

2007

The Secret Serbian-Bulgarian Treaty of Alliance of 1904 and the Russian Policy in the Balkans Before the Bosnian Crisis

Kiril Valtchev Merjanski
Wright State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://corescholar.libraries.wright.edu/etd_all



Part of the [History Commons](#)

Repository Citation

Merjanski, Kiril Valtchev, "The Secret Serbian-Bulgarian Treaty of Alliance of 1904 and the Russian Policy in the Balkans Before the Bosnian Crisis" (2007). *Browse all Theses and Dissertations*. 96.
https://corescholar.libraries.wright.edu/etd_all/96

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses and Dissertations at CORE Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Browse all Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of CORE Scholar. For more information, please contact library-corescholar@wright.edu.

THE SECRET SERBIAN-BULGARIAN *TREATY OF ALLIANCE* OF 1904
AND THE RUSSIAN POLICY IN THE BALKANS
BEFORE THE BOSNIAN CRISIS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

By

KIRIL VALTCHEV MERJANSKI
M.A., Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Bulgaria

2007
Wright State University

COPYRIGHT BY
KIRIL VALTCHEV MERJANSKI
2006

WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Winter Quarter 2007

I hereby recommend that the thesis prepared under my supervision by KIRIL VALTCHEV MERJANSKI entitled THE SECRET SERBIAN-BULGARIAN TREATY OF ALLIANCE OF 1904 AND THE RUSSIAN POLICY IN THE BALKANS BEFORE THE BOSNIAN CRISIS be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF ARTS.

Edgar Melton, Ph.D.
Thesis Director

Edward F. Haas, Ph.D.
Department Chair

Committee on
Final Examination

Edgar Melton, Ph.D.

Jonathan Winkler, Ph.D.

Awad Halabi, Ph.D.

Joseph F. Thomas, Ph.D.
Dean, School of Graduate Studies

ABSTRACT

Merjanski, Kiril Valtchev. M.A., Department of History, Wright State University, 2006. The Secret Serbian-Bulgarian *Treaty of Alliance* of 1904 and the Russian Policy in the Balkans before the Bosnian Crisis.

The two Serbian-Bulgarian treaties, concluded simultaneously in 1904, and known in the literature under the common name of “The Secret-Serbian-Bulgarian *Treaty of Alliance* of 1904” are the specific topic of this thesis. These treaties between the Kingdom of Serbia and the Principality of Bulgaria contained political, military and economic provisions aimed not only against the Ottoman Empire (a common rival of both countries), but also against Austria-Hungary. A significant feature of these treaties was their obvious pro-Russian orientation, shaped in provisions like unification of the telegraphic systems of both countries with that of Russia as well as the requirement for Russian arbitration between Bulgaria and Serbia if they were not able to reach agreement about the partition of the European possessions of the Ottoman Empire by themselves. Considering all this, with some of their provisions the Serbian-Bulgarian Treaties of 1904 resembled in many ways the Treaty of 1912 between the above-mentioned Balkan countries, which became the backbone of the creation of the Balkan League. The creation of the latter, on the other hand, was a significant step toward the breakdown of equilibrium in Eastern Europe, eventually leading to the outbreak of the First Balkan War, with its well known larger consequences.

Seen in this light, the significance of the Serbian-Bulgarian Treaties of 1904 could be defined also as evidence that the Russian policy of creating alliances between the small Balkan Slav States, aimed not only against the Ottoman Empire, but also against Austria-Hungary, and, in this way, “encircling” the latter, could be dated from before the Bosnian Crisis (1908), as opposed to the prevailing attitude in the existing literature, that the Bosnian Crisis itself was the turning point of Russian foreign policy in this direction. Analyzing the military and other clauses of the Serbian-Bulgarian Treaties of 1904, their secret character, and the role of some Bulgarian statesmen, politicians and diplomats (especially of the Bulgarian Prince Ferdinand I), this thesis seeks to reveal how their successful negotiation was ever possible, in spite of the fact that in 1904 Bulgaria was ruled by the People’s Liberal Party, a party with a pro-Austrian orientation. This orientation was clearly in opposition to a close rapprochement with the new pro-Russian, internationally isolated Serbian regime, established with a very bloody *coup d’etat* in 1903.

In revealing this, this thesis also seeks to define the ways by which the Bulgarian and Serbian Foreign policies were subjected to those of Russia even at the time, when, because of its disastrous engagement in the Far East, the Russian Empire was seemingly abandoning its active policy in the Balkans.

Initiated by the Bulgarian Prince Ferdinand and conducted by means of secret diplomacy by some Bulgarian and Serbian politicians, diplomats and military men with firm Pan-Slavic affiliations, this pro-Russian Serbian-Bulgarian rapprochement allowed not only the conclusion of the secret treaties of 1904, but eventually proved to be disastrous for the European peace.

TABLES OF CONTENTS

	Page
I. SERBIAN-BULGARIAN RELATIONS BEFORE 1904 AND THE RUSSIAN POLICY IN THE BALKANS.....	1
II. THE SECRET SERBO-BULGARIAN TREATIES OF 1904..	30
III. CONCLUSIONS.....	79
APPENDIX.....	81
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	99

DATES AND TRANSLATIONS

All dates, unless followed by "N. S.," refer to the Julian or Old Style calendar used in Bulgaria, Serbia and Russia at that period. This calendar lagged behind the Gregorian by twelve days in the nineteenth century and by thirteen in the twentieth century.

The author of this thesis, made all translations from Bulgarian, Russian, Macedonian and Serbian, unless they are followed by a translator's name.

I. SERBIAN-BULGARIAN RELATIONS BEFORE 1904 AND THE
RUSSIAN POLICY IN THE BALKANS

1. Introduction

In the literature devoted to Russia's role in the origins of World War I, the Bosnian Annexation Crisis of 1908 is usually considered the turning point in Russian Balkan policy. Thus, for example, Andrew Rossos, author of a major study of Russia's policy in the Eastern Question, argues that it was the Austrian annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1908 that led Russia to abandon its policy of cooperation with the Habsburg Empire in solving the most acute problems in the Balkans, and began a new course of promoting Balkan alliances directed not only against the Ottoman Empire, but also against Austria-Hungary.¹

Eventually this new course led to the creation of the Balkan league, which proved to be a significant step toward the breakdown of equilibrium in Eastern Europe and the outbreak of the First Balkan War, with its grave consequences for the European peace. Here Rossos follows the traditional interpretation dating back to Luigi Albertini, but also accepted by Edward C. Thaden, Laurence

¹ Andrew Rossos, *Russia and the Balkans: Inter-Balkan Rivalries and Russian Foreign Policy 1908-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 5-7.

Lafore, F. R. Bridge, D. C. B. Lieven, James Joll, Barbara Jelavich, Samuel R. Williamson.²

Only Sidney Fay, in his magisterial work "The Origins of the World War," suggests that Russia's adventurism in the Balkans began much earlier. As Fay points out,

it would be a mistake to assume, as most writers do, that Russia had abandoned even temporally, the consideration of her ambitions in the Near East while pressing her imperialist policy in the Far East. This misconception arose largely from the inspired Russian Press and from misinformed persons who believed that the Russian Bear had shifted his appetite completely to the plains of Manchuria. In reality, though the Tsar and his ministers talked of "Port Arthur," they were at the same time thinking of "Constantinople."³

Fay however offered no concrete evidence for his speculation.

Following the conclusions reached in the course of this thesis it could be added to Fay's observation that "the Tsar and his ministers" were also thinking about

² Luigi Albertini, *The Origins of the War of 1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), V. I, 92, 132-8, 221-2, 253, 256, 293-4, 296-7, 300, 303, 306, 310, 364; Edward C. Thaden, *Russia and the Balkan Alliance of 1912* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1965), 15-6, 24, 62; Laurence Lafore, *The Long Fuse: An Interpretation of the Origins of World War I* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1965), 104, 144, 151, 163, 167; F. R. Bridge, *From Sadowa to Sarajevo: The Foreign Policy of Austria-Hungary 1866-1914* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), 301, 306, 308-309; D. C. B. Lieven, *Russia and the Origins of the First World War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), 33, 34, 36, 39, 40-1; James Joll, *The Origins of The First World War* (London: Longman, 1984), 46, 47; Barbara Jelavich, *Russia's Balkan Entanglements 1806-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 210, 224-5, 228; Samuel R. Williamson Jr., *Austria-Hungary and the Origins of the First World War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), 59, 68, 69, 70, 72, 74-5, 78, 80, 104; and indeed leading Russian diplomats have argued in their memoirs that it was precisely the Bosnian crisis that definitively unveiled the expansionist Austrian policy in the region, and it was only after this crisis that Russia publicly abandoned its entente with Austria-Hungary; this entente manifested in the so called *Murzsteg* program for reforms of 1903, was thus destroyed by the Austrian annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina: See Serge Sazonov, *Faithful Years*, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1928), 14, 15, 19, 61; N. V. Tcharikow, *Glimpses of High Politics* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1931), 269-71.

³ Sidney B. Fay, *The Origins of the World War* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1928), 365.

"Krakow and Sarajevo" in the same context as about "Constantinople" i.e. not only about the destruction of the Ottoman, but of the Habsburg Empire as well.

If most scholars have viewed the Bosnian Annexation Crisis as the turning point in Russia's Balkan policy, it is because they have generally viewed Balkan affairs through the Great Powers' prisms. A new understanding of Russia's Balkan policy requires us to view this problem from the prospective of the Balkan states themselves and also, and even more important, to view this problem from the perspective of Russia's policy toward the Balkan states in particular. This is why detailed studies of Russian policy towards the Slav Balkan states, especially Bulgaria and Serbia, are necessary.

The present study addresses both of these problems through the neglected source, the memoirs of the Bulgarian diplomat Christophor Khesapchiev.⁴ Khesapchiev's memoirs are especially valuable as a neglected source for Serbian-Bulgarian relations in the early 20th century, and Khesapchiev is absolutely essential for a behind the scenes view of the negotiations leading to the Serbian-Bulgarian treaties of 1904. As a trusted personal confidante of the

⁴ Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина: Военнодипломатически спомени 1899-1914 г.* (София: Военноиздателски комплекс Св. Георги Победоносец, 1993).

Bulgarian Prince Ferdinand, and as the actual negotiator on the scene, Khesapchiev was privy to all phases of the Serbian-Bulgarian rapprochement of 1904-1905. Secondly, he supports his memoirs with documents from an extremely well-preserved and complete personal archive supplemented by detailed day-to-day diaries.⁵ Khesapchiev's archive was much more complete on these negotiations than that of the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, because, at the beginning of negotiations, the Bulgarian Prime Minister Racho Petrov had ordered that all relevant diplomatic correspondence, both Bulgarian and Serbian, be routed only to himself and Khesapchiev, thus leaving the Bulgarian Foreign Ministry uninformed.⁶ By publishing his secret correspondence with P.M. Petrov, Khesapchiev made available not only the final versions of the treaties, but also their preliminary drafts, thus illuminating all stages of the negotiations. It should also be added that Khesapchiev's dealings with the Great Powers' diplomatic representatives in Belgrade, included in his memoirs, also shed additional

⁵ Хесапчиев, *Служба на България*, 26.

⁶ Хесапчиев, *Служба на България*, 13; Toshev, who published for first time *The Treaty of Alliance* in 1929 especially points out that the treaties in question were given to him by General Racho Petrov, instead of taking them from the Archives of the Bulgarian Foreign Ministry, where they were not presented See Андрей Тошев, *Балканските войни* (София: Факел, 1929), Т. I, 153.

light on the Balkan policies of the Great Powers during this period.⁷

The present thesis argues that the Bosnian Annexation Crisis, while an important event in Europe in the first decade of the twentieth century, was not the turning point in Russia's Balkan policy. In fact behind the façade of official cooperation with Austria-Hungary Russia was actually pursuing anti-Austrian alliances with the major Balkan powers as early as 1896.

This anti-Austrian policies can be most clearly seen in the secret Serbian-Bulgarian rapprochement of 1904 in which Russia played a covert yet decisive role.

2. Russo-Bulgarian Relations 1878-1896

The independent Bulgarian state came into existence in 1878 after the Russo-Turkish War (1877-1878) and the Congress of Berlin (1878). Despite Russia's claim to portray herself as liberator of Bulgaria, the Russo-Bulgarian relations deteriorated rapidly after Russia refused to recognize the Bulgarian Unification of 1885. This conflict between Russia and the newly united Bulgarian Principality led to active Russian intervention in

⁷ It would not be an exaggeration to say that Khesapchiev's memoirs are still virtually unexplored by the contemporary historians writing on the topic; this can be explained from the fact that the memoirs were not published until 1993.

Bulgarian affairs, and culminated with the abdication of Prince Alexander Battenberg.

Soon after the election of the new Bulgarian Prince Ferdinand von Saxe-Coburg-Gotha in 1887, Russo-Bulgarian relations reached their nadir. Russo-Bulgarian diplomatic relations broke down and would not be resumed until 1896.

After the death of the Russian Tsar Alexander III in 1894, and the fall of Stambolov's Russophobe government in Bulgaria, there were favorable conditions not only for renewing diplomatic relations between Bulgaria and Russia, but also for their rapid improvement. Indeed the initiative for a Russo-Bulgarian rapprochement came from no less an authority than the Bulgarian Monarch, Prince Ferdinand.

The ill-fated experience of his predecessor on the Bulgarian throne had made it clear to Ferdinand that, without winning Russian approval and support, he could not hope to remain ruler of Bulgaria.⁸ Moreover, without Russian support, his recognition as legitimate Bulgarian monarch was also impossible, since Russia could block his recognition by the Ottoman Sultan, Ferdinand's formal suzerain.

Following his ambition not only to secure the Bulgarian throne for himself, but also to secure the future

⁸ Stefan Groueff, *Crown of Thorns* (London: Madison Press, 1987), 25.

of his newly founded dynasty, Ferdinand took a second decisive step in winning Russian support. In 1896 he christened his first-born son Boris (the successor to the Bulgarian throne) in the Christian Orthodox faith. For this decisive step, Ferdinand, himself a Catholic, was excommunicated by Pope Leo XIII, but he nevertheless achieved his main political goal, and also gained Russian approval. Ferdinand was thereby recognized as legitimate Bulgarian prince by the Russian Tsar and the Ottoman Sultan, but also won the approval of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, which had earlier opposed his reign. As a gesture showing the importance of Russia's relations with Bulgaria, the new Russian Emperor Nicholas II even agreed to become Boris' godfather, marking in this way a new beginning in Russian-Bulgarian relations.⁹

Along with the rapid improvement of the Russo-Bulgarian relations in 1896 the Russian diplomacy made the first step for initiating an alliance between the Slav Balkan states i.e. Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro. The initial push came from the Russian ambassador in Constantinople Alexander Nelidov, who in several meetings with Mitar Bakic, the Montenegrin ambassador in

⁹ Георги Годоров, "Обезглавената монархия", *Култура*, no. 18 (2001); Андрей Тошев, *Балканските войни*, Т. I, 96-7.

Constantinople, proposed that Montenegro take the initiative in forming such an alliance.¹⁰

According to the Bulgarian diplomat Andrej Toshev, who witnessed these events in his role as ambassador to Macedonia, Montenegro, and later Serbia, soon after the improvement of Russian-Bulgarian relations, Russian diplomats in Sofia and Belgrade began working for an alliance between Serbia and Bulgaria.¹¹

3. *The Macedonian Question*

A Serbian-Bulgarian Alliance at that time was much easier to imagine than achieve. The main barrier was the fate of Macedonia, which was still under Ottoman rule. Both Serbia and Bulgaria wanted an end to Ottoman rule, but their visions about the future of Macedonia were in sharp contrast. Viewing Macedonians as Bulgarians, Bulgarian political circles and political opinion favored full autonomy of Macedonia as a preliminary step towards future unification with Bulgaria, in the same way that unification between Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia in 1885 had been

¹⁰ Радослав Попов, *Балканската политика на България* (София: Издателство на Българската академия на науките, 1984), 107.

¹¹ Андрей Тошев, *Балканските войни*, Т. I, 97.

achieved.¹² Opposing this Bulgarian view was the Serbian vision, which favored a partition of Macedonia between Serbia and Bulgaria.

The Bulgarian viewpoint on this question was largely a reaction to the activities of the Internal Macedonian-Odrin Revolutionary Organization (IMORO) created in 1893.¹³ IMORO's terrorist tactics had alienated these Bulgarian politicians who might otherwise have favored a partition of Macedonia between Serbia and Bulgaria. It is also well known from some of his conversations and remarks that the Bulgarian Prince (later Tsar) Ferdinand was also afraid of IMORO, and thus extremely cautious in dealing with Macedonia.¹⁴

Another controversy that poisoned relations between Serbia and Bulgaria was the existence of the Bulgarian Exarchate. Created in 1870, the Bulgarian Exarchate was the Bulgarian National Church, which had long been separated from the patriarchate of Constantinople. Embracing most of Macedonia, the Bulgarian Exarchate served as promoter of

¹² Димитър Г. Гоцев, *Идеята за автономия като тактика в програмите на национално освободителното движение в Македония и Одринско 1893-1941* (София: Издателство на Българската академия на науките, 1983), 19-20.

¹³ The epithet *Odrin* came from the Bulgarian name of Adrianople – Odrin, and indicated that IMORO was fighting for liberation of the Bulgarians within the Ottoman Empire not only in Macedonia, but also in Eastern Thrace. About the leaders of IMORO (such as Gotse Delchev, Dame Gruev and others) and their support for the autonomy of Macedonia as preliminary step towards unification with Bulgaria See Димитър Г. Гоцев, *Идеята за автономия като тактика в програмата на национално освободителното движение в Македония и Одринско 1893-1941*, 17-9.

¹⁴ Eric Helmreich, *The Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938), 51.

the Bulgarian cause, facilitating the creation of a substantial number of Bulgarian schools where pupils studied the language, history and culture of Bulgaria. In fact, most of the founders and the leaders of IMORO were former teachers from those schools. To neutralize the influence of the Bulgarian Exarchate, the Serbian state relentlessly promoted Serbian priests in Macedonia, thus creating opposition from the Bulgarian government, Church, and also IMORO.

Given these obstacles hindering a strong alliance between Serbia and Bulgaria, a reconciliation of almost irreconcilable factors was necessary. The most important of these factors were as follows:

1. a mutually satisfactory solution to *the Macedonian Question*
2. overcoming the resistance of IMORO for a future compromise on this matter
3. given the importance of Russian mediation, the establishment of Russophile governments in the both countries.

4. The Serbian-Bulgarian Rapprochement 1896-1987 and the Russian Policy in the Balkans

By 1896 some of the factors favoring a Serbian-Bulgarian Alliance were already in place. According to Andrej Toshev, Russian diplomats had begun to press the Bulgarian government to improve its relations with Serbia. Russia appears to have pursued the same policy toward Serbia, where at that moment the government led by Joka Simich also favored closer ties with the Russian Empire.

It is therefore not surprising that 1896 was the pivotal year for a new Serbian-Bulgarian rapprochement after decades of hostile relations. The role of Russian diplomacy in this process is clearly described in the memoirs of the secretary of the Bulgarian Exarchate Atanas Shopov (a Russophile himself), who in 1896 visited St. Petersburg for series of meetings with the Russian foreign minister Count Lobanov-Rostovskii. According to Shopov,

The designs of Russian diplomacy for a close Serbian-Bulgarian rapprochement became more evident after the recognition of Prince Ferdinand and the anointing of the Crown-Prince Boris. Along with the other questions, discussed at that time, there were talks about a future Serbian-Bulgarian rapprochement and about setting aside the Schism.¹⁵ It was made clear to us that

¹⁵ The schism in question between the patriarchate of Constantinople and the Bulgarian Exarchate became fact in 1872 i.e. two years after the creation of the Bulgarian Exarchate in 1870: *See* Радослав Попов, *Балканската политика на България 1894-1898*, 15.

Bulgaria must follow the Russian policy in the East about all questions.¹⁶

During A. Shopov's conversations with the Russian foreign minister, the latter also insisted, that for improving its relations with Serbia, the Bulgarian government should relocate the head of Bulgarian Exarchate Joseph from Constantinople to Sofia, leaving Macedonian churches to the patriarchate of Constantinople.

As already noted, the growing influence of the Bulgarian Exarchate in Macedonia was one of the barriers for the improvement of the Serbian-Bulgarian relations, so it was clear that in this question, Russian diplomacy had sided with Serbia, while pressing Bulgaria for compromise as a way for removing the existing barriers to a future Serbian-Bulgarian Alliance. Moreover, according to Shopov, Lobanov-Rostovskii made it clear to him that Russia saw the resolution of these religious Serbian-Bulgarian contradictions as a necessary condition for achieving a future Serbian-Bulgarian Alliance.¹⁷ But even for the most radical Russophiles in the Bulgarian government, this compromise was too great. It was also unacceptable to Bulgarian public opinion. There was also the danger of a violent reaction from IMORO.

¹⁶ Атанас Шопов, "Сръбско-български сфери на влияние в Македония", *Миръ*, no. 4165-5-7 и 8 (1925).

¹⁷ Атанас Шопов, "Сръбско-български сфери на влияние в Македония", no. 4165.

Although the Bulgarian government rejected the Russian proposal to limit the influence of the Bulgarian Church in Macedonia, it nevertheless consented to a lesser compromise: to try to persuade the Bulgarian Exarchate to allow Serbian priests in Macedonia and to allow a Serbian Exarchate there. Soon an agreement was reached on this matter between the Serbian and Bulgarian governments and, following this agreement in 1896, the Bulgarian ambassador in Constantinople, accompanied by the secretary of the Serbian embassy, met with the head of the Bulgarian Exarchate, asking him to permit a Serbian Exarchate in Kumanovo.¹⁸ This proposal was firmly rejected by the head of the Bulgarian Church, Joseph I, who was independent of the Bulgarian government. As we shall see later in this thesis, Russian diplomacy would continue to work for the admission of Serbian priests in Macedonia, and using its influence in a later Russophile Bulgarian government (led by Stojan Danev) would succeed in this in 1902.¹⁹

As already noted, 1896 marked a new beginning in relations between Serbia and Bulgaria. On 25 March, almost immediately after his recognition as legitimate Bulgarian Prince, Ferdinand arrived in Belgrade, accompanied by the

¹⁸ Андрей Тошев, *Балканските войни*, Т. I, 119.

¹⁹ Of all Bulgarian politicians Danev was the most extreme Russophile See Richard C. Hall, *Bulgaria's Road to the First World War* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1996), 11.

Prime-Minister Konstantin Stoilov and the Military Minister General Racho Petrov. Met with a great pomp by the Serbian king Alexander, his ministers and the leaders of the Serbian clergy, Prince Ferdinand also attended a solemn church service conducted by the Serbian metropolitan Michael "for the well-being of the Russian Tsar, the Serbian King and of the Princes of Bulgaria and Montenegro."²⁰

After Ferdinand's visit in Belgrade, the improvement of the Serbian-Bulgarian relations accelerated. This improvement took shape in exchange of delegations, consisting members of the Serbian and Bulgarian Parliaments, military officers, merchants, clerks, journalists, clergymen and students. On 10 May 1896 a special train arrived in Sofia with a delegation of one thousand Serbian statesmen, scientists, journalists, clergymen and other important persons, who came for the specially organized Serbian-Bulgarian celebrations. The dates of this celebration were deliberately chosen to coincide with the coronation of Nicholas II in Moscow on 14 May. These Serbian-Bulgarian activities were accompanied by campaigns in the Serbian and Bulgarian presses, praising the friendship of these two "brotherly Slav nations."

²⁰ Андрей Тошев, *Балканските войни*, Т. I, 98.

During this campaign, the person of the Russian Tsar was also often pointed out as guarantor for the durability of this new rapprochement.²¹

Returning Ferdinand's visit, on 17 February 1897 King Alexander visited Sofia accompanied by the Serbian Prime-minister Simich and the financial minister Vujch. During this visit a Trade Treaty was signed and to be underlined that this visit had also meaning of a preliminary step to a future military cooperation, the Serbian King watched exercises, performed by some units of the Bulgarian army in the company of Prince Ferdinand. This visit furthered the Serbian-Bulgarian rapprochement, which continued to the very end of 1897.²²

But a more formidable barrier for future political and military alliance between the two countries was the Macedonian Question. This was the *sine qua non* for conclusion of a real political and military alliance between Serbia and Bulgaria. Fifteen years later (in 1912) the creation of the Balkan League under Russian assistance, became possible only because the Russophile Bulgarian government led by Ivan Gueshoff, agreed to divide Macedonia with Serbia.²³

²¹ Тошев, *Балканските*, Т. I, 98-9.

²² Тошев, *Балканските*, Т. I, 101-3.

²³ Ivan Gueshoff, *The Balkan League* (London [no publisher is identified], 1915), 14.

It is an interesting coincidence (if indeed a coincidence), that the Bulgarian russophile government, led by Constantin Stoilov during the Serbian-Bulgarian rapprochement in 1896-97, was also inclined to do this.²⁴ The evidence is difficult to find, because the negotiations on that matter between the Serbian and Bulgarian governments were held in deep secrecy. The main reasons for this secrecy were the fierce rejection at that time by Bulgarian public opinion of any possible compromises concerning the Macedonian cause, and the fear of reprisal by the Macedonian revolutionaries, who were ready to oppose with any possible means the partition of their country. This fear appeared to be not unfounded. When in 1897, rumors circulated that the Bulgarian government was preparing the partition of Macedonia, Prime-Minister Stoilov began to receive anonymous threats that he and his ministers "will pay with their blood, if they allow this treachery to happen."²⁵

Realizing the seriousness of the situation for his government and for him personally, Stoilov declared publicly in the Bulgarian Parliament on 13 December 1897, that the Bulgarian government under his leadership had

²⁴ During the period between 1894 and 1899 Ivan Gueshoff was also minister in Stoilov's government.

²⁵ Андрей Тошев, *Балканските войни*, Т. I, 104-5.

never intended to divide Macedonia into spheres of influence between Serbia and Bulgaria.²⁶ But a closer examination of the Serbian-Bulgarian negotiations in this period reveals that such negotiations were in fact in progress.

In 1897, according to Ljubomir Jovanovich, a Serbian statesman from this period, the representatives of the Bulgarian government had begun talks with their Serbian colleagues over the future partition of Macedonia between Serbia and Bulgaria.²⁷ In connection with this, the recollections of the Bulgarian diplomat Hristo Brakalov are also very important. When, in 1899, he arrived as new Bulgarian ambassador in Belgrade, in his first meeting with the Serbian King Alexander he was extremely surprised to hear the following:

You are probably informed - the King said - about the negotiations, which for two years are in progress between Serbia and Bulgaria for a closer rapprochement between these two brotherly countries. The most difficult question has always been the Macedonian question. But for solving this question we came to a satisfactory agreement two years ago during my visit in Sofia. In Macedonia we have vital interests as you Bulgarians have vital interests there. What is left is to define exactly our spheres of influence in this Ottoman province. With the government of Mr. Stoilov the negotiations about this matter made very good progress. I believe

²⁶ Тошев, *Балканските*, Т. I, 105.

²⁷ Љубомир Јовановић, “О Старој Србији и македонској аутономији”, *Дело* IX, no. 31, (1904): 27.

that it will be the same with the new Bulgarian government, because this is the only way for establishing of close and unbreakable alliance between Bulgaria and Serbia.

Brakalov was surprised by the words of the Serbian king, because he was a representative of the pro-Austrian Bulgarian government that had come to power in Bulgaria in 1899, and was therefore privy to the secrets of the previous Russophile government of Konstantin Stoilov. Thus the Bulgarian ambassador could only reply that he knew nothing about all this, but would check with the Bulgarian Foreign Ministry about written agreements between the Serbian and Bulgarian governments concerning this matter. After a search conducted by Bulgarian foreign minister Todor Ivanchov, no documents of this kind were found in the Bulgarian Foreign Ministry, but oddly enough, a map of Macedonia was found with blue and red lines on it, defining the regions of Bulgarian and Serbian "spheres of interests." To deepen the mystery surrounding these Serbian-Bulgarian negotiations in 1897, this map was found not in the archives of the Bulgarian foreign ministry, but had come either from the palace of Prince Ferdinand, or from the Bulgarian Ministry of War.²⁸

²⁸ Андрей Тошев, *Балканските войни*, Т. I, 105-7.

The information that Prince Ferdinand was personally involved in the negotiations for partition of Macedonia as necessary step for achieving a strong alliance with Serbia deserves special attention.²⁹ Later he would play a leading role in the conclusion of the secret Serbian-Bulgarian Alliance of 1904. Ferdinand's role would be also decisive, although hidden, in the creation of the Balkan League, calling to power in 1911 precisely these Russophile parties, which with the assistance of the Russian diplomacy would accomplish the creation of the League.

At the same time that it secretly facilitated and encouraged a Serbian-Bulgarian rapprochement in 1897, official Russian policy was oriented toward keeping friendly relations with Austria-Hungry. Concerning the Balkans these relations were oriented toward maintaining the *status quo* in the region and the division of the Russian and Austrian spheres of influence there.³⁰ In April 1897 the Austrian Emperor Franz Josef visited St. Petersburg. During this visit a secret agreement was elaborated for future collaboration between the two empires

²⁹ Even if we prefer to accept the information that the map in question was found in the Ministry of War as the real one, this does not minimize the personal involvement of Ferdinand in the negotiations about the partition of Macedonia at least for two reasons: first, Ferdinand was supreme commander of the Bulgarian army, so the negotiations of that caliber possibly led by the Bulgarian militaries could not be conducted without his knowledge and second, the military minister at that time was General Racho Petrov, who was one of the most faithful and confident servants of Ferdinand in the Bulgarian political life.

³⁰ Андрей Тошев, *Балканските войни*, Т. I, 113-4.

in the Balkans, based on the definition of their spheres of interests. Possibly aware of the recent Serbian policies in South and Eastern direction and its attempts for creating a strong alliance with Bulgaria, during Franz Josef's visit in St. Petersburg, Austrian diplomacy secured the future creation of Albania in case of termination of the Ottoman possessions in eastern Europe, denying in this way a future access of Serbia to the Adriatic coast.³¹ As a consequence of this secret agreement between the Russian and the Habsburg empires, on 29 April 1897 the Russian and the Austrian governments issued two simultaneous diplomatic communiqués. Rejecting any possible changes in the *status quo* in the Balkans, Russia and Austro-Hungary declared that they would continue to promote reforms in Macedonia. The main addressees of these communiqués were the governments of Bulgaria, Serbia, and Montenegro.³²

But despite its official position, the Russian government tacitly encouraged Serbia and Bulgaria to reach an agreement aimed at altering the *status quo* in the region. It is worth reiterating here that the initial push for this Serbian-Bulgarian rapprochement was given by Russian diplomacy in 1896, and that throughout 1897, the

³¹ Barbara Jelavich, *Russia's Balkan Entanglements*, 212.

³² Андрей Тошев, *Балканските войни*, Т. I, 114.

figure of the Russian Tsar continued to be considered by both countries as guarantor for this rapprochement.

There is yet another important detail. In 1897, the Russian ambassador in Belgrade was the future foreign minister A.P. Izvolskii. When Izvolskii became Russian foreign minister in 1906, he infused new dynamic into Russian foreign policy. Openly changing Russia's foreign priorities and pursuing alliances in Europe Izvolskii played an important role in Anglo-Russian rapprochement of 1907 thus laying the foundation for the Triple Entente.

In his Balkan policy, Izvolskii sought to create military alliances between the small Balkan Slav States.³³ These were aimed at Austria-Hungary, and against German influence in general, and there is evidence that this policy began before the Bosnian Crisis. Thus, for example in his first meeting with Sergeev, the Russian ambassador in Belgrade (Feb. 1908), it became clear to Toshev, the Bulgarian ambassador that "the Russian diplomacy wanted at any costs to ally Serbia, Bulgaria and Montenegro, and to have them at its side in a future big war against Germanism."³⁴ To all this could be added also the fact, that Izvolski was also very sympathetic to *Neoslavism*, a mainly

³³ Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 444.

³⁴ Андрей Тошев, *Балканските войни*, Т. I, 177.

Russian intellectual and political movement, which considered Slavs in the Hapsburg and the Ottoman empire living under a "yoke," that should be terminated by the breakup of these empires.³⁵

All these considerations hint at the possibility of Izvolskii's more active role in the Serbian-Bulgarian rapprochement in 1897. Some historians have argued that Izvolskii spent the major part of his career as ambassador in western Europe, and was therefore not familiar with Balkan politics.³⁶ But a closer look at Izvolskii's diplomatic career reveals that he spent substantial time in the Balkan embassies. He had started his diplomatic career as secretary to the future foreign minister Lobanov-Rostovskii, during the latter's service as Russian ambassador in Constantinople. Before becoming ambassador in Belgrade, Izvolskii had also served as first-secretary in the Russian embassy in Bucharest.³⁷

³⁵ For *Neo Slavism* See Barbara Jelavich, *Russia's Balkan Entanglements*, 208-10; about the difference between conservative *Pan Slavism* and liberal *Neo Slavism* See James Joll, *The Origins of The First World War*, 105-6.

³⁶ Barbara Jelavich, *Russia's Balkan Entanglements*, 217.

³⁷ Whatever the truth, the author of this thesis still does not possess any information about Izvolskii's activity as Russian ambassador in Belgrade, except the fact that he was recalled from Belgrade, when he was too vehemently for a diplomat protested about the change of Serbian policy from pro-Russian to pro-Austrian in October 1897: See Радослав Попов, *Балканската политика на България*, 207.

5. The Decline of the Serbian-Bulgarian Rapprochement after October 1897

By late 1897, the Serbian-Bulgarian rapprochement, initiated by Russian diplomacy, had reached a dead end. The main reason for this was the political change in Belgrade, where a new government came to power with a clearly pro-Austrian orientation. Whereas Bulgaria until 1899 was ruled by the same Russophile government, led by the People's Party of Konstantin Stoilov, which under the Russian influence even made the first steps toward a future partition of Macedonia, the new Serbian government, led by Dr. Vladan Georgevich, preferred to seek rapprochement with the Ottoman Empire against Bulgaria.³⁸ One of the reasons for this was the growing tension in Macedonia, where IMORO became more active especially in 1897-98, supplanting in many regions Ottoman power with its own. Given the fact that IMORO was sponsored by and had its bases solely in Bulgaria, where armed bands were formed for trespassing into the Ottoman parts of Macedonia, the new Serbian government viewed exactly Bulgaria as the biggest threat to the Serbian influence there.

When, in 1899, the Bulgarian Liberal Party, a party with anti-Russian orientation, replaced Stoilov's

³⁸ Андрей Тошев, *Балканските войни*, Т. I, 116.

Russophile government, the possibility of a Serbian-Bulgarian alliance became even more remote. This development, moreover, coincided with the shifting of the focus of the Russian foreign policy to the Far East, where it became more and more evident that Russia would have to fight a war with Japan. To secure its rear, official Russian diplomacy continued to be cautious toward Austria-Hungary, following the policy from 1897.

This new Far Asian direction of Russian diplomacy coincided with the appointment of Count Lamzdorf as Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs. Lamzdorf, a cautious diplomat, continued a Russian policy balanced between Germany, Austria-Hungary and France. At the end of 1902, Lamzdorf also visited Sofia and Belgrade to calm Bulgarian and Serbian agitation over recent developments in Macedonia.³⁹ But Lamzdorf also warned them not to rely on Russian help in a future conflict. To secure Austrian neutrality in the coming war with Japan, Lamzdorf also visited Vienna, where, with his Austrian counterpart Goluchowsky, he elaborated a program of reforms to damper the escalating tension in Macedonia.

But in spite of these reforms and the warnings of the Bulgarian government that it could not be involved

³⁹ Тошев, *Балканските*, Т. I, 122-3.

officially in future disturbances in Macedonia, a revolt, led by IMORO, finally broke out there in 1903. This immediately worsened relations between Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire, both of whom saw the other as the real instigator of the uprising.

In accordance with its official policy of promoting reforms in cooperation with Austria-Hungary, Russia, in a special communiqué from 11 April 1903, had already publicly condemned IMORO as organization acting against the interests of the Christian Balkan peoples, and had accused it of seeking to convert Macedonia into a solely Bulgarian land.⁴⁰ The last statement could be pointed out as representative for the Russian Macedonian policy in general, according to which Macedonia was first and foremost a land populated by Eastern Orthodox Slavs, and after that by different nationalities.

Following this policy, even during the years between 1898-1900, when Serbia was generally pro-Austrian, Russian diplomacy continued to work for promoting Serbian priests as leaders of the local churches in Macedonia, a policy that, according to all accounts, was extremely unpopular

⁴⁰ Тошев, *Балканските*, Т. I, 123-4.

among the local population, and needless to say, among the leaders and members of IMORO.⁴¹

Practical expression of this policy was the appointment of the Serbian priest Firmilian as bishop of Scopje in 1902, an event that caused significant agitation not only among the local Macedonians, but also in public opinion in Bulgaria.

This appointment was achieved with the relentless efforts of Russian diplomacy for a period of about five years, from 1897 to 1902, when at last Firmilian received a *berat* for the bishopric of Scopije.⁴² This proved to be possible, when again in 1902, a Russophile government, led by Stojan Danev, came on power in Bulgaria. It was not surprising, if we keep in mind that in 1896 another Russophile Bulgarian government, following Russian advise, was ready for compromise on this matter.

But for Balkan relations, the appointment of Firmilian is also important in another light. During the agitation in Bulgaria caused by this appointment, the idea of a future alliance between Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro was first articulated publicly. This is even more significant because it was made by a Bulgarian politician and diplomat, who

⁴¹ Александр Амфитеатров, *В моих скитаниях: Балканские впечатления* (Райская: СПб, 1903), 97-8.

⁴² *Berat* – special charter issued by Ottoman Sultan allowing the Orthodox priests within the Ottoman Empire to occupy their sees. Андрей Тошев, *Балканските войни*, Т. I, 118-22.

later would play a very important role, not only in the conclusion of the secret Serbian-Bulgarian Alliance of 1904, but also eight years later in the formation of the Balkan League. The name of this person is Dimitar Rizov.

Later in this thesis Rizov's political and diplomatic activities will be scrutinized in a more detailed way, but for now it is worth noting that in 1902 he was one of the few Macedonians in Bulgaria to favor the appointment of Firmilian as bishop of Skopije.⁴³ During a protest meeting against Firmilian's appointment at Sofia University, Rizov alone defended Firmilian's appointment, and for the first time stated publicly that Bulgaria should support this appointment for the sake of a future alliance between Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro.⁴⁴

The significance of this statement is two fold: first, it suggests that the idea of a Proto-Balkan League had already existed in 1902 and, second: that this statement was made by the future Bulgarian ambassador in Montenegro.⁴⁵ In any case, it is clear that Rizov's views were close to those of the Bulgarian Prince Ferdinand, who decided most appointments of Bulgarian diplomats. Had Ferdinand opposed

⁴³ See pp. 49-54 of this thesis.

⁴⁴ Андрей Тошев, *Балканските войни*, Т. I, 122.

⁴⁵ Soon after this public statement Rizov was sent in the Montenegrin capital Cetine as Bulgarian diplomatic agent.

Rizov's views, he would not have chosen him for the Montenegrin post.

Officially Russia continued to cooperate with Austria-Hungary in implementing reforms in Macedonia, and these reforms, more radical than those elaborated by Lamzdorf and Goluchowsky in February 1903, became evident when in the summer of the same year, the revolt broke out in Macedonia, leaving about 4,700 dead and 71,000 forced, to emigrate to Bulgaria. In response to these new Ottoman massacres, Russia and Austria-Hungary jointly introduced a new program of reforms, known as the *Murzsteg program*, named after the Austrian town where Nicholas II met with Franz-Joseph in Sept. 1903. According to this new program, an international commission was formed for preventing new atrocities against the Christian population in Macedonia and appointing foreign military officers for supervising and reforming the Turkish gendarmerie.⁴⁶

But for the political situation in the Balkans, 1903 was significant not for the *Murzsteg* program (which never achieved significant results) but because of the coup that toppled the ruling dynasty in Serbia.

⁴⁶ Андрей Тошев, *Балканските войни*, Т. I, 127-30.

6. *Coup d'etat* in Belgrade

On the evening of June 11, at midnight, twenty-eight Serbian officers and their units surrounded the palace of the Serbian king Alexander, disarmed the royal guard and cruelly massacred the monarch and his wife Queen Draga.⁴⁷ On the same night, several Serbian ministers were also killed in front of their families.⁴⁸ This *coup d'etat* replaced not only Serbia's ruling dynasty, but also changed the political course of the Serbian government. The new dynasty, represented by king Peter Karageorgevich, returned power to the Old Radical Party, which would rule unopposed for decades to come. This party favored a rapprochement with Russia, and claimed the Serbian population living within the Habsburg Empire as part of Greater Serbia. This policy would prove extremely dangerous for the political balance in the Eastern Europe, and would ultimately upset this balance, thus leading to the outbreak of First World War.

⁴⁷ The leader of these conspirators was no other than the well known Dragutin Dimitrievic (Apis), the organizer of the Sarajevo assassinations: See David MacKenzie, *Serbs and Russians* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1996), 133-7; 303; 307-8.

⁴⁸ Andre Gerolymatos, *The Balkan Wars* (New York: Perseus Books Group, 2002), 36.

II. THE SECRET SERBO-BULGARIAN TREATIES OF 1904

1. Introduction

Although the secret alliance concluded between Bulgaria and Serbia in 1904 was known to contemporaries under the name of "The Serbian-Bulgarian Treaty of Alliance of 1904", there were actually two treaties signed between Serbia and Bulgaria on 30 March (12 April - N. S.) 1904.⁴⁹ The first was a "Treaty of Friendship" while the second was the actual "Treaty of Alliance".⁵⁰

Since both signatories intended for the treaties to remain secret in the foreseeable future, there were specific articles stipulating that eventual disclosure could be undertaken only after preliminary agreement between the Serbian and the Bulgarian governments. The treaties were also accompanied by a "Concluding Protocol", in which the secret character of the "Treaty of Alliance" was again confirmed by a separate clause, stating that copies of this treaty be kept only in the personal archives of the Serbian and Bulgarian Monarchs (King Peter and Prince Ferdinand respectively), and thus forbidding

⁴⁹ Ivan Gueshoff, *The Balkan League* (London [no publisher is identified], 1915), 10.

⁵⁰ Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина чужбина: Военнодипломатически спомени 1899-1914 г.* (София: Военноиздателски комплекс Св. Георги Победоносец, 1993), 101-6; Андрей Тошев, *Балканските войни* (София: Факел, 1929), Т. I, 154 – 5; 156; Ernst Helmreich, *The Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938), 464; 466; 468.

additional copies to be deposited even in the archives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the two states.⁵¹

This secrecy reflects not only the covert nature of the preliminary negotiations, but also explains why their existence remained for so long unknown to the public. The "Treaty of Friendship" was only published for the first time by the Bolshevik government after the collapse of the Tsarist regime in 1918.⁵² The "Treaty of Alliance" remained a secret until 1929, twenty five years after its conclusion.⁵³

Despite this secrecy, the history of these treaties is one of the best documented cases in modern Bulgarian diplomacy, primarily because of the detailed account by one of the main participants in the negotiations Hristofor Khesapchiev, at that time serving as Bulgarian military agent in Belgrade.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 102; 104; 106; Андрей Тошев, *Балканските войни*, 156; 154; See also Appendix, II, 2, p. 104, Article IV.

⁵² From the archives of the former Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs as negative example of the Russian secretive "imperialistic" diplomacy See in *Народный комиссариат по иностранным делам: Сборник секретных документов из архива бывшего министерства иностранных дел* (Петроград: Народный комиссариат по иностранным делам, 1917-18), no. 2, 34-5.

⁵³ Published by the Bulgarian diplomat Andrej Toshev in his memoirs "The Balkan Wars": Андрей Тошев, *Балканските войни*, 153-5.

⁵⁴ Because in 1904 Bulgaria was still a vassal principality of the Ottoman Empire, her representatives abroad were called diplomatic and military agents, after declaring the independence of Bulgaria in 1908 these offices were accordingly transformed into ambassadors and military attachés.

2. Background of Alliance

Khesapchiev first raised the idea of an alliance between Bulgaria and the new Serbian regime during his final audience as Bulgarian military agent in Belgrade with the new Serbian King Peter Karadjordjevic on 18 January (1 February - N. S.) 1904.⁵⁵ During this audience Khesapchiev openly told the King that he would like to return to Belgrade with "a special mission to work for an agreement between our brotherly (i.e. Bulgarian and Serbian) peoples."

This statement evoked an enthusiastic reaction from the Serbian King, who replied that:

What happiness that would be! Serbia and Bulgaria share a common origin, they represent one people with one religion and they must live in a brotherly way; they have the same interests and common enemies. A union between them would create a power to be reckoned with, inspiring with awe the Great Powers, and we would cease to be the play-toys of their interests.

Adding that the combined armies of Serbia and Bulgaria would make them "a decisive factor in the Balkans", King Peter also declared that, faithful to the traditions of his

⁵⁵ Because of the so-called "Diplomatic Strike", Khesapchiev as Bulgarian military agent along with the Bulgarian diplomatic agent Konstantin Velichkov was recalled from Belgrade by the Bulgarian government. For the "Diplomatic Strike" See David MacKenzie, *Serbs and Russians* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1996), 332-5.

Karadjordjevic dynasty, he had always hoped for a Serbian-Bulgarian agreement "on a wide basis".⁵⁶

It is important to note that Khesapchiev's suggestion for promoting Serbian-Bulgarian rapprochement was initially undertaken without authorization from either the Bulgarian government or the Bulgarian Monarch Prince Ferdinand.

Khesapchiev apparently undertook this unauthorized diplomatic move because Bulgaria and Serbia were both on the diplomatic defensive caused by the threat of Austrian expansion in the Sanjak of Novi Pazar and Thessalonica respectively.⁵⁷ Khesapchiev feared Austrian intervention in these regions because of Russia's current military involvement in the Far East, which had temporarily distracted her from Balkan affairs.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 52-3. With the last statement, King Peter probably meant the reign of his father, Prince Alexander (1842-59), whose Balkan policy was strongly influenced by Ilija Garasanin's ideas (from his popular work *Nacertanie*) for creating of a large South Slavic State, gathering in it besides the Serbs, also the Bulgarians, the Croats and the other South Slav peoples: See Michael Petrovich, *A History of Modern Serbia*, V. II (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovic, 1976), 231; 536.

⁵⁷ Following the provisions of Article XXV of the Treaty of Berlin the Sandjak of Novi Pazar had been already occupied by the forces of the Dual Monarchy: See Constantin Dumba, *Memoirs of a Diplomat*, (Boston: Little Brown, and Company, 1932), 89; what Khesapchiev meant about "the Austrian aspirations towards the Sandjak of Novi Pazar" was an eventual annexation of this enclave by Austria-Hungary or at least building of railroad there, thus these both possibilities were firmly resisted by Russia: See F. R. Bridge, *From Sadowa to Sarajevo: The Foreign Policy of Austria-Hungary 1866-1914* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), 250-1; 256-7.

⁵⁸ Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 51-2. According to the Russian minister of internal affairs Pleve the coming war between Russia and Japan was supposed to be "a little victorious war" for Russia: See Andrew M. Verner, *The Crisis of Russian Autocracy: Nicholas II and the 1905 Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 104-5; a belief shared by the Russian Tsar Nicholas II who in conversation with his Foreign Minister Lamzdorf made the following comment concerning the Japanese army: "This is not a real army and if we have to deal with it, excuse my words, only a wet spot will remain of them": See *Русия начала XX века* <http://www.russiankorea.com>, 4.

Khesapchiev rightly supposed that Serbia's present diplomatic isolation would make her receptive to an alliance with Bulgaria. Khesapchiev also realized that Bulgaria's relations with the Ottoman Empire were at a dangerous point. Blaming Bulgaria for the outbreak of the *Ilinden Revolt* in Macedonia, the Porte was concentrating troops on the Ottoman-Bulgarian border in late 1903.⁵⁹ The Ottoman Empire was ready to go to war with Bulgaria as a last resort, in order to dissuade Bulgarian encouragement of Macedonian Guerrilla Bands organizing in Bulgarian territory.⁶⁰ The Bulgarian Government itself considered this situation so dangerous that it had sent special envoys to Constantinople to negotiate an agreement with the Porte in which Bulgaria promised her full cooperation in preventing the Macedonian bands from entering Ottoman territory.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Андрей Тошев, *Балканските войни*, 133; Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 52.

⁶⁰ In fact these bands as well as their creator IMORO despite their names "Macedonian" were considered not only by the Ottomans, but also by the other Powers as Bulgarian, one of numerous proofs for this besides the already mentioned communiqué of the Russian Government from 11 April 1903 could be found in the memoirs of the Austrian ambassador in Belgrade from this period Constantin Dumba, where he refers to these bands as Bulgarian, not mentioning their designation as Macedonian at all: See Constantin Dumba, *Memoirs of a Diplomat*, 93.

⁶¹ The Bulgarian envoys sent to Constantinople were Grigor Nachovich, a Bulgarian politician with clearly pro-Austrian orientation and Andrej Toshev, who at that time served as Bulgarian Commerce Agent in Bitolya, Macedonia, thus on 26 March (i.e. four days before signing of the secret Serbian-Bulgarian Treaty of Alliance) an agreement was signed between Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire, which obliged the Bulgarian Government: 1. Not to allow formation of revolutionary comities and bands, and their transportation on Ottoman territory, as well as to punish everybody, who acts against law in the neighboring Ottoman provinces; 2. Not to allow transportation of explosive materials form Bulgarian territory into the neighboring Ottoman provinces: See Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 52; Андрей Тошев, *Балканските войни*, 133-5; 151-2.

Khesapchiev may have exaggerated somewhat the danger of war with the Ottomans. Not that the threat of war did not exist, but it was already receding by January 1904.⁶² As to Khesapchiev's fears of Austrian expansion in Thessalonica and Novi Pazar,⁶³ it is also questionable whether this was a real danger. Leaving aside Austria-Hungary's stated reluctance to make territorial acquisitions in the Balkans, hostilities between Russia and Japan had not yet begun, and in the beginning of 1904 nobody could have contemplated so humiliating and ruinous a defeat for the vast Russian Empire, and the domestic upheavals that followed in the Revolution of 1905.⁶⁴

It is also questionable whether alliance with Serbia in 1904 would have enhanced Bulgaria's security in the

⁶² Later in February, during his first meeting with Pasic in connection with the negotiations preceding the conclusion of the Serbian-Bulgarian Alliance of 1904, Khesapchiev, contradicting to himself, would point out to the Serbian Foreign Minister that Bulgaria was seeking rapprochement with Serbia, not very much because of the difficulty of her situation, but mostly because of Serbia's vulnerability towards a possible Austrian intervention: See Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 67.

⁶³ Хесапчиев, *Служба на България*, 51.

⁶⁴ Austrian denial for more territorial acquisitions in the Balkans was repeatedly confirmed by the public assurances of the Austrian Foreign Minister Goluchowski: See Constantin Dumba, *Memoirs of a Diplomat*, 99; this denial was based mostly on Hungarian government's hostility for acquisition of more Slav population within the Habsburg Empire, thus years 1903-05 were especially critical in the relations between the Imperial administration in Vienna and the Hungarian government in Budapest: See F. R. Bridge, *From Sadowa to Sarajevo*, 269-70. About the beginning of the hostilities between Russia and Japan in 1904 See Andrew M. Verner, *The Crisis of Russian Autocracy*, 104. Even after the military defeats of 1904 and 1905 in which the Russian Empire suffered about 400 000 killed and wounded, by summer of 1905 Russia had mustered half a million soldiers in East Asia outnumbering the already exhausted Japanese army and only the outbreak of the Revolution in 1905 prevented Russia from continuing and eventually winning the war: See David Stevenson, *Armaments and the Coming War: Europe 1904-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 76-7.

event of war with the Ottoman Empire.⁶⁵ Serbia at that moment was a country internationally isolated, politically unstable, and riddled with military factions, one of which had just overthrown and murdered the previous Serbian king. Serbia was also on the verge of bankruptcy.⁶⁶ Under these circumstances well known to all Balkan observers, Bulgaria stood to gain very little from an alliance with Serbia. Indeed such an alliance was more likely to undermine Bulgaria's position by damaging her relations with the Dual Monarchy, which considered Serbia as part of her sphere of influence, and thus reacted in a hostile way to every country trying to play politics there.

In short Khesapchiev's proposal for a Serbian-Bulgarian alliance would not necessarily have improved Bulgaria's international position.⁶⁷ Indeed it is likely that Khesapchiev's diplomatic initiative was prompted by other motivations, which may be inferred from his words

⁶⁵ In his study "The Balkan Wars 1912-1913" Richard C. Hall sees the reason for the Bulgarian interest in alliance with Serbia in 1904 in Bulgarian inability to wage war against the Ottoman Empire alone. According to Hall: "After 1903 the Bulgarians contemplated direct military action against the Ottoman Empire for achieving their national goals": See Richard C. Hall, *The Balkan Wars 1912-1913* (London: Routledge, 2000), 6; which contradicts to Serbia's military, political and financial weakness in 1904, proving her incapable for serious military involvement at that particular moment.

⁶⁶ Michael Petrovich, *A History of Modern Serbia*, V. II, 537-41.

⁶⁷ In his memoirs "The Balkan Wars" Toshev also lists the Ottoman-Bulgarian tensions, the danger of Austrian invasion and the preoccupation of Russia in the Far East as reasons for Bulgaria to seek an alliance with Serbia in 1904, thus it is not clear was he repeating with later date these considerations from Khesapchiev's article "The historical truth about the Serbian-Bulgarian Allied Treaties from 1904 and 1905", published in 1928 and cited in "The Balkan Wars" or the necessity for a Serbian-Bulgarian alliance as counterbalance to the Ottoman and Austrian threats was a consciously realized necessity for him and for the rest of the Bulgarian diplomats at that particular moment, given the secretive character of the Serbian-Bulgarian negotiations that led to the treaties in question, the first suggestion looks more plausible.

“our brotherly peoples” which suggests more an ideological than a strategic consideration.

Khesapchiev was a Pan Slav for whom it was natural that the Orthodox Slavs should unite against their imperial neighbors - the Muslim Ottomans and the Catholic Austrians, especially, at a time when their former protector, Orthodox Russia, was involved in the Far East far away from the Balkans.⁶⁸ As already noted, the difficult situation in which the new Serbian regime found itself also convinced Khesapchiev that this was the right moment to forge alliance between Serbia and Bulgaria. Khesapchiev was also a Russophile who had received his military education in St. Petersburg, and considered Russia as “the great helper of the Balkan Slav Christians”.⁶⁹

It is also important to remember that the new Serbian King Peter Karajorjevič was well known both for his Pan Slavism and his Russophilism, and thus he was considered

⁶⁸ Even after the collapse of the largest Slav empire (Russia) and Bulgaria’s crushed aspirations in Macedonia after the Second Balkan and the First World War, Khesapchiev continued to be a devoted Pan Slav up to his death in 1939, a confirmation for this could be found in the fact that he bequeathed by his will 100 000 leva, a substantial sum at the time, to the Bulgarian Slav Society for establishing an award in his name for honoring Slav writers contributing to the bringing together and the developing of the understanding between Slav peoples: See Елена Стателова, „Христофор Хесапчиев и неговото дело.” В *Христофор Хесапчиев, Служба на България в чужбина: Военнодипломатически спомени 1899-1914 г.* (София: Военноиздателски комплекс Св. Георги Победоносец, 1993), 8.

⁶⁹ Хесапчиев, *Служба на България*, 51; 443-4. As Russophile and as Chief of Sofia Military School in 1885 Khesapchiev was also involved in a failed conspiracy for overthrowing the Regency, which after the abdication of Prince Battenberg was ruling Bulgaria, resisting Russian attempts for subjecting the country, turning it in a Russian client state: See Симеон Радев, *Строителите на Съвременна България*, Том 2 (*VII. Заминаването на Каулбарса*)

<http://www.slovo.bg/showwork.php3?AuID=101&WorkID=9356&Level=3>

even by the Austrians to be under the personal protection of the Russian Tsar.⁷⁰ In his first speech from the throne, king Peter openly expressed his desire for "traditional relations with powerful brotherly Russia" and friendship with Serbia's Balkan neighbors, a fact probably well known to Khesapchiev as the Bulgarian military agent in Belgrade.⁷¹ Nevertheless, king Peter was a constitutional monarch, and thus could play only a limited role in shaping Serbian foreign policy, while Khesapchiev's action was unauthorized by the Bulgarian government, which in this period happened to be constituted by representatives of the People's Liberal Party, a party with a traditionally pro-Austrian orientation.⁷²

Only when Khesapchiev returned to Sofia and described to Prince Ferdinand his last conversation with the Serbian king, did the idea of a rapprochement between Serbia and Bulgaria gradually gain political significance.

Outlining Ferdinand's role in the beginning of this rapprochement, Khesapchiev describes in his memoirs his conversation with Ferdinand:

If Your Highness thinks that in the present troublesome situation, Bulgaria's interests dictate an alliance with Serbia, from all points

⁷⁰ Constantin Dumba, *Memoirs of a Diplomat*, 143.

⁷¹ Michael Petrovich, *A History of Modern Serbia*, V. II, 537.

⁷² Милен Куманов и Таня Николова, *Политически партии, организации и движения в България и техните лидери 1878-1999* (София: Ариадна, 1999), 17.

of view, this is the right moment for achieving it. My careful study of the situation there, gives me all assurances that eventual negotiations for achieving this goal would succeed. Moreover since Russia began her war in the Far East, the Serbs are really afraid of an eventual offensive action by Austria-Hungary.⁷³

Prince Ferdinand replied that he had recently received a letter from the Prince of Montenegro, Nicola, in which the latter was appealing to him that "in the present political situation, achievement of an alliance between the Balkan Slav peoples is of the utmost necessity."⁷⁴

On their second meeting, two days later, on 27 January, Khesapchiev repeated to Ferdinand his arguments in favor of an alliance between Serbia and Bulgaria, adding that "it is possible this alliance can be achieved on the basis of the autonomy of Macedonia."⁷⁵

Prince Ferdinand surprised Khesapchiev by his reply; seeking the maximum theatrical effect the Prince confessed to Khesapchiev, that many Bulgarians considered him an

⁷³ In connection with the Serbian fears about such a possibility, it is interesting here to be pointed out that in 1913 the Austrian ambassador in Belgrade from 1903 to 1905, Dumba, admitted to the Austrian politician Baernreither that at that time, if wanted the Austrian Army could occupy Belgrade within fourteen days without facing serious resistance, Dumba even addressed a memorandum to the Austrian Foreign Ministry proposing Sarajevo as center of such kind of action under the leadership of Archduke Eugene, but he never got any answer to it, which shows how far Austria-Hungary was, even in 1903-04, from any kind of direct involvement in Serbia: See Joseph M. Baernreither, *Fragments of a Political Diary* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1930), 248.

⁷⁴ Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 54.

⁷⁵ Which meant that, because of its complicated international situation, the new Serbian regime could give up Serbia's firm demand for division of Macedonia. Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 54.

"Austrian agent", whereas, insisted Ferdinand "the foundation of my soul is Slavonic."⁷⁶

This confession of the Bulgarian Prince to a Panslav such as Khesapchiev deserves special attention. In European political and aristocratic circles Ferdinand was well known not only for his lack of principles and firm convictions, but also for his histrionic and deceitful character.⁷⁷ When it suited his personal or dynastic interests, he represented himself at times as founder of a new Coburg (supposedly pro-Austrian) dynasty in Bulgaria, other times as descendant of St. Louis and Louis XIV, at one moment as a faithful Catholic, who is eager to bring Bulgaria into

⁷⁶ For the popularity of this accusation among some Russian and French political circles See: Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 21; Serge Sazonov, *Faithful Years*, 49; 178; 229-30 and Raymond Poincare, *Le Balcan en feu* (Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1926); thus especially the Russian Foreign Minister from 1910 to 1916 Sergei Sazonov was firmly convinced that Ferdinand "had been placed upon the throne of Bulgaria by the diplomatic efforts of Berlin and Vienna" for "furthering the cause of Germany in the Balkans": See Serge Sazonov, *Faithful Years*, 49; 229-30; this accusation was also very vivid among the Russian, French and Serbian public opinions, but it is difficult to define how much of it was due to real conviction, how much simply for propaganda purposes: See Иван Илчев, *България и Антантата през Първата световна война*, 20 http://www.promacedonia.org/ii_ww1/index.html and Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 120; those who followed closely Ferdinand's political course were well aware that such kind of accusations were unfounded: See Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 21.

⁷⁷ Not overburdened with modesty Ferdinand described the complexity of his own personality to the French Ambassador in Sofia Paleologue in this way: "... some very varied atavisms are commingled in me. It is to the Bourbons I owe the pride of my race and my courage. But I also owe a great deal to the Coburgs: my kind of intelligence and my political qualities. ... And if I have an ability to deal with eastern people, understand them, to make them accept me, then I owe it to my Magyar ancestry, to the blood I inherited from my grandmother Princess Kohary": See Hans Roger Madol, *Ferdinand of Bulgaria: The Dream of Byzantium* (London: Hurst & Blackett Ltd., 1933), 94-5; but for most of the people Ferdinand had to deal with, this complexity, combined with his involvement in some shady financial affairs, was considered simply as wickedness: See Иван Илчев, *България и Антантата през Първата световна война*, 50-1 and Stephen Constant, *Foxy Ferdinand: Tsar of Bulgaria* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1980), 181; 184-5; 281.

the Catholic Church, at another moment as restless promoter of the cause of Germanism in Bulgaria.⁷⁸

So it is obvious that analyzing Ferdinand's Slavophile confession to Khesapchiev, instead of taking it as self-evident, one should seek to find what was its practical political significance and real political meaning.

After his reconciliation with Russia in 1896, Ferdinand's "Slavophilism" was becoming more and more evident. During his visit to St. Petersburg in 1896 for the coronation of Nicholas II he not only tried to convince the members of the Russian Imperial family of his own Slav ancestry, but acted a *plus Slave que les Slaves*, imitating

⁷⁸ Ferdinand's image as an pro-Austrian Coburg was dominant for the first part of his reign (before 1895 i.e. before his switch to a pro-Russian policy), when he enjoyed the personal support and admiration of the Austrian Emperor Francis Joseph: See Stephen Constant, *Foxy Ferdinand*, 142. St. Louis was the canonized King Louis IX of France who died in Northern Africa in 1270 while leading the last Crusade to the Holy Land, thus the stressing of this descent by Ferdinand had two fold purpose: on one hand he tried to show himself up as a good Catholic, on another as destined by his origin to lead the Christian Balkan peoples in the Last Crusade against the Ottomans for expelling them from Europe: See Stephen Constant, *Foxy Ferdinand*, 45. Ferdinand's outlining of his Bourbon-Orleanist descent as descendant of Louis XIV was mainly preserved for the French politicians and diplomats, who for promoting the French interests in Bulgaria were often flattering the Bulgarian Prince as grandson of the last French King Louis Philippe: See Stephen Constant, *Foxy Ferdinand*, 214; 237. Ferdinand's image as promoter of Catholicism in Bulgaria was dominant for the first part of his reign (more precisely before his excommunication by the Pope in 1896) and was especially useful for him in winning the consent of Duke of Parma to marry his daughter Marie-Louise: See Stephen Constant, *Foxy Ferdinand*, 45; 140; after his excommunication Ferdinand did not hesitate openly to demonstrate his resentment against the Vatican, thus according to the testimony of Princess Victoria of Batemberg, when during the festivities accompanying the coronation of Nicholas II, the Catholic prelate, facing occasionally Ferdinand, marked his contempt for his apostasy with "gesture of spiting at him. Prince Ferdinand ... spat back": See David Duff, *Hessian Tapestry* (London: Muller, 1967), 154. After his abdication in 1918, settling in his private estate in Coburg, Ferdinand gave an interview for the German newspaper "Berliner Tageblatt", stating that he had worked more than thirty years in putting Bulgaria into "Germany's political course", which besides angering the Bulgarian public opinion, considering this as ultimate confession, was also far from real, thus the real reason for this statement could be found in Ferdinand's unpopularity in Austria-Hungary at that particular moment and the unpleasant possibly for his expulsion within forty eight hours from its territory as it was proposed by the Austrian Foreign Minister at the time Count Berchtold: See Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 21.

for instance the most pious Russians by taking off his headgear and crossing himself every time he passed a church.⁷⁹ Later, in his, one could say, comic attempts to represent himself as a Slav prince, Ferdinand would go even further, ordering to be portrayed on the walls of the biggest church in Sofia, "St. Alexander Nevski", in Royal Slavonic outfit with an inscription defining him as a "descendant of the Bithynian Princes", a pure mystification, ridiculing him even in the eyes of his most faithful supporters.⁸⁰

3. Russo-Bulgarian Secret Military Convention of 1902

In a political sense, Ferdinand's pro-Russian orientation after 1896 reached one of its peaks in the secret Military Convention concluded between Bulgaria and Russia in 1902.

A detailed study of this Convention goes beyond the scope of this thesis, but it is important to note that the

⁷⁹ For proving his Slav ancestry Ferdinand went back some nine hundred years to trace Slav blood in his mother's family, pointing to the Dark Ages, when a Russian Princess married a Capet: See Stephen Constant, *Foxy Ferdinand*, 185; Димитър Делийски, "Ботевият ден и "византийската мечта" на Фердинанд," *Кула 2*, (Април 2006): 3–11. Observing Ferdinand's imitation of Russian pious behavior a Russian newspaper sized on this and in a satirical *feuilleton* mocked Ferdinand that he was taking his head gear off and was crossing himself even when entering Russian theaters and concert halls: See Stephen Constant, *Foxy Ferdinand*, 184-5.

⁸⁰ The Bithynian Princes were supposedly of Slavonic origin; after the Second Balkan War, when the Bulgarian public opinion considered Bulgaria betrayed by Russia, Ferdinand ordered the image as well as the inscription erased: See Добри Ганчев, *Спомени за Княжеското време* (София, Издателство на Отечествения фронт, 1983), 208; Димитър Делийски, "Ботевият ден и "византийската мечта" на Фердинанд", 3–11.

First Article, defined the Convention as a response to the Military Convention concluded between Austria-Hungary and Rumania in 1897.⁸¹ But in several provisions (Articles Four and Five) the Convention exceeded its stated purpose by allowing Russo-Bulgarian military assistance in case of war against all members of the Triple Alliance.⁸²

As already noted this Convention was also secret, in part because of Article 17 of the Bulgarian Constitution, which allowed Bulgaria to conclude treaties only with its Balkan neighbors.⁸³ But even more unconstitutional was the very fact of its secrecy. Article 17 also forbade the conclusion of treaties without the approval of the Bulgarian Parliament.⁸⁴

Viewed in the light of the subsequent secret alliance with Serbia in 1904, the Russo-Bulgarian Convention of 1902 is significant in yet another way. During the negotiations preceding its conclusion the Bulgarian Diplomatic Agent in

⁸¹ Даниела Давчева и Светослав Овчаров, *Лисицата и Лъвът: Фердинанд I на фона на българската психологическа и политическа действителност 1886-1902* (София: Университетско издателство "Св. Климент Охридски", 1994), 271; the full text of this Convention in English could be found in the Appendix, I, pp. 84-9.

⁸² Including Germany and Italy respectively.

⁸³ The disclosure of this Convention by the Bulgarian Government came eleven years later (i.e. in 1913) after the disastrous for Bulgaria Second Balkan War: See Даниела Давчева и Светослав Овчаров, *Лисицата и Лъвът*, 278-85.

⁸⁴ The full text of article 17 of the Bulgarian Constitution reads as follows: "The prince represents the Principality in all its relations with foreign states. In his name, and with the approval of the Subranie (i.e. the Bulgarian Parliament), special conventions may be made with the neighboring states regarding matters dependent on the administration of the Principality, and for which the reciprocal action of the government in question is required": See Конституция на Българското княжество, чл. 17 <http://kzg.parliament.bg/?page=history&lng=bg&hid=4>); about the unconstitutional character of the Russo-Bulgarian Military Convention of 1902 See also Richard C. Hall, *Bulgaria's Road to the First World War* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1996), 20-1.

St. Petersburg, Dimitar Stanchov, reported to Ferdinand that in the Russian Military Minister Kuropatkin had strongly advised Bulgaria to conclude a similar military convention with Serbia, promising that Russia would support it.⁸⁵

Indeed, Kuropatkin's words reflected Russia's consistent policy on Serbian-Bulgarian relations in that period. N. V. Tcharikow, the Russian Ambassador in Belgrade from 1900 to 1903, notes in his memoirs that, from the very beginning of his ambassadorship in Belgrade, he was instructed to facilitate a closer possible rapprochement between Serbia and Bulgaria under Russia's auspices.⁸⁶

It was thus in accordance with Russia's political wishes that Ferdinand tried a rapprochement with Serbia and personally with King Alexander Obrenovich in late 1902.⁸⁷

This attempt ended without any significant results mainly because of the worsening of the internal situation in Serbia, due to the growing unpopularity of King

⁸⁵ Даниела Давчева и Светослав Овчаров, *Лисицата и Лъвът*, 260.

⁸⁶ N. V. Tcharikow, *Glimpses of High Politics*, 22, where Tcharikow writes as follows: "In 1900 I was sent again to the Balkans as Minister Plenipotentiary to Serbia, with the same mission of furthering friendly relations between her and Bulgaria, based on the confidence of both in Russia." In this quote, Tcharikow is referring to an 1896-7 mission, when he was Russian Ambassador to Bulgaria.

⁸⁷ Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 38-9; witnessing as Bulgarian Military Agent in Belgrade Ferdinand's attempt at a rapprochement with King Alexander in the end of 1902, Khesapchiev explains this policy on behalf of the Bulgarian Monarch with the coming of the *Ilinden Revolt* (more than half a year away from that particular time) and with the growing tensions between Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire, threatening to evolve into armed conflict, which again contradicts to the mentioned above financial and military unreliability of Serbia from this period. For Serbia's extreme financial and military weakness during the last years of King Alexander's reign See David MacKenzie, *Serbs and Russians*, 170; 305.

Alexander's domestic policy as well as his marriage with Draga.⁸⁸ To this could also be added the important detail that after Lamzdorf's visit to Serbia at the end of 1902, Russia definitely gave up her efforts of supporting the unpopular Serbian King.⁸⁹

It is also likely that Ferdinand's conversation with Khesapchiev on 27 January 1904, and his odd reference to the "Slavonic foundation" of his soul, clearly reflects his desire for an alliance with the new Russophile regime in Serbia, and reveals Russia's persistent attempts to facilitate such an alliance.

4. Plans for a Bulgarian Mission to Belgrade (Late January 1904)

Soon after this conversation, Khesapchiev was summoned for a meeting with the Bulgarian Prime Minister and

⁸⁸ About the extreme unpopularity of King Alexander's marriage and his domestic policy form the last years of his reign *See* David MacKenzie, *Serbs and Russians*, 133-4; 303-5.

⁸⁹ N. V. Tcharikow, *Glimpses of High Politics*, 232-5. Russia's policy for winning King Alexander over to her side mainly relied on the support that Russian diplomacy and the Russian Tsar gave to his unpopular marriage with Draga; this policy proved to be successful for some time, when after the death of the Ex-king Milan in early 1901 King Alexander refused to renew his father's secret treaty with Austria-Hungary from 1883, confirming in this way his new pro-Russian orientation, but Nicholas II after showing "all the gracious kindness" on the occasion of King Alexander's marriage with Draga, inviting them in St. Petersburg, suddenly changed his policy canceling the already planed visit: Tcharikow, *Glimpses*, 232; according to Tcharikow this proved to be disastrous for the prestige of the Serbian Royal couple "among the Serbian people", thus this cancellation was followed by order of the Foreign Minister Lamzdorf, who during his visit in Serbia in 1902 instructed the Russian Embassy in Belgrade "not to meddle with the internal affairs of Serbia" (i.e. stopping helping King Alexander to keep his throne); Tcharikow's conclusion about Lamzdorf's order in question is that it "was the death-warrant of King Alexander and Queen Draga": *See* Tcharikow, *Glimpses*, 234; about all this and especially about Tcharikow's role as chief advisor of King Alexander and the Serbian government before Lamzdorf's visit *See* also Michael Petrovich, *A History of Modern Serbia*, V. II, 502-3.

Minister of Foreign Affairs Racho Petrov, where the Bulgarian Minister of Internal Affairs Dimitar Petkov was also present. At that meeting, he learned of his appointment to head the Bulgarian Diplomatic Agency in Belgrade.⁹⁰ Dimitar Petkov also gave Khesapchiev the following preliminary conditions for the beginning of negotiations with the Serbian Government:⁹¹

1. The idea for the division of Macedonia between Bulgaria and Serbia is definitely excluded from the policy of the Bulgarian Government, which would adhere to the principle of "Macedonia for Macedonians".
2. The autonomy of Macedonia should be the leading principle in Serbian and Bulgarian support for the Macedonian reform program to be carried out by the Great Powers.⁹²
3. Bulgaria and Serbia are undertaking the obligation for sustaining peace in the Balkan

⁹⁰ Because of the Diplomatic Strike, following the boycott of the Great Powers to the new Serbian regime, the Bulgarian Government was still abstaining from appointing an official Diplomatic Agent in the Serbian capital.

⁹¹ The reason that Khesapchiev was receiving diplomatic instructions by the Bulgarian Internal Minister was due to the fact, that Dimitar Petkov was leader of the People's Liberal Party (also called the Stambolovist Party after the name of its founder, the already deceased at that time Stefan Stambolov) and members of this party, as was mentioned above, made up the Government, predominantly. The only person in the Government not a member of this party was General Racho Petrov, who as a military person was not allowed to participate in political organizations. General Petrov was Prime Minister as well as Minister of Foreign Affairs, but as a political figure he was considered to be the political *alter ego* of Prince Ferdinand.

⁹² I.e. the so-called *Murtzeg program* for reforms.

Peninsula and must therefore avoid any action that could cause complications in this region.

4. Bulgaria and Serbia should agree to the *status quo* in the Balkans, and to the use of military force against any occupation or conquest by a third Power in the European lands of the Ottoman Empire, especially those lands populated by their compatriots.
5. The Bulgarian Government is willing to open its Black Sea ports for transit of Serbian goods, taking the obligation to facilitate this trade with all possible means.⁹³

According to Khesapchiev's recollections at the end of the meeting Petkov told him that the Bulgarian Government "received reliable information from a friendly-to-us embassy in Constantinople that Turkey, encouraged by Germany, is preparing to declare war on Bulgaria."⁹⁴ Thus, as Petkov pointed out, concluding a treaty with Serbia would be a great accomplishment."⁹⁵

Was Petkov really convinced that the war between Turkey and Bulgaria was inevitable? It is very difficult to say with any certainty, but given Petkov's role as leader

⁹³ Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 56-7.

⁹⁴ War that the Ottoman Empire never declared against Bulgaria.

⁹⁵ Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 57.

of the pro-Austrian People's Liberal Party, and the uncompromising instructions for maintaining the autonomy of Macedonia, it is clear that Petkov was not simply fishing for an alliance with Serbia, and was clearly unwilling to compromise on the Macedonian question. Why, then, did he seek the alliance with Serbia?

The definite tone of Petkov's instructions suggests that the Bulgarian Internal Minister was hoping to take advantage of the temporary weakness of the new Serbian regime, forcing it to accept the autonomy of Macedonia as basis for a future agreement with Bulgaria.⁹⁶ Indeed, it is plausible that Ferdinand used the policy of Macedonian autonomy to win over Petkov (a Macedonian) to an alliance with the new pro-Russian Serbian Government despite the risk of angering Austria.⁹⁷

During the meeting with General Petrov and the Internal Minister Petkov, Khesapchiev was also informed that, the Bulgarian Diplomatic Agent in the Montenegrin capital, Cetine, Dimitar Rizov, would accompany him to Belgrade. Rizov would later also play a very important role in the creation of the Balkan League, and his political

⁹⁶ Petkov was probably also hoping for some economic gains for Bulgaria from her alliance with Serbia as it will be shown later in the course of this thesis: *See* pp. 66-7; 74.

⁹⁷ Two days after the described above meeting Khesapchiev met occasionally Petkov and the latter told him that no other, but Ferdinand pointed out to him the favorable conditions about an alliance with Serbia at that particular moment: *See* Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 58-9.

career as well as his personality thus deserve more detailed scrutiny.⁹⁸

Dimitar Rizov was everything that a diplomat should not be: he was indiscreet, tactless and was despised or disliked by almost everybody who had ever met him.⁹⁹ Nevertheless, he had a brilliant diplomatic career.¹⁰⁰

Rizov began his political life as a Macedonian revolutionary, and first gained notoriety in 1885 in connection of the so called "coupons affair", when

⁹⁸ This is how one of the main architects of this alliance, the Bulgarian Prime Minister Gueshoff describes Rizov's participation in the drafting of the memorandum that later would become a base for the conclusion of the Serbian-Bulgarian Alliance of 1912: "After Mr. Rizoff had given us a full report of his conversations in Belgrade, we established the principles which should regulate our understanding with Serbia, embodying them in a memorandum. I may mention that the points dealing with an attack on Serbia and Bulgaria by a third party, particularly by Austria, were drafted by Mr. Rizoff himself": See Ivan Gueshoff, *The Balkan League*, 13.

⁹⁹ When he got the news about Rizov's appointment Khesapchiev pointed out to Petkov that this appointment jeopardized the secrecy of his mission and this soon appeared to be true, because almost immediately after his arrival in Belgrade Rizov began to give interviews to various newspapers that he was there with an important mission: See Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 57-8; this indiscretion caused Prince Ferdinand's discontent as well as the discontent of the Serbian representatives, thus General Gruic, warned Khesapchiev: "Rizov talks too much, he is a dangerous person", this statement was supported by Pasic who remarked: "Rizov talks too much and with this he is doing harm to our cause and to himself. He is a person with unhealthy ambitiousness": See Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 58. Khesapchiev describes in the following way Rizov's behavior during the Serbian-Bulgarian negotiations in 1904: "On the whole during the negotiations from their very beginning until their end Rizov behaved in an outrageous way. Almost always agitated, bristling and goggle-eyed, he was constantly interrupting his opponents, ending what they were trying to say by himself": See Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 97. About Dimitar Petkov's negative attitude towards Rizov See Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 57; about Khesapchiev's negative attitude towards Rizov See Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 19; 57; 97; 435; about Ferdinand's negative attitude towards Rizov see Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 58; about the negative attitude towards Rizov of some Macedonian revolutionary leaders like Gorche Petrov See *Вежбанка за критичко мисленье: Македонска историја, 25/05: Стравот и желбите на македонизмат во карантин*, 3, бел. 23 <http://www.makedonskaistorija.com/item/10/catid/3>; one British diplomat characterized Rizov in the following way: "A charming person, but one should pray not meet him in a deserted place at midnight": See Иван Илчев, „Сделката на Фердинанд и Радославов, с която загрибиха България,” *Сега*, 13.03.2002.

¹⁰⁰ From 1903 to 1905 Diplomatic Agent in Cetine (Montenegro), from 1905 to 1908 Diplomatic Agent in Belgrade, from January 1908 to September 1908 Diplomatic Agent in Athens, from 1908 to 1910 Ambassador in Rome, from 1915 until of his death in 1918 Ambassador in Berlin: See Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 649, бел. 38.

Macedonian revolutionaries robbed and murdered a Rumanian aristocrat in Bucharest. The goods robbed included international financial bonds, which proved dangerous to be cashed in Rumania, because the Rumanian police were put on alert after the murder.¹⁰¹ To get these bonds out of Rumania unnoticed, Rizov and his Macedonian friends used the corpse of the notorious Bulgarian revolutionary Rakovski, who had died twenty years earlier as an exile in Rumania, and was buried on Rumanian soil. Under the guise of transferring Rakovski's mortal remains from Rumania to Bulgaria, Rizov and his brothers-in-arms hid the bonds in Rakovski's casket and in this way smuggled them out of Rumania. This squalid act became public a few months later, when two Bulgarian military officers were arrested in Vienna trying to sell the bonds, but due to Russian diplomatic intervention, the arrested Bulgarian officers were released by the Austrian authorities.¹⁰²

Rizov became extremely anti-Russian when Tsar Alexander III refused to recognize the newly united Bulgaria (1885), but Rizov soon changed his political affiliations, became a Russophile, and immigrated to Russia. In St. Petersburg, he served not only as an agent

¹⁰¹ According to the contemporary terminology the robbed financial bonds were called *coupons* from where the whole affair took its name.

¹⁰² Симеон Радев, *Строителите на съвременна България*. Том I (II. Заговорът за съединението) <http://www.slovo.bg/showwork.php3?AuID=101&WorkID=4436&Level=3>

of the Russian Asiatic Department, but was also involved in several unsuccessful attempts to assassinate the Bulgarian Prime Minister Stefan Stambolov.¹⁰³

After Stambolov's fall from power and his murder in 1895, Rizov returned to Bulgaria and continued his pro-Russian activities, this time as a member of the Bulgarian Parliament, where he constantly lobbied for pardoning Bulgarian military officers who had earlier plotted to overthrow the anti-Russian Government in Bulgaria.¹⁰⁴ He was also one of the few people in Bulgaria who publicly supported extremely the unpopular Russian policy of forcefully installing Serbian priests in Macedonia.¹⁰⁵

As already noted in 1902 Rizov strongly supported a military alliance of all Slav Balkan states against both Turkey and Austria-Hungary.¹⁰⁶ In addition Rizov was also an active protagonist of the South Slavonic unity in the broadest possible sense.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 334-6, 435.

¹⁰⁴ *11-то Народно Събрание: I Извънредна сесия от 22.02 – 26.08.1901 г.: Запитвания към Министъра на войната: XLIII заседание, събота 5 май 1901: Запитване от Кюстендилския народен представител Д. Ризов за офицерите емигранти*
<http://www1.parliament.bg/kns/Pkontrol/11%20ons/11%20ons.htm>

¹⁰⁵ Андрей Тошев, *Балканските войни*, Т. I, 122.

¹⁰⁶ Rizov remained Russophile and Slavophile until the Second Balkan War of 1913, when after Bulgaria's humiliating defeat he changed radically into an extreme Germanophile and as such he was sent by Tsar Ferdinand as Bulgarian Ambassador to Berlin in 1915, where he died in 1918: See Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 436.

¹⁰⁷ In his memoirs the Croatian sculptor Ivan Meshtrovic, who made friends with Rizov in Rome in 1912 relates that Rizov considered Macedonians neither Bulgarians, nor Serbians, but South Slav Christians in the broadest possible sense without specifying what this term exactly meant: See *Вежбанка за критичко*

Appointing Rizov to the Bulgarian mission in Belgrade also meant that the coming negotiations between Bulgaria and Serbia would be open to Montenegro, the third Slav Balkan state. This tripartite configuration would later play a decisive role in the formation of the Balkan League in 1912. As Bulgarian Diplomatic Agent in Cetine, the Montenegrin capital, Rizov would play a role in the inclusion of Montenegro as prospective partner in the Serbia-Bulgarian Secret Treaties of 1904.¹⁰⁸

But Rizov's appointment was also important because it marked his emergence as one of the main players on the Balkan diplomatic stage; he would later play an extremely important role in the formation of the Balkan League in 1912.

Given Rizov's lack of diplomatic experience, it is not easy to explain his rise. There are, however, several possible explanations. First of all, there was Rizov's broad Slav outlook, which made him open to pro-Serb concessions in order to achieve an alliance with Serbia. Secondly, Rizov was a former Macedonian revolutionary, and thus had connections and influence in IMORO, enabling him

мисленье: Македонска историја, 25/05: Стравот и желбите на македонизмат во карантин, 3, бел. 23 <http://www.makedonskaistorija.com/item/10/catid/3>.

¹⁰⁸ See Appendix, II, 2, p. 94, Article V; how danger was this for provoking Austria-Hungary could be seen in the fact that Dumba writes that Austria was ready to on war for preventing Serbia and Montenegro unification: See Constantin Dumba, *Memoirs of a Diplomat*, 91-2.

to influence this organization in the direction of accepting the division of Macedonia. Finally, he was a Russian agent, which made him more dependable, at least in the eyes of the Russians.

In choosing Rizov, Russian agent, to negotiate the Balkan League later in 1911, Ferdinand was demonstrating his support of Russian policy.¹⁰⁹ In any case, Khesapchiev and Rizov were Pan-Slavs and Russophiles, and thus fully committed to Russia's aim of a Serbian-Bulgarian alliance.

5. Preliminary Negotiations

Arriving in Belgrade in the beginning of February, Khesapchiev and Rizov discovered that their Serb counterparts also strongly favored a Serbian-Bulgarian alliance. During the preliminary discussions the Bulgarian representatives were also delighted that their Serbian counterparts - the Prime Minister General Sava Grujic and the Foreign Minister Nikola Pasic - proved very

¹⁰⁹ In September 1911 Rizov returned in Sofia from Rome, where he was Bulgarian minister, and soon after that he was sent in Belgrade to start negotiations for Serbian-Bulgarian Alliance, which eventually resulted in the creation of the Balkan League: See Edward C. Thaden, *Russia and the Balkan Alliance of 1912*, 74; there are some indications in Khesapchiev's narrative suggesting that Rizov's appointment in 1904 as well as in 1911 was Ferdinand's choice; in connection with this should be pointed out that according to the contemporary Macedonian historian Gligor Todorovski, Rizov was "Ferdinand Coburgotski's man": See *Вежбанка за критичко мислење: Македонска историја, 25/05: Стравот и желбите на македонизмат во карантин*, 3, бел. 23 <http://www.makedonskaistorija.com/item/10/catid/3>

conciliatory toward all conflicts, especially the most vexing of them, the Macedonian Question.¹¹⁰

The Bulgarian proposal for Serb agreement on the autonomy of Macedonia as a guiding principle of their policies, was whole-heartedly accepted by the Serbian negotiators, even the head of the Serb Parliament Aca Stanojevic, remarked that an autonomous Macedonia could become part of a future South Slav federation.¹¹¹ Indeed, South Slav unity was a dominant theme in almost all of the preliminary meetings, preceding the official negotiations. Both Bulgarian and Serbian representatives stressed the promotion of the South Slav cause.¹¹² And the need to counter Austrian plans against the Balkan Slavs."¹¹³

In connection with this, the possibility of drawing Montenegro into a future alliance with Serbia and Bulgaria was also discussed, and thus the leading role of a Serbian-

¹¹⁰ Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 60-1; 65-6. General Sava Grujic is defined by Khesapchiev in his memoirs as "a good Serbian patriot and staunch Russophile": See Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 62. About Pasic's political orientation toward Russia seen by him as Serbia's natural protector and mightiest possible ally as well as about his close ties with leading Pan-slavs such as Cont N. P. Ignat'ev and M. N. Katkov See David MacKenzie, *Serbs and Russians*, 167-8; 172.

¹¹¹ Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 60. During his first meeting with Khesapchiev, General Grujic made a similar statement: See Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 65.

¹¹² Хесапчиев, *Служба на България*, 60. In promoting Slav cause Khesapchiev even went thus far that speaking with Grujic pointed out that "in the new political conditions the interests of the particular Slav states had to be subjected to the common Pan-slav interests", informing duly the Bulgarian Prime-Minister about this statement of his in one of his secret reports sent to Sofia: See Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 65.

¹¹³ Хесапчиев, *Служба на България*, 66.

Bulgarian agreement concerning the matter was emphasized.¹¹⁴ And to ensure that Montenegro would not be left out of the Serbian-Bulgarian discussions, it was decided to keep the Montenegrin Prince Nicola personally informed about the ongoing negotiations.¹¹⁵

Another persistent topic during the preliminary talks was Russia's role in the negotiations preceding the projected Serbian-Bulgarian alliance. During his first meeting with Rizov, Pasic openly declared:

If the Bulgarian government is really animated by a true desire for an agreement between our countries and takes the initiative for beginning of negotiations, I will not start negotiating before asking St. Petersburg for that.¹¹⁶

In accordance with this view it was agreed to inform Russia of the Serbian-Bulgarian negotiations.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Or as Stanojevic put it: "After reaching an agreement between Serbia and Bulgaria, Montenegro will fall by itself as a ripened fruit": See Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 61.

¹¹⁵ Хесапчиев, *Служба на България*, 68.

¹¹⁶ Хесапчиев, *Служба на България*, 61.

¹¹⁷ It is interesting that Pasic, who was well connected in various Russian political circles up to the highest level and was familiar with different conflicting tendencies of Russian political life made in Khesapchiev's presence the following comment concerning Russia's attitude about the projected Serbian-Bulgarian Alliance: "I know that in Russia there is a political trend, the representatives of which have a negative attitude toward an agreement between Balkan Slav peoples. These fellows think that achieving this agreement we shall become stronger and they fear that because of that Russia's influence in the Balkans would weaken, but nevertheless given to the existing political situation Russia will accept joyfully an agreement between us": See Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 67.

6. Official Negotiations

Given the conciliatory atmosphere of the preliminary soundings, the first meeting between the Bulgarian and Serbian envoys went smoothly.¹¹⁸

The meeting itself took place on 7 March at 11 PM in Pasic's house.¹¹⁹ Pasic and General Grujic represented Serbia while Khesapchiev and Rizov were the Bulgarian negotiators.

Opening the meeting, Khesapchiev gave a short speech. Predicting "a bright Slavonic future for the Balkans", he ended enthusiastically with these highly spirited words:

The successful conclusion of the great deed undertaken by us will be the most significant and most solemn political act not only in Serbia's and Bulgaria's recent history, but also in the recent history of the Balkans. Our brotherly peoples will glorify and praise this as the salvation of South Slavdom.

Speaking afterwards, General Grujic expressed the Serbian government's gratitude about "the fortunate initiative" of the Bulgarian government, adding that the projected alliance would also include Montenegro. This statement evoked a positive reaction from the other participants who agreed that Bulgaria and Serbia should either conclude separate treaties with the Montenegrins, or

¹¹⁸ "Semi-official" as Khesapchiev put it: *See* Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 71.

¹¹⁹ For better secrecy all meetings between Grujic, Pasic, Khesapchiev and Rizov were scheduled for late nightly hours.

else to include them in the alliance they were presently negotiating.

Speaking after Grujic, Pasic admitted that he had previously opposed Macedonian autonomy, but now, "pressed by the events" he realized that he had been wrong. He also expressed his conviction that the reforms undertaken by the Great Powers in Macedonia would not succeed and Serbia and Bulgaria should decide on a joint action.

Speaking last, Rizov agreed with Pasic, that reforms were doomed end concluded with his hopes for a positive outcome of their negotiations.

The Bulgarian envoys came to this first meeting with their proposal for a Serbian-Bulgarian alliance.

Read by Rizov, this project contained the following points:

- a) mutual defense pact against all outside aggressors.
- b) joint military action against any attempt to occupy the Ottoman vilayets of Salonica, Bitolya, Kossovo (Macedonia and Old Serbia), and Adrianople.
- c) joint support for the reforms that Russia and Austria-Hungary had agreed to implement in the vilayets of Salonica, Bitolya and Kossovo, and to promote by all peaceful means the introduction of these reforms in the vilayet of Adrianople (these reforms were aimed at autonomy

of the above named provinces under Christian General-Governors, elected by the Great Powers).

d) should the Austro-Russian reform program fail, Bulgaria and Serbia would jointly promote their own reform program for the establishment of autonomy of these provinces.

e) a special military convention to accomplish the above tasks.

f) duty-free importation of their respective products (of domestic origin), while preparing for an eventual customs union (*Zollverein*).

g) to facilitate the mutual exchange and transit of their products by reducing the corresponding freight and passenger rates.

h) to equalize their telegraph and postal rates and to introduce the Cyrillic alphabet into their telegraphic communication.

i) to abolish passports, and all other hindrances to free communication between Serbia and Bulgaria.

j) to conclude a judicial convention for the mutual execution of decisions under civil law as well as for the extradition of criminals according to common law (*du droit commun*), and of deserters.

Other questions were to remain open for further negotiations.

In subsequent discussions, the Serbian envoys unanimously accepted all of these provisions and, according to Khesapchiev they appeared visibly relieved that the Bulgarian government was not exploiting Serbia's difficult international situation by posing demands that Serbia could not accept. Pasic still hoped for the partition and therefore argued that the boundaries of Macedonia should be defined in the course of the ongoing negotiations. Khesapciev suspected that he would later suggest that Scopie be included within the boundaries of Kossovo, which would mean *de facto* partition. Pasic also told the Bulgarians that Serbia was ready to help Bulgaria acquire Constantinople, if the Ottoman Empire would to be partitioned.

But Khesapchiev realized that this proposal was an attempt to win Bulgarian consent for moving the boundary between Macedonia and Kossovo to the North of Skopje, simply another way of partitioning of Macedonia. Responding to Pasic's ploy, Khesapchiev replied laughingly that the acquisition of Constantinople was not within the scope of Bulgaria's foreign policy, adding that it might be possible for a small country to conquer this city, but impossible to

keep it for long.¹²⁰ Pasic's ploy is interesting in the light of the First Balkan War, in 1912, when Bulgaria's advance on Constantinople would alarm Russia and lead her to allow Rumania's attack on Bulgaria during the Second Balkan War, even though Russia and Bulgaria were allies.¹²¹

As an experienced politician, Pasic was well aware that the Great Powers would never permit Bulgaria to acquire a city as important as Constantinople.

It is also possible that Pasic knew that the Bulgarian Prince (later Tsar) Ferdinand had toyed with the notion of becoming the successor to the Byzantine Emperors.¹²²

¹²⁰ Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 75-8.

¹²¹ Special anxiety among the highest aristocratic circles in St. Petersburg was caused by the reports of the Russian Ambassador in Sofia Neklydov, who reported that the Bulgarian troops were extremely enthusiastic about conquering Constantinople, singing brave marching songs about this; in the context of the traditional Russian suspicion towards the Bulgarian Tsar Ferdinand, most Russian statesmen saw him as main driving force behind the Bulgarian attempts for breaking into the Ottoman capital, thus one of the most prominent Russian aristocrats Duke Dolgorukov remarked, that for these attempts, Ferdinand "would finish his career in some Russian sanatorium": See Георги Марков, *България в Балканския съюз срещу Османската империя: Глава Първа: Изтръгнато надмощие, военностратегически дипломатически пропуски: 2. Високата порта моли за милост* http://www.promacedonia.org/gm_bw1/gm_1_5b.html; about Russia's discontent concerning the Bulgarian pretensions to Constantinople and how this discontent affected Russia's policy towards Bulgaria in the fateful for her 1913 See Richard C. Hall, *The Balkan Wars 1912-1913*, 103.

¹²² Hans Roger Madol, *Ferdinand of Bulgaria*, passim; Stephen Constant, *Foxy Ferdinand*, 180; that this was a well-known secret in the political circles trough Europe can be deduced from the following account left by the German Chancellor Bulow: during a meeting in Wiesbaden (Germany) in 1903 between the German Kaiser William II and Tsar Nicholas II, where Bulow was also present, the two monarchs were discussing the latest rumors that Prince Ferdinand was about to proclaim himself king of an independent Bulgaria. Nicholas II remarked: "The Bulgarian has royal ideas." Laughing, William went on to tease Nicholas by asking him if he knew how the kingdom of Bulgaria would look. The Tsar replied in the negative and the Kaiser said: "Greater Bulgaria, including the whole of Macedonia and with its capital at Constantinople." The result of this remark, Bulow wrote, was: "*Tableau!* The expression on his Russian Imperial Majesty's face spoke volumes": See Stephen Constant, *Foxy Ferdinand*, 205-6; according to the Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Sazonov "By furthering the cause of Germany in the Balkans he (Ferdinand) hoped to resuscitate in his person the Constantinople *basileus* or at any rate to find an occasion for displaying the Byzantian stage outfit he had prepared beforehand. Ferdinand kept by him the regalia and the full dress of the Emperor of Byzantium he had brought from some theatrical company": See Sergei Sazonov, *Fateful Years*, 229-30, n. 1.

Pasic's remark about Bulgaria's acquiring Constantinople also suggests that he was well informed about the quixotic plans of the Bulgarian Prince, and thus knew that Russia feared Bulgarian ambitions in the Straits.¹²³

Actually, Pasic's ploy went unnoticed even by the other Serbian envoy General Gruic, who as "a staunch Russophile" reminded his colleague that Russia needed Constantinople, and that Bulgaria and Serbia should not interfere with "this centuries-old goal".¹²⁴ Pasic carefully replied that he recognizes the legitimacy of Russia's goal, but hinted at future conflicts between Bulgaria and Russia over Southern Thrace.¹²⁵

The first meeting between the Serbian and Bulgarian envoys on 7 March 1904 ended with a Bulgarian proposal that the Russian Tsar settle any disputes between Serbia and Bulgaria. According to Khesapchiev, the Serbian representatives accepted this proposal.¹²⁶ It was obvious that Serbia supported this proposal simply because

¹²³ In his memoirs (written in 1920s) Khesapchiev gives a very low estimation of Pasic's intellectual abilities, explaining his political and diplomatic successes only with "his ability to make intrigues": See Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 62-4, not noticing that opposite to these Bulgarian diplomats, who were guided mostly by their Pan Slav affiliations, he acted as a *Realpolitik* politician: a great advantage in time when the ethics of Imperialism were predominant.

¹²⁴ Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 78-9.

¹²⁵ Later during the First World War Russia would claim all territory south of the line Enos – Media uniting the Aegean with the Black Sea and only the collapse of the Tsarist regime prevented her from taking it: See Serge Sazonov, *Fateful Years*, 252.

¹²⁶ Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 79.

territorial conflicts between Serbia and Russia did not exist.

On following day (8 March), the Serbian envoys accepted all the Bulgarian proposals, and divided them into two treaties - one secret and one that could be disclosed after a preliminary agreement between both sides.¹²⁷

7. Negotiations Interrupted

Hoping for Serbian acceptance, the Bulgarians were surprised to learn, two days later, that Serbia would not sign the treaties unless the boundaries of Macedonia were limited to the vilayets of Salonica and Bitolya. This would leave Scopie and its region outside the boundaries of Macedonia and thus, in effect, result in Macedonia's partition.¹²⁸

When the Bulgarian representatives refused to accept this alteration, the Serbian envoys informed them that they recanted their acceptance of the autonomy of Macedonia, and thus General Gruic openly told Khesapchiev:

Look Mr. Khesapchiev, let's stop outfoxing each other, but, rather like good friends, speak openly. We do not have any illusions about the Macedonian Question. We know very well that an autonomous Macedonia would become part of your

¹²⁷ Хесапчиев, *Служба на България*, 79.

¹²⁸ Хесапчиев, *Служба на България*, 79-84. Although geographically and ethnically the Sanjak of Scopie was part of Macedonia, according to the existing Ottoman administrative system it was part of vilayet of Kossovo: See Радослав Попов, *Балканската политика на България*, 42, бел. 119.

state. In Macedonia some people speak Bulgarian, some Serbian, but you have been promoting your cause there for very long time. The Bulgarian Exarchate is a wonderful tool for that.¹²⁹

Thus, negotiations broke down over "the bright Slavonic future of the Balkans".

8. A Compromise Agreement

After another week of fruitless meetings in which both sides insisted on their previously declared positions, the Bulgarian Foreign Minister General Racho Petrov informed Khesapchiev that the Bulgarian government could propose a compromise satisfactory for both sides. He suggested a moratorium on the Macedonian question, thus leaving the *Murzsteg* program of reforms as the guiding principle for both countries in regard to Macedonia.¹³⁰

The Serbian envoys readily accepted this compromise, probably because Serbia saw the *Murzsteg* program as *de facto* sanction for the future division of Macedonia.¹³¹ The *Murzsteg* reforms envisioned the division of Macedonia into administrative districts based on the old Ottoman vilayet system. This would have left Scopje in the vilayet of Kossovo, where the Serbian population was predominant.¹³²

¹²⁹ Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 85.

¹³⁰ Хесапчиев, *Служба на България*, 87-90.

¹³¹ Хесапчиев, *Служба на България*, 88-9.

¹³² See p. 60 of this thesis.

Scopje was important to the Serbs, because lay on the north bank of Vardar River and thus belonged to the territory traditionally claimed by the Serbs.

After some further meetings and discussions about the final drafts of the both treaties, on 30 March 1904 at 11PM Khesapchiev and Rizov for Bulgaria, and General Gruic and Pasic for Serbia signed them.¹³³ As already noted, there were two treaties: the *Treaty of Friendship*, and the *Treaty of Alliance*.¹³⁴

The content of the first went beyond the usual treaties of friendship, and included concrete matters like the common postal and telegraph rates, use of the Cyrillic alphabet in telegraphic communications between the two countries, the abolition of passport requirements between them, the extradition of criminals, a monetary union and the encouragement of mutual trade by the reduction of freight and passenger rates on both countries' railways.¹³⁵

It is important to note that this Treaty was not specifically designated as secret, but its last article included a special provision allowing disclosure, but only after preliminary agreement between both signatories.¹³⁶

¹³³ Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 99.

¹³⁴ Хесапчиев, *Служба на България*, 101-6; the texts of both treaties translated into English are appended in the end of this thesis: See Appendix, II, 1, 2, 3, pp. 89-100.

¹³⁵ See the full text of the treaty translated into English in Appendix, II, 1, pp.89-91 at the end of this thesis.

¹³⁶ Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 102.

Neither Serbia nor Bulgaria wanted immediate disclosure of the treaty, since the first article dealt with creation of a future customs union.¹³⁷

This had been a Bulgarian idea, based on the fact that in 1904 Bulgarian economy was substantially stronger than the Serbian.¹³⁸ Serbia, however, was also eager to free its economy from its total dependence on Austrian markets. The reason for Bulgarian reluctance to disclose the projected customs union was quite simple: the creation of such a union contradicted Article VIII of the Treaty of Berlin, which forbade Bulgaria to conclude commercial treaties without the consent of the Great Powers.¹³⁹ Serbian reluctance to make the Treaty of Friendship public was also clear: she feared provoking the Dual Monarchy, which might have serious consequences for the Serbian economy.¹⁴⁰

It is important here to point out that according to Kesapchiev's recollections, during the negotiations, the

¹³⁷ "The free importation of their respective products (of domestic origin), at the same time attempting to conduct similar customs policies with respect to other states, aiming at an eventual customs union (*Zollverein*)": See Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 101.

¹³⁸ As the pace of development years between 1903 -1909 were most forceful for Bulgarian economy before First World War, thus only within the period between 1904-1907 in Bulgaria the number of enterprises rose from 166 to 206, while Serbia began slowly to accelerate its economic development not before 1908 when she had only 162 enterprises, thus 1904 was for her with worst possible economic performance reducing her enterprises from 105 in 1903 to 93 in 1904: See Борислав Гърдев, „Драматичната история на банковия заем от 1901-1902” in *Подир българската мечта* (Варна: Електронно издателство "Liternet", 2006) http://liternet.bg/publish4/bgyrdev/podir/01_05a.htm) and Michael Petrovich, *A History of Modern Serbia*, V. II, 571.

¹³⁹ F. R. Bridge, *From Sadova to Sarajevo*, 278; T. E. Holland, *The European Concert in the Eastern Question: A Collection of Treaties and other public acts* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1885), 284.

¹⁴⁰ Which actually happened, when at the end of 1905, the Bulgarian Parliament without asking the Serbian Government disclosed the projected custom union between both countries, provoking Austria-Hungary to wage the so-called *Tariff* (or *Pig*) *War* against her South Slav neighbor.

Serbian envoys especially warned the Bulgarian representatives that given Serbia's "total economic dependency" upon Austria-Hungary, it would be impossible to establish such a customs union in the near future and thus "this is an ideal, which should be achieved only after a gradual preparation of the needed favorable conditions."¹⁴¹ The Serbian position is clearly presented in the *Concluding Protocol* accompanying the treaties.¹⁴²

But for relations between the two countries, the second of the treaties was more important, since it represented nothing less than a political alliance.¹⁴³ It not only expressed approval of the *Murzsteg program* and pledged the support of both states for its attainment, but also called for mutual military assistance against any attack "on the present territorial integrity and independence of their respective states, or on the security and inviolability of the reigning dynasties." The treaty also called for joint action against any outside aggression against Macedonia and Kossovo (Old Serbia). A further article (Article V) envisaged a possible alliance between

¹⁴¹ Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 156; 93.

¹⁴² In Article I of the Chapter II of the *Concluding Protocol* of the treaties, titled "In order to avoid misinterpretations in the applications of the said treaties" reads as follows: "Concerning the *Treaty of Friendship*: (a) in Article I the phrase: "to conduct similar custom policies" is to be understood: as far as the existing commercial treaties of the two states permit this": See Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 105.

¹⁴³ See the full text of the treaty translated into English in Appendix, II, 2, pp. 92-5 at the end of this thesis.

Serbia and Montenegro concerning the Albanian Question and its resolution in favor of Montenegro. This article is especially interesting with its statement that the two allied countries Serbia and Bulgaria would support Montenegro led by a "desire to prepare the ground for the full cooperation between the Slavs on the Balkan Peninsula" and implements the idea voiced during the negotiations that the Serbian-Bulgarian Alliance of 1904 would be the first step in the creating of an alliance of all Slav Balkan countries.

The treaty also provided for arbitration by the Russian Tsar of any disputes between Serbia and Bulgaria, and also permitted the Tsar to refer such disputes to the Hague Tribunal. As already noted, the unanimous acceptance of Russian arbitration by both sides clearly reveals the pro-Russian character of the Serbian-Bulgarian alliance of 1904.

On 31 March (after the signing of both treaties on the previous day) a *Concluding Protocol* was signed.¹⁴⁴ It has been already mentioned that this *Protocol* stipulated that the proposed customs union should not affect existing commercial treaties, which actually meant that as it was contradictory to the Austrian-Serbian Treaty of 1881, the

¹⁴⁴ Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 99.

projected customs union could not be put in practice in the near future.¹⁴⁵

But the most important aspect of Bulgaria's treaty obligations to Serbia was the inclusion in this *Protocol* of an explanatory note, specifying: "the vilayet of Kossovo is understood to include the Sanjak of Novi Pazar."¹⁴⁶

Inclusion of the Sanjak of Novi Pazar in Kossovo, then occupied by Austro-Hungarian military forces, meant that Bulgaria obliged herself to oppose its future annexation by Austria-Hungary.¹⁴⁷ In his memoirs, Khesapchiev does not emphasize this very important fact, noting only that Pasic had made this proposal, but for a Russophile like Khesapchiev the opposition to Austrian claims in the Sanjak would have been so evident as to require no explanation.¹⁴⁸

In contrast to the *Treaty of Friendship*, the *Treaty of Alliance* in the *Concluding Protocol* was specifically designated as secret, and thus only two copies of it were to be kept, one by the Serbian King Peter, and one by the Bulgarian Prince Ferdinand.¹⁴⁹ Again, the reason for Bulgarian insistence upon secrecy is clear: the *Treaty of Alliance* was contradictory to Article 17 of the Bulgarian

¹⁴⁵ Michael Petrovich, *A History of Modern Serbia*, V. II, 549.

¹⁴⁶ Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 106; Michael Petrovich, *A History of Modern Serbia*, V. II, 547; Ernst Helmreich, *The Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars*, 7.

¹⁴⁷ Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 103.

¹⁴⁸ Хесапчиев, *Служба на България*, 79.

¹⁴⁹ Хесапчиев, *Служба на България*, 104, 106.

constitution, and its disclosure would have had serious consequences for Bulgaria, both externally and internally.

Given the larger political constellation, with Russia engaged in a long, unsuccessful war in the Far East, the disclosure of this treaty could have simultaneously worsened Bulgaria's relations with both the Ottoman Empire and Austria-Hungary. Viewed from the standpoint of Bulgaria's internal politics, the disclosure of this treaty would have caused a split within the ruling Peoples Liberal Party, which ostensibly represented a pro-Austrian orientation.

The Bulgarian Prince Ferdinand also insisted that this treaty remain secret. Fully aware of the fact that disclosure of this treaty could have poisoned her relations with the Dual Monarchy at the worst possible moment for the Russian Empire, Ferdinand, who actually initiated the alliance in question, especially warned Khesapchiev in case of a possible breach of secrecy: "What are the members of friendly royal courts going to say about me? 'What the Hell is our Ferdinand doing?' What is my wonderful friend Great Duke Vladimir going to say about me?"¹⁵⁰

¹⁵⁰ Хесапчиев, *Служба на България*, 113; Great Duke Vladimir was brother of the Russian Tsar Nicholas II.

For different reasons, Ferdinand also feared a radical deterioration of his relations with the Dual Monarchy.¹⁵¹ Soon after signing of the treaties, Ferdinand met Khesapchiev in Belgrade and told him: "If Austrians knew what I have done, they would have killed me immediately after setting foot on their soil." To this histrionic declaration, Khesapchiev replied that he did it "to guarantee the vital interests of his [Ferdinand's] Principality".¹⁵²

The anti-Austrian character of this treaty could have also placed the new Serbian regime in a dangerous position vis-a-vis the Dual Monarchy.

From the standpoint of the Treaty's value for Bulgaria, it is clear that Bulgarian diplomacy did not achieve its two major objectives: winning Serbian cooperation in securing Macedonian autonomy, and gaining economic advantages for the then-booming Bulgarian economy.¹⁵³ Moreover, Bulgaria obliged herself to act on Serbia's behalf in case of an Austrian annexation of Sanjak Novi Pazar, thus binding her foreign policy to that of Russia, Austria's rival in the Balkans. Bulgaria also

¹⁵¹ One of the reasons could be found in fact that as Austrian-Hungarian aristocrat Ferdinand possessed large estates on Hungarian territory.

¹⁵² Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 118.

¹⁵³ As some representatives of the ruling People's Liberal Party and some Bulgarian financiers were hopping for: See Хесапчиев, *Служба на България*, 156-60.

pledged support for the new pro-Russian Serbian regime. But the Bulgarian Prince Ferdinand viewed the subordination of Bulgarian foreign policy to Russian end as the *sine qua non* for survival of his dynastic regime. It is therefore not surprising that he steered Bulgarian foreign policy in a pro-Russian direction.

The politicians, diplomats and military men who conducted Bulgarian policy were both Russophiles and one, Rizov, was actually a Russian agent employed by the Russian Asiatic Department. They saw Russia as the only Great Power willing to help the South Slavs in achieving their irredentist claims.

For Serbia, the alliance with Bulgaria came at a crucial moment. The new Serbian regime had come to power through violence and regicide and therefore found itself internationally isolated. The alliance helped the new regime to bridge this isolation.

9. The Anatomy of Russia's Balkan Policy in 1904

The clearly pro-Russian character of this alliance also points to Russia's direct involvement in the Serbian-Bulgarian rapprochement of 1904, which contradicted Russia's official Balkan policy from that particular period. Given Russia's continued and unsuccessful

engagement in the Far East, official Russian policy toward Balkans in 1903 and 1904 strictly followed the course of maintaining the Austro-Russian *Entente*, renewed in 1902.

This course required Russia to cooperate with Austria-Hungary in preserving the *status quo* in the Balkans while implementing the *Murzsteg program*. Russia also officially pressured the new Serbian regime to purge itself of the continuing presence of many of the regicide conspirators in the court of the King Peter, the new Serbian monarch.¹⁵⁴

Thus Russia officially supported Dumba, the Austrian ambassador in Belgrade, when he initiated the so-called "diplomatic strike", as well as the recall in the late spring of 1903 of the Russian ambassador in the Serbian capital, Tcharikow, who had opposed the preliminary Austro-Russian agreement to recognize the new Serbian regime only *de facto*, while withholding *de jure*.¹⁵⁵

Although the Russian Government did not repudiate Tcharikow's action, the Russian Foreign Minister Lamzdorf did recall him, and made a point of especially informing Aehrenthal, the Austrian ambassador in St. Petersburg. This emphasized Russia's commitment to Austro-Russian cooperation over Serbian matters.¹⁵⁶ To strengthen the

¹⁵⁴ Michael Petrovich, *A History of Modern Serbia*, V. II, 538-9.

¹⁵⁵ Constantin Dumba, *Memoirs of a Diplomat*, 127, 134, 212.

¹⁵⁶ Dumba, *Memoirs*, 125; 127.

impression of Russia's temporary retreat from her forward policy in the Balkans, the Russian Foreign Ministry also delayed the appointment of a replacement for Tcharikow for almost a year, until the end of April 1904 (N.S.), when the new Russian Ambassador Goubastow was sent to Belgrade.¹⁵⁷

But leaving aside these official efforts to keep the Austro-Russian *Entente* intact, a closer examination focusing on the activities of the Russian embassy in Belgrade during this period reveals that Russia was actively involved in the ongoing Serbian-Bulgarian rapprochement.

Naturally, the arrival of the Bulgarian envoys in Belgrade, combined with Rizov's lack of discretion, raised diplomatic eyebrows in the Serbian capital. Predictably, the most agitated were the Ottoman and the Austrian ambassadors.¹⁵⁸ And while the Ottoman diplomat Fehti Pasha limited his reaction to spreading gossip about Serbian and Bulgarian preparations for a final showdown between both countries' forces in Macedonia, the Austrian ambassador Dumba was more thorough in his efforts to determine what was really going on between Serbia and Bulgaria.¹⁵⁹ He thus

¹⁵⁷ Dumba, *Memoirs*, 135; officially from July 1903 to April 1904 Tcharikow was still Russian ambassador in Serbia, but on leave, spent by him in Rumania until April 1905: See N. V. Tcharikow, *Glimpses of High Politics*, 237.

¹⁵⁸ Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 109; 121.

¹⁵⁹ Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 109.

met with both Pasic and Khesapchiev to find out if there were some truth to Rizov's claim that he was in Belgrade with a "special mission" for the conclusion of a Serbian-Bulgarian agreement.¹⁶⁰

Aware that their activities in Belgrade could not go unnoticed, the Serbian and Bulgarian envoys had agreed that if they were to be asked about their mission in the Serbian capital, they would answer that they were negotiating a postal and telegraph convention as well as a judicial one.¹⁶¹ The answers received by Dumba from the Serbian Foreign Minister and the Bulgarian envoy were consistent with this version, and Khesapchiev even assured the Austrian diplomat that because of their rivalry in Macedonia "any political alliance between Serbia and Bulgaria is unthinkable".¹⁶²

Khesapchiev received visits not only from Dumba, but also from Eckart, *charge d'affairs* of the German embassy, from Imperiali, the newly appointed Italian ambassador in

¹⁶⁰ Хесапчиев, *Служба на България*, 109-10; about Rizov's interviews *See* p. 57 of this thesis.

¹⁶¹ Хесапчиев, *Служба на България*, 100.

¹⁶² Хесапчиев, *Служба на България*, 110; given to his strong anti-Austrian sentiments, Khesapchiev is especially sarcastic about Dumba's vain attempts to penetrate the Serbian-Bulgarian shroud of secrecy titling a whole chapter of his memoirs "Nervousness and evil devices of some foreign ambassadors in Belgrade", where he describes the Austrian diplomat as "an arrogant, haughty, sly and impudent Hungarian magnate, first-rate intriguer and liar", who during their meeting "with brutality typical for a German diplomat asked me immediately about Rizov's special mission": *See* Хесапчиев, *Служба на България*, 109-11.

Belgrade, and from the Belgian ambassador, Van Den Steen.¹⁶³ All were trying in vain to find out what was going on between Bulgaria and Serbia.

To Khesapchiev's amusement, all these visits were in pleasant contrast with the behavior of Russian diplomats who were calm and content during all this agitation, since they alone were well informed about the character of the negotiations, and were extremely sympathetic to a Serbian-Bulgarian alliance."¹⁶⁴ Indeed, the only foreign diplomat in Belgrade with whom Khesapchiev was constantly in contact was Muravieff, secretary of the Russian embassy, who was then serving as *charge d'affairs* of the Russian diplomatic mission in the Serbian capital.¹⁶⁵

In his regular (supposedly secret) meetings with Mouravieff, Khesapchiev not only kept his Russian colleague informed about the ongoing negotiations, and the content of the signed treaties, but also received an important report from Chekhotin, the Russian consul in the Serbian town of Nish.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶³ Хесапчиев, *Служба на България*, 110-11. Хесапчиев, *Служба на България*, 69-71; 111. Хесапчиев, *Служба на България*, 122.

¹⁶⁴ Хесапчиев, *Служба на България*, 111.

¹⁶⁵ N. V. Tcharikow, *Glimpses of High Politics*, 237.

¹⁶⁶ Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 121; 135; Mouravieff's secretive activities concerning the Serbian-Bulgarian rapprochement, somehow entered into Dumba's radar, who in his memoirs vaguely mentions about "the intrigues carried on ... by Mouravieff": See Constantin Dumba, *Memoirs of a Diplomat*, 137; about the secret subversive activities conducted by most of the Russian Legation secretaries in Belgrade See Virginia Cowles, *The Russian Dagger: Cold War in the Days of Tsars* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1969), 223.

In his report Chehotin had informed St. Petersburg that Serbia and Bulgaria had agreed upon the following: a) if the *Murzsteg reforms* failed the two countries would take in their own hands the task of improving the condition of their fellow-countrymen in the Ottoman Empire; and b) Serbia and Bulgaria would defend jointly all South Slav lands against any encroachment from whatever source.

During this meeting Mouravieff also informed Khesapchiev that the Russian Imperial Government was "extremely enthusiastic" about the ongoing Serbian-Bulgarian rapprochement; Mouravieff also made light of Dumba's agitation, saying that Dumba was trying "to hide his agitation, cracking stupid jokes with an inane smile". From Khesapchiev's memoirs it is also evident that Mouravieff had been kept well informed by the Serbian Foreign Minister Pasic.¹⁶⁷

But following Khesapchiev's recollections one could also conclude that the role of Russian diplomacy was not limited only to gathering information or encouraging the Serbian-Bulgarian rapprochement. Russian diplomats also played an active role in deciding how and when the Russian Tsar should be presented with copies of the Serbian-Bulgarian Treaties signed on 31 March 1904.

¹⁶⁷ Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 120-1; 135.

As initiator of the Serbian-Bulgarian alliance in question, the Bulgarian Prince Ferdinand was pressing energetically for providing copies of both treaties to Nicholas II, while the Serbs, given their economic, political and geographical proximity to the Habsburg Empire, were more reluctant to do this.¹⁶⁸

Given Russia's official policy of maintaining the *Entente* with Austria, it is also not surprising that Russian diplomats were reluctant to excerpt copies of the Treaty of Alliance, since it presented the Russian Tsar as supreme arbiter of an alliance directed against Austria-Hungary.¹⁶⁹

It took four and a half months, two meetings between Prince Ferdinand and king Peter, and the joint efforts of Khesapchiev, the Serbian Foreign Minister Pasic and his Bulgarian colleague General Petrov plus those of the Russian ambassadors in Belgrade and Sofia, Goubastow and Bahmetiev respectively, to solve this problem.¹⁷⁰

Finally on 15 September 1904 at 11 AM, the Russian ambassadors in Belgrade and Sofia were simultaneously and

¹⁶⁸ Хесапчиев, *Служба на България*, 123. Khesapchiev relates that during their meetings Mouravieff was especially curious to find out, whose initiative was the new rapid Serbian-Bulgarian rapprochement, which according to his words was "чрезвычайно важно для истории" ["extremely important for history" (Russian)], receiving from his Bulgarian interlocutor the answer that no other, but the Bulgarian Prince Ferdinand was the person who initiated it, Mouravieff told Khesapchiev that he would inform with a special letter the Russian Foreign minister Lamzdorf about this: See Христофор Хесапчиев, *Служба на България в чужбина*, 121.

¹⁶⁹ Хесапчиев, *Служба на България*, 124.

¹⁷⁰ Хесапчиев, *Служба на България*, 123-6; 130.

secretly presented with copies of the *Treaty of Friendship* between Serbia and Bulgaria by the Foreign Ministers of both countries.¹⁷¹

All these covert efforts to keep the Serbian-Bulgarian alliance under Russian control undoubtedly led to the conclusion that despite all public representation for keeping the *status quo* in the Balkans in cooperation with Austria-Hungary intact, Russian diplomacy was in fact acting in opposition to this, encouraging and supporting the creation of alliances between the small Balkan Slav states (in this case Serbia and Bulgaria), aimed eventually at breaking up the existing equilibrium in Eastern Europe.

This leads to another important conclusion: despite the conventional view that Russia temporarily abandoned Balkan politics during her ill-fated engagement in the Far East, the Russian Empire continued even in 1904, to dominate her Balkan Slav co-religionists, tirelessly working to unite them under Russian control, and thus preparing for a war against both Ottoman and Habsburg Empires, aimed at their final dissolution.

¹⁷¹ Хесапчиев, *Служба на България*, 126; this is why, when fourteen years later the Bolsheviks disclosed the secret archives of the Tsarist Foreign Ministry, only this treaty was found there: See p. 33 of this thesis.

III. CONCLUSIONS

Examining Russian policy in the Balkans in the period between 1896 and 1904 (i.e. before the Bosnian crisis), suggests the following conclusions: that Russia promoted alliances between the small Balkan Slav countries, alliances aimed not only against the Ottoman Empire, but also against Austria-Hungary, and although this was not done openly, there is evidence that Russia worked secretly to encourage and facilitate the creation of these alliances. For conducting this policy Russian diplomacy relied on Russophile Balkan politicians, diplomats and military men as well as on agents directly employed by the Russian Asiatic Department. Among the later was the Bulgarian diplomat Dimitar Rizov, who played important role not only in the negotiations and the conclusion of the Serbian-Bulgarian Treaties of 1904, but also of the Serbian-Bulgarian Treaty of Alliance of 1912, which became the backbone of the Balkan League. Rizov's role in the creation of the above-mentioned alliances clearly points to Russia's covert involvement in relentless efforts for uniting Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro substantially before the Bosnian Annexation Crisis. This Russian policy was parallel to, but quite different from the official one of

cooperation and maintaining good relations with the Habsburg Empire. This duality was possible only because of the secret diplomacy used for conducting this policy.

APPENDIX

**I. RUSSIAN-BULGARIAN MILITARY CONVENTION CONCLUDED ON
31 MAY 1902**

1. The present convention is not aggressive in its aims, and as such is meant to be only a counterbalance to the Austrian-Romanian Military Convention.¹⁷²
2. From the definition of this convention as stated in Article 1, follows that this convention aims actions only against Austria-Hungary and Rumania and can not be used for actions neither against Turkey, nor against any other Balkan state.
3. Russia would act with all forces at her disposal for preserving and defending the integrity and inviolability of the territory of Bulgaria.
4. If Bulgaria or Russia, or the both countries simultaneously would be attacked by Austria-Hungary or Rumania, or by the joint forces of these two states, or by the forces of the Triple Alliance, in this case both allied states (i.e. Bulgaria and Russia) take the obligation to use

¹⁷² The Austro-Rumanian Military Convention in question was concluded in 1898, followed by an Austro-Rumanian treaty of alliance concluded on April 17, 1902: See Даниела Давчева и Светослав Овчаров, *Лисицата и Лъвът: Фердинанд I на фона на българската психологическа и политическа действителност 1886-1902* (София: Университетско издателство "Св. Климент Охридски", 1994), 278; Edward C. Thaden, *Russia and the Balkan Alliance of 1912* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1965), 61.

all forces and means at their disposal to fight against the aggressors, not hesitating to give all necessary sacrifices that might be needed for achieving final victory.

5. If Bulgaria were to be attacked only by Rumania, in this case only the Bulgarian Military Forces would resist this attack. Taking into account that Austria-Hungary had promised Rumania moral support and military aid, Russia (in case of Rumanian attack against Bulgaria) also takes the obligation to give Bulgaria diplomatic support, and if Austria-Hungary enters the war (on Rumanian side against Bulgaria) to enter the war with forces sufficient for overwhelming Austria-Hungary. In the same way, if Austria-Hungary and Rumania, or the Triple Alliance without declaring war to Bulgaria, attack Russia, Bulgaria takes the obligation to mobilize all forces at her disposal, to concentrate them according to a previously drawn plan and when Russia gives order for that to start an offensive against the Austrian-Rumanian forces.
6. In case of war between Russia and Bulgaria on one side and Rumania and Austria-Hungary, or the

Triple Alliance on the other, Bulgaria takes the obligation to observe strict neutrality towards Turkey and to be extremely cautious not to provoke her in order not to complicate the international situation. In order to execute the tasks related above, Bulgaria takes the obligation that after leaving a small amount of forces south of the Balkan, sufficient only for patrolling the borders and for keeping the law and order there, to concentrate all of her army along the Danube River for action against Rumania according to the preliminary elaborated plan.

7. All plans of mobilization and concentration of the Bulgarian army and its units, as well as its plans for defense and offence, in order to execute the tasks and objectives given by the Russian General Staff, should be prepared earlier under the supervision of the Russian General Staff in collaboration with the Bulgarian Ministry of Military Affairs and should be submitted for approval by His Imperial Majesty the Tsar of All Russians. The plans mentioned above would be reexamined, adjusted and supplemented if there would be a need for this.

8. The supreme command during the war of the Russian and Bulgarian armed forces as well as the command of the military operations, depending on whether the two armies would operate together or separated i.e. on different war theaters, in any case would be for the Russian Supreme Commander. His Highness the Bulgarian Prince keeps the prerogatives and the title of Supreme Commander of his army and would command it personally. If His Highness would appoint some other person for commanding his army, in that case this person as well as the Chief of the General Staff of his army should be appointed earlier in co-ordination with the Russian Ministry of Military Affairs and with the consent of His Imperial Majesty the Tsar of All Russians.

For facilitating the contacts between the Russian Supreme Command and the Supreme Command of the Bulgarian Army there would be a staff officer attached to the latter. There would be also one Russian staff officer attached respectively to every army corps or every particular unit of the Bulgarian Army. All these officers would be with

advisory powers for deciding questions of operative matter.

There would be one Bulgarian General or staff-officer attached to the Staff of the Russian Supreme Commander, appointed by His Highness the Bulgarian Prince.

9. During the course of the military actions the military and transport ships of the Russian fleet would have access to all Bulgarians ports for supplying with all kind of goods and for organizing of the defense of these ports. All Bulgarian navy and all Bulgarian merchant fleet would go under the unconditional command of the Commander of the Russian navy for conducting with joint forces or separately all kind of operations, considered necessary by the commander of the Russian navy.

10. The present Convention becomes valid immediately after its ratification and should be considered as a State Secret of extremely importance.

(s) General Kuropatkin

Russian Military Minister

(s) Major-General Paprikov

Bulgarian Military Minister

31 May 1902

(From Давчева, Даниела и Светослав Овчаров, *Лисицата и
ЛЪВЪТ*, 1994)

II. THE SERBIAN-BULGARIAN TREATIES OF 1904

1. TREATY OF FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN THE PRINCIPALITY OF BULGARIA AND THE KINGDOM OF SERBIA

The government of His Royal Highness Prince Ferdinand I of Bulgaria and the government of His Majesty King Peter I of Serbia, deeply conscious of the common destinies of their neighboring and related states, and sincerely inspired by the desire of safeguarding the regulated and peaceful political and cultural development of their nations through a friendly and brotherly union between them, agree on the following:

I

To permit the free importation of their respective products (of domestic origin), at the same time attempting to conduct similar customs

policies with respect to other states, aiming at an eventual customs union (*Zollverein*).

II

To facilitate the mutual exchange and transit of their products by reducing the corresponding freight and passengers rates.

III

To equalize their telegraph and postal rates with their internal rates and to introduce the Cyrillic alphabet into their telegraphic communication.

IV

To abolish their frontier passports, and to remove all other hindrances to free communication between their peoples.

V

To conclude a judicial convention for the mutual execution of decisions under civil law as well as for the extradition of criminals according to common law (*du droit commun*), and of deserters.

VI

To conclude a monetary convention for the establishment of the free circulation of Serbian

and Bulgarian money in their states, and thus to facilitate commercial relations.

VII

This treaty may be made public only after a preliminary agreement between the two states. It shall enter into force from the day of its ratification.

Concluded in Belgrade on the thirtieth of March 1904 (one thousand nine hundred fourth year) after the birth of Christ, the third day of the Resurrection.

In the name of the Kingdom of Serbia:

(s) General Sava Gruic

(s) Nikola Pasic

in the name of the Principality of Bulgaria:

(s) D. Rizov

(s) Colonel of the General Staff

Colonel Khesapchiev.

(By mutual consent the two allied states agree that this treaty be made public.)

2. *TREATY OF ALIANCE BETWEEN THE PRINCIPALITY OF
BULGARIA AND THE KINGDOM OF SERBIA*

The government of H. R. H. Prince Ferdinand Bulgaria and the government of H. M. King Peter I of Serbia, guided by the principle of "The Balkans for the Balkan nations," and inspired by a desire to safeguard the peace and security of their peoples, to preserve the territorial *status quo* on the Balkan peninsula, and to improve the condition of their fellow-countrymen in the Ottoman Empire, agree on the following:

I

Convinced of the utility of the program of reforms adopted at Murzsteg for the vilayets of Salonica, Bitolya and Kossovo (Macedonia and Old Serbia), the two allied states hereby promise to promote jointly and by all peaceful means at their disposal the execution of these reforms in the said three vilayets, at the same time encouraging their introduction into the vilayet of Adrianople, thus safeguarding the lives, property and free development of their fellow-countrymen in these vilayets, on the basis of political and national equality in all respects.

II

Firmly resolved to apply all of their loyal efforts and goodwill for the presentation of peace on the Balkan peninsula, the two allied states hereby promise jointly to defend themselves with all the power and resources at their command, against any encroachment from whatever source, be it on the present territorial unity and independence of their respective states, or the security and inviolability of the reigning dynasties.

III

Likewise the two allied states promise to oppose, with all the power and resources at their command, any hostile act or isolated occupation of the above-mentioned four vilayets, whatever nation may be responsible.

IV

In the circumstances foreseen in Articles II and III, the two allied states will conclude a special military convention, in which all possible eventualities and all their consequences will be provided for.

V

In the desire to prepare the ground for the full cooperation between the Slavs on the Balkan peninsula and to create favorable circumstances for an immediate agreement between the Kingdom of Serbia and the Principality of Montenegro, the two allied states hereby promise - whatever the question of Albania should arise - to support such a solution as would favor the interests of Montenegro.

VI

The two allied states hereby promise to discuss and decide jointly all questions which, by their nature and spirit, are within the sphere of this treaty.

VII

The two allied states hereby promise to submit to the final decision of His Imperial Majesty the Tsar of All Russians, all of those controversies which they are not able to decide among themselves. In case the Russian emperor declines to award a decision on such a controversial question, it will be placed in the

hands of the Permanent Court of Arbitration at
The Hague.

VIII

The present allied treaty remains secret. It
may be communicated to a third party - in whole
or in part - only after a preliminary agreement
between the two allied governments.

After five years this treaty may be brought
up for revision if the two allied states consider
it desirable.

It becomes valid on the day of its
ratification.

Concluded in Belgrade the thirtieth day of
the month of March, the one thousand nine hundred
and fourth year after the birth of Christ, the
third day of Easter.

In the name of the Principality of Bulgaria:

(s) D. Rizov

(s) Colonel of the General Staff Khesapchiev

In the name of the Kingdom of Serbia:

(s) General Sava Gruic

(s) Nikola Pasic

3. *Concluding Protocol*

Today, March 31, 1904, we the undersigned: D. Rizov, Bulgarian diplomatic agent in Cetine, and Hristofor Khesapchiev, Colonel of the General Staff, charge d'affaires of the Bulgarian diplomatic agency in Belgrade, appointed by His Royal Highness Prince Ferdinand I of Bulgaria with plenipotentiary letters, issued in Plovdiv on March 22, as plenipotentiaries of the Principality of Bulgaria, and General Sava Gruic, president of the ministerial council, and N.P. Pasic, minister of foreign affairs of the Kingdom of Serbia, appointed by H. M. King Peter I of Serbia with a plenipotentiary letter, issued in Belgrade on March 28, as plenipotentiaries of the Kingdom of Serbia, with the aim of conducting negotiations for the drawing up and conclusion of a convention to guarantee the political and economic development of the said two states through joint action for protecting their national rights and interests, having exchanged our plenipotentiary letters which were found in good and due form, we proceeded to the execution of the mission entrusted to us.

After a long and varied exchange of opinions as to the foundations which should form the basis of such convention, we decided:

I

That the convention should consist of two parts: the one, which may be made public after the condition foreseen in its text has been fulfilled, to be entitled: "A Treaty of Friendship between the Principality of Bulgaria and the Kingdom of Serbia" and to contain agreements of a cultural and economic character; the other, which is secret, to be entitled: "A Treaty of Alliance between the principality of Bulgaria and the Kingdom of Serbia," and to contain agreements of a political and military character.

II

That, in order to avoid misinterpretations in the application of the said treaties, the following explanations are included in this protocol:

1

Concerning the *Treaty of Friendship*: (a) in Article I the phrase: "to conduct similar custom

policies" is to be understood: as far as the existing commercial treaties of the two states permit this; and (b) as a supplement to Article III: the two states will agree upon making a joint proposal to the imperial Russian government for the immediate establishment of telegraphic communication between Russia and Bulgaria - if possible in the Cyrillic alphabet.

2

Concerning the *Treaty of alliance*: (a) in Article I, the vilayet of Kossovo is understood to include the Sanjak of Novi Pazar. (b) in Article I, above the Serbian text of the Bulgarian-Serbian copy the last word *pogledu*, as synonymous with the word *otnoshtayu*, is not to be considered erroneous; (c) supplementary to Article I, the two allied states will promote mutual tolerance between their fellow-countrymen in the Ottoman Empire, and (d) in Article V "Albania" is to be understood within the boundaries of the vilayets of Scutari and Janina.

III

That the two treaties be written parallel and with tow copies of each one, in the Serbian

and Bulgarian languages; also that the copies for the Kingdom of Serbia should be in Bulgarian and Serbian, and the copies for the Principality of Bulgaria should be in Serbian and Bulgarian.

IV

That the original copies of the two treaties, duly ratified by the two sovereigns and their respective ministers, after the plenipotentiary letters and the present protocol have been attached, be kept in the private archives of H. M. King Peter I and H. R. H. Prince Ferdinand I of Bulgaria. Only a copy of the Treaty of Friendship may be deposited in the archives of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the two states.

Concluded in Belgrade on March 31, the one thousand nine hundred and fourth year after the birth of Christ, the third day of Easter.

In the name of the Principality of Bulgaria:

(s) D. Rizov

(s) Colonel of the General Staff H. Hesapchiev

In the name of the Kingdom of Serbia:

(s) General S. Gruic

(s) Nikola P. Pasic

(Duly ratified by the sovereigns of the two allied states, the above treaties were exchanged in Sofia on April 29th).

(Translation C. E. Black *from* Ernst Helmreich,
The Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars, 1912-1913
(Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938)

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Archival material

Давчева, Даниела и Светослав Овчаров. *Лисицата и Лъвът: Фердинанд I на фона на българската психологическа и политическа действителност 1886 – 1902.*

София: Университетско издателство “Св. Климент Охридски”, 1994.

Народный комиссариат по иностранным делам: Сборник секретных документов из архива бывшего министерства иностранных дел. Петроград: Народный комиссариат по иностранным делам, 1917-18.

11-то Народно Събрание: I Извънредна сесия от 22.02 – 26.08.1901 г.

<http://www1.parliament.bg/kns/Pkcontrol/11%20ons/11%20ons.htm>

Books

Albertini, Luigi. *The Origins of the War of 1914.* 3 Vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965.

Baernreither, Joseph M. *Fragments of a Political Diary.* London: MacMillan and Co., 1930.

Bridge, F. R. *From Sadowa to Sarajevo: The Foreign Policy of Austria-Hungary, 1866-1914.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972.

Constant, Stephen. *Foxy Ferdinand: Tsar of Bulgaria.* New York: Franklin Watts, 1980.

Cowles, Virginia. *The Russian Dagger: Cold War in the Days of Tsars.* New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1969.

Duff, David. *Hessian Tapestry.* London: Muller, 1967.

Dumba, Constantin. *Memoirs of a Diplomat.* Boston: Little Brown, and Company, 1932.

Fay, Sidney B. *The Origins of the World War.* New York: The Macmillan Company, 1928.

Gerolymatos, Andre. *The Balkan Wars.* New York: Perseus Books Group, 2002.

- Groueff, Stefan. *Crown of Thorns*. London: Madison Press, 1987.
- Gueshoff, Ivan. *The Balkan League*. London [no publisher is identified], 1915.
- Hall, Richard C. *Bulgaria's Road to the First World War*. Boulder: East European Monographs, 1996.
- _____. *The Balkan Wars 1912-1913*. London: Routledge, 2000.
- Holland, T. E. *The European Concert in the Eastern Question: A Collection of Treaties and other public acts*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1885.
- Joll, James. *The Origins of The First World War*. London: Longman, 1984.
- Jelavich, Barbara. *Russia's Balkan Entanglements*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- Lafore, Laurence. *The Long Fuse: An Interpretation of the Origins of World War I*. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1965.
- Lieven, D. C. *Russia and the Origins of the First World War*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983.
- Madol, Hans Roger. *Ferdinand of Bulgaria: The Dream of Byzantium*. London: Hurst & Blackett Ltd., 1933.
- MacKenzie, David. *Serbs and Russians*. Boulder: East European Monographs, 1996.
- Petrovich, Michael. *A History of Modern Serbia*. 2 Vols. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovic, 1976.
- Poincare, Raymond. *Les Balcans en feu*. Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1926.
- Rossos, Andrew. *Russia and the Balkans: Inter-Balkan Rivalries and Russian Foreign Policy 1908-1914*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981.
- Stevenson, David. *Armaments and the Coming of War: Europe 1904-1914*. Oxford:

- Clarendon Press, 1996.
- Sazonov, Sergei. *Fateful Years*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1928.
- Thaden, Edward C. *Russia and the Balkan Alliance of 1912*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University, 1965.
- Tcharikow, N. V. *Glimpses of High Politics*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1931.
- Verner, Andrew M. *The Crisis of Russian Autocracy: Nicholas II and the 1905 Revolution*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990.
- Williamson Jr., Samuel R. *Austria-Hungary and the Origins of the First World War*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991.
- Амфитеатров, Александър. *В моих скитаниях: Балканские впечатления*. Райская: СПб, 1903.
- Ганчев, Добри. *Спомени за Княжеското време*. София: Издателство на Отечествения фронт, 1983.
- Гоцев, Димитър Г. *Идеята за автономия като тактика в програмите на национално освободителното движение в Македония и Одринско 1893-1941*. София: Издателство на Българската академия на науките, 1983.
- Илчев, Иван. *България и Антантата през Първата световна война*.
http://www.promacedonia.org/ii_ww1/index.html
- Конституция на Българското княжество*.
<http://kzg.parliament.bg/?page=history&lng=bg&hid=4>
- Куманов, Милен и Таня Николова. *Политически партии, организации и движения в България и техните лидери 1878-1999*. София: Ариадна, 1999.
- Марков, Георги. *България в Балканския съюз срещу Османската империя 1912-*

1913. http://www.promacedonia.org/gm_bw1/gm_1_5b.html

Попов, Радослав. *Балканската политика на България*. София: Издателство на Българската академия на науките, 1984.

Радев, Симеон. *Строителите на Съвременна България*. 2 тома.

<http://www.slovo.bg/showwork.php3?AuID=101&WorkID=4436&Level=3>

<http://www.slovo.bg/showwork.php3?AuID=101&WorkID=9356&Level=3>

Русия начала XX века. <http://www.russiankorea.com>

Тошев, Андрей. *Балканските войни*, 2 тома. София: Факел, 1929.

Хесапчиев, Христофор. *Служба на България в чужбина: Военнодипломатически спомени 1899-1914 г.* София: Военноиздателски комплекс Св. Георги Победоносец, 1993.

Articles

„Вежбанка за критичко мисленье: Македонска история.”

<http://www.makedonskaistorija.com>

Гърдев, Борислав. „Драматичната история на банковия заем от 1901-1902.” *Подир българската мечта* Варна: Електронно издателство “Liternet”, (2006).

http://litenet.bg/publish4/bgyrdev/podir/01_05a.htm

Димитър Делийски, “Ботевият ден и “византийската мечта” на Фердинанд.” *Кула 2*, (Април 2006)

Илчев, Иван. „Сделката, с която загробиха България.” *Сега* (Март 13, 2002).

Ловановић, Љубомир. „О Старој Србији и маћедонској аутономији.” *Дело IX*, no. 31, (1904).

- Стателова, Елена. „Христофор Хесапчиев и неговото дело.” В *Хесапчиев, Служба на България в чужбина: Военнодипломатически спомени 1899-1914 г.* София: Военноиздателски комплекс Св. Георги Победоносец, 1993.
- Тодоров, Георги. „Обезглавената монархия.” *Култура* 18 (2004).
- Шопов, Атанас. „Сръбско-български сфери на влияние в Македония.” *Миръ* 4165:5:7:8 (1925).