

CHAPTER 4



PERCEPTIONS OF SERBIA AND THE BALKANS IN THE BRITISH PRESS

I. BRITISH QUALITY DAILIES ON SERBIA

The journalists are now the true kings and clergy; henceforth Historians, unless they are fools, must write not of Bourbon Dynasties and Tudors, and Hapsburgs, but of Stamped Broadsheet Dynasties.

This is how W. T. Stead started his article on ‘His Majesty's Public Councillors’, by which he meant the editors of London's daily papers. Comparing the influence of the ‘Public Council’ to the significance that the Privy Council had once had in British history, he remarked that the Public Council ‘has advanced in political importance. The Cabinet relies upon the Public Council. It fears its hostility, it rejoices in its support’.¹ However, out of the twenty-one editors of London daily newspapers not all belonged to the same group. There were those who

¹ W. T. Stead, ‘Character Sketch. His Majesty's Public Councillors: to Wit, the Editors of the London Daily Press’, *The Review of Reviews*, vol. 30 (December 1904), p. 594; Stephen Koss felt that Stead's inventory although disputable in specific cases ‘serves conveniently to provide a framework’: Stephen Koss, *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1984), p. 1.

made ‘the influencing of opinion their chief business’ and, in Stead's opinion, two journals were remarkable in this group, two ‘which everyone who is in affairs must read’. There was ‘no Minister, no diplomatist, no public man’, who could ‘afford to miss reading *The Times* in the morning and *The Westminster Gazette* in the evening’. Although both were ‘party papers’, men of both parties read them. Consequently, according to Stead, whoever reads both may ‘feel secure that he misses nothing’.² Out of the weeklies, the most influential was *The Spectator*, which under its editors M. Townsend (Editor from 1861 to 1897) and John St Loe Strachey (Editor from 1898 to 1925) ‘came to be regarded as perhaps the foremost and most representative of British periodicals’.³

In the chapter that follows I shall analyse the coverage of Serbia in the two leading British dailies and the leading weekly. *The Morning Post* is also referred to since it was the paper of the Conservative and Unionist Party which ruled Britain from June 1895 to December 1905. *The Spectator* is reviewed in this chapter because, like dailies engaged in every-day political struggles, it aimed to achieve immediate influence. Occasionally, *The New York Times* will be cited, chiefly for the sake of comparison.

On the whole, the London dailies did not devote much coverage to the Balkans. However, with the emergence of the independent Balkan countries, a dilemma appeared on how to cover these states. In the network of the correspondents of *The Times*, at the time of the Berlin Treaty, the territory of the Balkans was primarily the responsibility of the Vienna Correspondent. He sometimes had special writers sent to cover peculiarly relevant events, and he also supervised the local agents in

² *Ibid.*, p. 595.

³ Dennis Griffiths (ed.), *The Encyclopaedia of the British Press* (London: Macmillan Press, 1992), p. 526.

charge of day-to-day news. The Constantinople Correspondent and the news agencies, especially Reuter's, supplemented this work. There was no special correspondent for the Balkan Christian countries. Even the post in Constantinople had 'occasional gaps'.⁴ In the hierarchy of the foreign correspondents of *The Times* there were occasional correspondents, 'Our Correspondents', who were preceded in eminence only by those styled 'Our Own Correspondents'.⁵ Bouchier was occasional correspondent until 1892 when he was given a permanent position, being in charge of Bulgaria, Rumania, and Greece. From July 1895, he was 'Our Own Correspondent', which meant that from that time there was a permanent whole-time correspondent of *The Times* to the Balkan Peninsula.⁶ Bouchier had support from Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace, Director of the Foreign Department of *The Times* from 1890 till 1899, himself a former correspondent of *The Times* from Constantinople.⁷ However, the Manager of *The Times* 'never admitted that anybody in Britain had the slightest interest in the Balkans'.⁸ Moreover, when Bouchier was granted a permanent position in 1892, he was discouraged by the Manager from expecting a deputy, since 'as a rule the British public

4 Lady Grogan, *The Life of J. D. Bouchier*, p. 51; Correspondents from Constantinople were: Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace (1878–1884), M. Guarracino (1890–1891), Mr. Whittaker (1895–1903) and then Dudley Disraeli Braham till 1907.

5 The fact that the articles of *The Times* correspondents were not signed, but only had the above mentioned references sometimes create difficulties in identification of their authors.

6 *The History of The Times* (London: The Office of The Times, 1947), pp. 713, 715–716.

7 Mackenzie Wallace was a man of strong Russian sympathies and É. Halévy believed that, at the time when he was Foreign Editor of *The Times*, this 'may have contributed to the anti-German attitude of the paper'. Élie Halévy, *A History of the English People. Book III: The Decline of the Unionist Party* (London: Penguin Books, 1940), p. 177.

8 *The History of The Times*, p. 713.

only care for one thing at once and two things in the Balkans would be more than they could stand'.⁹

Serbia had a peculiar position in the coverage of *The Times*. Namely, the country was sometimes covered by the Vienna correspondent and sometimes by Bouchier, who was in Belgrade almost every year, but usually on his way to other places. He rarely provided coverage of Serbia in the 1890s. He mostly wrote on her finances and scandals at the Belgrade Court.¹⁰ The Vienna correspondent of *The Times*, from the end of 1902, was Henry Wickham Steed (1871–1956), who succeeded William Lavino there. He was an able foreign correspondent for *The Times*, to become its Foreign Editor, and finally the Editor of *The Times*. During the preparations of the Serbian conspirators to murder the Serbian royal couple, he was probably the only Englishman who knew something about the conspiracy. He visited B. von Kállay, a capable Austro-Hungarian administrator of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in early March 1903, to discuss the outlook in Macedonia. He could not discover anything from von Kállay on Macedonia, but Kállay warned him to keep his eye on Belgrade. 'Master Alexander has got an awful fright. He knows there is trouble brewing and he has not dared to stir out of his Konak for the last forty-eight hours. Watch carefully and you may see things', Kállay told him.

Similarly to von Kállay *The Times* discussed the possibility of a premature end of the rule of King Alexander on several occasions. A correspondent of *The Times* from Vienna reported, in May 1901, the Viennese mood towards King Alexander. He noticed that the affairs of Serbia were not regarded in Vienna as 'very satisfactory'. However the *status quo* was considered 'far preferable to any change that is within the limits of probability', especially because 'a hopeless state of anarchy' was

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 714.

¹⁰ Lady Grogan, *The Life of J. D. Bouchier*, p. 94.

regarded 'as the most likely result of a popular revolt against the King', who was 'practically the sole representative of his dynasty'. *The Times* offered the list of pretenders considering Prince Peter Karageorgevich as being 'quite unsuited to a thorny task of ruling such a turbulent little country as Servia'. Still, there was a candidate 'of more serious kind', Prince Mirko of Montenegro, the son of Prince Nicholas who 'has long cherished the idea of a Greater Servia, in which the scattered members of the Servian race would be reunited under a scion of his own house'. However, Viennese circles that supplied *The Times* with information considered this unlikely because of the jealousy that the Serbians felt 'towards all their kindred beyond the frontier, and more particularly the Montenegrins, a comparatively poor and backward race, who would be sure to seize all the more remunerative post under the new *régime* and to emigrate *en masse* from their barren mountains to the fertile Servian plains'. A Central European or a Russian Prince would not be possible because of the jealousy of the Powers and a neutral candidate would find it very difficult to govern 'that stormy kingdom'. *The Times* considered therefore that republicans might try with the help of the peasantry to substitute the Monarchy with a Republican form of government.¹¹ Still, William Lavino, the correspondent of *The Times*, from Vienna soon reported that capable and well-informed observers did not anticipate 'any serious consequences in Servia, at least for the present'.¹² However, the situation in Serbia grew worse and the Vienna correspondent reported, at the end of 1902, that it was sincerely to be hoped that King Alexander would refrain from perilous experiments,

11 *The Times*, May 18, 1901, p. 7 e ('Servia'); Following the *Palmer's Index of The Times* for reference purposes the columns of each page have been lettered from left to right – a, b, c, d, e, f. For the same purposes the titles of articles are given in brackets.

12 *The Times*, May 20, 1901, p 7 f ('Servia').

and that he would not attempt another violent revision of the Constitution, ‘which could only increase the existing confusion and further endanger his own position’.¹³

Finally, King Alexander was killed on 11 June, 1903, and Steed found out about it from the Viennese evening press. He immediately went to see von Kállay who told him that he was not in on the conspiracy and that ‘Alexander was doomed, and the intrigues of Nicholas of Montenegro have been nipped in the bud’.¹⁴ He was able to tell Steed that the successor in Serbia would be Peter Karageorgevich, and that the Karageorgeviches ‘have always had two elements in their policy—not to quarrel with Austria-Hungary, and not to quarrel with Turkey, their most powerful neighbours’.¹⁵ Von Kállay was, according to Steed, ‘clearly excited by the murders’, and, ‘undoubtedly pleased by their probable effects’.¹⁶

‘Servia the land of assassinations, abdications...’

The regicide naturally aroused interest in Britain towards both Serbia and the Balkans. However, the Balkans generally, and Serbia in particular, were not very familiar to the British public and therefore editors felt obliged to supply their readers with basic data on them. From 1898 *The Times* joined with two American publishers who owned the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and published the Tenth Edition (1902–1903).¹⁷ The publishers

13 *The Times*, November 24, 1902 (‘Servian Outlook’).

14 Henry Wickham Steed, *Through Thirty Years*, p. 204.

15 *Ibid.*, p. 204.

16 *Ibid.*, p. 204.

17 *The History of The Times* (London: The Office of *The Times*, 1947), pp. 443–446.

undertook to advertise the *Britannica* through *The Times* and the May Coup provided one of the opportunities for the marketing of the Encyclopaedia. An advertisement drew the attention of readers of *The Times* to the assassination in the Balkans. 'After the first shock many, even among those who are diligent readers of the newspaper, are asking what the Karageorgevich Dynasty is, where it comes from...' Moreover the political picture of the Balkans was so complicated and it is one which the 'average reader has been asked to look at so often that he has, very probably, never taken courage to look at it carefully'.¹⁸ As an introduction to the 'complicated' situation *The Times* offered its readers four extracts from historical articles written by Chedomille Miyatovich, Serbian Minister at London. Later the readers of *The Times* were reminded that 'anything may be expected from the Balkan Peninsula', but whatever happened the possessor of the thirty-five volume Encyclopaedia could 'feel himself prepared'.¹⁹ Nonetheless, it seems the British public knew more than Americans, and *The New York Times* even felt obliged to publish an article explaining who the Serbs were.²⁰

The Westminster Gazette, being an evening newspaper, naturally published information on the regicide on the evening of 11 June. The newspaper expressed its astonishment: 'this is "staggering humanity" with a vengeance; it is a comprehensive *coup d'état* that is hardly the less terrible because it is one to which the East has accustomed us'. However, *The Westminster* was not sure how the regicide would affect the situation in the Near East, although in its opinion it could 'hardly fail to have

18 *The Times*, June 12, 1903, p. 4, d.

19 *The Times*, June 18, 1903, p. 4 d.

20 *The New York Times*, June 12, 1903, p. 2 c ('Who the Servians are').

an important effect'.²¹ *The Westminster* also demonstrated an interest in the aftermath of the regicide in an interview with the Serbian Minister in London, C. Miyatovich, asking him what Russia and Austria would be likely to do and if they would intervene in any way. The Minister's answer about the possibility of intervention was negative.²²

The Westminster had no correspondent in the Balkans and as a substitution, published in the next day's issue a long article of Herbert Vivian, the personal friend of the late royal couple. Vivian admitted that he had always admired Serbia, holding her to be 'the pattern State of the Balkans, almost as a model to Europe'. Moreover he had almost persuaded himself that were he not a Briton he would cast his lot 'with a people whose history and instincts were supremely chivalrous'. Having received the news on the regicide, he felt much as if he had lost half of his relatives and all his friends. And it happened in Belgrade 'almost a second home' to him. He could have understood it, had it happened 'among the mongrel Tatars of Bulgaria', but that it could happen 'among the courteous, gentle, civilised Servians' was 'as outstanding as if a British general or a Premier suddenly ran amok'. So Vivian decided that 'until further information' reached him he would not believe 'that this crime' had 'the countenance of the Servian nation' because the Serbian nation 'seemed to possess all the public virtues' and they could not 'suddenly become most infamous'.²³ Contrary to Vivian's restraint, *The Westminster* was more explicit in describing in the same issue the regicide as 'a wholesale extirpation of a reigning

21 *The Westminster Gazette*, June 11, 1903, p. 2 b.

22 *The Westminster Gazette*, June 11, 1903, p. 7 b.

23 *The Westminster Gazette*, June 12, 1903, p. 1 c, 2 a (Herbert Vivian, 'The Servian Massacre I.-In Praise of the King and Queen').

family unparalleled in modern European history', which 'pales into insignificance all previous achievements of the Servian people in the way of assassination and coups d'état'.²⁴

The Times had a clear advantage over *The Westminster* in coverage of the regicide by having two able journalists in the region. As soon as he found out about the murder, H. W. Steed sent a dispatch to *The Times*, from Vienna, reporting:

*Servia, the land of assassinations, abdications, pronunciamientos, and coups d'État, has surprised itself and caused all previous achievements to pale into insignificance beside the tragedy enacted between midnight and the small hours of this morning in Belgrade. A Central Asian khanate, not a European city, would have been a fitting theatre for such ruthless and accurately planned regicide. France has seen her President, Austria her Empress, and Italy her King struck down by assassins within the last ten years; but no parallel can be found in recent European history for such wholesale extirpation of a reigning family and of its partisans. Full and dully authenticated descriptions of the hecatomb are still waiting, but enough is known to characterise the tragedy of Belgrade as unique in contemporary history.*²⁵

However, it was not Steed but Bouchier who hastened to come to Belgrade, after he received the news on the assassination. He sent his first telegram on 12 June. It was difficult for him to realise when he arrived to Belgrade 'that there had been enacted within barely 24 hours another of those terrible tragedies which have disfigured the history of Servia'. He noticed that 'perfect

²⁴ *The Westminster Gazette*, June 12, 1903, p. 7 a.

²⁵ *The Times*, Friday, June 12, 1903, p. 5 a.

tranquillity' prevailed everywhere. Belgrade had 'a festive aspect', with almost every house displaying a flag, which indicated 'either the satisfaction or the fear of its occupants'. Even in the streets there was 'no display of excitement', and 'business went on as usual'. Bouchier explained this 'callous attitude of the people' by the unpopularity of the late Queen.²⁶ Two days later he noted that there was no sign of opposition to the new order of things, and Serbia remained under civil government. 'But in reality the army is supreme and the reign of Praetorianism has begun'.²⁷ Similarly to Bouchier *The Westminster* soon concluded that the new Serbian King would return to Belgrade 'to get place rather than power' and the power would reside with the Army since 'it is a case of the Army first, the rest nowhere'. Moreover it was not clear whether the Serbians would be 'any better off in consequence' than they had been 'under the rulers whom they found it necessary to murder'.²⁸

Another London newspaper with a correspondent in the Balkans was the conservative daily *The Morning Post*. Its correspondent was Hector Hugh Munro (1870–1916, known under the pseudonym Saki), a well-known Scottish writer and journalist. He wrote political satires for *The Westminster Gazette* and later he was the Balkan Correspondent for *The Morning Post*. He came to the southern Balkans in late 1902, reporting from Salonica in October as 'Our Special Correspondent'. He was far from Bouchier's sympathies for the Macedonian Christians calling them 'an artificial element inspired by Sofia and only working to provoke a massacre that would draw in the Great

26 *The Times*, June 13, 1903, p. 7 a ('The Servian Tragedy').

27 *The Times*, June 13, 1903, p. 7 a ('The Servian Tragedy. Further Details').

28 *The Westminster Gazette*, June 18, 1903, p. 2 c.

Powers'.²⁹ At the moment of the May Coup he was in Sofia, and he took the evening train to Belgrade on the same day. Like Bourchier he was 'looking out at station after station across the Serbian lowlands for signs of lamentation', but there were none, not 'even evidence of any unusual stirring'. He portrayed the situation, with his artistic talent, for the *Morning Post*:

History will concern itself with the yea and the nay of the fallen dynasty, with its hapless marriages and its coups d'état, and sentiment will be busy with the contemplation of its vicissitudes and its fatal catastrophe.

Here, face to face with tragedy, it behoves neither to blame nor to pity. The issue was a domestic one, and lay between the Servian people and the Servian ruling family.

But above all other reflections stands the horror of that final loneliness in the dark Palace, when amid the crashing uproar of forced-in doors the hunted couple sought in room after room for succour of safety and found only desertion and enemies.³⁰

Munro (Saki) was even inspired to write a play, entitled *The Death-Trap*, based partially on the May Coup.

The Spectator was very explicit as regard to the murder at Belgrade calling it 'wholesale butchery, which reads like a Palace tragedy of the Italian Renaissance'. This weekly was also worried about the prospect of peace in Europe expressing its hopes that 'it will not be imperilled by the event, and a further

29 Quoted from Vesna Goldsworthy, *Inventing Ruritania. The Imperialism of the Imagination*, p. 118.

30 Quoted from *Ibid*, p. 62.

source of danger added to the existing complications in the Balkans'.³¹ Commenting the election of Prince Peter to be the King of Serbia, *The Spectator* remarked that he was 'as little known to King Edward' as 'the Obrenovitch was'. It further concluded that Prince Peter had no other alternative under existing circumstances but to be guided by the Praetorians of Belgrade. It further prophesied about the army that 'their sway will be at least as bad as that of the Obrenovitches, and will end, if history is any guide, either in another revolution or in a civil war, the troops in the interior growing jealous of the ascendancy of the troops in the capital'.³²

The Withdrawal of the British Minister

The withdrawal of the British Minister from Belgrade, soon after the May Coup, and the effects of the withdrawal, were carefully followed by Bouchier. He reported, on 21 June, that Sir George Bonham, the British Minister in Belgrade, would leave the Serbian capital the next day. He also reported the Serbian reaction, noting that the decision of the British Government was 'strangely understood', in Belgrade, 'owing to the prevailing conviction that a highly meritorious act has been committed which has raised Serbia in the eyes of the civilized world'. He quoted the journal *Mala* (probably *Mali Zhurnal*), which claimed that England, being accustomed to oppressing other nations, perhaps regretted 'that the number of oppressed nations in the world' was 'now diminished by one'. Furthermore, 'the act which has been committed in the Servian capital has saved the honour of Servia, has exalted her prestige, and has

31 *The Spectator*, vol. 90, June 13, 1903, p. 922.

32 *The Spectator*, vol. 90, June 20, 1903, p. 965 ('The Revolution in Servia').

restored peace and tranquillity to the country'. In Bouchier's opinion these effusions were 'highly characteristic', reflecting 'the present state of the public mind', which regarded 'the foreign disapprobation with contempt'.³³ Bouchier himself completely supported the withdrawal of the British Minister, calling it, at the end of 1903, an 'excellent example'.³⁴

From the moment of the withdrawal of the British Minister all reactions concerning that decision were carefully covered in the British press. All newspapers supporting British official attitudes were quoted. Even American newspapers supporting British views were quoted, especially *The New York Times*.³⁵ *The Times* correspondent from New York cited *The Tribune* stating that the British Government set 'a good example in withdrawing its Minister from Belgrade' and in declining 'to maintain ordinary relations with the murderers', which precisely accorded 'with American feelings'. After that, the New York correspondent ironically noted that *The Evening Post* could see 'nothing good in a Government of which Mr. Chamberlain is a member', and that it considered Lord Lansdowne's action 'incomplete as a rebuke and impracticable as a general policy'. But other British journals, he commented, saw that it was 'not meant as a statement of general policy', but was 'expressly applicable to Serbia and exactly suited to the existing conditions of that wretched country'.³⁶

However, Steed reported that the attitude in Vienna was rather different. Namely, the action of England in withdrawing Sir George Bonham from Belgrade was not generally welcomed

33 *The Times*, June 22, 1903, p. 7 b ('The Servian Revolution. The Withdrawal of the British Minister').

34 *The Times*, December 23, 1903, p. 6 a, b ('The Situation in Serbia').

35 *The Times*, June 20, 1903, p. 7 a.

36 *The Times*, June 22, 1903, p. 7 b.

there, and was considered a little superfluous. The Austro-Hungarian view was that Serbia was ‘an Oriental State’, that Europe wanted a tranquil Serbia, and that King Peter, whether acquainted or not with the conspiracy, offered ‘the best guarantee of Servian tranquility’, and possessed ‘the advantage of damping Montenegrin hopes’, and ‘that practical diplomacy ought not to increase his embarrassment by exposing him to a moral boycott’.³⁷

As the day of the arrival of Prince Peter to Belgrade approached, the diplomatic situation went from bad to worse for Serbia. Bouchier reported on 23 June, that the British Minister had left that morning, and that he would be followed by the French, Dutch, Turkish and American Ministers and only Russian and Austrian Ministers would ‘certainly attend to-morrow’s ceremony, the former in uniform, the latter in morning dress’.³⁸ Still, the Austrian Minister appeared in full dress, which *The Times* only mentioned, while *The Westminster Gazette* commented on it as ‘a marvellous object-lesson in the ways of diplomacy’. ‘Could anything be more diplomatic?’, *The Westminster* wondered. ‘The Austrian Minister is there in uniform, he is presented to the King, but his Government has still not recognised the new régime. Our compliments to him on his cleverness in seeing that his Russian colleague was not left in sole possession of the diplomatic field.’³⁹

Finally, Bouchier reported on 23 June, that the foreign Ministers who had left Belgrade before the King’s arrival, returned except the British, the Dutch, and the American ones, of which the last two did not permanently reside in Belgrade. Furthermore the new Serbian King got telegrams acknowledging

37 *The Times*, June 23, 1903, p. 5 b (‘The Servian Revolution’).

38 *The Times*, June 24, 1903, p. 7 b (‘The Servian Revolution’).

39 *The Westminster Gazette*, June 25, 1903, p. 2 b.

his announcement from the King of Italy, the Kings of Sweden and Norway, and the President of the Swiss Republic. He added that the Serbian Government would remain in power till the election fixed for 14 September, commenting: 'Thus the curtain has fallen on the last act of the Servian tragedy. A period of relative tranquillity will probably ensue. The harvest is beginning, during which peasants have no time for politics, and many of the leading politicians will betake themselves to abroad to recruit their energies for the autumn campaign'.⁴⁰ Having estimated that the situation in Serbia was calm, Bouchier soon left for Sofia, and the news from Serbia in *The Times* started to be much shorter. In fact, the news was usually taken from Reuter's.

The Regicides

However, it was in September that *The Times* started to cover everything available related to the position of the regicides in Serbia. Steed reported in September that it was still 'difficult to estimate the importance of the conflict in Servia between the bulk of the corps of officers and the clique of assassins'. An official investigation 'has shown 900 out of the 1,300 officers of the Servian army to have adhered formally to the movement against the assassins', who 'have no mind to let themselves be driven from power, and are reported to be threatening King Peter with the publication of documents proving his complicity in the conspiracy against King Alexander should he show the white feather'. Steed finished characteristically: 'In these circumstances Servia seems likely to provide interesting developments as

⁴⁰ *The Times*, July 1, 1903, p. 7 f.

any corner of the Balkan Peninsula'.⁴¹ About 'the righteous indignation, and stern morality of the Russian Press' he commented that it 'would ring truer if Russia had been less precipitate in recognizing the new Servian *regime*', and perhaps King Peter 'could tell an interesting tale should he ever return to private life'.

A special correspondent of *The Times* from Belgrade soon reported that "new conspiracy" was 'a far more serious matter than the Government could dare to acknowledge', encompassing at least 1,000 out of a total of some 1,500 officers. In his opinion there were probably 'few Servians who do not at least secretly sympathize with it'. The anti-regicide movement consisted of three groups: 'those whose fortunes and possibly lives were dependent on the late Obrenovitch dynasty', of a still smaller party of those who were 'honestly ashamed of the murders', and the vast majority because they realised 'that the revolution had led to perhaps worse corruption and tyranny than ever existed before. For the clique of assassins hold all the chief civil and military offices, the keys of the arsenal and the treasure chests, and any man who crosses them is doomed'. He thought that King Peter was himself surrounded and ruled, and many were 'losing hope that he will ever be able to shake himself free'. Moreover, Serbia seemed to be 'singularly lacking in strong men with respectable characters', and therefore it would be interesting to see whether any one would appear who would dare to stand up against the reigning clique, and what would be the fate of King Peter.⁴²

41 *The Times*, September 9, 1903, p. 3 c.

42 *The Times*, September 22, 1903, p. 3 b ('King Peter and the Servian Army').

The Diplomatic Strike

On 14 December, Steed informed the readers of *The Times* that the rumours had been confirmed and the Austro-Hungarian Government was about to recall its representative from Belgrade. This was ‘a clear manifestation of European disapproval of the predominating influence in Serbia by the assassins of King Alexander’, and it would ‘offer King Peter an opportunity of removing these men from power’. Steed anticipated that it was probable that there would ‘shortly be a general diplomatic strike at Belgrade’.⁴³

At the end of the 1903, an unusually long Bouchier's article appeared about Serbia. He depicted the situation in Serbia, as follows:

The present state of affairs in Servia is hardly such as to warrant an optimistic forecast. The final scene of the hideous drama of last summer has not yet been enacted, and the hand of the Avenging Goddesses, which the Greek tragedians loved to trace in their noble masterpieces, still weighs heavily upon that unhappy country. All appearances lead to the conclusion that the day of expiation is approaching.

In Bouchier's opinion ‘had King Peter, immediately after his arrival at Belgrade, summoned courage to remove the guilty officers from every position of power and influence, such an act of decision would in all probability have consolidated his own position and that of his dynasty’. The King seemed to him ‘sensitive to the humiliations to which he is subjected’, but all he could do, in the given circumstances, was ‘to temporize with

⁴³ *The Times*, December 14, 1903, p. 7 b (‘The Servian Regicides’).

his gaolers'. It was hinted that King Peter welcomed the diplomatic boycott 'in the hope that it may impress public opinion in Serbia and eventually enable him to shake off a yoke which humiliates him personally and endangers his dynasty'.⁴⁴

After this dispatch, Steed again took over the coverage of Serbian affairs for the following half year. He reported on 7 March, that 'the semi-boycott' to which King Peter and the Serbian Government that had been subjected for some time by the Powers, was 'beginning to produce an effect'. Namely, the figure-head of the assassins, Damyan Popovich, was to be promoted from his position near the person of the King to a higher post as soon as the Skupshtina had sanctioned the necessary Budget formalities. 'It is hoped that the Powers may then be moved to raise the boycott and to release King Peter from an embarrassing predicament', Steed noticed.⁴⁵ He soon noted that many other officers appointed by the revolutionary Government had been redistributed among various regiments, and that the posts about the person of the King had been filled by non-conspirators. Consequently, 'King Peter has not had long to wait for his reward. Russia and Italy, apparently acting in concert, have immediately raised the diplomatic boycott'.⁴⁶

The boycott thus ended but Serbia was still for *The Times* a country from what one could not hope for anything good. Steed soon turned his attention again to Serbia and again in a poetical manner: 'If smoke means fire, the Servian question may soon become burning. Belgrade is not a city where truth walks abroad at midday, but occasionally Servian rumours merit attention'. First these rumours included the intention of King Peter to

44 *The Times*, December 23, 1903, p. 6 a, b ('The Situation in Servia').

45 *The Times*, March 7, 1904, p. 6 a ('Servia').

46 *The Times*, April, 2, 1904, p. 3 b ('Servia').

abdicate; second his intention to ‘remodel “the much-kneaded Servian Constitution”’; and, third King Peter's ‘alleged belief that Servia may shortly be called upon to take a head in possible Balkan complications’. Steed dismissed abdication as highly improbable and felt that the remodelling of the constitution was ‘a possible, though not an immediate, necessity’. With regard to the troubles in the Balkans, Steed noted that in Berlin and in Vienna politicians feared that Russia could ‘attempt to create in South-Eastern Europe a diversion from the unfortunate predicament in which she finds herself in the Far East’, and it was thought possible that King Peter ‘might be willing to earn a fresh title to Russian gratitude by stirring up the glowing embers of the Balkan fire’.⁴⁷

The next event in Serbia that provoked the attention of *The Times* was the coronation of King Peter. This time Bouchier came personally to Belgrade to cover it and sent four informative dispatches about it.⁴⁸ Two other Englishmen came to Belgrade to be present during the coronation ceremonies. They were Arnold Muir Wilson (1857–1909) and Frank Storm Mottershaw (1882–1931). Wilson was an eminent lawyer and a member of the Sheffield City Council. In the summer of 1898 he was appointed to be Serbia's Honorary Consul in Sheffield and it was in this capacity that he worked to improve Serbia's trade with Great Britain. He was very devoted to Serbia and he decided to come to Belgrade to attend the coronation and to bring with him Mr. Mottershaw who was a cameraman of the Sheffield Photo Company. Mottershaw's notes, containing his impressions from

⁴⁷ *The Times*, May 10, 1904, p. 5 e (‘The Outlook in Servia’).

⁴⁸ *The Times*, September 21, 1904, p. 3 d (‘Coronation Ceremonies at Belgrade’); September 22, 1904, p. 3 d (‘Coronation of King Peter’); September 23, 1904, p. 3 d (‘The Servian Coronation’); September 24, 1904, p. 6 a (‘The Servian Coronation’).

Serbia, have been preserved. They offer a good insight into an average Englishman's perceptions of Serbia at the time. He says he was very surprised by Wilson's offer to go to Belgrade. At first he hesitated, having in mind terrible murders that had happened just several months earlier, together with stories about bombs and banditti in Serbia that he had read in press.⁴⁹ Still, he recorded the coronation, and he also filmed several Serbian monasteries and some spots in Sanjak of Novi Bazar, in Turkey, as well as some spots in Montenegro and Dalmatia. Upon his return to Britain Wilson organised two presentations in Sheffield and one in London.⁵⁰

Another British cameraman visited Serbia in 1905. His name was Mackenzie and he came from Inverness. He was commissioned by the Urbanora Company 'to obtain living pictures of men, manners, and customs in the Near East'.⁵¹ He was accompanied by Harry de Windt, who was sent as Special Correspondent of *The Westminster Gazette* to visit the Balkan States and European Russia. His experience will be discussed in the next chapter since he published his impressions about 'savage Europe' in a book.⁵²

49 Срђан Кнежевић, „Почасни конзул Србије Арнолд Мјуир Вилсон”, *Историјски часопис* [Srđyan Knezhevich, 'Pochasni konzul Srbiye Arnold Myuir Vilson', *Istoriyski chasopis*, Belgrade, vol. 39 (1992), p. 171]. Knezhevich quoted Mottershaw in Serbo-Croatian translation, and since that source is not available for me in English, I can only retranslate Mottershaw's words into English.

50 *Ibid.*, p. 173; The film has been preserved and is kept in the Belgrade Cinema Archives.

51 Harry De Windt, *My Restless Life* (London: Grant Richards, 1909), p. 354.

52 De Windt, Harry, *Through Savage Europe. Being the Narrative of a Journey (Undertaken by Special Correspondent of the Westminster Gazette) throughout the Balkan States and European Russia* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1906).

Calm in 1905

The Times was not particularly interested in Serbia in 1905. Several months passed without any single news from Serbia. It was only crises of Serbian cabinets that drew some attention of the Reuter's Agency and almost none of Bouchier's. Since the May Coup all coverage of Serbia by *The Times* was related to the regicide, the regicides, the new King and the Cabinet crises. The only news not following this pattern was published in October 1905. *The Times* shortly informed, according to the foreign press, that the Serbian King opened the first Serbian University. But even this news was followed by a remark that the ceremony was said, 'to have aroused little popular enthusiasm'.⁵³

Finally, Bouchier published a longer text on Serbia in October. He was in Rumania then, and from letters that he received from Belgrade he got 'a gloomy picture of the situation in Servia', where discontent was stated 'to be rife among the population of the interior, which had expected great benefits from the change of dynasty' but which found itself 'in a worse position than before'. The people were 'irritated and disillusioned', the expected millennium was still remote, and a period of economic stress seemed in prospect, as a poor harvest had resulted from the drought of the past summer. 'A feeling of discouragement' also prevailed among the upper classes. Even in the army 'the tension between the conspirators and the so-called anti-conspirators has increased to such a degree that the present state of affairs can hardly last much longer'.⁵⁴ At the beginning of the next year, Bouchier reported from Belgrade that there were rumours 'with regard to a plot formed by the military conspirators for the

⁵³ *The Times*, October 18, 1905, p. 7 d ('First Servian University').

⁵⁴ *The Times*, October 31, 1905, p. 5 e, f ('The Outlook in Servia').

assassination of their principal opponents' who had formed 'a league for the settlement of the question of the conspirators and of the difficulty with England by legal means'.⁵⁵

The Renewal of Diplomatic Relations with Serbia

The intentions of Serbian and Bulgarian Governments to sign a commercial convention and decisive resistance of Austria-Hungary to accept it slowly changed the tone of *The Times*. Nevertheless, Bouchier was persistent in his descriptions of the rule of the regicides in Serbia. He sent a very long dispatch from Belgrade, on 1 February, 1906, stating that the regicides still pronounced 'the decisive word in all important matters of State, and the civil as well as the military administration' was 'practically under their control'. All the troops in the capital and its neighbourhood were at the disposal of the conspirators. Moreover, 'the custody of the King and the Heir-Apparent' was 'in their hands'. Even 'the government of the day' was 'likewise at their mercy', holding its position 'during good behaviour'. However, he noted that some of the senior members of the praetorian camarilla were ready to retire 'on receipt of a lump sum which would enable them to live in affluence abroad', although the proposal of a pension did excite their suspicions. There were also signs of 'considerable nervousness' among some conspirators, and their position was daily becoming 'more insecure'. The general disposition was not in their favour: 'Among the peasants of the interior – the bulk of the population – among the politicians at Belgrade, in the army, and in the upper classes of society, the desire for their downfall is now openly expressed, and the

55 *The Times*, January 15, 1906, p. 5 b ('The Servian Military Conspirators').

conviction prevails that the period of their domination is fast drawing to a close'. The discontent among peasants had special superstitious background. In Bouchier's opinion they believed that 'the curse of blood-guiltiness' still hung over Serbia. Therefore, 'every visitation of nature, such as the drought of last summer, the failure of the maize, all even the local scarcity of eggs, is attributed to Divine displeasure at the immunity accorded to the crime'.⁵⁶

More interesting was Bouchier's interpretation of the effects of the international situation on Serbia. The Russian defeat, in the Russo-Japanese War, in 1905, produced upon the Balkan peoples 'the growing conviction', that England was henceforth 'destined to play a leading part in the maintenance of their liberty and independence'. The attitude of Russia in the Macedonian question shook the belief of the Slavonic nations in the sincerity of Russia's desire. 'On the other hand, the noble work of humanity carried out by unofficial England in Macedonia after the insurrection and, still more, the strenuous efforts of Lord Lansdowne... have awakened a strongly sympathetic feelings towards the Power which, for many years after the Berlin Treaty, was held to have riveted the chains of the Christians in European Turkey'.⁵⁷

As regards the dispute between Serbia and Austria-Hungary over the commercial convention with Bulgaria, Bouchier expressed sympathies 'to a little nation which endeavours to vindicate its economic and political interests in the face of enormous odds'. However, Serbia entered 'upon the campaign without the necessary preparation and the necessary war mate-

⁵⁶ *The Times*, February 9, 1906, p. 8 c ('The Situation in Servia').

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p. 8 d.

rial'. He concluded with a recommendation: 'Before braving the foreigner Serbia would do well to set her house in order and to regain the respect and confidence of the civilized world'.⁵⁸

An editorial of *The Times* dealing with the Balkan affairs, and published in the same issue was very much based on the Bouchier article previously quoted. It states that to Englishmen 'there will not appear anything very heinous or unnatural in the Serbo-Bulgarian combination... To us a permanent Serbo-Bulgarian feud would be much more regrettable than a Serbo-Bulgarian understanding'. Furthermore, Serbia is interested in economic relations with Britain in order to liberate herself from 'her economic servitude to Austria-Hungary', but since the break-up of the diplomatic relations, trade between two countries had fallen considerably. Therefore the renewal of diplomatic relations was very important. The Serbian public generally believed that the dismissal of the regicides was 'an indispensable condition to the renewal of Anglo-Serbian relations', and it was 'right in that belief'. Finally, the editorial concludes:

We have no grudge against the Servian people, but, on the contrary, every sympathy with them and regard for their many excellent qualities, and we think it desirable on every ground that diplomatic relations should be restored. Our mutual interests counsel it, and the general situation in the Balkans calls for it even more. But such a resumption is not possible while the regicides still hold sway at Belgrade. In what precise manner they are to be pensioned off is no concern of ours. We do not call for infliction of any punishment upon them. But dismissed they should be, and in the interests of our mutual relations it

58 *Ibid.*, p. 8 d, e.

*is to be hoped that their dismissal will not be long delayed.*⁵⁹

These articles attracted considerable attention in Belgrade. In London, C. Miyatovich immediately sent a letter to the Editor of *The Times* thanking him for his ‘admirable leader on Serbia, so fair to and sympathetic for the Servian nation’. He expressed his hopes that ‘all parties in England-and more especially the liberal party, which is by right the heir to the late Mr. Gladstone's friendship for all the Balkan nations’ would endorse his conclusions. Furthermore, he pleaded ‘openly for the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Serbia and Great Britain’.⁶⁰

Soon, in April, the Paris correspondent of *The Times*, William Lavino, who was known for his support for the policy of Anglo-French *entente*⁶¹ reported that there was ‘reason to believe that the cordial cooperation of England with France at the Algeciras Conference’ would ‘in the future be extended as far as possible to other parts of the world’. Such an occasion was likely ‘to be provided before long in the Near East’, and there were people who now considered that it would ‘be desirable to fill the post of British Minister at Belgrade’. But, there was an obstacle to it consisting ‘in the maintenance of the regicides in their present positions’. There seemed, however, ‘to be every disposition on the part of the Servian Ministry to place in retirement the ringleaders, if they were only sure that the British Government would be satisfied with that measure’. Moreover, German economic penetration in Serbia, Bulgaria, and Turkey was ‘proceeding steadily and unostentatiously’ and Germany had

59 *The Times*, February 9, 1906, p. 7 e (editorial).

60 *The Times*, February 13, 1906, p. 7 c.

61 *The History of The Times* (London: The Office of The Times, 1947), p. 649.

‘already succeeded in almost monopolizing the Near Eastern markets’. Therefore, ‘if allowed to continue, it would soon establish German preponderance so firmly that it would be impossible to contend against it’. Especially, because ‘in that part of Europe political influence is closely associated with economic progress, a circumstance which here at all events gives ground for serious reflection’.⁶²

The Serbian Government now started to yield to the British conditions. Reuter's reported on 29 May that: ‘The King has signed a decree which will appear in the Gazette to-morrow, placing the principal regicides on the retired list’.⁶³ Three weeks later *The Times* shortly informed: ‘The King has been pleased to approve the appointment of Mr. J. B. Whitehead, Councillor to his Majesty's Embassy at Berlin, to be his Majesty's Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary at Belgrade’.⁶⁴ On the occasion of the appointment of J. B. Whitehead the *The Westminster Gazette* ran the same article as the issue of *The Times* of the same date.⁶⁵

The crisis in diplomatic relations started with enormous coverage by the British Press. The act of the re-establishment of the diplomatic relations between the United Kingdom and the Kingdom of Serbia, however, failed to attract attention in London. Even *The Times* with its network of correspondents based its coverage on Reuter's dispatches.

The Times had a very harsh stance towards the Belgrade regicide. Its Balkan correspondent Bouchier was very persistent in insisting that the regicide must be punished before diplomatic

62 *The Times*, April 11, 1906, p. 5 e (‘England, France and Servia’).

63 *The Times*, May 30, 1906, (‘The Servian Regicides’), p. 5 c.

64 *The Times*, June 19, 1906, p. 9 f (‘Political Notes. New Minister at Belgrade’).

65 *The Westminster Gazette*, June, 19, 1906, p. 8 b.

relations were to be re-established. However, a special publication of *The Times*, published only two years after the re-establishment of diplomatic relations, demonstrates that even strong moral condemnation may easily sink into oblivion. It was *The Historians' History of the World*, a collection of works on the history of the world 'recorded by the great writers of all ages'. Some twenty pages in this monumental edition, consisting of twenty-five large volumes, are dedicated to Serbia. This is how the regicide was commented:

*A military conspiracy was formed, and the king and queen were brutally murdered in the palace at Belgrade, soon after midnight on June 1st, 1903. The premier, the minister of war, and the two brothers of the king were also killed. A provisional government was at once formed, which proclaimed the constitution of 1888 and invited Prince Peter Karageorgevich to become king. In spite of the horror felt at the unnecessary brutality of the proceedings, public sympathy in foreign countries was generally with the revolutionists, as King Alexander had lost public respect. In Belgrade itself there was great rejoicing.*⁶⁶

Obviously, 'the horror of brutality' had not been forgotten, but it was more than relativised only five years after the regicide.

II. BRITISH OPINION MAKERS

The May Coup was widely reported in British periodicals. However, one can hardly detect any special policy of British

66 Henry Smith Williams (ed.), *The Historians History of the World. A Comprehensive Narrative of the Rise and Development of Nations as Recorded by the Great Writers of All Ages* (25 vols. London: The Times, 1908), vol. 24, p. 205.

periodicals towards Serbia. Instead, personal affinities often encouraged individuals dealing with Serbia and the Balkans rather than some specific policy of their journals.

The Steads

Among Victorian journalists who always insisted that their consciousness should lead them in the writing of articles, the most prominent was William Thomas Stead (1849–1912). His father was a congregational minister and he was consequently brought up in a Puritan atmosphere, with Oliver Cromwell as his idol. His deeply religious nonconformist positions led him to spiritualism in his later years. As the Assistant Editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* (from 1880), and especially after becoming the Editor (in 1883), he was considered ‘the most powerful journalist in the island’.⁶⁷ His innovations influenced British journalism substantially, while his exposures of public evils had such an influence that legislation was even enacted as a consequence of his campaigns. Such was the case in his campaign against the white slave traffic in 1885. Five years later Stead founded *The Review of Reviews*, a monthly, which proved to be a great success. Throughout his career he was a champion of Anglo-Russian co-operation. During the Peace Conference in The Hague, in 1899, Stead addressed a series of weekly letters to Nicholas II. As his biographer Sir Frederic White pointed out: ‘these letters constitute, doubtless, the only instance in history of an Englishman acting as “special correspondent” and political

⁶⁷ Dennis Griffiths (ed.), *The Encyclopaedia of the British Press 1422–1992* (London: Macmillan Press, 1992), s. v. ‘Stead, William Thomas’, p. 532.

adviser to a Tsar of Russia'.⁶⁸ During the Boer War 'Stead was the most uncompromising of all the opponents of the war in South Africa (1899–1902), and thereby he accentuated his unpopularity'.⁶⁹ Similarly to Kinglake in his later years, Stead was under the influence of Madam Olga Kireyeva Novikova, once called by Disraeli a Russian MP.⁷⁰ In the 1890s, he became very interested in psychical matters, and was Editor of *Borderland*, a periodical devoted to this subject. He published, in 1897, *Letters from Julia*, a selection of spiritualist communications which he believed he wrote involuntarily with his own hand, through the departed spirit of an American lady named Julia Ames.⁷¹

The lead story in *The Review of Reviews*, in its issue of July 1903, was the news about the 'Servian massacre'. The journal pointed out that 'the civilised world was startled' by the news on the regicide, and 'it was even more amazed when it learned that the perpetrators of the massacre considered them-

68 Sir Frederic White, *The Life of W. T. Stead* (2 vols. London, New York and Boston: Johnatan Cape Ltd. and Houghton Mifflin Company, 1925), vol. II, p. 154. In his advocacy of Anglo-Russian co-operation Stead was in no way alone in Britain. Describing the situation before the Russo-Japanese War (1904–05) Élie Halévy concludes: 'In fact, for the past ten years there had always been Englishmen in favour of an understanding with Russia, more, indeed, than those who had advocated an understanding with France'. Élie Halévy, *A History of the English People. Book III*, p. 177.

69 Frederic William Whyte, s. v. 'Stead, William Thomas', *The Dictionary of National Biography, 1912–1921*, p. 508.

70 For more details on Olga Kireyeva Novikova see R. W. Seton-Watson, *Disraeli, Gladstone and the Eastern Question. A Study in Diplomacy and Party Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1972), pp. 115–118.

71 Frederic William Whyte, *op. cit.*, p. 508.

selves marvels of heroic patriotism'.⁷² The May Coup was a new opportunity for Stead to revive his condemnation of the Boer War. Commenting on the claims of the regicides that they adopted methods of barbarism against their will because an *aide-de-camp* had made an attack 'upon the heroic Servian army', Stead ironically noted that the regicides 'no more intended to kill the king than Lord Salisbury intended to annex territory or to seize goldfields'.⁷³ Stead was one of few Englishmen who personally had known the chief regicide, Colonel Mashin, from the time of the Hague Peace Conference. Mashin left an impression on him of 'a quite, mild man', whom he 'would no more have suspected of assassination' than he 'could have anticipated that an equally pleasant man, Lord Milner, would drench South Africa in blood'.⁷⁴

Stead was related to the May Coup in the most extraordinary way. Two prominent British journalists had some knowledge on the preparations to kill the Serbian Royal Couple. Wickham Steed found out about the preparations from von Kállay, Stead, characteristically for him, found out about it in a clairvoyant vision! Being an adherent to spiritualism, Stead had organised one of many clairvoyant sessions in March 1903. The result of the session that took place on the night of 20 March, 1903, in Stead's opinion was that 'the bloody tragedy in the palace was seen clairvoyantly three months before it took place, and described in the hearing of at least a dozen credible witnesses'.⁷⁵ For

⁷² *The Review of Reviews*, vol. 28 (July 1903), p. 3.

⁷³ *Ibid*, p. 3.

⁷⁴ *The Review of Reviews*, vol. 28 (July 1903), p. 5.

⁷⁵ W. T. Stead, 'A Clairvoyant Vision of the Assassination at Belgrade', *The Review of Reviews*, vol. 28 (1903), p. 31.

Stead these sessions were a kind of scientific experiments. So, when it turned out that the session in March might have prophesied the murder of the royal couple in Belgrade, Stead dedicated himself to the scientific collecting of data on that session. This was an especially important task for him, because the session was reported the world. Almost all the British dailies, as well as the American and continental press, commented on the prophecy.⁷⁶

One of the guests at the session was the Serbian Minister in London, Chedomille Miyatovich. Thanks to his interviews the British press was able to publish stories about the prophecy immediately after the news on the Belgrade regicide reached London. Miyatovich had left the session before the medium, Mrs. Julia Burchell, was able to make a clairvoyant reading of an envelope brought by him, containing the signature of King Alexander Obrenovich. However, the other guests, including Stead, later confirmed that the clairvoyant upon taking the envelope became very agitated describing a vision in which a King was killed with a Queen next to him. This event took place on 20 March, 1903. Miyatovich found out about it the next day from one of the participants. Being himself an ardent spiritualist he immediately sent a letter to King Alexander warning him that he had 'reason to believe that an attempt would be made to murder him in his own Palace'.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ See *The Westminster Gazette*, 11 June, 1903, p. 7 b; *The New York Times*, 12 June, 1903, p. 2 c ('A Clairvoyant's Prediction').

⁷⁷ Chedomille Mijatovich, *The Memoirs of a Balkan Diplomatist*, p. 181. Miyatovich claims that when he visited Belgrade, in 1914, he found that it was 'common knowledge that the conspirators had opened safe in the bedroom of the King and Queen and discovered in it my letter warning the King', *Ibid*, p. 182.

In the meantime, Stead became so obsessed with the prophecy to conclude that ‘the famous warning of the soothsayer who warned Julius Caesar to beware of the Ides of March sinks into insignificance’ if it is ‘compared with this remarkable instance of clairvoyant vision’,⁷⁸ and he started to fill his *Review* with news and polemics concerning this prophecy. However, the Society for Psychical Research did not share his delight, rejecting his proof as insufficient. Reacting against this, Stead wrote a long story in *The Review of Reviews* on how the Society for Psychical Research investigated the story underlying that ‘no prophecy of our time has been noised abroad so widely’, and in both the Old and the New world the press was ringing ‘with the report of the clairvoyant vision which was afterwards so singularly realised’.⁷⁹ At the end Stead accused the Society of having ‘utterly absurd self-stultifying policy’.⁸⁰ Now the President of the Society felt obliged to reply. He was a prominent British physicist, Sir Oliver Joseph Lodge (1851–1940), the first principal of the new Birmingham University (in 1900). Like Stead he believed strongly in the possibility of communicating with the dead, and wanted to implement scientific research on it.⁸¹

The whole affair with the clairvoyant vision added a new, mystical aspect to the Belgrade tragedy. Since mystery and the

78 W. T. Stead, ‘A Clairvoyant Vision of the Assassination at Belgrade’, *The Review of Reviews*, vol. 28 (1903), p. 31.

79 W. T. Stead, ‘How the Society for Psychical Research Investigated the Servian Story’, *The Review of Reviews*, vol. 28 (1903), p. 146.

80 *Ibid*, p. 149.

81 ‘A Defence of the Psychical Research Society. An Open Letter to Mr. W. T. Stead by the President, Sir Oliver Lodge’, *The Review of Reviews*, vol. 28 (1903), pp. 260–261. Stead replied to this letter in the same issue of his *Review* (*Ibid*, p. 261); for later references to the clairvoyant vision see, for instance: Harry De Windt, *Through Savage Europe*, p. 147.

Orient have usually gone hand-in-hand in western imagination, this incident undoubtedly helped the re-orientalisation of Serbia that will be treated later.

After the affair with the prophecy had calmed down Stead continued to cover events in Serbia. He commented on the 'tardy indignation' of the Austrian Emperor when he decided to withdraw his Minister from Belgrade: 'Whether this course would have been adopted had Serbia been other than a minor State is doubtful, but where would the consciousness of the Great Powers have opportunity to show their workings if so insignificant nations existed?' In Stead's opinion many saw in the withdrawal of the Austrian representative 'not a mark of indignation but rather a diplomatic move to force Serbia to submit once more to the overlordship, actual if not acknowledged, of Austria'.⁸² Stead was the first to view Austro-Hungarian moves in this way. *The Times* took the same attitude two years later.

A friend of Stead's, a prominent British journalist, Dr Emile Joseph Dillon (1851–1932), a special correspondent of *The Daily Telegraph* from Russia (from 1887, till 1914)⁸³ also wrote a very interesting paper on the May Coup.

Having in mind the general lines of W. T. Stead's activity, it is not surprising that his son Alfred Stead (1877–1933) became a champion of the re-establishment of Anglo-Serbian diplomatic relations. Stead Junior was an expert on Japan and wrote several books about the country. Gradually, his interest shifted from the Far East to the Near East, especially to Romania and Serbia. He visited Serbia in 1905, submitting a memorandum to the Serbian Prime Minister on 13 August, entitled 'Memoranda sur les

⁸² *The Review of Reviews*, vol. 29 (1904), p. 6.

⁸³ About Dillon see Dennis Griffiths (ed.), *The Encyclopaedia of the British Press* (London: Macmillan Press, 1992), p. 201.

Relations entre l'Angleterre et la Serbie'. In A. Stead's opinion the best solution for Serbia was to follow English foreign policy in Europe. The Liberals were heading for power and they would have Bulgarophile policy. Therefore Serbia should immediately establish connections with England so that the Liberals, when they come to power, would not be able to challenge already established relations. In order to arouse England's interest in Serbia, the latter should arrange an English loan. Then England would be compelled to protect its economic interests in Serbia, as was the case with Morocco. The loan should be 87,500,000 francs, and Serbia could use it to buy weapons and to build a railway, which were two key issues for Serbia. Stead also proposed a mining concession for English companies. Finally he proposed a book 'pour instruire l'opinion publique en Angleterre'.⁸⁴

As soon as he returned from Serbia he endeavoured to influence British public opinion in two ways: 1. By advocating the renewal of diplomatic relation with Serbia, and, 2. By publishing papers aimed at improving the image of Serbia in Britain. His first texts were cautious. His letter to *The Times* followed Bouchier's condemnation of Austro-Hungarian policy as regards her condemnation of the Serbo-Bulgarian Convention and the similarly phrased editorial (in the issue of 9 February, 1906), and was published in the next day's issue. Having expressed his doubts about the further break-up of the diplomatic relations with Serbia he pointed out: 'The shadow of Austria is always heavy upon the Servian people, and the past few years have not been without indications that the authorities in Vienna would welcome, as a pretext for occupation, any internal trouble such as might easily arise from any attempt to remove conspira-

84 ASANU, No. 12880/3.

tors by force'. Therefore it was logical for him to conclude that events in the Near East 'make it a matter of mutual importance that there should be diplomatic relations between Great Britain and Servia', and Britain should not 'neglect justice and fair play towards a small State for the satisfaction of being able to revel in a high moral standard above our fellows'.⁸⁵

The affair concerning the Serbo-Bulgarian convention gave him an opportunity to express his beliefs concerning British foreign policy in the Balkans. Stead thought that Austrian resistance to this convention made it clear that she did not wish 'to see real progress in that part of Europe'.⁸⁶ He estimated that in the future the Convention might 'develop into a true customs union', and it seemed to him that almost 'some unseen but potent force' led these two nations 'to martyr themselves for the good of the Balkan peoples in hastening the day of a Balkan confederation'.⁸⁷ Stead characterised the decision of the Viennese authorities to close the borders to Serbian pigs as 'diplomatic swine fever,' a contagious disease, prevalent when Serbia opposes Austrian desires'.⁸⁸ Romania, Serbia and Bulgaria had already experienced Austro-Hungarian 'arbitrary demands'. Romania withstood her, 'and therefore there is hope for Servia and Bulgaria'. Stead was struck that 'it should be possible for one nation to starve another, for a great nation to crush a weaker by commercial stagnation'. It sounded 'incredible in the present day', yet it was actually taking place.⁸⁹

85 *The Times*, February 10, 1906, p. 8 e ('Situation in Servia').

86 Alfred Stead, 'The Serbo-Bulgarian Convention and its Results', *The Fortnightly Review*, vol. 79 (March 1906), p. 537.

87 *Ibid.*, p. 538.

88 *Ibid.*, p. 541.

89 *Ibid.*, p. 542.

Stead explained what Britain was to do. In his opinion, in the Balkans, she had 'no position at all', and the British seemed to him 'passively determined to leave all the great opportunities of the South-East of Europe severely alone, to enrich the Germans, the Austrians, or the French'. Finally, he came to the question of the Anglo-Serbian relations. While Serbia 'has of course no right to ask us to reopen relations, but she has a right to know upon what grounds we stand, and what conditions we wish her to fulfil before we are ready to reopen relations'. The re-establishment of relations would demonstrate the Britons 'sympathise in the struggle of the small States, with liberal ideas for liberty, for the right of being friends with their neighbours'. Moreover, although the regicides were Serbians, 'the idea was inspired and promoted in St. Petersburg', and it was always thus in Serbia 'the statesmen of Vienna and St. Petersburg devise the *coups d'états*, and leave them to their Servian instruments to execute'.⁹⁰

Persistent in his advocacy of the Balkan federation, Alfred Stead endeavoured to portray two Balkan kings to the British public. He started with the Romanian King, Charles I Hohenzollern. Romania once a Turkish vassal state was now 'standing proudly erect amongst the European nations'. Instead of the former chaos and corruption there was 'an orderly State, bound in friendly alliance with Great Powers'. And all of this was 'work of one man... one who stands in the very forefront of the categories of sovereigns, past and present'.⁹¹

In June 1906, diplomatic relations were re-established and William T. Stead shortly noted that the British Government 'has at last condescended to enter into diplomatic relations with

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 545.

⁹¹ Alfred Stead, 'King Charles I. of Roumania', *The Fortnightly Review*, vol. 80 (July 1906), p. 1.

Servia', agreeing 'to let bygones be bygones'.⁹² In the same issue Stead Junior published a character sketch of another Balkan ruler, King Peter, in an obvious effort to exonerate him. Stead found that it was 'the irony of fate that the most constitutional of Servian monarchs should have been summoned to the throne as the result of a bloody tragedy which wiped out a dynasty...'⁹³ The future King knew that his refusal of the crown 'meant in all probability the end of the separate existence of Servia and the incorporation of the Servian people in the Austrian Empire'. For, in Vienna the statesmen 'were only waiting a pretext to cross the Danube and occupy Servia, as they have already occupied the Servian provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina'. The coming of King Peter marked 'a new era',⁹⁴ and Serbia gained in King Peter 'a highly educated, well read, and broad-minded sovereign, who was able to infuse into her government many of the most beneficial elements of Western constitutional systems'.⁹⁵ Stead even depicted King Peter as 'a great admirer of Great Britain', and it was 'a very real sorrow to King Peter that the first years of his reign should be shadowed by the refusal of the British Government to send a Minister to Belgrade'. Serbia, though a small state, 'is large and very considerable factor in the future of the Austrian Empire and the Balkan peninsula', and there was no reason for Britain to abandon 'the rich resources of the country to more enterprising Germans, whose ideas are not without taint of political aspiration'.⁹⁶

92 *The Review of Reviews*, vol. 34 (September 1906), p. 229.

93 Alfred Stead, 'Character Sketches. King Peter of Servia', *The Review of Reviews*, vol. 34 (September 1906), p. 245.

94 *Ibid*, p. 247.

95 *Ibid*, p. 248.

96 *Ibid*, p. 250.

A. Stead soon drafted his wider ideas concerning the British foreign policy. Now he turned attention of the British public to the link between ‘pan-islamism’ and the German foreign policy. He was struck by Kaiser's declaration that ‘the 300,000,000 Mohammedans who, dwelling dispersed throughout the East, reverence in his Majesty the Sultan Abd-ul-Hamid their Khalif, may rest assured that at all times the German Emperor will be their friend.’⁹⁷ Now pan-islamism was ‘no longer a mere phrase coined for convenience of orators’. It was ‘an active reality, appalling in its promise of causing far-reaching disintegration and danger’.⁹⁸ Stead found it unfortunate that it was ‘still so possible for misguided enthusiasts or well-meaning but impolitic Ministers of War to lead the British public into forgetting the fundamentally inimical policy of Germany in individual Anglo-German friendship’.⁹⁹ However, there was a remedy for this problem. It consisted not only in controlling the Sultan, but also in coping ‘efficiently with that sovereign who is anxious to act at one and the same time as the right-hand of God and the understudy of Mahomet’. Therefore ‘without embracing Germany and the German Emperor any attempt to control the movement in the Mohammedan world would be futile and foredoomed to failure’.¹⁰⁰ To achieve this, Britain had ‘one certain and easy method’ for controlling ‘the systematic spread of Pan-Islamism’. It was ‘to enter into friendly understandings with the three States bordering the Danube in the Balkan Peninsula – Rumania, Servia, and Bulgaria’.¹⁰¹ If Britain failed to do this, the alternative was ‘the loss of an unparalleled opportunity

97 A. Stead, ‘Pan-Islamism: Some Dangers and Remedy’, *The Fortnightly Review*, vol. 80 (October 1906), p. 589.

98 *Ibid.*, p. 585.

99 *Ibid.*, p. 598.

100 *Ibid.*, p. 595.

101 *Ibid.*, p. 597.

in the Balkans, followed by the handing over of these countries to Germany, and the unrestricted growth of Pan-Islamism'.¹⁰²

A. Stead soon explained what other consequence this new coalition might have. Namely, 'the Europe of the nineteenth century' was passing and 'a new Europe' was 'in a process of formation' with 'new national forces' on the rise.¹⁰³ This practically meant that a multinational state like Austria-Hungary 'inevitably... must disappear'. It was no question 'of a sudden collapse'. It was 'the result of national forces working in opposite directions'.¹⁰⁴ In this scenario Serbia, had a special role to play. Her confrontation with Austria-Hungary and the subsequent Tariff War led Stead to conclude:

In Serbia it is the Servian people, the entire nation, who have awakened, and it is because this awakening has been manifest in the struggle with the Austrian Empire that the proud position must be assigned to Serbia of having unleashed the forces destroying her great neighbour. Just as David killed Goliath, so Serbia has begun the disintegration of the Austrian Empire. Thus the arrival of Serbia to a truer sense of her national possibilities has become a European event of the first importance, not a mere minor evolution to be passed over without much notice.

Now, that Serbia and Romania seemed inevitable to come closer, new forces came into being in South-Eastern Europe and the Foreign Office was supposed 'to take steps, so that we may

102 *Ibid*, p. 601.

103 A. Stead, 'The Situation in the Near East', *The Fortnightly Review*, vol. 81 (1907), p. 695.

104 *Ibid*, p. 696.

stand well in those quarters'. Moreover, since Germany was trying to counteract the growing Anglo-Russian entente by closing the Baltic, the adequate reply was to destroy 'the last certain member of the Triple Alliance, barring way to Asia Minor, and standing in the best possible relations to the new, federated Power, which will come into being in South-Eastern Europe! A somewhat bold step in foreign policy perhaps, but Fortune favours the bold!'¹⁰⁵

Finally in 1909, the book which Stead discussed with the Serbian Prime Minister in 1905 was published. As already stated its principal aim was 'pour instruire l'opinion publique en Angleterre'. The book, entitled *Servia by the Servians*, was dedicated 'by special permission to His Majesty King Peter I. of Servia'. This book aimed to improve image of the Kingdom of Serbia in the British public opinion. It is comprised of 25 articles written by prominent Serbian politicians and intellectuals. A typical article was the one entitled 'The Head of State', written by Dr. Dinich, physician and private Secretary to the King. This is how he described the May Coup and the accession of King Peter:

Scarcely four years later the most faithful partisans of the Obrenovich turned, after the death of King Milan, against his son, and executed terrible drama of the 11th June, 1903.

On arriving on Servian soil, the first words which King Peter pronounced were that he wished to "forget" and "forgive" and demanded that all should be forgotten and pardoned... King Peter wished to break with the tradition which exacted from the new dynasty the

¹⁰⁵ Alfred Stead (ed.), *Servia by the Servians* (London: William Heinemann, 1909), p. 707.

*persecution – the extermination even – of the adherents of the old.*¹⁰⁶

This book was shaped to serve the image of Serbia desired by the Serbian Government. For this purpose a description of brutalities was omitted and moral judgements avoided. It is not therefore surprising that many Serbian historians later followed this pattern in describing the May Coup.

Who Was Who, 1920–1930 says about A. Stead that he ‘was instrumental in securing the renewal of diplomatic relations between Great Britain and Serbia’.¹⁰⁷ However, it is difficult to say what his real influence was although some Serbian Prime Ministers very carefully listened to his advice.

Herbert Vivian

Among Britons who took part in the creation of the image of Serbia and the Balkans, one person should be given a special attention. He was the author of the book *Servia, the Poor Man's Paradise*, the title of which persisted as a powerful metaphor for quite a long time.¹⁰⁸ The abundance of articles and books on the Balkans that he left over a long span of time enables us to perceive a pattern that is not so obvious in other cases.

106 Ibid, p. 40.

107 *Who Was Who, 1929–1940* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1980), p. 1283.

108 Many authors dealing with Serbia referred to this Vivian's appellation. See Mrs. Northesk Wilson, *Belgrade the White City of Death*, p. 27; Harry De Windt, *Through Savage Europe*, p. 167; *The Times*, 16 May, 1932, p. 12 d (Obituary. ‘Count Miyatovich’).

Herbert Vivian's first works on Serbia reveal exotic and infantile motives that existed in portraying the Balkans among some British travellers. Vivian, an admirer of the Stuarts, came to the Balkans with an obvious idea to find their modern equivalent. His vivid imagination quickly turned Serbia into a land 'possessing a history more wonderful than any fair tale, and a race of heroes and patriots who may one day set Europe by the ears'.¹⁰⁹ He even found a royal family that fascinated him. Moreover, the fascination was mutual which led the Serbian King to decorate Vivian, while in return the Serbian King was immortalised in Vivian's book as 'one of the most interesting figures in the whole Balkan peninsula'.¹¹⁰

Vivian continued to write about the Serbian royal couple. Just several weeks before the May Coup, Vivian's article was published in *The Pall Mall Magazine*.¹¹¹ 'Like all good Tories', King Alexander Obrenovich was 'above all a patriot', having behind him 'the great mass of the people'.¹¹² He was 'a living proof of Disraeli's dictum that nature is stronger than education'.¹¹³ Moreover, Vivian summed him up as 'the King who never tires', and who even 'never makes mistakes'.¹¹⁴ This characterisation of King Alexander led W. T. Stead to remark: 'I wish we could believe what Mr. Vivian says about the King,

109 Herbert Vivian, *Servia, the Poor Man's Paradise*, p. vii.

110 *Ibid.*, p. 1; In a later article he mentioned that he saw King Alexander 'a hundred times'. Herbert Vivian, 'A Glorious Revolution in Servia', *The Fortnightly Review*, vol. 79 (July 1903), p. 70.

111 Herbert Vivian, 'The King of Servia and his Court', *The Pall Mall Magazine*, vol. 29 (April, 1903).

112 *Ibid.*, p. 509.

113 *Ibid.*, p. 511.

114 *Ibid.*, p. 518.

but a gentleman who is lost in adoring admiration of such people as our Stuarts is a very unsafe guide'.¹¹⁵ Vivian's adoration of the Obrenoviches was known in Serbia. Mary Durham, who visited Serbia at the end of 1902, heard from people that the only 'English tourist' who had lately written about Serbia, 'had done great harm by writing up the Obrenovich. People were very bitter indeed about this, and begged me to tell England the true state of things'.¹¹⁶ Ironically, Vivian's new royal heroes perished similarly to his 17th century idol. Now, he started to wake up from his sweet Serbian dream. The Serbs had lost their heroic nature, but still his hopes were kept.

His initial reaction, in the already quoted article¹¹⁷ written one day after the regicide, was that until further information reached him he declined to believe that 'this crime' had 'the countenance of the Servian nation'.¹¹⁸ Soon in an article written for July's issue of *The Fortnightly Review* he repeated his disgust: 'A patriotic young King, his fair consort, his chief ministers, and his faithful servants have been butchered with inhuman atrocity; the murders have gloried in their infamy...' Yet 'on the very day of the holocaust, when the mangled corpses of a King and Queen were being exposed to the outrages of frenzied fiends, there was never a pause in the pomp and circumstance and revelry of European Courts'.¹¹⁹ Still for Vivian

115 W. T. Stead, 'King Alexander of Servia. Mr. Herbert Vivian's Latest Find', *The Review of Reviews*, vol. 27 (January-June 1903), p. 372.

116 Mary E. Durham, *Through the Lands of the Serb* (London: Edward Arnold, 1904), p. 256.

117 See p. 97.

118 *The Westminster Gazette*, June 12, 1903, p. 1 c (Herbert Vivian, 'The Servian Massacre. In Praise of the King and Queen').

119 Herbert Vivian, 'A "Glorious Revolution" in Servia', *The Fortnightly Review*, vol. 79 (July 1903), p. 67.

‘the late Revolution was not the handiwork of Servia. It was engineered by the law cunning of a handful of discredited ruffians’,¹²⁰ although he remarked that ‘we should all of us esteem Servia more highly if a few hundreds of her sons had protested, even though the act had cost their lives’. After all he still believed that ‘chivalry and honour cannot be altogether dead in a people which has already produced so many heroes in the past’. He only wished ‘that a few more brave men had now been found to belie the unanimous acceptance of the most barbarous crime in history’.¹²¹ In his estimation the Serbian nation was ‘put back at least a century’, and ‘whether it must be relegated to the dark ages or blotted out altogether will depend on the events of the next few years’. If he were a bookmaker, ‘he would gladly lay very long odds against the reign of Prince Peter outlasting the year’. He finished his article sadly. He was a mere mourner of his beloved King, of a Queen whose character he admired. And he mourned ‘a country which I loved next to my own’.¹²²

The time passed but the Serbs did not approach the day of expiation, King Peter was still in power and Vivian seemed to be awakening. In 1904 he published a new book *Servian Tragedy with Some Impressions of Macedonia*. He dedicated the book ‘to the memory of His most Gracious Majesty King Alexander I. Patriot, Statesman, Hero. Requiescat in Pace’. He felt that in new circumstances he was obliged to make some clarifications:

I protest that my admiration is undiminished for the kindly hospitable people, who worked out their own eman

120 *Ibid*, p. 73.

121 *Ibid*, p. 74.

122 *Ibid*, p. 75.

... I regard the terrible crime of last June as the handiwork of the new desperadoes and I believe that Serbia is to be pitted rather than blamed...

At the same time I must confess to the feeling of dismay, aroused by the absence of commotion and protest when the facts of the tragedy became known.¹²³

Vivian's complete account of the regicide sent a clear message to the British public that something terrible indeed had happened in Belgrade. In his words: 'Out of all these confused reports two facts stand clear. The murders were committed with the utmost barbarity, such as would not be expected in the most savage country...'¹²⁴ Vivian's imagination was still vivid, and he found new persons to sympathise with in the Balkans – Balkan brigands. For him 'the Balkans were still mediaeval', and brigands were 'an appropriate mediaeval topic; it was like meeting the ghost of Sir Walter Scott and extracting fresh tales of a grandfather'. He felt so well acquainted with 'real brigands' as to be able to design their characterisation: 'The real brigand is usually a political refugee, who only desires to be let alone and is content if he can steal enough to keep body and soul together, or else a political emissary who travels about trying to force an unwilling peasantry into revolution'.¹²⁵

In his memoirs he described his activities concerning Serbia after the May Coup. He was disappointed by the decision of the United Kingdom to renew diplomatic relations with Serbia, and he 'kept up a campaign in Press and Parliament against this'.

¹²³ Herbert Vivian, *The Servian Tragedy with Some Impressions from Macedonia* (London: Grant Richards, 1904).

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

¹²⁵ Herbert Vivian, *The Servian Tragedy*, p. 254.

The Serbian Press Bureau invited the editor to be received in Belgrade and Vivian replied: ‘I was willing to go out and inquire into “the sobriety of Peter Karageorgevitch and the sanity of his son”, provided that the Serbian Government first lodged £20,000 in a bank for the benefit of my widow’.¹²⁶ Vivian even claimed that, being persistent in his campaign, he was later offered by a Serbian emissary either the sum of £5,000, or his murder should he refuse. He sent the Press a letter, entitled ‘Reasons why I ought to be assassinated’. Later he was even engaged in a movement, in 1907, to offer the crown of Serbia to Prince Arthur of Connaught, and he supplied conspirators with some thousands of his photographs. ‘But either they failed to please, or the Prince had no ambitions in that direction, for nothing further happened’.¹²⁷

Vivian was still involved in the Serbian national plans. Only now he shifted his support from Serbia to Montenegro. Being aware of his sympathies, the Montenegrin Government considered at the end of 1908 to appoint him the Honorary Consul of Montenegro in London.¹²⁸ However, the Serbian Government dissatisfied with Vivian's articles urged the Montenegrin Government not to appoint him, and the Montenegrin Government abandoned its plan.¹²⁹ In the midst of the First

126 (Herbert Vivian), *Myself not Least, Being the Personal Reminiscences of 'X'* (London: Thornton Butterworth Ltd., 1925), p. 225.

127 *Ibid.*, p. 225. This probably happened in 1905, and not in 1907.

128 AS, Legation of the Kingdom of Serbia in London, file 1, Administrative Archives, Confidential, no number specified, December 9, 1908.

129 AS, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, microfilm, Nos. 2453 of 13 December, 1908 and VI/406 of 19 December, 1908; The Serbian Minister at Cetigne was told in the Montenegrin Ministry of Foreign Affairs that Vivian himself asked to be appointed Honorary Consul of Montenegro.

Balkan War he advocated territorial expansion of Montenegro: 'Give the Sanjak to Montenegro, and Serbia will not have far to look for a sovereign when the time comes to replace her blood-stained dynasty with the monarch worthy of Dushan's glorious traditions. Montenegro contains all the fine flower of Servian chivalry, and has maintained her independence against the encroachments of empires all through centuries'.¹³⁰ He soon reiterated this, hoping that King Nicholas would unite Serbia and Montenegro, 'thereby ending the regicide terrorism of the last nine years and restoring greater Serbia, almost the Serbia of Dushan, to her old place among civilised nations'.¹³¹ Discussing Romanian demands for compensation after the First Balkan War, he expressed his general opinion of Balkan Christians. He pointed out that the Romanians 'developed their civilisation and culture', while 'Bulgarians, and Servians and Greeks were downtrodden peasants'. 'Is it then strange', Vivian asked, 'that Roumania should deserve a preponderating influence in the peninsula, when the others remain semi-savages steeped in ignorance and corruption?'¹³²

What is evident from his memoirs, published in 1925, is that his disillusionment with Serbia was complete. He starts a chapter dedicated to Serbia with the following passage from Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*: 'The bulk of your natives appear to me to be the most pernicious race of little, odious vermin that Nature ever suffered to crawl upon the face of the earth'. Having described the Serbs in this way he referred to his

130 Herbert Vivian, 'Montenegro', *The Fortnightly Review*, vol. 92 (November 1912), p. 858.

131 Herbert Vivian, 'After the War', *The Fortnightly Review*, vol. 93 (February 1913), p. 320.

132 *Ibid*, p. 313.

visits to Serbia in 1890s when ‘the country was backward, but happy’. In his opinion the Russians were those who ‘helped a few discharged officers to murder him (King Alexander) and Queen Draga’.¹³³ He described King Peter as a person with ‘drunken reputation’ from Geneva, and ‘he was a poor creature, and submitted to snubs from everybody’.¹³⁴ Characteristically, the only Serbs that looked sympathetically to him were again brigands. Describing Montenegro, his contempt for Serbia was turned into hatred. This is how he described the event following unification between Serbia and Montenegro: ‘Wherever the Serbians went, flames and massacres and pillage followed in their train. Every day a fresh village was destroyed’.¹³⁵ Vivian even gave a description of a murder of two pro-independence Montenegrins: ‘They were assassinated... their eyes were torn out, their ears were cut off and their tongues were passed through a hole made in their jaws; they were left in this state for a considerable time and then their entrails were torn out with bayonets’.¹³⁶

Several years later he published *The Life of the Emperor Charles of Austria*. He dedicated the book ‘to his Majesty Otto, Emperor of Austria, Apostolic King of Hungary’. Speaking about responsibility for the murder of Archduke Francis Ferdinand he points out: ‘And why see other culprits when the evidence is as clear as daylight that the murders were committed by agents of Serbian secret societies under the direct patronage of the Serbian

133 (Herbert Vivian), *Myself not Least, Being the Personal Reminiscences of 'X'*, p. 221.

134 *Ibid*, p. 224.

135 *Ibid*, p. 204.

136 *Ibid*, p. 205.

Government, with Russia as an accessory before the fact?'¹³⁷ Reference to the Belgrade Regicide was unavoidable. The regicides, after they had killed King and Queen, 'set up a terrorist rule which has continued ever since. They established a dynasty of gipsy origin as their puppets, and have continued their career of crime undisturbed'.¹³⁸ Moreover, Vivian now mentions that it is related that Peter Karageorgevich himself 'hid in the Russian Legation during the murders and watched the defenestration of the bodies of the King and Queen; then returned to Geneva to await the regicides' summons to the throne'.¹³⁹ Finally, this is how he characterised the mood in Serbia after the assassination of the Archduke: 'Serbia indeed suffered from moral insanity, a mass suggestion in favour of murder. Not only did she regard it as practical politics, but her own official year-book recognizes a percentage of murders far greater than in any other European country'.¹⁴⁰

Vivian's case is very interesting for it reveals a pattern in the perception of the Balkans which has existed ever since the first British travellers visited the region. Namely, those travellers who only had personal ideals in their perception of the Balkans were very easily fascinated by some specific Balkan ruler, people or region. As soon as their ideas proved not to match reality their feelings would easily turn from fascination to disenchantment.

137 Herbert Vivian, *The Life of the Emperor Charles of Austria* (London: Grayson & Grayson, 1932), p. 39.

138 *Ibid*, p. 43.

139 *Ibid*, p. 43.

140 *Ibid*, p. 48.

Mary E. Durham

Two British travellers left very valuable first hand information on the mood of the Serbs about the Obrenoviches, and the reception of the regicide in the Balkans. Mary Durham (1863–1944) was in Serbia on the eve of the fatal event, at the end of 1902. She witnessed the general contempt for the royal couple in Serbia. Speaking of King Alexander she mentions: ‘Through all the land I did not hear one good word spoken of him. That he was more fool than knave was the best said of him’. The hatred of the Queen ‘was deep and bitter’.¹⁴¹ In Montenegro the mood was similar. The Montenegrins, having ‘the view taken of female virtue’ that was ‘curiously Old Testament’, regarded that Queen Draga ‘overstepped all right to protection and consideration’. An elder in a large group of people told her: ‘All such women ought to be shot’.¹⁴² She realistically admitted that ‘the truth about what took place in the early hours of June 11 will probably never be exactly known. Those who took part in the tragedy were too drunk with blood and passion to give a coherent account, and there are at least a half of dozen versions’.¹⁴³ From the other side what the Turkish reception of the regicide was like can be gleaned from Noel Brailsford, who was in Macedonia in the winter of 1903–1904, acting on behalf of the British Relief Fund, together with Miss Durham. He once ‘discussed the Belgrade murder with an “educated” Turk’, a Pasha, connected by marriage with the Imperial family. Brailsford remarked that the crime was quite unnecessary, since it was so easy to arrest and exile the royal couple. The Pasha

141 Mary E. Durham, *Through the Lands of the Serb*, p. 256.

142 *Ibid*, p. 258.

143 *Ibid*, p. 257.

seemed to agree; “Yes”, said he, “it was very stupid. The civilised thing to do would have been to imprison them, and then quietly, when every one had forgotten about them, to give them poison. Yes. It was a barbarous act!” The Pasha's reply led Brailsford to conclude about the Turks and the Macedonians: ‘In a land where the code of the more enlightened rulers is to murder with elegance and some regard for propriety, one must not apply the moral standards of London or Paris to the conduct of their revolted serfs’.¹⁴⁴

Durham's account of ‘the land of the Serb’ is generally very sympathetic with the Serbs. Describing her visit to a provincial town in western Serbia she commented: ‘Servia just now has a bad reputation in England; I owe it to Servia to say that in no other land have I met with greater kindness from complete strangers’.¹⁴⁵ This book gives various details on the every-day life of the Serbs in Serbia and Montenegro and this is its most important aspect. Soon M. Durham published several articles explaining her position. She was a great advocate of the emancipation of the Balkan peoples from the Ottoman yoke. Commenting on Turkish reforms she put a question: ‘With their notoriously corrupt system of government, how can any sane person believe that the Turks, even if willing, are capable of spreading sweetness and light in this unhappy land?’¹⁴⁶ The free Balkan states looked quite different to her: ‘The free Balkan States are supposed by the average Briton to be wild and dangerous places. I can only say, from experience, that both Servia and Montenegro have treated me exceedingly well, and

144 H. N. Brailsford, *Macedonia. Its Races and Their Future* (London: Methuen & Co, 1906), p. xi.

145 M. Durham, *Through the Lands of The Serb*, p. 162.

146 M. Edith Durham, ‘The Blaze in the Balkans’, *The Monthly Review*, vol. 12 (September 1903), p. 54.

that to go from either of them into Turkey is to plunge from safety and civilisation into danger; from the twentieth century into the Middle Ages; off the pavement into the sewer'.¹⁴⁷ Yet her first impressions about many Balkanites were very stereotypical. In this sense she resembles Miss Stone. First, she had stereotypes of the Albanians, especially the Moslem Albanians and Macedonian peasant women. A Turkish officer asked what her opinion of the Albanians was. She replied: 'The Albanians are very brave and have plenty of intelligence, but they know nothing, and they live like animals'.¹⁴⁸ She similarly described Macedonian peasant women, whom she called somewhat ironically 'my golden sisters':

*They are stumpy, they are stout, they are heavily built and clumsy, they have faces like Dutch cheeses; they wear their hair in two draggly, skimpy pigtails which they prolong with wool and string... they tie their head up in black handkerchiefs which cover mouth and chin in Mohammedan manner, and their costume is the most unlovely ever yet devised; they call me their 'golden sister'; the yard is full of them, and they are all unutterably filthy.*¹⁴⁹

And this is how she described the efforts of Macedonian peasant women to get some extra food from the British Relief Fund: 'It is astonishing how slow-witted my golden sisters are, and how impossible it is to drive a new idea into them. Animal-like, they have learnt that food is to be found in a certain spot, and they return and return again'.¹⁵⁰ She admitted that her

147 *Ibid*, p. 57.

148 *Ibid*, p. 61.

149 M. Edith Durham, 'My Golden Sisters. A Macedonian Picture', *The Monthly Review*, vol. 15 (May 1904), p. 73.

150 *Ibid*, p. 76.

opinion about the Macedonian peasants was less than positive: 'I cannot pretend that this peasantry is in any way lovable or admirable. As far as I have seen it, it is the peasantry of the lowest type, dull-witted and of poor physique, inferior to any of the other Balkan races with which I am acquainted, and under the present government it can never by any possibility become any better'. She offered a remedy: 'A Christian ruler under the supervision of the Powers and not the Sultan is the only cure for existing evils, and even then progress will be effected but slowly'.¹⁵¹

Her inclination to the exotic was already noticeable in her first book about the Serbs. Being unmarried, she was ready to play with various marriage proposals from the natives. On one occasion, she was proposed to by some Montenegrins, whom she refused and later commented: 'I have often wondered what the crowd would do if I accepted someone temporarily, but have never dared try. Five offers in twenty minutes is about my highest record'.¹⁵² This inclination to the exotic led her to visit Albania, which at that time, due to constant unrest, was certainly not a very safe area for the female traveller. By that time, she had shifted her sympathies, and became great advocate of the Albanian cause. With Aubrey Herbert she founded an Anglo-Albanian association. She was said to have 'restored Albania to the memory of Europe'. Her book *High Albania*, published in 1909, is a monument of her new dedication to the Albanians. She was remembered in her beloved country as 'the queen of mountaineers', and streets named after her remained through all changes of regime.¹⁵³

151 *Ibid*, p. 81.

152 Mary E. Durham, *Through the Lands of the Serb*, p. 11.

153 Harry Hodgkinson, s. v. 'Durham, (Marry) Edith', *The Dictionary of National Biography. Missing Persons* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

It is, however, interesting that she followed Vivian's pattern and after she shifted her sympathies for the Serbs, she also felt obliged to comment Serbian responsibility for the First World War. Thus, she found the Austrian Ultimatum to Serbia of 23 July, 1914 justified, even in the part that requested that Austrian officials should participate in the search of killers of the Archduke in Serbia proper: 'To those of us who were used to Serb methods and intrigues this demand seemed the one most necessary paragraph of the note, which was in every point justified by the circumstances'.¹⁵⁴ She endeavoured to describe the relation between 'the Great Serbian idea' and 'the Serajevo crime'. She put the question: 'Which of our statesmen who were responsible for resuming diplomatic relations with Serbia in 1906 realised what our support of the Great Serbian idea must entail?'¹⁵⁵ She was very frustrated that England did not take a harsher stance to Serbia in 1914: 'We cannot but feel that in June, 1914, had England, France and Russia firmly insisted upon the Serb Government at once investigating the Serajevo crime and bringing those responsible to justice, the better class of Serbs would have been glad to rid the land of these pests'.¹⁵⁶ Yet, this wish of hers contradicts her assessment of the role of Russia and France. In her interpretation Russia 'very clearly told Serbia in 1909 that she had but to wait till Russia was ready and then provoke Austria to retaliation. The European war from which Russia hoped much would then blaze up. "You press the button. We do the rest"'.¹⁵⁷ On the other hand, she quoted an English author, C. H. Norman, who tried to prove that there was a connection between French masons, the Russian secret service

154 M. Edith Durham, *The Serajevo Crime* (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1925), pp. 12–13.

155 *Ibid.*, p. 20.

156 *Ibid.*, p. 74.

157 *Ibid.*, p. 42.

Okhrana, and the Serbian conspirators, although she expressed some reservations.¹⁵⁸ Her final conclusion was that as a result of the trial to the murderers of the Archduke 'the connection of the criminals with Belgrade was completely established'.¹⁵⁹ Durham's and Vivian's allegations were never positively confirmed. A. J. P. Taylor shortly commented on the idea about the complicity of the Serbian Government in the Sarajevo crime: 'The Austrians took their time. Always dilatory, they sought, in a leisurely way, some proof that the Serb Government had been involved at the plot in Sarajevo. They found no proof; none was ever found'.¹⁶⁰

Chedomille Miyatovich

Miyatovich (1842–1932) was a prominent Serbian economist, historian, diplomatist and writer. He was also a very diligent translator from English into Serbian.¹⁶¹ During his studies in Germany he met his would-be British wife Elodie Lawton (1835–1908), previously a dedicated abolitionist in Boston, who influenced him significantly, and turned him into a devoted Anglophile. Miyatovich's career was meteoric. At the age of thirty-one he was already Minister of Finance and, in 1881, as Foreign Minister of Serbia, he signed the Secret Convention with Austria-Hungary which virtually turned Serbia into a protectorate of the Habsburg Empire, but which also saved her from humiliation after a defeat in the Serbo-Bulgarian war in 1885. He was one

158 *Ibid.*, pp. 86–88.

159 *Ibid.*, p. 94.

160 A. J. P. Taylor, *The First World War. An Illustrated History* (Penguin Books, 1967), p. 16.

161 Among other works he translated Bunyan's *Pilgrim Progress* and Dr. Brown's *Commentaries to the Gospels*.

of the four leaders of the Progressive Party in Serbia, in the 1880s. The party consisted of European trained intellectuals who insisted on modernisation of Serbia, but who did not consider that Serbian people was ripe for democracy.¹⁶² In 1883, following the proclamation of the Kingdom in Serbia, a Serbian Minister was appointed to the Court of St. James. The second Minister in London was Mijatovich, and he served thrice in that capacity (1884–1886; 1895–1900 and 1902–1903). After the May Coup, he lived in London until his death in 1932.

In London he published a book about the last Byzantine Emperor¹⁶³ and was later elected to be an honorary member of the Royal Historical Society, being the first Serb to attain such a distinction. Some time earlier he had become the second President of the Serbian Royal Academy, in 1888–89. He was also a contributor to the Tenth and Eleventh Editions of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.¹⁶⁴ His respect in England seemed to be high, sometimes even higher than in Serbia. In 1889, Bouchier travelled around Serbia accompanied by Mijatovich which made him remark that ‘he is generally regarded by his fellow-countrymen as the most learned man in Servia’.¹⁶⁵ Vivian dedi-

162 See Душан Т. Батаковић (редактор), *Нова историја српског народа*, Београд – Лозана 2000 [Dushan T. Batakovich (ed.), *Nova Istorija Srpskog Naroda* (Belgrade, Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme, 2000), p. 179].

163 Chedomille Mijatovich, *Constantine the last Emperor of the Greeks; or the Conquest of Constantinople by the Turks (A. D. 1453). After the latest Historical Researches* (London: Sampson Low, Marston and Co., 1892). The book was later translated into Russian and Spanish.

164 His article on Serbia, from the Eleventh Edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, was later published in a book: Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace, Prince Kropotkin, C. Mijatovich and J. D. Bouchier, *A Short History of Russia and the Balkan States* (London: The Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1914).

165 J. D. Bouchier, ‘The Great Servian Festival’, p. 219.

cated his book *Servia, the Poor Man's Paradise* to him, and W. T. Stead, who met him during the Peace Conference in The Hague, was so delighted with him that he wrote: 'It was almost worth while creating the Kingdom of Servia if only in order to qualify Chedomille Miyatovitch for a seat in the Parliament of the Nations'.¹⁶⁶ Being himself a devoted spiritualist, Miyatovich cherished his friendship with W. T. Stead and his son Alfred. Although Miyatovich was a Serb, he was very important in creating an image of Serbia among Britons. He seems to have spoken better English than Serbian. To a distinguished Serbian historian, Slobodan Yovanovich, he looked more like a German or an Englishman than a Serb. Being a rare English speaker in Belgrade, he was a favourite collocator to British diplomats in Belgrade who often mistakenly accepted his views as representing those of the Serbian government.¹⁶⁷ Being one of the few Serbs in London, he was the unavoidable source of information for both British journalists and officials of the Foreign Office.

A personal friend of King Milan Obrenovich and adherent to the dynasty of Obrenovich, he was shocked upon receiving the news of the murder of Milan's son Alexander. Both Miyatovich and his Nonconformist wife Elodie¹⁶⁸ were very religious, and the May Coup shook them deeply. Moreover, he had to face the inimical reaction of the British public opinion. On 17 June, six days after the murder, he reported to the new Foreign Minister that the public opinion in Britain: 'was still very outraged by various stories on horrible details of the murder. I have received

166 W. T. Stead, 'Members of the Parliament of Peace', *The Review of Reviews*, vol. 19 (1899), p. 533.

167 See Phyllis Auty, 'Slobodan Jovanović as a Historian', *The Slavonic and Eastern European Review*, vol. 38 (1959–60), p. 326.

168 She was a member of the Wesleyan Church.

anonymous letters in which people express disgust'.¹⁶⁹ Two days later he submitted his official resignation. He was the only Serbian diplomat who did so. This fact was hardly ever forgiven him, and consequently he was sentenced to *damnatio memoriae* in Serbia.

His unofficial diplomatic efforts were discussed in the previous chapter. Here I shall say something about his articles and books. His first interviews were very much preoccupied with the clairvoyant session organised by W. T. Stead. He also wrote several letters for *The Times*.¹⁷⁰ However, his main activity in influencing the British public opinion arose through several books. Only a few weeks after the murder a book appeared dealing with the Belgrade regicide, entitled *Belgrade the White City of Death. Being the History of King Alexander and of Queen Draga*. The book was written by Mrs. F. Northesk Wilson.¹⁷¹ The book is signed in a peculiar way so that Miyatovich is mentioned almost as co-author. This was not only a sign of courtesy. The same ideas and the whole identical sentences are to be found in other works of Miyatovich. Therefore it seems that his and his wife's role in writing this book was significant if not overwhelming.¹⁷² Russia was portrayed as a Power sup-

169 Andriya Radenich (ed.), *Dokumenti o Spolynoy Polititsi Kralyevine Sribiye, 1903–1914*, vol. I/1, p. 105.

170 *The Times*, January 18, 1904, p. 2 f ('Greeks, Bulgarians, Servians'); *The Times*, February 13, 1906, p. 7 c ('Serbia and Great Britain').

171 Actually, her real name (or maiden name?) was Flora Ames as the Catalogue of the Library of Congress reveals.

172 Mrs. Wilson acknowledges this in a dedication: 'The Authoress begs to tender her grateful thanks to His Excellency M. Chedomille Mijatovich, Servian Minister at the Court of St. James, also Madame Elodie Mijatovich, for their kind help to her in the compilation of this volume'. Mrs. F. Northesk Wilson, *Belgrade the White City of Death*, p. 5. Miyatovich used to write articles in the British Press even earlier under pseudonyms. See, for instance: *The Pall Mall Gazette*, February 25, 1885.

porting Draga to merry young King in order 'to wipe out the Obrenovitch for ever'.¹⁷³ The book warns: 'the horrors committed at the revolution of June 10th have added one more danger to Servian life – the perpetual fear of the soldiery who can make and unmake a King'. Still it was admitted: 'But, on the other hand, the sad death of Alexander and Draga, lamentable in itself, has at least removed the terrible inheritance of dynastic rivalry'.¹⁷⁴ Finally the book reproduced the whole text from *The Review of Reviews* on 'A Clairvoyant Vision of the Assassination at Belgrade'.¹⁷⁵ The book is important for creating a new metaphor. If the metaphor of Serbia, before 1903, was Vivian's designation *Poor Man's Paradise*, then the metaphor of her capital was, after 1903, White City of Death.¹⁷⁶ This is how Harry De Windt summarised his impression of the Balkan capitals that he visited in 1905:

*Our journey occupied three months, during which we visited Belgrade, aptly named 'White City of Death', since the brutal assassination of its martyred King and Queen; Sofia – that seething little cauldron of international intrigue – and Bukarest, the city of pleasure, which is not unlike Paris seen through the wrong end of telescope*¹⁷⁷

Apart from Miyatovich's unofficial diplomatic efforts that have already been treated, he was involved in a peculiar action

173 *Ibid.*, p. 81.

174 *Ibid.*, p. 100.

175 *Ibid.*, pp. 140–163; It seems that Mrs. Wilson took part in the session. Stead's list of the persons who witnessed the session includes such a name. *Ibid.*, p. 151.

176 Belgrade, i.e. Beograd, means white city in Serbo-Croatian.

177 Harry De Windt, *My Restless Life* (London: Grant Richards, 1909), p. 357.

which he described in his *Memoirs*. In June 1905, three Serbians came to visit Miyatovich ‘on a special mission’, sent by ‘a Committee of patriots’, dissatisfied with the rule of King Peter. The Committee decided that Prince Arthur of Connaught, the third son of Queen Victoria, was to be elected King of Serbia. They asked Miyatovich to introduce them to the Prince. Miyatovich replied that he would make himself ridiculous in the eyes both of King Edward and Prince Arthur if he approached them on that matter. Disappointed Committee members ‘left London with the sole consolation that they carried away all the photographs of Prince Arthur they could buy’.¹⁷⁸ Early in the autumn of 1905 the photographs were distributed throughout Serbia and many in Serbia believed that Miyatovich stood behind it, which he denied in his *Memoirs*.¹⁷⁹ Vivian, as I have already mentioned, was behind (p. 142) the distribution of photographs. This does not mean that Miyatovich did not expect that a dynastic change would take place.

In his book, published on the occasion of the triennium of the regicide (June 1906), which in Christian Orthodox traditions is the last major commemoration for a deceased person, he compared ‘a royal tragedy’ of Belgrade with Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*. The main reason for this was the prophecy of a certain Mata of Kremna, made in 1868, which seemed to predict King Milan’s abdication and the subsequent murder of his son. According to Miyatovich’s narrative, the prophecy further claimed that after the Obrenovich dynasty and King had perished: ‘he will be replaced on the Throne by Peter Karageorgevich, who

178 Count Chedomille Mijatovich, *The Memoirs of a Balkan Diplomatist*, p. 138; Vucinich thinks that Miyatovich really passed the offer to Prince Arthur. See W. Vucinich, *Serbia Between East and West*, p. 102.

179 Count Chedomille Mijatovich, *The Memoirs of a Balkan Diplomatist*, pp. 137–139.

will reign about three years and then also disappear. A foreign army will enter the country, and the people will suffer very much. At last a man will arise... and inaugurate a happy era of national history'.¹⁸⁰ Obviously, Miyatovich expected that an overthrow of a Serbian ruler would happen simultaneously with the publication of his book. He probably hoped to create the same sensation as on the occasion when Stead and he himself had announced the accounts from the clairvoyant session of March 1903, but the foreseen change did not occur.

One cannot positively say if this expected change of the ruler was connected with the plans to bring Prince Arthur to the throne of Serbia. Anyway, Miyatovich's book on the Belgrade Regicide could only have worsened the image of Serbia. He not only gave more details on the Russian complicity, but he also expressed his disgust at the regicides: 'I cannot describe the horrible, disgusting, and ferocious conduct of some of those murderers. They seemed to emulate the exploits of Jack-the-Ripper on the dead body of the woman who was their Queen. As I write these lines, I feel utter shame and humiliation that Servian officers could have conducted themselves with such brutal cruelty'. The publication of an article by a sister of Queen Draga, Christina Petrovich, in *The Fortnightly Review*, was certainly done through Miyatovich's mediation, for he hosted Christina's son in London, and he was himself an associate of *The Fortnightly Review*.¹⁸¹ The Article was an effort to exonerate the late

180 Chedomille Mijatovich, *A Royal Tragedy. Being the Story of the Assassination of King Alexander and Queen Draga* (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1906), p. 5; The book was reprinted in New York, in 1907.

181 Miyatovich wrote several articles for *The Fortnightly Review*: 'Sultan Abd-ul-Hamid. A Character Skatch', vol. 80 (1906), pp. 575–584; 'Pan-Germanism', vol. 81 (1907), pp. 590–599; 'The Balkan Problems. The Macedonian Question: Suggestions for its Solution', vol. 82 (1907), pp. 431–442; 'Lord Salisbury – The Peacemaker. A Sketch', vol. 82 (1907), pp. 967–975.

Queen Draga, which indirectly shows that propaganda of the new Serbian establishment had already achieved some success by the end of 1906, so that now Draga's sister had to write an article to save her memory.¹⁸²

Obviously, there was some discrepancy between Miyatovich's unofficial efforts and his published works. He intimately believed that the conspirators should not only resign but be punished as well. This is why he joined the Society for the Legal Settlement of the Regicides Question, which advocated punishment of the regicides.¹⁸³ However, being an experienced diplomat, he noticed that this was too much to expect from any Serbian Government. Therefore he reserved his disgust for his books, and directed his diplomatic efforts towards a pragmatic solution.

If the Viennese press intensified its campaign after the retirement of Serbian conspirators, the British press was not so susceptible to Viennese influences any longer. The stories about Prince Arthur as a possible new King of Serbia soon reached the Press: first in Vienna and then in London. H. Wickham-Steed reported, at the beginning of 1907, that Viennese journals, 'have for some time past been carrying on a violent campaign against Servia and the Karageorgevitch family'. Some of the stories centred round M. Mijatovitch, who, 'it is stated, will shortly be tried and condemned for high treason on account of efforts to place a member of the British Royal Family on the Throne of Servia'. However, Wickham-Steed rejected such rumours pointing out: 'It is, moreover, highly desirable that the wild talk about the "selection" of an English Prince for a Throne not vacant

182 Christina Petrovitch Lunyevitza, 'The Truth Concerning the Life of Queen Draga, Written by Her Sister', *The Fortnightly Review*, vol. 80 (December 1906).

183 See Miyatovich's letter in *The Times*, February 13, 1906, p. 7 c; See a short article about the Society in *The Times* of June 4, 1906, p. 4 b.

should be made to cease. Whatever cliques or coteries inside or outside Serbia may imagine themselves to have an interest in propagating pernicious nonsense of this kind would do well to remember that British Princes are not in the habit of being candidates for shaky Thrones from which a predecessor may have been summarily or even bloodily removed'.¹⁸⁴

It is interesting to mention that Miyatovich and W. T. Stead, although both devoted attendants of clairvoyant sessions, failed to prophesise their own deaths. Stead perished spectacularly on the maiden voyage of the liner Titanic, in April 1912. Miyatovich, who believed he would be the victim of a political assassination,¹⁸⁵ died in a London nursing home, in May 1932, quite forgotten in his native country.¹⁸⁶

Harry De Windt

'Why "savage" Europe?' asked a friend who recently witnessed my departure from Charing Cross for the Near East.

'Because', I replied, 'the term accurately describes the wild and lawless countries between the Adriatic and Black Seas'.¹⁸⁷

If living dangerously and dying young, as James (Jan) Morris entitled one of her chapters,¹⁸⁸ was one of the many

184 *The Times*, January 4, 1907, p. 3 b, c ('The Situation in Serbia').

185 Count Chedomille Mijatovich, *Memoirs*, p. 14.

186 See *The Times*, May 16, 1932, p. 12 d (Obituary 'Count Miyatovich').

187 Harry De Windt, *Through Savage Europe* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1907), p. 15.

188 James Morris, *Pax Britannica. The Climax of an Empire* (London: Penguin Books, 1979), p. 14.

tempting offers that the British Empire at its climax was able to offer, then De Windt was certainly charmed by this possibility. 'For a century living dangerously, or alone, had been a way of life for a minority of British people, to a degree that no other European nation could match, and this experience was by no means ended'.¹⁸⁹ Harry De Windt (1856–1933) undoubtedly belonged to this minority. He called himself an explorer, an occupation slightly outdated at the end of the nineteenth century. He travelled from Peking to France by land in 1887; rode to India from Russia (via Persia) in 1889; attempted to travel from New York to Paris by land for *The Pall Mall Gazette*; nearly perished on the Bering Straits, being rescued by a whaler; travelled from Paris to New York by land in 1901–1903; and finally travelled through the Balkan States, from Montenegro into Russia, for *The Westminster Gazette*, in 1905.¹⁹⁰

Numerous editions of his book *Through Savage Europe*, his dispatches for *The Westminster Gazette*, and his fame of a notorious traveller, all this contributed to the fact that his book substantially influenced the British public opinion concerning the Balkans. Travelling through the Balkans he visited Cettigne 'the smallest capital in Europe', where he witnessed a vendetta. What he experienced there made him note: 'life is valued almost as cheaply here as in China and Japan'.¹⁹¹ Yet he was charmed by Montenegrin admiration for Gladstone whose death 'was still mourned throughout Montenegro'.¹⁹² The next region he visited was Dalmatia. He associated the region with 'visions of brigands, primitive travel and squalid life',¹⁹³ although he was quite

189 *Ibid.*, p. 307.

190 *Who Was Who 1929–1940*, p. 362.

191 Harry De Windt, *Through Savage Europe*, p. 45.

192 *Ibid.*, p. 49 (Gladstone died seven years prior to De Windt's visit, in 1898).

193 *Ibid.*, p. 69.

delighted with Ragusa. Through Herzegovina he came to Bosnia where he witnessed ‘the prosperous condition of this country’.¹⁹⁴ Finally, De Windt came to Belgrade by train. This made him revoke his impressions of his first visit during the Russo-Turkish War of 1876. He evoked Belgrade from the seventies when ‘everything was primitive, dirty, and comfortless’, and favourably compared this with its contemporary conditions. Now he was pleasantly surprised ‘to enter a palatial railway station instead of being dumped down on a mud-bank from the deck of a grimy steamer’.¹⁹⁵ Everything was now ‘up to date in this city of murder and mystery’.¹⁹⁶ The adjective ‘scarlet’ seemed to him more suitable than ‘white’ for ‘a city which has witnessed such infamous deeds, committed under the name of “patriotism”’.¹⁹⁷ He was surprised by ‘a great similarity between the Servian and the French people, which is one of the most curious characteristics of this little-known nation’, although his association with the ‘upper ten of Belgrade’, reminded him of the ‘Western States of America, where a man is welcomed less of wealth and social status than for an agreeable personality’.¹⁹⁸ And the Serbs generally left a good impression on him: ‘Servians of all classes are the politest people in the world’.¹⁹⁹ He dedicated a special chapter to ‘some recent rulers of Serbia’, and unavoidably another chapter to ‘Alexander and Draga’. In describing Alexander he followed Vivian whom he quoted. The chapter entitled ‘Murderers in Uniform’ was his effort to give ‘probably the first

194 *Ibid.*, p. 104.

195 *Ibid.*, pp. 110–111.

196 *Ibid.*, p. 113.

197 *Ibid.*, p. 114; Belgrade means in Serbian ‘white city’.

198 *Ibid.*, pp. 115, 121.

199 *Ibid.*, p. 115.

absolutely authentic account of the assassination of the late King and Queen of Serbia which has ever been published in England'.²⁰⁰ Despite this claim there was nothing new in his dispatches and he mostly follows Vivian and Bouchier in his descriptions, although he personally talked to some of the regicides. However, repeating somewhat exaggerated horrors of the May Coup from Vivian's books and Bouchier's dispatches and giving negative characterisation of King Peter he could only have strengthened the negative image of Serbia. His description of Serbian province consolidated this negative image. 'Unless the visitor is prepared to "rough it", Serbia is a good place to avoid',²⁰¹ De Windt advised. Still, he 'had his full share of tough travel' around Serbia and the provincial part did not impress him much. He was in Nish, a city consisting of 'mostly (to paraphrase Carlyle) thieves'.²⁰² He even met a priest, an excellent *raconteur*, who 'would have made a name in any European capital', but not in Serbia. The priest is supposed to have said to De Windt: 'Pigs make a poor audience, and my parishioners are little better, intellectually speaking, and not half as useful, as the swine they breed!'²⁰³

Animalisation of the other was, as one could see, not so rare in the British perception of the Macedonian Slavs and Albanians. Both Miss. Stone and Edith Durham did not hesitate to make such references. De Windt's characterisation is, however, a rare case of an implicit British animalisation of the image of the Serbs, and in a way represents a peak in the negative characterisation of the Serbs between 1903 and 1906.

200 *Ibid.*, p. 145.

201 *Ibid.*, p. 184.

202 *Ibid.*, p. 189.

203 *Ibid.*, p. 187.

British Opinion Makers a Century Later

Maria Todorova points out 'that the pattern of all Westerners dealing with the Balkans' was to find their 'pet nation'.²⁰⁴ Perhaps it is interesting to mention what was the fate of the British opinion makers among their pet Balkanites. *James David Bouchier* died in Sofia in 1920, after his efforts to recreate ethnic Bulgaria failed in Versailles. He was buried with great pomp in Rila monastery. The Bulgarian State immortalised him by the publication of a series of post stamps with his portrait. Even a brand of local cigarettes was named after him.²⁰⁵ His efforts, in the capacity of the Balkan correspondent, are acknowledged in *The History of The Times*. A boulevard in Sofia named after him, again bears his name. The Bulgarian Encyclopaedia has a rather short article on him, designating Bouchier: 'A friend of Bulgarian people and a protector of its national aspirations.'²⁰⁶ Yet, Anglo-Saxon correspondents have forgotten their forefather. Well-known American correspondent from the Balkans, Robert D. Kaplan who visited monastery Rila in 1981 provoked surprise of a local guide when he admitted that he had never heard of Bouchier.²⁰⁷ Moreover, M. Todorova did not mention him in her book *Imagining the Balkans*, although he significantly influenced the British notion of the Balkans at the turn of the century. The Macedonians, in whose favour he wrote for so long, will certainly not celebrate him due to his insistence on the Bulgarian

204 Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, p. 120.

205 Robert D. Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts. A Journey Through History* (St Martin's Press: New York, 1993), p. 194.

206 Енциклопедия България, s. v. 'Баучър, Джеймс Дейвид', Българската академия на науките, София 1978 [Enciklopediya Bulgariya, s. v. 'Bauchur, Dzheimz Deivid' (Sofia: Bulgarskata akademiya na naukite, 1978), vol. 1, p. 226].

207 *Ibid*, p. 229.

character of the Macedonian Slavs. *Herbert Vivian* has been completely forgotten in Serbia. His *Servia, the Poor Man's Paradise*, the first British eulogy of Serbia has never been translated into Serbian. The Serbs have never forgiven him his attachment to Alexander Obrenovich, and even less his condemnation of the rule of King Peter. But now the Montenegrins might remember their failed candidate for consulship, and a chivalrous protector of their independence when no one cared about it in Europe, although his praise for the Montenegrin version of pan-Serbian national unification may well produce an opposite effect among Montenegrin nationalists. *Edith Durham* had more luck in Albania. Although she also failed in her efforts to support ethnic Albania after the Balkan Wars, she was celebrated even by the new communist regime. Enver Hoxha himself made an honourable exception regarding Durham 'in a book whose title tells all – *The Anglo-American Threat to Albania*'.²⁰⁸ *Alfred Stead* is completely forgotten in Serbia, and moreover, he is sometimes confused with the more famous Wickham Stead due to an improper Cyrillic transliteration of his surname. Some writers have recently tried to exonerate *Chedomille Miyatovich* in Serbia.²⁰⁹ However, it is peculiar that no one reacted in Belgrade, when street signs, in a small lane bearing his name, were recently replaced by football fans who wanted to celebrate their football hero of the same family name.²¹⁰

208 John Hodgson, 'Edith Durham. Traveller and Publicist', in John B. Allcock and Antonia Young, *Black Lambs and Grey Falcons* (Bradford: Bradford University Press, 1991), p. 9.

209 See Simha Kabiljo-Šutić, *Posrednici dveju kultura. Studije o srpsko-engleskim književnim i kulturnim vezama* (Beograd: Institut za književnost i umetnost, 1989).

210 Football player of the same surname is Predrag (Pedy) Miyatovich from Real Madrid.