Relations, with the Porte and (?) the revisal of its Constitution. Our opinions, such as they were ultimately settled after some discussion, are recorded in a separate paper containing four Articles, and transmited in Copy herewith.

The propositions relating to Servia, as well as these which concern the two other Principalities here neither signed not dated. The French Ambassador stated that his instructions confined him to an officious interference.

Unaccompanied with formalities, and your Lordship is aware that I had no authority to insist upon a different course of proceeding.

...

Copy

## Servie

Projet relative à la Servie arrêté entre les représentants des 3. Puissances et ceux de la Sublime Porte dans la Réunion du 11. fevrier.

1. Les Articles 3<sup>me</sup>, 4<sup>me</sup>, 5<sup>me</sup>, 6<sup>me</sup>, 8<sup>me</sup>, 9<sup>me</sup>, 12<sup>me</sup>, 13<sup>me</sup>, et 15<sup>me</sup>, relatifs à la Moldavie et à la Valachie sont également applicables à la Servie.
2. La Sublime Porte pourra librement combiner, d'accord avec le Gouvernement de la Principauté, toutes les mesures défensives qui seraient jugées nécessaires dans l'intérêt commun de l'Empire. Elle continuera à entretenir comme par le passé, des garnisons dans les fortresses situées sur la territoire serbe qu'elle occupe aujourd'hui.
3. La Constitution actuellement en vigueur en Servie sera révisée conformément aux vœux et aux besoins des populations par une Commission des Serbes qui se réunira sans délai à Constantinople. Son travail sera soumis à la Sublime Porte communiqué aux hautes Parties contractantes. La Constitution révisée sera approuvée par Sa Majesté le Sultan et publiée à Son nom à Belgrade de la même manière que le Règlement organique y a été promulgué.

(Signature)

MEMORANDUM ADDRESSED BY THE SERVIAN GOVERNMENT TO  
THE SUBLIME PORTE RESPECTING THE OCCUPATION OF THAT  
PRINCIPALITY BY AUSTRIAN TROOPS;

Presented to the House of Commons by command of Her Majesty,  
in pursuance of their Address of June 22 1854, London: Harrison  
and Sons

Trans. from French

Since the commencement of the war which has been broken out between the Sublime Porte and the Court of Russia, Austria has assumed towards Servia and attitude which, while it left an expectant character to the policy of this Power, tended to give it the means of disposing at its will of the action of Servia. According as Austria believed the Servian Government to be more or less well disposed towards Russia or towards Turkey she held it a language conformable to these supposed sentiments and constantly promised it her support for the defence of the frontiers of the Principality against all hostile aggression.

By means of this policy, put in operation chiefly by the Representative of Austria at Belgrade, and so constantly followed up that it has been remarked by the Representatives of the other Powers in this Principality, Austria believed that she was already in possession of unlimited confidence of the Servian Government, and either to give more weight to her policy and the better to assure the access of her views, or to put herself in a position to give more force to her assurances, whatever they might be, to any one or other of the great European Powers, the Cabinet of Vienna ordered some time ago a very considerable concentration of troops on the frontiers of Servia.

The Government of the Principality justly disturbed by these military demonstrations, which were not provoked by any act on the part of Servia, and which neither the state of affairs in the country more pacific and reassuring than ever, nor the relations of Servia with the Sublime Porte and the Powers in alliance with it justified, sought for information directly from the Cabinet of Vienna; and indirectly from the Sublime Porte, as to the object and meaning of these military movements of Austria.

These measures have not succeeded in enlightening us to the situation in which they wished to place us. Whilst the organs, more or less direct, of the Cabinet of Vienna made us sensible that Austria was doing nothing, and did not intend to do anything, with regard to Servia without the previous consent of the Suzarain Court the Sublime Porte replied to the Kapou-Kehaja of Servia that Austria left them in ignorance of the object of the military preparations in question, and that no agreement nor understanding were established on this subject between the two Powers. Neither did the representatives of France and Great Britain at Constantinople give us more satisfactory assurances on this subject. In the interviews with which they honoured the Kapou-Kehaja of Servia, they at one time did not appear to believe in the reality of such serious demonstrations, and at the tendency which we have always attributed to them; at another time they shared our own uncertainty and the anxieties which resulted from it. The Pasha of Belgrade remained without instructions which had formerly been given to him, and in virtue of which he was to consider any military intervention of Austria in Servia as a hostile attempt directed against the Ottoman Empire itself, and as such to repel it with all his power.

The conduct of Austria with regard to the general question of the existing war having perhaps taken a turn more favourable to the intentions of the Western powers the Cabinets of Paris and London gave the Servian Government, through the medium of their agents at Belgrade satisfactory assurances on the subject of the disposition of Austria. About the same time, the cabinet of Vienna made known to the Servian government that the military measures in question had nothing in them hostile to Servia, that in directing them, the object of Austria was only to put herself in a position to protect her own frontiers, and that she would not interpose in Servia unless the Russian troops entered it or revolts against legitimate authority broke out there; that consequently even in that case she would interpose as a friend, in order to lend assistance to the Government and to legitimate authority.

This step of Austria, while it determined the cases in which this power intended to interpose in Servia, was not of a nature to dispel all our anxieties. In the first place, we did not find in it any guarantee against an arbitrary intention undertaken without motive and without real necessity and abandoning in dangerous and fatal consequences to Servia. In the second place, we saw in it an isolated action of Austria, who under the pretext of acting in cooperation with the general policy of Europe and in support of the Ottoman Empire, created for herself the means of invading Servia, and of causing in that Principality by her unjust aggressive behaviour that very disorder, that very confusion, and that very desolation, which it is particularly the interest of the Ottoman Empire, as it is that of the Powers allied to it, to prevent, and the dangers of which the Government and nation of Servia would devote themselves with all their efforts to keep off from their country.

In anticipation of such serious eventualities and while continuing to receive from Constantinople news quite in contradiction to the avowed object of Austria; seeming moreover, that the military preparations of Austria assumed day by day a more threatening aspect and were pushed to a point beyond which nothing remained but their immediate execution, the Servian government, in concert with his Excellency Izzet Pasha resolved to take active steps at Vienna and Constantinople, to ascertain accurately on what we were to rely in this respect, and to resist, where we could rightly do so, every combination which should make Austria the arbiter of the present destinies of Servia. This was the object of Azziz Pasha's mission to Vienna. This person is now at Constantinople, and will have given a detailed report of what he did at Vienna to the Government of His Majesty the Sultan.

While waiting for the diplomatic solution of this question, the Government of the Principality, admirably seconded by his Excellency Izzet Pasha, has ordered all the measures necessary for the defence of the country from a hostile aggression.

At the point which we have now reached in this matter, the object is to ascertain if Austria can succeed in obtaining the consent of the Sublime Porte to a measure unjust prejudicial to so many interests which are common to and equally dear to the Principality and to the Empire of which the country forms part. As to a(n) intervention undertaken without the consent of the Porte, there is little chance that under existing circumstances Austria should dream of it unless she wishes to declare openly for Russia against the Sublime Porte and its allies.

Austria put forwards two reasons which might authorise its military intervention in Servia. 1. The entrance of the Russians; 2. The breaking out an internal insurrection in Servia.

1. If Russians enter Servia the cooperation of Austria against Russia ought to form a part of the combine measures which the Powers allied to the Sublime Porte are called upon to employ for the defence of the Ottoman Empire and which are not to determine. It is scarcely probable the case of the entry of the Russians into Servia should occur, if we may rely on the assurances which Baron Mayendorff has given to the Count Buol, Russia has declared her intention not to enter Servia; and if appears more easy to acknowledge this since the theatre of war and the line of operations for the Russian troops are without already on too great a scale for their further extension to be thought of. But even admitting that the Russians should attempt to enter Servia which would not be easily effected considering the resistance which would be offered to them on the part of both of the Servian and Turkish troops – we boldly affirm that the entry of the Austrians would in that case, be an extremely unfortunate measure and one which might lead to a number of complications.

Any auxiliary troops whatever would be preferable to those of Austria. The Servian nation has so decided a mistrust, if not a hatred, of Austria, that the entrance of the Austrians into Servia would be immediately considered by everyone as so immanent a danger so great a misfortune, that all the proceedings of the Servians would be employed in resisting those enemies in whom is always supposed to be personified that cupidity which urges Austria to seek to exercise in Servia no matter under what patronage, an egoist influence. In the same degree as the cooperation of the Austrians might be useful to the cause of the Sublime Porte, if it was given at the suitable time and place, would it beget difficulties and complications if, despite of all that has been said it were displayed in Servia.

2. As far as concerns internal insurrections, we fear of them now less than ever. The whole nation is perfectly convinced that its most precious interests impose upon it the maintenance of tranquillity and order, and the avoidance of anything that could involve it in the war and turn Servia into a battle-field. Filled with a deep gratitude to the Suzarain court for the privileges which have been so graciously confirmed to them, and for the attitude which they have been allowed to hold during this war, the Government and people of Servia are too much attached to the happiness of their country to hesitate a moment as to

the line of conduct to be followed. Their consciousness of their own situation will preserve them better than any threats whatever from all false and injurious measures.

In other respects, since the war has broken out, has not Servia sufficiently shown that she both knows, and will remain faithful to her duties and obligations? Notwithstanding all that may have been said, she has never ceased following a line of conduct retiring, it is true, line loyal and conformable to her engagements. Neither will she henceforward deviate from this line of conduct. The Sublime Porte may be perfectly sure of it.

All that the Servian Government requires, is to be honoured henceforth with the same confidence with the Suzarain Court has hithero shown it, and not to see its country given over to Austrian occupation, which would be the signal for and the commencement of incalculable misfortunes. On this condition Servian Government fully answers for the maintenance of tranquility and public order in Servia. If even isolated disturbances (which may happen any time and in under any circumstances) were to break out anywhere, the Government is capable of repressing and quelling them before any importance could be attached to them.

The Kapou Kehaja of Servia has already, on several occasions been instructed to communicate with His highness Reshid-Pasha on this matter; and, although he has had the honour of already submitting to his Highness the greater part of the reasons and considerations herein set forth, which otherwise could not have escaped the penetration of the Sublime Porte, and which make us hope that the Suzarain Court will in no case recognise in Austria a power the mere claim to which ought to expose her to suspicion the Servian Government has nevertheless, thought it its duty to submit to the enlightened attention of His Highness the Minister for Foreign Affires an accurate memorandum on this important affair, the decision of which affects so many questions, as essential to the honour, the dignity and the interests of the Sublime Porte as to the tranquillity and happiness of the Servian nation.

Belgrade, 5. /17. April 1854



## ADDITIONS

**Ilija Garašanin** (1812-1874), the Serbian statesman and politician. He took up his post in the civil service in 1834. Garašanin was one of the leaders of the Constitutionalist opposition. He was at the head of the Ministry of the Interior from 1843 until 1852. In 1844 he authorized the Draft (Načertanie) - Serbia's foreign-political, national and state programme. He suppressed Obrenović's mutinies of 1844, 1846 and 1848. *The Police Code (Policijski zakonik)* of 1850 was passed while he was at the position of the Minister. He was at the head of the government from 1852 to 1853, and from 1861 to 1867.

Closely linked with the Polish emigration, Garašanin established close connections with France and Great Britain in the beginning of the fifties and this was the reason for his deposal under the pressure of Russia in 1853. He was returned to the State Council in 1856, and he became again the Minister of the Interior at the time of the St Andrew's Assembly and the overthrow of Aleksandar Karadjordjević. He remained without his job in the beginning of the second rule of the dynasty Obrenović because he advocated the establishing of oligarchy, but Prince Mihailo brought him back to head the government in 1861. Garašanin, known as a conservative, carried out the internal reforms and created an alliance with the Christian Balkan states during the rule of Mihailo Obrenović. He was dismissed because he was against Prince Mihailo's second marriage. After the assassination of Prince Mihailo, he formed the temporary Vice-Regency of short duration, but he was put down soon.

**Aleksa Simić** (1800-1872). Shop assistant and apprentice from Southern Hungary. He joined the civil service in 1819. He was, together with his older brother Stojan Simić, one of the leaders of the Constitutionalist opposition. After the 1835 Mileta revolt he headed the Ministry of Finance and became the member of the State Council. He was at the head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 1843 to 1844. Simić became the head of the Ministry of Justice and Education after 1849, and he headed the Ministry of the Interior from 1852 to 1853. He was the Prime Minister from 1853 to 1855, and from 1856 to 1857. After Tenka's plot in 1857 he was temporarily at the head of the State Council. That same year he was retired.

**Aleksa Janković** (1806-1869). Born in Temišoar. He came to the Principality of Serbia and joined civil service in 1834. Janković was a lawyer, educated in Budapest. He joined the Constitutionalists, became Toma Vučić-Perišić's secretary and the head of Prince Aleksandar Karadjordjević's office. He carried out the duties of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and also the duties of the Minister of Justice and Education from 1847 until 1848. He headed the government from 1851 to 1852 and from 1855 to 1856. Aleksa Janković was an Austrophile and a moderate oppositionist after Tenka's plot, and he became the Vice-President of the State Council in 1858. After the restoration of the Obrenović dynasty he abandoned the political scene.

**Prince Aleksandar Karadjordjević** (1806-1885). Karadjordje Petrović's second son (1762/7-1817). Educated during his short-term service in the Page Corps in Russia. In 1830 he married Persida Nenadović, Jakov Nenadović's daughter (one of the leaders of the First Serbian Uprising and the first man in the influential Nenadović family). He was the Constitutionalists' candidate for the throne of the Prince since 1839. Aleksandar was elected the Prince of Serbia after the 1842 Vučić revolt. Contrary to his predecessors the Porte did not grant him the right to title succession. Sixteen years of Aleksandar Karadjordjević's rule passed in swift internal reforms, whereas there were wanderings in foreign policy. The Prince was both greatly influenced by Great Powers and their followers in the country, and subject to the influence of the Nenadović family. He lived for another twenty seven years in Austria and Romania after his dethroning in 1858. In 1869 he was imprisoned for almost a year in Budapest under the suspicion that he was behind the assassination of Mihailo Obrenović.

**The First Serbian Uprising** (15 February 1804-5 October 1813) was the greatest national uprising in the history of the Ottoman Empire. The insurgents, in average between 25,000 and 30,000, succeeded to wage war for nine years with the Sultan's armies from Bosnia and Roumelia ranging in number from 100,000 to 150,000. The insurgents fought against the rule of the Ottoman outlaws – janissaries from 1804 to 1806. After the capture of Belgrade in 1806 the insurgents started the struggle for establishing of the independent state. In spite of the unsuccessful 1809 offensive when the insurgents were unable to establish the empire, they, in alliance with the

Russian army, fought successfully in the southern and the eastern parts of the state in 1810 and 1811. "The Leader" (Vožd) Karadjordje Petrović (1762/7-1817, the founder of the Karadjordjević dynasty) was the ruler of Serbia, and the Ruling Council (Praviteljstvjujušći Sovjet) was established in 1805, simultaneously representing both the government and the senate. The system of the insurgent state was defined by the 1805 and 1811 Constitutional Laws. Until 1811 Karadjordje was able to suppress the opposition and to establish full personal power. The insurgents refused to accept the provisions of the Bucharest Peace Treaty with the Ottoman Empire signed by Russia in May 1812, because of her preparations for the war with France. After one year and a half the Ottoman armies succeeded in conquering Serbia. Karadjordje and the majority of the uprising leaders went into exile. The terror reigned in the country for two ensuing years.

**The Second Serbian Uprising** (April-July 1815) under the leadership of Miloš Obrenović (1780-1860) was raised against the Ottoman reign of terror introduced after the fall of the First Serbian Uprising. Having successfully won several battles, Miloš Obrenović negotiated the autonomy of Serbia with Marshli Ali Pasha. The agreement which took place in 1815 was the beginning of the existence of the autonomous Serbian state in the nineteenth century.

*The Autonomy of the Principality of Serbia*

- 1815 The Miloš-Marashli Ali Pasha agreement. Internal self-government and jurisdiction over the Serbian settlements except towns and cities. The Prince was responsible for the collection of the annual tribute.
- 1817 Serbian leaders granted Miloš Obrenović the right to the hereditary title of the Prince within his dynasty.
- 1830 The third Hatisherif of the Porte granting the autonomy to Serbia. Russia became the official protector of the Serbian autonomy.
- 1833 In addition to twelve regions (nahias) of the Belgrade Pashalik the autonomous Principality of Serbia was enlarged with another six regions (nahias) in the south and southeast of the country.
- 1835 Serbia received its first Constitution (the first Constitution on the Balkans, banned by the Porte six weeks later). The abolition of feudal relations in Serbia.
- 1838 The Turkish Constitution
- 1839 Abdication of Prince Miloš
- 1842 Deposal of Prince Mihailo, election of Prince Aleksandar Karadjordjević
- 1844 The passing of the Civil Code in Serbia
- 1856 The Paris Congress equalized the autonomous status of Serbia with the autonomies of Wallachia and Moldavia. The autonomy of the Principality of Serbia was guaranteed by six Great Powers (Austria, Prussia, Russia, France, Great Britain and Piedmont).
- 1862 The Conference in Kanlidz passed the decision on the evacuation of the Ottoman garrisons from all towns except Belgrade.

- 1867 The Ottoman garrison left Belgrade
- 1869 The proclamation of the Regency (Pentecostal) Constitution
- 1876 The First Serbo-Turkish war
- 1877/78 The Second Serbo-Turkish war
- 1878 The Berlin Congress recognized the independence of Serbia

## THE WAR IN THE EAST\*

(‘The Illustrated London News’, 31. December 1853., p. 598)  
(From our Special Correspondent)

Belgrade, Dec. 14<sup>th</sup>

There are, here and there throughout Europe, small states or principalities, of which the existence would soon be problematical were it not that their situation renders them an object of desire to more than one powerful neighbour.<sup>1</sup> Serbia is one of these. It is needless to enter here into the contending and clashing interests of Turkey, Austria and Russia; it is sufficient to bear in minds that Serbia obeys the Porte as its suzerain, pays tribute to it, yet holds its head up as if it were really independent, and could defy at once the diplomacy of Russians, the bayonets of Austria, and scimitar of the Turk. “Where is Serbia?” once said a Parisian dandy to a travelling noble of this country. “Where is Serbia! As well might I ask you “Where is Paris?” was the reply. The Servians, in truth, believe that their neutrality is the make-weight that keeps all parties even; and that declaration on their part for one side would be fatal to the other, and involve the whole of Europe in instant war.<sup>2</sup>

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\* Č. Antić, *A Country of Holidays and a City of Monuments*, Belgrade/Velika Plana, 2004.

<sup>1</sup> In 1853-4 tensions were high in the East European states from Denmark and Poland southward down to Kyrgyzstan in Russia, W. Baumgart, *The Crimean War (1853-1856)*, London 1999, p. 34-54.

<sup>2</sup> After the Russian army occupied Wallachia and Moldavia the strategic importance of Serbia was overrated by British and French foreign policy makers. It was argued that had the Russian army entered Serbia the outlet to the Adriatic Sea would be automatically opened to it. It was widely believed that this would seal the destiny of the

There are, however, very few Servians who are sufficiently deep in politics to be more than either Russian or Turkish in their leanings.<sup>3</sup> But there are some who go so far as to foreshadow the existence of a Servian kingdom, having for its frontier on the side of Austria – not the Save and the Danube, but the Danube and the Drave, taking in Slavonia, which speaks the Servian language; including Bosnia and Montenegro, whose inhabitants, dwelling in fastnesses inaccessible almost to any but themselves, supply them with the plunder of the plains; and, finally, the Herzegovina, and a couple of ports on the Adriatic, which would make them independent of the Danube for supplies, and open a corn-market for European vessels without the necessity of entering the Black sea.<sup>4</sup> The more enlightened and best-informed Servians who thus anticipate on the eventualities of war are too often blind, however, to the fact that Servia, as at present constituted, can do little towards obtaining these grand ends without assistance. It is obvious that, from the Russians – into whose hands some Servians feel included to throw themselves – little would be gained, save absorption into the administrative and despotic system of a province of the Czar; from the Austrians, nothing save a participation in her large debts, and her conscription; whilst under the suzerainty of Turkey it is possible for them to grow in civilisation and vigour.<sup>5</sup> At present, however, the forces of the Servians cannot be rated so highly as they themselves would make the world believe, nor even as numerous authorities assert. It has been stated that in the Hungarian war the Servians supported Austria with an army of 25,000 men.<sup>6</sup> Nothing can be more exaggerated than this. In the first place, the force which left Belgrade consisted of no more than 7000 men; and in the second, it is extremely doubtful whether the assistance thus afforded was effectual. It would seem, from what is

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Ottoman Empire. J. Ристић, *Србија и Кримска војна, Историјски списи*, Београд, 1940. /J. Ristic, *Serbia and the Crimean War, Historical Writings*, Belgrade 1940/

<sup>3</sup> Russia was the official “Protector”, while the Ottoman Empire was “Suzerain” of the Principality of Serbia.

<sup>4</sup> The British public was bitterly and strongly influencing the Cabinet to enter in to the war during Summer and Autumn 1853. It was wrongly believed that the Russian occupation of Wallachia and Moldavia caused shortages of bread in British cities.

<sup>5</sup> During 1853 British diplomacy on several occasions accused Austria and Russia of plotting to divide the Balkan Peninsula. P. Shroeder, *Austria, Britain and the Crimean War*, New York 1972.

<sup>6</sup> Under the command of Stevan Knicanin 12 000 volunteers fought in Southern Hungary. J. Ристић, *Србија и Кримска војна, Историјски списи*, Београд, 1940, 49. /J. Ristic, *Serbia and the Crimean War, Historical Writings*, Belgrade 1940, p. 49/.

known of them here, that these men were a source of greater fear to their friends than to their enemies. They entered Slavonia *en masse*; and instead of acting in any disciplined useful manner, they spent their time in plundering, not only the foes of the house of Habsburg, but the churches of the Greek persuasion throughout the country which they overrun. Their trophies of silver and gold, brought back to Servia after the expiration of the war, consisted principally of cups and chalices and precious images, stolen from the Greek Churches of the border. Again, it is asserted that Servia could furnish a body of troops of about 50,000 men.<sup>7</sup> Undoubtedly such might be the case under a system of conscription, which would take the men from their homes and give them officers and discipline; but the only troops in Servia which are dressed and consist of about 3000 men, clothed in Russian uniforms, and without officers. At a review, a few days since, the companies were commanded in succession by the same captains, lieutenants and non-commissioned officers, who might be observed rushing from place to place in considerable hurry and trepidation. The Servians, however, are brave; and when disciplined, would be a splendid force. They are at present, however, in a somewhat barbarous state, being, in many respects, as backward as the people of the less polished parts of Turkey, and holding in considerable contempt the amenities and ordinary customs of civilisation. As an instance, it is only necessary to say that their women, although they enjoy the privileges of Christians, are scarcely less slaves than those of Turkey; and that, in Servian families, a father is never observed to treat any but his sons with respect and affectation. The Servian's wife obeys him as her lord, and gives him an amount of obedience that no civilised Europeans can conceive or would dream of exacting – she dare not eat until he has eaten, nor drink till he has helped himself.<sup>8</sup> Nor is it likely that much can be done in the Christian countries following the rites of the Greek Church until some reform is made in the ceremonies and influence of that Church. We know that in Russia there are upwards of 200 holidays in the year. In that of Servia there are 265 holidays; and the Archbishop here, who was once the marmiton of Prince Milosch, has lately put forth the enormous pretension that the people

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<sup>7</sup> There were 3,000 Serbs who joined the Russian Army in Wallachia (less than the Greeks and Bulgarians), among them was Petar, Duke Toma Vučić- Perišić's grandson.

<sup>8</sup> Princess Ljubica was the first female Serb who was given a place at the dining table (sofra). Т. Р. Ђорђевић, *Србија у доба кнеза Милоша*, Београд 1921./T.R. Djordjevic, *Serbia in the Age of Prince Milos*, Belgrade 1921/.



of every Christian denomination should keep their numerous fetes holy. The Servian who thus labours for a hundred days out of every 365 can be scarcely said to understand the value of time.<sup>9</sup> There are, indeed, very few things that they can do. There are no carpenters, nor smiths, nor labourers throughout the country; and even the houses are built by workmen who come out of Austria in summer, to return in winter to their homes with their earnings. There is not an inn out of Belgrade where a traveller can sleep, and if he wants a bed he must take it with him. Such being the state of Servia, it is somewhat surprising to find its people putting forward such pretensions as their pride induces them to hold. It was with no small interest that I witnessed yesterday an imposing ceremony in commemoration of Servian independence. The privileges accorded by the Porte, at various times, were crowned at last by the granting of a berat or firman, which secured to the Servians the right of governing themselves; and the anniversary of this joyful day is celebrated with considerable pomp.<sup>10</sup> On the present occasion, the brightest sunshine lent animation to the scene, and the brass ornaments of the Greek Church, as well as the zinc spires of the minarets, glistened in its rays, as the cannon boomed in honour of the day, and the band of the Royal regiment played upon the square the most inspiring tunes. The troops of the garrison dressed in Russian uniforms, were drawn up in martial array, and the officers in all the pride of gold lace and royal blue, strutted about the ground with consiabile importance in their aspect.

The interior of the church is, like most of the Greek edifices of the same character, adorned with frescoes, which not only fill the vaulted ceilings, but which cover the panels of the screen. A dais was raised in front of the screen, on which by turns the Archbishop, in gold costume, and with splendid mitre, officiated, assisted by splendidly dressed priests, bearded nobly like himself. The service consisted chiefly of formulae and ceremonies, more absurd in my eyes than those of the Roman Catholic Church<sup>11</sup>; and the priests, when they

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<sup>9</sup> Л. Димитријевић, *Како наш народ живи*, Београд 1893./L. Dimitrijevic, *How Do Our People Live*, Belgrade 1893/.

<sup>10</sup> St. Andrew (celebration day 1/13 December) was the longest celebrated day of the statehood in Serbia (from 1830 to 1878).

<sup>11</sup> The dispute between the British government and the Roman-Catholic Church was in progress at that time. On the other hand in Serbia the equal treatment of all denomination and religions was proclaimed in 1853. This Act was partly instigated by Britain and France. In 1854 the construction of a separate church building for two hundred Belgrade Protestants was agreed.

approached their Metropolitan, bowed low before and stooped to kiss his hand. A choir on each side chanted now and then a strange and harmonious psalm, which sounded shrill and discordant throughout the edifice. The Ministers of the Servian Prince, Mr. de Fonblanque the British Consul-General), and the official persons of the Austrian and French Embassies were present in brilliant costume. The ceremony being over, the Archbishop marched up to the dais, and delivered an exhortation to his flock to be moderate in their mode of life, and in the direction of the affairs which they might have under their charge. He returned, and two priests then advanced to the dais, and delivered – the first a prayer for the health of Abdul-Medjid, the Sultan, and the second a prayer for Alexander, prince of Servia. As the priests retired, I observed an extraordinary movement amongst assembled crowd. It seemed as if some remarkable circumstance had occurred; and, in truth, it appeared that it was so. The usual prayer for the Russian Emperor had been omitted on this occasion. The first emotion caused by this circumstance having subsided, the crowd quietly poured out of the various gates of the church.

A few sagacious people suppose that the desires of the Servian Government have been only thus obeyed by the Archbishop, in order that he may have an excuse for specially sending up a prayer for the Czar on St. Nicholas Day next approaching; but the utmost endeavours are being made to make the Servian clergy abandon this design.

One word about rumours which are current in England respecting Servia. It is not true that the Servian Government has requested the return to Belgrade of Mr. Monkhim (Muchin), the Russian Consul. That gentleman is at Semlin, suffering from chilblains – a remarkable affliction for a Northern. Meanwhile, although the Russian flag is struck from mast before the Consular dwelling, and the arms are taken down, still the colours are painted, and remain as an emblem on what may now be called symbolically the bare pole.<sup>12</sup>

There is no truth in the statement of an engagement on the Servian frontier. The various stories of that kind are mere inventions.

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<sup>12</sup> The Russian Consul-general Tumanskey was by all criteria among the most influential persons in Serbia at the beginning of 1853. His successor Muchin soon was ordered to leave Serbia and to go to neighboring Zemun (Semlin). Even though it was seen as ominous and fateful, the withdrawal was approved as a consequence of the Russian decision to respect Serbian neutrality.

## THE WAR ON THE DANUBE

(‘The Illustrated London news’, 14. January 1854, p, 34-35)  
(From our special Correspondent)

Negotin, Dec. 25.

There are two ways in summer leading from the Austrian frontier at Semlar (Semlin, Zemun) to the Turkish at Widdin: the first short and agreeable, the second long and fatiguing. In winter, however, there is no choice. The navigation of the Danube, so agreeable and so varied by splendid scenery, is interrupted by the frost, and the traveller who seeks to journey into Turkey must perforce consent to undergo the long privations of a land journey. These privations are very much increased by the mountainous formation of the country through which it is necessary to pass, and by the natural impediments superadded of snow, ice and fog. It was not, therefore, without considerable preparation that your Correspondent started from Belgrade on a journey crossing Servia, and on a route encompassed by alps of considerable height. The roads, it was well known, were execrable in good weather. What might they not be after snow had lain upon them? Inns, it was equally certain, there were none – at least in the European sense of the word. It was, therefore, politic to carry, besides the usual baggage and complement of fur pelisses, a coverlet to sleep on, tea, knives and forks and spoons, napkins, and provisions.

A hurricane was blowing at Belgrade on the 16<sup>th</sup> of December. The snow had fallen thick throughout the night, and but little chance appeared of change. It was, therefore, under unpromising auspices that the little party of horsemen composing our expedition left Belgrade behind. Perhaps, under more favourable circumstances, the sight of the semi-Turkish city in its prominent position on

the promontory that commands the Danube and the Save might have been picturesque and beautiful. The sight of minarets intermixed with Christian steeples is not a spectacle that leaves the mind long unimpressed. The struggle of the Crescent and the Cross is manifest externally; the Turk and the Christian mingling in the streets, and scowling at each other. All this is present to the mind. But snow and wind, with its accompaniments, soon derive attention from all, except from one's self; and traveller, shivering, turns his back on Belgrade, and commences the ascent of the rents in the dusky clouds the square towers of a ruined Roman castle. The Crescent and the Cross vanish for a moment, and dim visions of Imperial legions guarding Servian passes rise before eye. By the time the ideas thus raised and dwelt on are replaced by others, a village is in sight, consisting of small, low houses, made of wood and mud, and covered with the branching straw of Indian corn. Each little cottage, with its dirty yard and oxen, its watchful dog and gobbling geese, nestles separately, in the midst of orchards surrounded by wooden palisades, six or seven feet in height. In the centre of the place is the inn where the horses and their riders park together and take refreshments. There are but two apertures in the common inn of Servia: through the first the traveller enters, and through the second the smoke of a blazing fire makes its exit. In truth, the houses of Servian villages, like those in the Highlands of Scotland, are more like chimneys than anything else. The fire and the smoke are such paramount necessities, that all is sacrificed to them. Round the cheerful logs that blaze in the midst, the Servian squats and sips. With his complement of saucepans the *meiandjiah* makes the coffee of the guests, or boils the beans, which are the only fare obtainable in days of fast. Hanging in festoons along the sides are hides of oxen, seep, and pigs, in various stages of smoke and preservation. Higher up the chimney are lines of strips of beef; and straggling everywhere, on pegs, and poles, and nails, the fat of hogs and wedders is suspended till the day of marketing. In the midst of smoke which emanates not only from the blazing logs, but from the pipes of every person in the place, the martial figure of the Tartar, with moustache and arms, the far less handsome uniform of the Europeans; and the stalking innkeeper, with red cap and white apron, and his store of knives stuck in his belt, are but dimly visible, and look like visions of the Brocken. Such is a truthful sketch of the first Servian inn I entered – a picture which may be found repeated throughout the length and breadth of the country.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> The Author probably passed Little Vracar (nowadays the Vracar hill), reached Avala Mountain where an old Turkish fortress existed and proceeded to Grocka.



Serbian Inn

Grotshka, on the map, seems no great distance from Belgrade. The road, however, was so bad that it was dark before we reached it. The inn had one advantage, which the first we visited had not: it had a stove and window; and when the door was opened, a score of swineherds, drovers, and peasants were dimly visible on the raised dais, which forms the sleeping place for all. On this a Turk was squatting, and quietly enjoying a narghile. Around him were the drowsy forms of sleepy peasants; the cunning figure of the Sinza trader peered amidst the smoke; and the meijandjiah was quietly making coffee amidst the noise and uproar.

It may be well to remind the traveller who visits Servia that, for five weeks before Christmas-day and for seven before Easter, the Greek Church enacts a fast from everything but fish and vegetables. Accordingly, at Grotshka, beans and *paprikatsch* (a peppery soup of salted fish) was all the food that could be had. We rejoiced that some excellent *saucissons de Lyons*, a cold roast turkey, and sardines, from Bordeaux, were part of our stores, which enabled us to eke out the miserable Servian fare. But it was with a still more pleasurable sense that we laid out our well-prepared bed upon the boards of the inn, when we discovered that there were no separate rooms for travellers, and no beds to be had in Servia. There is no denying that sleeping in one room, in company of twenty others, is a practice to which more civilised Europeans do not at first become reconciled. There is no general *esprit de convenance* which makes the silence on which sleep depends imperative. Those who fall asleep at six perhaps will rise at three, whilst others who go to roost at nine will possibly be up as late as six. There is, therefore, no single instant of silence or repose. Those who are accustomed to it, however, sleep in spite of noise. The only quiet and noiseless things about, are one or two varieties of the insect species, who are as indefatigable in their attacks as the noise ceaseless. A Servian inn affords you every day what Punch's<sup>14</sup> Eastern Correspondent has gracefully called an Arabian Night's Entertainment. "Late to bed, early to rise," is the result of such discomforts. The Servians and Turks, whose skins are hardened from early youth to every species of insect attack, gets up as fresh as I would get up from a bed at Long's. The former, as they rise, devoutly say their "cospodi pomilni", bow down their heads as they make three times the sign of the cross, and depart on their errands; the Turks, more cleanly, wash themselves. And thus the scene is renewed each night and morning.

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<sup>14</sup> *Punch* was a very popular humorous magazine during the Victorian period.

Early dawn saw us on the road to Semendria (Smederevo). The way for a time remained as dull as that from Belgrade to Grotshka; but as the sun appeared above the hills, the Danube came in sight, its frozen surface glistening in the rays, whilst behind it, in the limpid atmosphere, lay the plains of the Banat and the mountains of Weisskirchen (Bela Crkva). If you have seen from Klostunenburg, above Vienna, the hills that form the gorge in which the town of Pressburg lies, then may you have a faint idea of the distant view from Grotshka of the mountains of Weisskirchen.<sup>15</sup> There, not many years ago, a series of fearful engagements marked the quarrels of the Servians and the Hungarians. Weisskirchen, a strongly-fortified town, was taken and retaken twice. This quarrel between the Servians and Hungarians was a strange one. Previous to the break-out of the war between Austria and Hungary there had been the Magyars and the Croats, on the Banat, on a question of education.<sup>16</sup> The Hungarians were desirous of imposing upon the Croats their language. This the Croats resisted, and they were numbered during the revolution amongst the enemies of Hungary. The Servians, whose antipathy to Austria is very great, were ready to join the Magyars; and many of their chiefs were at Pesth when the Hungarian army was at the gates of Vienna. But, here, again, a false policy was pursued by the Magyar leaders, and the Servians were alienated by the same assumption which had deprived Hungary of the sympathy of the Croat. The more politic Servians, whilst refusing to be absorbed in the Hungarian nationality, determined some to return to their homes, others to fight the Austrians in Italy. Austria, however with considerable cleverness, fomented the quarrel of the Servians and Hungarians, and then obtained well-timed assistance from the former. Hence the battles of Weisskirchen, which rank amongst the sharpest and best-contested of the Hungarian struggle.

There is nothing so free or inspiring as a glorious sunrise; and none was ever more so than on the occasion of our leaving Grotshka. At the foot of the Servian hills, which reared their forms to an enormous height upon the right,

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<sup>15</sup> The Serbs and Hungarians were engaged in several battles near Bela Crkva during November and December of 1848. Struggles in near villages Tomaševac, Alibunar and Jarkovac suffered a heavy toll as well.

<sup>16</sup> The author himself was not quite sure what the regions was he looked at: thus he considered it as logical that Serbs lived in Slavonia (the Land of Slavs) which was situated westward, while in Banat certain Croats (who composed less than 5% of the population) allegedly had fought the “well known” struggle for educational autonomy.



and casting bright reflections on the frozen Danube, towered the countless squares of the Roman fortress of Semandria<sup>17</sup>; impregnable possibly at the period of the battering –ram, but of little use at present, though containing a small garrison. A pity it would be to see this stately edifice and splendid reminiscence destroyed by modern cannon-balls. Behind the fortress, and far away to left, were stretched the ample folds of the Austrian landscape. The winter wind had not yet robbed the Servian oaks of their withered leaves; the sharp northern gusts had drifted almost all the snow into holes and gullies; the plains of the Banat, brown with reeds, lay broad and majestic in the morning sun, and the light blue hills in the distance formed a nob(1)e picture. What a contrast between the great remains of the Roman conquerors and the humble wooden, broad-brimmed, red-tiled, rickety cottages of the Servians. Of such the town of Semandria is entirely composed. There is but one house in the town that has more than a ground floor, and that belongs to a minister. Yet Semendria is a large trading city, trough which the cotton traffic of Turkey passes on its way to Trieste.<sup>18</sup> It furnishes with fish, caught in the Danube, almost half of Servia; and exports hides, tallow, and lard to foreign countries. It is in Semandria, also, that one begins to see real Servian peasant women. One rarely finds them about on the roads as they keep very much at home; but here they were marketing and bargaining at the little shops, in highly picturesque attire. Their white woollen robes are embroidered with blue and red list; they wear the sandal with a brown and red stocking; a white or red drapery hangs from the back of specials of comb or crown, adorned with silver, and sometimes golden coins; and collars of the same pieces adorn their necks. It is computed that in this species of ornament the Servian women altogether possess upwards of 10,000,000 f.; a sacred fund, which is never touched except in times of war and peril, and when it becomes imperative to defend the national independence.<sup>19</sup> The custom first arose apparently at the time of

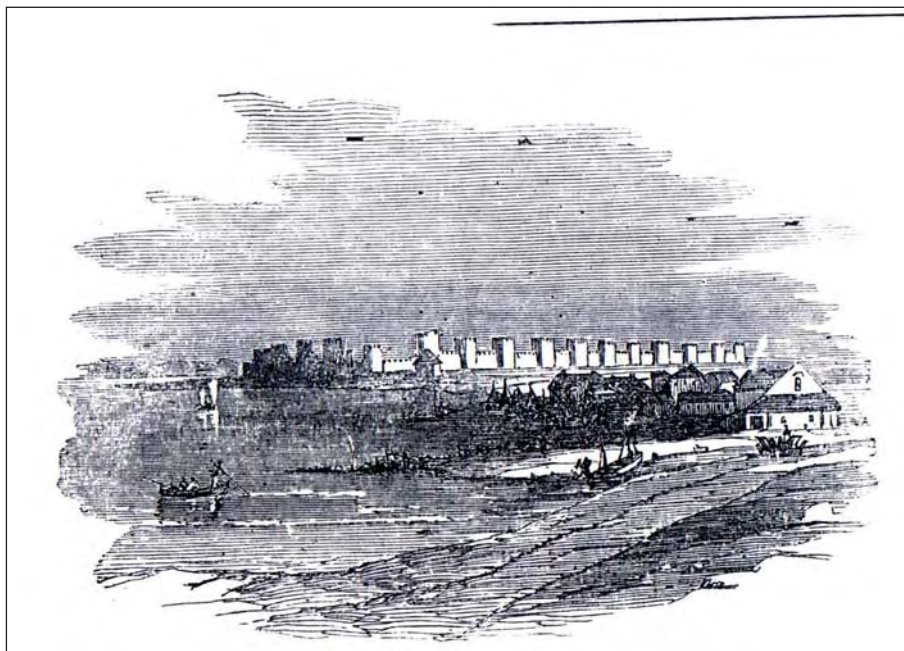
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<sup>17</sup> Smederevo (Semendria) was built between 1437 and 1430, when Despot Djuradj Branković ruled over Serbia.

<sup>18</sup> Trajan Stojanović argues that Serbia with low protectionist customs as part of the united Ottoman market and due to the fortunate circumstance that her fleet composed of small ships did not have the competition of bigger steam-boats which were not able to pass the Djerdap gorge, flourished before the 1870's, T. Stojanović, *The Balkan World – The First and The Last Europe*, Belgrade 1997.

<sup>19</sup> The source of this estimate remained unknown. It was by all means a significant sum of money, at least when a rural population is in the case. If it is correct





Smederevo

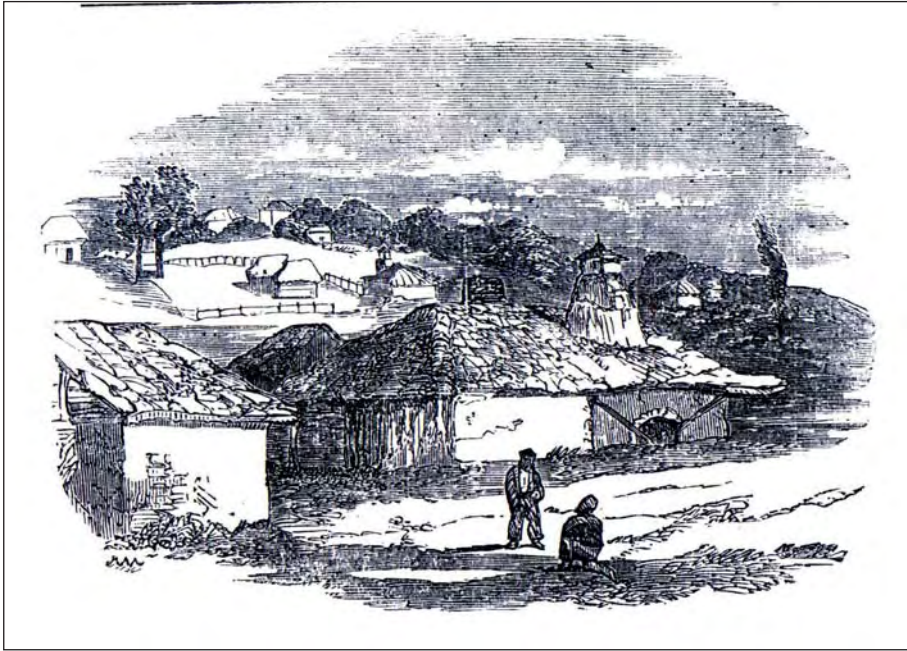
the Turkish inroads, the Osmanlies generally respecting the property on the persons of on the persons of women, who thus became the safest repositories for Servian savings.

Pojarewacs (Požarevac), remarkable, perhaps, for little more than that its name is given to a well-known treaty with the Turks, is the second sleeping station on the road from Belgrade.<sup>20</sup> From thence the country gradually rises

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that means that every fifth Serb women had on her chests a yearly income of an average inhabitant of Serbia. Nevertheless, in comparison with Western Europe that sum was not so huge. Thus just the tourists who visited Paris during then ten days long visit of Queen Victoria in 1855 spent significantly bigger sum of money.

<sup>20</sup> The Pozarevac Peace Treaty was concluded in 1718 between Austria and the Ottoman Empire. From 1718 to 1739 the north-western parts of Serbia with Belgrade were part of the Habsburg Empire.



Serbian Village

till the road entwines itself amongst the gorges of the valley of Pek; whose precipitous sides barely give passage to the bullock-carts of the Servian peasantry. The magpies no longer peck their food from off the backs of swine; the trees no longer crowd the landscape, transformed into incipient hayricks, for in the lowlands the oaks appear to serve two purposes – the acorns feed the swine, and the twisted boughs are laden with the hay from the broad-leaved maize; but snow and ice are closely packed around, the mountains which soar above one on each side are peopled by bears, and the rocks are rich in lead and iron. The road through the gorges of the Pek is generally in the bed of the river, and it seemed an inviting place for a brigand attack; but this is in Servia never known. The people, bristling as they are with arms, their shining pistols and horn-hilted knives sticking out of their belts, are peaceful when they are not engaged against a foreign enemy. Their swine feed the recesses of the forest,

and afford them ample revenue. The land is rich in the yield of wheat and maize, and scarcely requires tilling; the population is thin, and here, certainly, "there is room enough for all." The valley of the Pek opens as one ascends, its course until the village of Kruchenitza (Krušenica) is reached, where one eats and sleeps in the usual unsatisfactory manner. The weather, which until we reached Semandria had been cold, became milder, and was quite genial in the valley of the Pek; and it was under a pure and almost cloudless sky in Neresnitza (Neresnica), at the foot of a high range of mountains, was passed. From thence the road begins the ascend, and winds through the gorges of the chain of mountains, which, where they extend into Turkey, are called the Balkan. The mildness of the weather was very deceptive, however. Although on the plain below the snow was well nigh melted, and the sky was pure, we were not long to enjoy those advantages. The wind, as we advanced, appeared to sigh amongst the beeches; then the darkness of thick clouds enveloped us and the landscape. The snow under foot became higher, the fog drifting through the trees suspended to their branches large crystalline formations, which, dropping on the road, formed a rough and slippery medium. The horses' hoofs gradually sunk deeper and deeper, and soon a snow-drift appeared in sight, which it became evident it was impossible to pass. In vain attempts were made to turn this obstacle. The way was along the crest of a hog-backed mountain, and precipitous descents on both sides prevented all further passage. This most provoking barrier put an end to all hopes of reaching Widdin through the pass of Maidampek; and, necessity compelling our horses' heads (not reluctantly as regard them) were turned, and after dark the village of Neresnitza, with its humble inn, was welcomed with considerable pleasure.

Rather than return to Pojarewacs – from which another and longer road leads to Widdin – it was determined to strike across country, and join the road some distance forward. A guide, in the shape of the master of the inn at Neresnitza, promised to see us in safety through the cross road, but decamped after seeing us to Milnitza, a village composed of mixed Wallach and Servians. The whole of this portion of Servia is thus composed; and the Greek cap of the native is diversified by the sheep-skin covering of the Wallach. It is only since 1833. that this portion of the country has formed part of Servia, and has become independent.<sup>21</sup> The people then were still rayahs, and retain in part the sullen manner of the Christian subjects of the Porte. The Servians are

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<sup>21</sup> It was then, that the six south-eastern districts (nahija) that had been part of Serbia until 1813 were annexed to Serbia again.

hospitable to a degree. At Schetoh (Šetonje), a little village where it became necessary at night to repose, the largest house (which is the hall of justice) was heated and prepared for our repose, there being no sleeping-place in the tavern of the place; and your Correspondent was served at dinner by the Mayor of the village, and attended by the *birov*, or policeman, who punctually came in to keep the fire up and to attend to his wants; and, further on, during the day, a second curious instance of the hospitable feeling was witnessed at a village. On passing a house, and asking the way, the master rushed out, accompanied by a priest and almost all his relatives. Each of them clamoured to have the honour of dragging us in to eat and drink at their expense. "Have some fish," said the master of the house; "Take wine," said the priest; "A bottle of raki," said a third; and so the chorus went round. But we refused these kind offers, left our half tipsy yet hospitable friends, and with difficulty escaped from a score of similar invitations from each house in the village. Two young men, as we went forth into the fields, were the last who cried "Take wine, take raki;" and our horses were put to speed to avoid their kind intentions. It seems that this was the anniversary of the patron saint of the village, and during three days feasting is the order of the day; and it is esteemed a special advantage to have to have strangers at the board.<sup>22</sup> The priest, on these occasions, generally honours the feast with his presence. He is generally an humble man, paid chiefly by the proceeds of, marriage ceremonies, baptisms, and burials, who earning a little theology at Belgrade, is sent by the Archbishop to his native village, where he at first acts as curate, and then succeeds his rector. The influence of the priest appeared to me to be considerable; if one may judge of this from the respect paid him by his parishioners, who kiss his hand, and pay him other marks of respect at his approach. In Russia it is not so the *pope*, or priest, is an object rather of ridicule than respect; but there he belongs to a country differently constituted from Servia. The priests in this country have asked to be entrusted with the right of education; but, as there is great jealousy of Russia, and as the Czar is protector of the Greek religion, the Servians refuse to allow their priests to meddle in the teaching of their children. In the primary schools – of which there are great numbers – there are lay teachers, and the priest comes every

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<sup>22</sup> It was "Krsna slava", the village's Saint protector celebration day very specific for Serbian religious culture, see Л. Димитријевић, *Како наш народ живи*, Београд 1893./L. Dimitrijevic, *How Does Our People Lives*, Belgrade 1893./

Sunday to give what religious instruction he may.<sup>23</sup> The priests are appointed by the Archbishop of Belgrade, who himself is nominated by the Senate and Prince in conjunction.

Popowitz (Popovac), on the main road to Negotin, was ultimately reached in safety; and Chuprier (Ćuprija), a large town on the Moldava (the Morava river), was a resting-place for the night. The road then leads to Krivivir (Krivi Vir), and across the mountains to Bohowacs (Boljevac). Here the snow rendered the road again hardly possible. The hurricane which blew at Belgrade on the day of our departure had filled the roads with snow, uprooted scores of large trees which had fallen crossways, and whose boughs impeded travelling. Three days elapsed before we came in sight of Zaichar (Zaječar), and then an open road brought us to our present quarters in Negotin.

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<sup>23</sup> At the end of the Crimean War some Constantinople newspapers mentioned Serbia as an example how Christian education could flourish under the Ottoman Empire. However, comments in *Србски дневник /Serbian Daily/* were right when they argued that the advance of education in Serbia was rather the consequence of the inability of the Porte.

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3. *Ralph Paget: Life of a Diplomat*, (The Institute for Balkan Studies, Serbian Academy of Science and Arts: Belgrade, 2006)

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Serbian		English Phonetic
A	А а	A
B	Б б	B
V	В в	V
G	Г г	G
D	Д д	D
Dj dj	Ђ ђ	Dy
E	Е е	E
Žž	Ж ж	Zh
Z	З з	Z
I	И и	I
J	Ј ј	Y
K	К к	K
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Great Britain, Serbia and the Crimean War

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