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Aleksandra Kolaković¹
Institute for Political Studies
Belgrade

– Road to Great War – Serbian Intellectuals and Austro-Hungarian Policy in the Balkans (1894–1914)

Abstract

The generation of Serbian Intellectuals who were active in the political and public life of Serbia at the turn of 19th and 20th century were considering problems of maintaining the attained independence of Serbia, a search for reliable support in foreign policy, integration of the nation and further economic, social, and cultural development. In the Europe characterized with complex relationships between the great powers, ambitious imperialist plans, instability and conflicts which were leading to the Great War (1914–1918), the Serbian intelligentsia, prevalingly educated in European university centers, was striving to find ways of accomplishing the idea of liberation and unification. The change of orientation in Serbian foreign policy, which began in the last decade of 19th century and was definitely confirmed with the raise of the Karadjordjević Dynasty to the Serbian throne (1903), was a manifestation of the need of Serbian politicians and intellectuals to facilitate liberation from economic dependence, development of the state and the national idea, by edging away from the reliance on Austria-Hungary. From the Congress of Berlin (1878), via the Customs War (1906–1911), the Annexation Crisis (1908) and the Balkan Wars (1912–1913), the interest of Serbian intellectuals in the policy of Austria-Hungary in the Balkans was growing and intermingling with issues of the overall further

¹ Research Assistant
kolakovicaleksandra@gmail.com

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development of Serbia. The aim of this paper is to shed a light onto the origins and development of the interest and the thinking of Serbian intellectuals regarding the policy and interests of Austria-Hungary in the Balkans in the period which immediately preceded World War I. The attitudes and thoughts of Serbian intellectuals which were published in periodicals (the Serbian Literary Gazette /Srpski književni glasnik/ and the Work /Delo/), press, brochures and books, are viewed in the context of Austro-Hungarian imperial thrust into the Balkans, which started with the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and was definitely confirmed with the act of annexation and war plans. The efforts of Austria-Hungary to control the entire Balkans and occupy its central areas have also been studied in light of the confrontation between the two blocs of European powers, perception of the place of the Serbs and Serbia in the complicated international relations of the time, as well as in light of development of the Yugoslav idea, which was present among Serbian intellectuals prior to World War I.

Keywords: Serbian intellectuals, Serbia, Austria-Hungary, the Balkans, the late 19th and early 20th century, the Great War (1914–1918).

Serbian Intellectuals at Start of 20th Century

At the turn of 19th and 20th century, Serbian intellectuals were facing great challenges of preservation and further development of the Serbian state in the complicated international relations of the epoch of imperialism. The important feature of development of the Serbian state at the turn of 19th and 20th century was manifested through a powerful influence of the educated elite in political and social life (Grol 1939: 9–15; Radojević, Dimić 2014: 29–30). The periods of crises (turbulence and persecution in the Old Serbia – in Kosovo and Metohija, as well as in Macedonia, the Customs War, the Annexation Crisis, the Friedjung Process and the Balkan Wars) at the start of 20th century did not hinder cultural and intellectual development of Serbia. The number of educated Serbs increased with the progress of trade and industrialisation, through upgrading of the school system and planned sending of state protégés to foreign schools (Nemanjić 2001: 67). The belief in the importance of education and the state intervention in assisting the education of individuals who lacked financial means, resulted in the creation of a citizen ready to embrace and affirm the ideas of the epoch. Since the end of 19th century already, Serbian scholars and artists were successfully collaborating with their European colleagues, promoting their country at the same time. They published their views on the contemporary foreign policy issues, as well as the views of their European colleagues –

in periodicals, in the press, in brochures and in books. In this way, their ideas were paving the roads of further progress of the Serbian state, culture and nation.

The building of a modern Serbian state and the accomplishment of Serbian national objectives were priority tasks of Serbian intellectuals in the end of 19th and in the beginning of 20th century. By establishing national institutions – National Theatre (1869), Serbian Royal Academy (1886), Serbian Literary Association (1892), and other, foundations were laid for the first original scientific contributions in Serbian society. The most significant portion of educated Serbs were belonging to the generation which was educated or which gained higher education in European cultural centres. About 70% of the autochthonous Serbian intellectuals were educated within the three cultural circles: French, Central European and Russian (Trgovčević 2003: 44). Their knowledge and the ties they established during their studies enabled the Serbian society to build a state apparatus, reinforce the state and start the struggle for achievement of national objectives. The majority of the most prominent Serbian politicians and statesmen were educated in France and Switzerland in the end of 19th and the beginning of 20th century (Pavlović 2001: 159). Vienna and German university centres (Halle, Leipzig, Jena, Berlin and Munich) were the favourite studying sites up until 1905. France was given advantage only since 1913-1914, but Paris had had a special allure for Serbian students even before that time, because it was ‘far from the absolutist regime of Austria’ (Pavlović 1987: 189). In the second half of 19th century, it was customary for a student from Serbia to finalise his/her education in Paris, after the completion of graduate studies in Berlin or Heidelberg. Paris had therefore become the most important university centre for Serbs by the beginning of 20th century, which also coincided with political rapprochement to France (Bataković 1997: 73–95; Trgovčević 2003: 60). Due to education in a number of countries, Serbian intellectuals developed a more selective approach to foreign influences and they affected the influx of pluralist tendencies in Serbian culture.

At the start of 20th century, Serbia had 11,750 citizens with university education, out of whom there were 1,195 freelancers; however, if only those who exercised influence on public life through their activities and public engagement, are counted, their number would be 232

(Trgovčević 1996: 262).² In the *La Belle Époque* period, spiritual and intellectual views of Serbian intellectuals educated in Europe were in harmony with the norms of modern European civilisation. The Serbs educated in European cultural centres assumed important positions in the state apparatus, and in schools; they were founders of various associations and initiators of journals. The most important journals in which Serbian intellectuals were publishing their literary, scientific, as well as political works were the *Serbian Literary Gazette* and the *Work* (Palavestra 1992: 17–22; Ković 2001: 595–628; Ković 2003a: 363–378; Ković 2003b: 404–418; Kolaković 2010: 129–148). By integrating their professions with their political activities, Serbian intellectuals were leaving the boundaries of the sciences they studied. They were striving to aid and support educational and cultural elevation of Serbs – and not only of those in Serbia, but also of those living outside the motherland. The Serbian intellectuals involved in politics were organised in political parties (the Liberals, the Progressives, the Radicals, the Independent, the Socialists) (Nemanjić 2008: 43). They originated from different ideological and notional frameworks and they had different views upon foreign policy. It could therefore be said that the generation of Serbian intellectuals ahead of World War I (1914–1918) was heterogeneous in every aspect (Trgovčević 2003: 33). Still, the Serbian intellectuals at the start of 20th century were united behind the same objective – to steer the social and cultural development of Serbia towards a formation of the integrity of national identity and national consciousness (Palavestra 1986: 24–25)

Shift in Serbian Foreign Policy – Distancing from Austria-Hungary

Pursuant to the decisions of the Congress of Berlin in 1878, Serbia gained independence, and it was declared a Kingdom in 1882. However, its international position remained difficult. The Old Serbia (Raška, Kosovo and Metohija, Northern Macedonia) and Bosnia and Herzegovina still remained outside the Serbian borders, while – in accordance with the decisions of the Congress of Berlin, Austria-Hungary received the governance over Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the so-called Kállay's regime was instituted soon (Čubrilović 1982: 272; Kraljačić 1987; Ekmečić 1989: 330). Due to the policy of King Mi-

2 *Popis stanovništva u Kraljevini Srbiji, 31. decembar 1900. godine, drugi deo sa tri kartograma i tri dijagrama*, Beograd 1905, CCV.

lan Obrenović (1882–1889) and the signing of the Trade Agreement and the Secret Convention in 1881, Serbia became vastly dependent on Austria-Hungary, both politically and economically (Ljušić 2001: 181–182; Rajić 2009: 43–58). Serbia took upon itself to pursue a foreign policy in accord with Austro-Hungarian interests, which entailed abandoning the Serbian interests in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Only Prince Milan Obrenović, Prime Minister Milutin Garašanin and Minister of Foreign Affairs Čedomilj Mijatović knew of the Secret Convention. When it became publicly known in the end of 19th century, the prevailing public opinion in Serbia was that renouncing the right to pursue independent foreign policy considerably compromised the state sovereignty (Radojević, Dimić 2014: 12). At the turn of the centuries, assessments of the decisions and consequences of the Congress of Berlin and the Secret Convention also prompted the reviewing of the Serbian foreign policy course. The prevailing sentiment among the Serbs with regard to consequences of the Congress of Berlin could be illustrated by the judgement written by one of the most prominent Serbian scholar, Jovan Cvijić, who – in the period of Annexation Crisis, when Serbia had already changed its foreign policy course, and when the plans of Germanic push to the South had been apparent, wrote the following: ‘There is no state in Europe which would have so distinctively bad economic position as Serbia got it at the Congress of Berlin. After this Congress, Serbia virtually became an almost besieged country, and we became arrested people’ (Cvijić 1908: 8).

The first attempt in making a move away from Austria-Hungary was encouraged by the intellectuals assembled around the Radical Party (Krestić and Ljušić 1991; Protić 2007, 189).³ The conclusion of

³ National Radical Party or the Radical Party was founded on 21 January 1881 when its political programme was published in the party newspaper *Samouprava* (Self-Government). Its motto ‘Intra-national welfare and freedom, external state independence and liberation, and unification of other parts of the Serbian nation’ summed up the most important objectives of the programme. Constitutional reform; strengthening of the legislative power of the Assembly; simplified administration, the abolition of counties and the introduction of local self-government in districts and municipalities; progressive taxation; a people’s army; general, compulsory and free education; support to the as yet unliberated Serbs; laws on the freedom of the press, public assembly and association, personal and property safety, those were the goals aspired for by the Radicals led by Nikola Pašić, one of the most important political figures in the history of modern Serbia. The Radical leaders were Swiss-educated (Nikola Pašić) or trained only at Serbian schools (Stojan Protić), their ideological core was made up in France (Milovan Milovanović). The Radical movement in Serbia functioned as a bridge between European ideas and the Serbian realities.

the Franco-Russian Alliance (1893) prompted Serbian intellectuals to concentrate on analysing relations with the great powers and defining Serbian expectations in view of the alliance of Russia and France. With strong ties to Russia and to the French Radicals at the same time, the Radical Party circles received the news of the Franco-Russian Alliance coming into effect (1894) with great jubilation (Protić 1990). The idealist expectations with regard to the Franco-Russian Alliance were expressed by Serbian intellectuals in a number of original texts, academic publications as well as in translations of texts from European press which spoke in favour of the support of the above-mentioned Alliance to Slavic peoples. In the Work, which was initiated by the Serbian elites close to the Radical Party, the conclusion of the Franco-Russian Alliance was greeted with jubilation and with the conclusion that a balance in Europe was regained.⁴ Initiated by the Radicals, the standpoint that putting the Serbian issue on European agenda and its resolving could be achieved by relying on Russia and France, was gradually gaining followers among the wider Serbian public.

Since the end of 19th century, the Serbian elite – divided in a number of political parties, among which the Radicals had the crucial influence on political life of the country, was increasingly resolutely advocating the standpoint on the need of distancing from Austria-Hungary (Vojvodić 1999: 217–218). The weakening of authority of the Obrenović Dynasty, the conflict of King Milan with the Radical Party and the increase of popularity of the Radical Party, were gradually creating pre-conditions for a shift of Serbian foreign policy (Vojvodić 1999: 62–63; Kovačević 2004: 213–221; Vojvodić 2007: 190; Rajić 2009: 43–58). The arrival of Albert Malet in Belgrade in 1892, to be engaged as a professor to the future Serbian King, Aleksandar Obrenović, in the period when Nikola Pašić was the Prime Minister, had a clear political background and a support of the French Radicals, with the aim of neutralising the Austro-Hungarian and reinforcing the French influence in Serbia.⁵ The first gradual move towards Russia and the West European countries – France before all, began with the Government of Stojan Novaković, from the Progressive Party, in 1895 (Vojvodić 1988: 153–155; Rajić 2010: 137–166). A politician of conservative orientation, Novaković

4 *Delo*, book 1(1894), 183.

5 Archives des Ministère des Affaires étrangères, Paris (AMAE), Correspondance politique, Serbie, vol. 13, tel. № 65, Paris 12juillet1892; V. Tambourini, „Un Français en Serbie”, *Le Figaro*, 10 mai 1893.

turned towards France, an important factor of supporting the economic development of Serbia. At the same time, he believed it would lead towards gaining its diplomatic support.⁶ With the shift of the foreign policy support to Russia and France, Serbian intellectuals were also pointing out the necessity of finding common grounds with the other Balkan countries, as a key to further activities.⁷ However, the development of international relations was not in harmony with the needs of Serbia. Russia and France did not wish the raising of the Eastern Issue, but rather a preservation of the status quo in the Balkans.

Economic pressure exercised by Austria-Hungary resulted in the fall of Novaković's Government, and King Milan, as the commander of active army, returned to the country, together with the pro-Austrian Government of Vladan Djordjević.⁸ Nevertheless, since the marriage of King Aleksandar with Draga Mašin, in July 1900, King Milan retreated from the political life of Serbia which created conditions a policy of approaching Russia and cooling the relations with Austria-Hungary (Jovanović 1990, 195, 198, 200–204, 221–242, 262, 276, 286, 338, 353, 359–364). At the same time, the Serbian state was attempting to get closer ties with France; however, Novaković, Serbian envoy to Paris in 1900, reported that apart from 'local issues' and a couple of colonial ones, 'no political agenda was pursued in Paris at all'.⁹ Still, the Government of Mihailo Vujić was actively working on gaining Russian and French support during 1901, in the matter of construction of the Adriatic Railway, which would have eliminated the frequent obstructions to the Serbian trade and the isolation of Serbia imposed by Austria-Hungary (Vojvodić 1999: 152).¹⁰

As the battles were fought in the field of diplomacy, Serbian intellectuals were also observing the standpoints of European, before all of the French intellectuals on Austria-Hungary. The books of Charles Loiseau and André Chéradame drew special attention.¹¹ Loiseau's idea on the unity of South Slavs which appeared in the book *Slavic Balkans and*

6 "Jedan srpski ministarski program (1895)", *Nedeljni pregled*, № 6 (43), 8. februar 1909, 84–87.

7 M. Milovanović, "Istočno pitanje", *Delo*, book 3 (1894), 427–429.

8 Arhiv Srbije (AS), MID, PO, 1899, f. X, d. II, pov. № 3152, S. Novaković – V. Djordjević, Carigrad, 21. oktobar 1899.

9 AS, MID, PO, 1900, f. III, d. I, pov. № 1046, S. Novaković – V. Djordjević, 11. april 1900.

10 DDF, II, 1, Desportes de la Fossé à Delcassé, Belgrade, le 14 mars 1901.

11 *Srpski književni glasnik*, book 2 (1901).

Austrian Crisis (1898) instigated the idea of the necessity of creating one nation, which would be an ally of France and a powerful barrier against the thrust of Germany to the East. Loiseau's views were greeted with momentous approval among Serbian intellectuals. Hence, one of the first works presented in the Serbian Literary Gazette by Serbian politician, lawyer and historian Slobodan Jovanović, was Loiseau's Adriatic Equilibrium.¹²In Europe and Austrian Problem at Start of 20th Century, Chéradame indicated the internal problems of Austria-Hungary, its relying on Germany, the development of Pan-Germanic plans and a possible route of German push to the East, which would lead across the Balkans. Serbian intellectuals found confirmations of their views in the quoted works, as well as conceptual incentives for further analyses of relations with Austria-Hungary, which led to a definite shift of foreign policy at the start of 20th century, beginning with the dynastic upheaval in Serbia (1903) and the taking of the throne by Petar Karadjordjević (Vojvodić 1999: 225).

Serbs and Austro-Hungarian 'Civilising Mission' in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Facing the end of the Ottoman power in the Balkans and strengthening of the Serbian state, in its endeavour to reduce the Russian influence, Austria-Hungary secured the right to occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina at the Congress of Berlin. The head of administration in the occupied Bosnia and Herzegovina was Governor Benjamin Kállay, the former Austrian Consul to Belgrade (1870) (Ćorović 1939: 31–42). Although Kállay had learnt Serbian and written an affirmative history of Serbia in 1880's, he did not show much understanding for the Serbs as the Governor of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He established a regime of denationalisation, i.e. creating one unique – Bosnian nation. The Kállay's regime involved a strict control by the police, who were 'suspicious of everyone, constantly spying; there were places – luckily not many of them, where almost one third of the population were engaged in spying; he had an entire system of little resources on his disposal which he would use to spread fear, exercise pressure, provoke, kill any free movement and

12 N., "Charles Loiseau Les chemins de fer du Balkan occidental", *Srpski književni glasnik*, book 2 (1901), 395–396; N., "Charles Loiseau. La question du Simplon", *Srpski književni glasnik*, book 4 (1901), 470–480; S. Jovanović, "Ravnoteža na Jadranskom Moruod Šarla Loazoa, 1901", *Srpski književni glasnik*, book 3(1901), 61–67.

often bring individuals or entire groups of population in despair' (Cvijić 1908: 28). One of the primary features of the Austrian administration system in Bosnia and Herzegovina was 'systematic stir of envy between certain elements in the country' (Ćorović 1999: 78).

The terms often used in historiography to describe the Austro-Hungarian administration of Bosnia and Herzegovina were: 'modernisation', 'burden of the white man', and 'Civilising Mission'. The nature of the Austro-Hungarian administration in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been assessed in many ways within the profession (Tomlinson 2002; Said 2008; Todorova, 2006. Tejlor 2001; Ković 2011: 366 – 367). Some professionals see it as a positive process of modernisation and a project of civilising the Balkan population. However, the opinions based on post-colonial theoretical reasoning, which are searching for roots of imperialism and colonialism in art and science, do not agree with such attitudes. Historian Miloš Ković points out that the notion of 'Civilising Mission' in the 'semi-savage' Balkans was used as an ideological rationale for Austro-Hungarian imperial crusades, which the Serbian intellectual circle gathered around the *Serbian Literary Gazette* observed in the first decade of 20th century already (Ković 2011: 367–377). Using the 'Cultural Mission' phrase, Austria-Hungary was concealing plans of exercising a complete influence in the Balkans, in addition to Bosnia and Herzegovina and the areas of Sandžak of Novi Pazar. The extent to which the 'progress of modern civilisation' was brought to Bosnia and Herzegovina can be illustrated by an insight into the data on opening of new schools and numbers of literate people. There were five grammar schools and two secondary modern schools attended by 38% of Orthodox Christian students (Ćorović 1999: 129). By the year 1910, no girls' schools were opened. Literacy courses were banned at the same time, which resulted in 85.9% of illiterate population, while only 351,962 Orthodox Christians out of 800,000 had the opportunity to attend school (Ćorović 1999: 129). Obviously, education – as one of the principal development indicators of a society, was not on the priority list of Austro-Hungarian authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The field of culture was the only possible area of national activity for the Serbs who lived outside Serbia (Ekmečić 1983: 582). Individually, aided by the *Education /Prosveta/ Association*, or by scholarships granted by the Serbian Government, Serbian intellectuals from Bosnia and Herzegovina were educated in European centres (Ćorović 1999:

130). They were investing efforts to contribute to the development of the area in which they were born and to create cultural links with the intellectuals in their motherland. The de-nationalisation pressure, exercised by the *Kállay's regime*, met with resistance of Serbian intellectuals, notably: Aleksa Šantić, Svetozar Ćorović, Jovan Dučić and Atnasije Šola. Since 1895, these intellectuals assumed leadership over the *Gusle* cultural and educational association in Mostar and initiated the *Dawn /Zora/* periodical, which specialised in culture and literature (Ilić 2011: 39, 56). At the same time, the *Bosnian Fairy /Bosanska Vila/*, which had started as a bulletin for educating masses with a limited field of influence, grew into a periodical which reflected the new cultural and political currents by the end of 19th century (Palavestra 2002: 407; Djuričković 1975; Rizvić, 1973). Edited by Nikola Kašiković, in collaboration with Osman Djikić, who was engaged on improving the cultural and educational life of Muslims, despite the persecutions, the periodical managed to outgrow the national boundaries of influence and contribute to the spreading of Yugoslav idea. In the period when literature was the main national activity, through which the middle class was able to determine strategic goals of the entire people, the activities of Serbian intellectuals from Bosnia and Herzegovina were of significant importance in the resistance against the 'Civilising Mission' of Austria-Hungary at the turn of the centuries.

Austro-Hungarian Imperialism and the Serbian Issue

When a group of officers, who did not agree with the policy of King Aleksandar Obrenović and the inferior position of Serbia to Austria-Hungary, carried out the change of dynasties, a definite change in the relations between Austria-Hungary and Serbia ensued. Divided into blocs, the great powers saw the changes in the Balkans, where the Ottoman Empire was counting its last days, as a serious threat to their imperial objectives. Austria-Hungary feared that, led by the Karadjordjević Dynasty and with the dominant political influence of the Radicals and the Independent Radicals, Serbia could become an exponent of the policy of the other bloc of powers – Russia and France, especially in view of the fact that England had abandoned the policy of 'Splendid Isolation' (Radojević, Dimić 2014: 51). The internal problems of Austria-Hungary, caused by the decay of agriculture, and the industrialisation process, which were generating nationalism in

middle classes, determined its foreign policy as well. The conflict with Hungarian nationalism and the development of Yugoslav idea were worrying the ruling elites in Austria-Hungary (Tejlor 2001: 237–239; Bled 1998: 563; Radojević, Dimić 2014: 49–51). Serbia was increasingly emerging as a ‘summoning centre of pro-Yugoslav inclinations, as a brotherly, free and independent state’ (Djordjević 1957: 215). The imperial Balkan campaign of Austria-Hungary, which had gradually been attuned with the German plans of Push to the East, was jeopardised by this, and Serbia became the main enemy.

Planning to destroy the Serbian state, towards which the pro-Yugoslav movements were inclining as to a ‘Provenance of national unification’, Austria-Hungary resorted to discrediting these movements and Serbia and instigating Croatian chauvinism (supporters of Josip Frank and the Croatian Party of Rights)(Radojević, Dimić 2014: 50–51; Krestić 1995: 644–650). Serbian intellectuals recognised this new phase in the fulfilment of Austro-Hungarian plan of assuming control over the entire Balkans and occupying its central areas. The pro-Russian policy of Serbia, championed by the Radicals led by Nikola Pašić, and the insisting of the Independent Radicals on shifting towards West European states in resolving the issues of local and international development additionally confronted the two countries. The intellectuals gathered around the *Serbian Literary Gazette* recognised that the imperialist – conqueror’s ambitions and the pan-Germanic threat were lurking behind the ‘Civilising Mission’ of Austria-Hungary in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the Balkans. After the Münchener Agreement between Austria-Hungary and Russia in 1903, one of them, Kosta Kumanudi, warned that ‘its entire policy has conqueror’s ambitions in itself’.¹³ Already in his student days in Lausanne, the founder of modern Serbian culture, Jovan Skerlić, had encountered theoretical explanations of imperialism and the attitudes of European – before all the French leading scholars, that Austria-Hungary, which had no colonies, was seeing the Balkans as its potential colony, about which Skerlić wrote in the *Serbian Literary Gazette* (Ković 2011: 368–369).¹⁴ Adopting the ‘Western’ cultural matrices, proving the Western cultural identity and the ‘cultural abilities’ became the

13 K. Kumanudi, “Pogled na ulogu Rusije i Austrije u Istočnom Pitanju”, *Srpski književni glasnik*, book 8(1903), 604–605.

14 J. Skerlić, “Omladinski Kongresi”, *Srpski književni glasnik*, book 13 (1904), 126–127; *Ibid*, “Načelo solidarnosti”, *Srpski književni glasnik*, book 11 (1904), 592.

chief precondition of a defence against the 'civilising' arguments of Austria-Hungary and in winning the support of France and the United Kingdom for defending independence (Ković 2011: 369). At the same time, the Serbian intellectuals gathered around the *Work*, although they were not exercising the rigid devotion to West European cultural models, as the group gathered around the *Serbian Literary Gazette* did, also recognised the imperial ambitions of Austria-Hungary and their threat to Serbian survival. Although divided in their political and ideological preferences, Serbian intellectuals in the first decade of 20th century were able to notice and highlight the particular Austro-Hungarian interests in the Balkans.

The division into blocs could already be sensed in the Balkans during the Moroccan crisis in 1905. It was reflected in Serbia through resisting the Austro-Hungarian economic and political pressure by accepting the influx of French capital in the form of loan (Djordjević 1994: 142, 154). The predominant political influence of Russia and France, with the loans taken and weapons purchased, caused discontent in Austro-Hungarian political and economic centres, while the Serbian purchase of artillery guns in France in 1905, contributed to the closing of Serbian borders and the beginning of the Customs War between Austria-Hungary and Serbia (1906–1911) (Djordjević 1962: 210–248).¹⁵ Dimitrije Djordjević identifies three types of manifestation of the offensive policy of Austro-Hungarian ruling elites towards Serbia in the period between 1903 and 1908. The Customs War, the Novi Pazar Railroad and the Annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina were the key elements of the offensive policy of the military party and the clerical and capitalist circles, led by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Alois Lexa von Aehrenthal (Djordjević 1957: 215). The prerequisite of Austro-Hungarian imperialist policy of Push to the South was to secure the traffic and political monopoly in the Balkans, before achieving a territorial one. Aehrenthal therefore simultaneously initiated carrying out of the railway and the annexation plans (Djordjević 1957: 215). Serbian intellectuals realised the threat and they filled the pages of daily and periodical press writing about all the above-mentioned Austro-Hungarian projects. The *Politika* wrote: 'The Sword of Damocles will come even lower than it has been until now above the head of our tribe.'¹⁶ The *Politika* was followed by the *Echo/Odjek*/which pointed out that the Novi Pazar Railway was a

¹⁵ *Odjek*, 29. decembar 1906.

¹⁶ *Politika*, № 1453, 2. februar 1908.

‘mathematical formula of the Austrian Drang nach Osten /Push to the East/.¹⁷

The break of the Customs War and the Annexation Crisis encouraged the Serbian elite to strengthen the backbone of its foreign policy, relying on Russia, by winning the support of Western European countries through economic integrations. For that purpose and in hope they would secure a favourable solution to the Serbian issue, Serbian Minister of Foreign Affairs Milovan Milovanović and other leading Serbian politicians were going to Berlin, London, Paris, and Rome.¹⁸In France, they were making efforts to present the Serbian requests as European interest of restraining Austria-Hungary. Nevertheless, France was cautious in granting loans, since it did not want a confrontation with Austria-Hungary, or preparations of Serbia for a war (Aleksić-Pejković 1965: 223).¹⁹The relations between France and Germany were important for Serbia, as part of the further relations of Serbia and the European Central Powers, namely Austria-Hungary. Milovanović was therefore highlighting the German support to Austria-Hungary, and the belief that the alliance between Germany and Austria-Hungary would remain strong for as long as Russia and France, together with the Great Britain, fail to resolutely oppose this alliance.²⁰In the period of Annexation Crisis, the priority of the Serbian elite was to pull out Serbia without material and moral consequences and losses, ‘with an increased moral esteem of Serbia and strengthened international sympathies for Serbia.’²¹Milovanović agreed with the generally accepted belief in the circles of European diplomats, that France, Russia and Italy could not compromise their relations with Germany and Austria-

17 *Odjek*, № 34. 8. 2. 1908; *Odjek*, № 35, 9. januar 1908.

18 AS, Lični fond Milovan Milovanović (MM), MM–32, Beleške, 30. novembar 1908.

19 Serbian diplomat Milenko Vesnić sent reports from Paris in which he analysed the French press and concluded that France was not in the position to ‘tighten the strings’ with Germany. Elaborating the above-stated attitude in his letter to Jovan Žujović, Vesnić mentions the public support ‘due to the increasing strengthening of socialist and internationalist aspirations, and secondly, due to the fact that now it would be difficult to dissuade the French that the Moroccan issue would not be the main motive for a possible confrontation, and then again, under present circumstances, it is virtually impossible to wage a war because of it.’ AS, MID, pov. № 180, M. Vesnić – J. Žujović, 1. juni 1905.

20 AS, MM–32, Beleške, 28. Oktobar – 10. novembar 1908; AS, MM–32, Beleške, 21. juni 1909; Centre des Archives diplomatiques de Nantes (CADN), Légation de Belgrade, № 168, Parisle 8. janvier 1909.

21 CADN, Légation de Belgrade, № 168, Parisle 8. janvier 1909; AS, MM–32, *Moja politika u bosanskoj krizi*, 29. novembar 1909.

Hungary because they were not ready for a war.²² ‘Europe does not want a war. The opposite side has more self-reliance and more reliance on its own power if it comes to a war [...] There are other means but war; means of diplomacy [...] Europe should be engaged on advocating our cause by diplomatic means’, wrote Milovanović after consultations with the diplomats of the great powers.²³ The aim of all those visits, numerous meetings and consultations of Serbian intellectuals, as well as of the powerful action in Paris, where a group of French intellectuals supported the Serbian protest against the annexation, was presenting the Serbian issue to Europe.

At the time when all the Serbian statesmen were aware – as it was pointed out in the *Work*, ‘that Austria-Hungary was a constant and living barrier against the economic and financial consolidation and development of Serbia’, the activities of Serbian scholars and journalists in political and public life significantly influenced the confrontation of Austria-Hungary and Serbia.²⁴ This road, which several years later would be confirmed to have led to the Great War, was paved with Austro-Hungarian imperialistic ambitions and with the intentions of Serbian intellectuals to position the Serbian issue as a priority issue of international relations, by publishing texts in foreign languages. In addition to the information on geographic and economic position of Serbia after the Congress of Berlin and its aftermath, in his essay *Annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbian Problem*, the Serbian scholar of European range, Jovan Cvijić, indicated the importance of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the Serbian people, described the ‘spirit and meaning of Austro-Hungarian administration in Bosnia’ and presented the Serbian problem. Among other, Cvijić warned Europe: ‘Austria-Hungary is going to continue its aggressive policy towards the South. On its south border, it cannot stand the little Serbia, which is an opposition to it by the very fact of its existence, which must raise hopes for national independence in Serbian and Croatian peoples’ (Cvijić 1908: 14).²⁵ Preventing a further incursion of Austria-Hungary into the Balkans was a priority and joint task of all the powers opposed to the

22 AS, MM–32, 28. oktobar/10. novembar 1908.

23 AS, MM–17, *Beleške*, 6. mart 1909; *Retrospektiva*, 20. mart 1909.

24 St. M. Protić, “Tajna konvencija između Srbije i Austro-Ugarske jedan list iz novije istorije Srbije”, *Delo*, book 50(1909), 21.

25 See: Cvijić, J. (1909) *L’annexion de la Bosnie et la question Serbe*. Paris: Librairie Hachette et Cie.

Central Powers. Cvijić therefore proposed that ‘if due to the opposition of Austria-Hungary, Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot be united with Serbia and Montenegro – which would only be just, then they should be awarded such an international status which would facilitate their free national development’ (Cvijić 1908: 47). In Cvijić’s brochure, there were hints of the attitude of Serbian intellectuals that the solution to the Serbian problem should be linked to the imperial plans of the great powers and to resolve the issue of further development of Serbia in such complicated international relations, the issue which was turning into the issue of survival since the Annexation Crisis.

Austro-Hungarian Interests in Balkans at Time of Balkan Wars (1912–1913)

The declaration of annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1908, by which Austria-Hungary broke the provisions of the Congress of Berlin, changed the balance of powers in Europe and posed a definite threat to the European peace. The meeting of the Council of Ministers of 19th August 1908 was the key moment in which a political decision was made to destroy Serbia (Mitrović 1981: 76). Still, due to internal policy reasons, Austria-Hungary temporarily postponed the war with Serbia immediately after the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It chose to accuse Serbian politicians and a part of Yugoslav politicians for treason, and to organise show trials (The High Treason Process in Zagreb, the Friedjung Process in Vienna) by which ‘the fabric of civilised behaviour, which used to give it an honourable appearance, fell to pieces’ (Radojević, Dimić 2014: 62). Already since the Annexation Crisis, the French Doctor of Law and the Serbian statesman, Milovan Milovanović, pointed out in his encounters with foreign diplomats that the Balkans, i.e. Serbia was a point in which the interests of Austria were intermingling and colliding with those of Russia and Italy, as well as the interests of Germany with those of England. He was especially trying to draw the attention of France upon the fact that via Austria, Germany was penetrating into the Balkans, and then further east.²⁶ Nevertheless, France before all sought to maintain its economic interests in the Ottoman Empire and did not want further tensions in relations with Germany and Austria-Hungary (Vojvodić 1999: 226).

²⁶ AS, MM-32, 23. mart 1909.

After the crisis caused by the annexation, Milovanović directed the Serbian political and diplomatic activities towards the fulfilment of national objectives in the South, as part of which the Balkan states were drawn closer to each other. With an active support of Russian diplomacy and due to openly conqueror's intentions of Austria-Hungary and the Greater-Albanian movement, conditions were created for establishing the First Balkan League in 1912 (Cvijić 1912; Perović 1959; Djordjević 1994: 184–188; Aleksić-Pejković 1991: 25–32; Rastović 2013).²⁷ Interested in undermining the incursion of Austria-Hungary and Germany to the East, France – in which the Serbian intellectuals saw an important point of support for their diplomatic activities, accepted the Serbian-Bulgarian Agreement; however, it did not support a war option, although later it complied with the victories of the Balkan allies and the division of Turkish territory, expressing the interest in maintaining the anti-German character of the Alliance (Vojvodić 1968: 413–429).²⁸ In order to win as much support as possible in France, Serbia launched an energetic diplomatic action together with the other Balkan countries. Within the framework of this diplomatic action, French student Grgur Jakšić arrived in Paris in December 1912. As a representative of Serbian journalism, Jakšić's task was to use his contacts and connections in the French capital and to advocate Serbian interests before the French and European public.²⁹ Jakšić's mission in Paris was especially significant when a problem appeared between the Balkan allies and when the Bulgarian-Serbian conflict escalated and resulted in a new war in 1913. Public activities – through press and through a system of personal contacts and connections were the Serbian answer to the forceful Austro-Hungarian diplomatic offensive in this period behind which war preparations were concealed.

The victory of Balkan allies in the First Balkan War, and their subsequent mutual conflict in the Second Balkan War changed the political map of Europe. Serbia emerged out of the Balkan Wars with territorial extensions, having simultaneously raised its esteem among the South Slavs. After the period of Balkan Wars (1912–1913), the Austro-Hungarian hegemony was no longer jeopardised by Serbia

27 AS, MM–17, Beleške: Augarska, Srbija i Bugarska, Beograd, 30. maj 1909; AS, MM-6, 3. januar 1911.

28 *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije 1903–1914*, t. V, v. 3, Beograd 1986, № 50, 80, 83, 86.

29 Narodna biblioteka Srbije (NBS), Hartije Grgura Jakšića, G. Jakšić – N. Pašić, R558/IX/1619, nedatirano.

only, but also by the bloc of Balkan allies, with Serbia retaining the role of the ‘central challenger’ (Radojević, Dimić 2014: 63). The creation of Albania and the attitude of Austria-Hungary during the Skadar Crisis were the issues in which Serbian intellectuals could clearly notice the intentions of Austria-Hungary to assume control over the Balkans. In the ‘Political Review’ of the *Serbian Literary Gazette* The Foreign/Jovan M. Jovanović/ maintains that the year 1912 was ‘one of the most important years in the history of Balkan peoples’, but that it was also important for the history of Europe.³⁰ In addition to the importance and the success of the Balkan allies, he also emphasised the success of Austria-Hungary in creating a new Balkan state – Albania. In his opinion, the other European powers accepted the Austro-Hungarian proposal due to the military preparations of Austria-Hungary, namely ‘in order to avoid a war the results of which could have had serious consequences for many European states.’³¹ The scenarios and confrontations manifested at the London Conference indicated to Serbian intellectuals that new challenges were looming before the Serbian state.³² Serbian intellectuals close to the *Work* considered the following on the standpoint of Austria-Hungary with regard to the Skadar Crisis: ‘What Serbs and Montenegrins have won with all those casualties as well as what they have almost won is brutally taken from them and given to a new state – Albania. In fact, it is given to Austria. It is a well known fact, which Vienna is now not even trying to conceal, that the autonomous Albania has been created exclusively in the political interest and for the political objectives of Austria.’³³ By recognising the routes of actions of Austro-Hungarian diplomacy, the Serbian intellectual circles around the *Serbian Literary Gazette* and the *Work* were able to spot the seriously deteriorated relations and points of conflict between Austria-Hungary and Serbia.

Searching for Serbian answers to Austrian imperialist ambitions in the Balkans, Serbian intellectuals were consulting foreign authors. They showed interest in the work of French author Charles Loiseau, who was

30 Inostrani /Jovan M. Jovanović/, “Politički pregled 1912. godina”, *Srpski književni glasnik*, book 30 (1913), 65.

31 *Ibid*, 67.

32 Inostrani /Jovan M. Jovanović/, “Politički pregled – Bugarska, Srbija i Crna Gora i balkanska politika”, *Srpski književni glasnik*, book 28, (1912), 951; Inostrani /Jovan M. Jovanović/, “Politički pregled 1912. godina”, *Srpski književni glasnik*, book 30 (1913), 68.

33 Politicus, “Politički pregled, Savezničke pobjede Intervencija Evrope u Balkanskom ratu, Nelojalnost evropske diplomatije”, *Delo*, book 66 (1913), 476.

close to Yugoslav circles, and when the issue of the new Albanian state was open, also the work of French professor and lecturer at the Belgrade University, Gaston Gravier.³⁴ The above-mentioned authors influenced the standpoints of Serbian intellectuals, and at the same time – in French publications which were also read outside the French borders, they were highlighting the problems in the Balkans in a scholarly supported and unbiased manner. The collaboration between Serbian and French intellectuals in the period of Balkan wars was one of the methods of struggle of the Serbian state against the Austro-Hungarian war plans, which were presented to the members of the Triple Alliance at the time of the Treaty of Bucharest. The outcome of the Balkan Wars and the British standpoint to avert a German predominance, were gradually turning Germany towards supporting Austria-Hungary (Radojević, Dimić 2014: 71).

Serbian Intellectuals and Start of Great War in 1914

Serbia ended the Balkan Wars (1912–1913) territorially larger and reinforced with an aura of victory, which also influenced the reinforcement of the esteem of Serbia. The echo of Serbian victories in the Balkan Wars spread to the Austro-Hungarian provinces and gave further impetus to the Yugoslav idea (Djordjević 1994:197). Intensified Yugoslav oriented activities of Serbian intellectuals gathered around the *Serbian Literary Gazette* and the *Work* were more noticeable on the eve of the World War I, in their reviews on new books of South Slavs and the works of prominent French scholars Émile Haumant and Andre Cheradame, who wrote about the crisis of Austria-Hungary and the Yugoslav idea.³⁵ As the two most widely read and most influential periodicals among Serbian intellectual circles, albeit with different agendas, the *Serbian Literary Gazette* and the *Work* viewed the Austro-Hungarian imperialist plans in the Balkans and the position of Serbia in a similar manner. The political texts published in the above-mentioned

34 Inostrani /Jovan M. Jovanović/, “Politički pregled 1912. godina”, *Srpski književni glasnik*, book 30 (1913), 80; Inostrani/Jovan M. Jovanović/, “Politički pregled Nerešena pitanja”, *Srpski književni glasnik*, book 30 (1913), 151–152; “Beleške”, *Srpski književni glasnik*, book 30 (1913), 239.

35 E. Oman, “Srpsko-hrvatska narodnost”, *Srpski književni glasnik*, book 32 (1914), 359 – 374; M. “Balkanski rat i austrijska intervencija”, book 32 (1914), 477; “Političke perspektive u Novoj godini”, *Delo*, book 70 (1914), 154.

periodicals served as public rostrums where views were presented, as well as new information and proposals.

In spite of the political and economic crisis in which the Serbian state found itself in the *fin de siècle* period, a constant social development and cultural rise of the Kingdom of Serbia was noticeable, and therefore the Serbian intelligentsia turned the public disappointment and discontent, prompted by the external pressure exercised by Austria-Hungary, into the national agenda at the start of 20th century. Educated in Europe, Serbian intellectuals adopted the values of modern European civilisation and upon the return to Serbia, they would convey the knowledge and experience acquired in the course of their education and through the engagement in ministries, political parties, scientific and educational institutions, at the university or at schools, in newspapers and periodicals. On the eve of the First World War, Serbian intellectuals were active in a number of parallel, but interrelated fields, with the intention of strengthening and developing the Serbian state, as well as facilitating its survival under the attack of Austro-Hungarian imperialist campaign in the Balkans, concealed under the veil of ‘Cultural Mission’ in Bosnia and Herzegovina and accompanied by constant emphasising of the ‘Serbian Danger’, which needed to be ‘neutralised’. Therefore, the internal activities of Serbian intellectuals (cultural development in Serbia and aiding the cultural development of the Serbs outside Serbia), as well as their foreign policy activities (diplomatic and propaganda activities in France) were the response to the Austro-Hungarian plan of controlling the Balkans.

The plans of Serbian intellectuals involved in the Serbian political and public life were directed towards the cultural development of Serbs, aiding the cultural progress of Serbs outside the Serbian borders, development of cooperation among the Yugoslav-oriented intellectuals, as well as the cooperation with French intellectuals. In the end of 19th and the beginning of 20th century, the Serbian intellectuals from the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, gathered around the *Bosnian Fairy*, the *Young Bosnia/Mlada Bosna/* and the *Dawn*, together with the groups gathered around the *Work* and the *Serbian Literary Gazette*, introduced Serbian culture and nation into a new era. Before World War I, the movement of *Young Bosnia* also appeared in Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to Vladimir Ćorović, the members of the movement were ‘an interesting mixture of literary pickers and choosers, pure aesthetes, and national revolutionaries, who were very active and

whose ranks hatched some of the assassins' (Ćorović 1999: 117). The ground for diplomatic manoeuvres was built on the foundations of the cultural revival and development of the Serbian people.

As a consequence of the political and economic pressure of Austria-Hungary after the Congress of Berlin, which affected both its administration in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the influence it had in Serbia after the signing of the Secret Convention, the idea of abandoning the reliance upon Austria-Hungary was conceived among the Serbian intellectuals, mostly those in favour of the Radical Party. The change of foreign policy was gradually gaining support among other political groups as well, and it was especially encouraged with the concluding of the Franco-Russian Alliance (1894). The diplomatic field of activities involved the search for support of Russia and France, and later that of the Great Britain. Serbian intellectuals who were involved in the political life of Serbia, Milovan Milovanović before all, were spreading their activities in diplomatic circles of the great powers gradually and systematically, using the knowledge, experience and contacts they had acquired in the course of their schooling abroad.

For the purpose of protection of Serbian interests, jeopardised by Austro-Hungarian ambitions to gain the absolute advantage in the Balkans, which became fully prominent in the period of the Customs War, the project of Novi Pazar Railroad and the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbian intellectuals firmly concentrated their field of diplomatic activities around accentuating the Serbian issue in the public and intellectual spheres of the Western countries, France before all. Paris became the centre of propaganda activities, and the first results of the collaboration between the Serbian and the French intellectuals were visible in the activities of a group of French intellectuals, who also recognised an indirect incursion of pan-Germanism in the Austro-Hungarian policy in the Balkans. With the power of academic arguments of Jovan Cvijić, diplomatic skills of Milovan Milovanović and Milenko Vesnić, and contacts in the journalist and author circles of Grgur Jakšić, Serbian intellectuals succeeded in getting the European public – and gradually also the diplomacy, interested in the Serbian issue. In the period of the Balkan Wars already, the French intellectuals saw the correlation between the Serbian issue was and the German push to the East and this lay the foundations of understanding the Serbian position and the development of Yugoslav idea on the eve of a war, which was to obtain a world war proportions.

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