Demeter, Gábor – Ress, Imre: Conspiracy or coincidence: the parallelism between the annexation and the Bulgarian declaration of independence in 1908 – and its aftermath: cooperation between 1909–1913

It is not questionable that the occasion for the declaration of the Bulgarian independence arose as a consequence of a series of diplomatic conflicts in 1908 – beginning from the Austrian-Russian dispute on the Sanjak and Danube – Adriatic railways, through the failure of the Macedonian reform movement under the auspice of Powers, to the Young Turk’s revolution and the Reval and Buchlau meetings, and the strike at the Oriental Railway Company. But there is still the question whether the Bulgarian declaration of independence was accidental, exploiting merely the favourable political conditions – thus can be regarded as a parallel action – or it was a result of thorough planning and cooperation. If the latter, to what extent was it an own initiative of the Bulgarian diplomacy and the result of Austrian/Russian benevolence or secret diplomacy?

Many historians like Albertini were of the opinion that a direct agreement existed between Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria, thus the parallelism could not be coincidental: cooperation was suspected behind the curtains. Contemporary diplomats and statesmen like Fallières, the Serbian Chedomil Mijatovich and Marschall, German ambassador in Constantinople were also of the same opinion, like Russian newspapers (even before the annexation took place, on 23 September wrote about it). According to these authors and diplomats Prince Ferdinand

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1 An article with a similar title has recently been published by Peter Mentzel in the East European Quarterly (Vol. 37, 2003), that focuses on the railway strike analysing whether it could serve as a pretext for Bulgarian independence or was merely a coincident. Bulgarian nationalists were in fact convinced that the Ottoman government had engineered the strike in order to provide a pretext for meddling in Bulgarian internal affairs. The Ottomans, conversely, believed that it was in fact the Bulgarians who had fomented the strike in order to provide a justification for their declaration of independence. Our contribution bearing the same title focuses on the development of relations between Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria in 1908.


wouldn’t have risked such a step without bearing the approval and even the support of the Dual Monarchy. But the question is much more complicated.

Analysing the question of Bulgarian independence in the context of Power policy, we used the sources of the Austro-Hungarian diplomacy, the diary of István Burian (Minister of Finance, later in 1915 Minister of Foreign Affairs) and of Lajos Thallóczy (Chief of the occupied Serbia in 1915, secret counsellor) Hungarian statesmen, and sources from the private archive of King Ferdinand published recently.

The possibility of the annexation of Bosnia arose seriously first on 13, May 1907, when István Burian, at that time Minister of Finance and Governor of Bosnia-Herzegovina, in his memorandum advised the annexation of the two provinces. This idea has emerged several times, but now the context was quite different from that of the former plans: Burian envisaged a long-term cooperation with Bulgaria in order to weaken Serbian and Romanian pretentions. Burian wanted to destroy (but not incorporate) Serbia, if the state opposes to Austria-Hungary, thus creating a Greater Bulgaria with pro-Austrian sentiments. His advice was accepted by Franz Joseph (17, May) in connection with the annexation.

A serious problem of the Austrian-Bulgarian relations rooted here: Burian (and Aehrenthal, Minister of Foreign Affairs) wanted Bulgaria to be awarded with Serbian, instead of Macedonian territories, since Aehrenthal wanted to keep Turkey intact after the annexation (if possible). As later in 1913 Burian admitted to Count István Tisza, then Prime Minister of Hungary, he also wanted to use Greater Bulgaria as a barrier against Romanian pretentions on Transylvania. Unlike Tisza or Aehrenthal, who thought that Romania, as an ally feared of Russian penetration, Burian was convinced that Romania can be easily diverted against

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5 Ibid. p. 205.

Austria by Russia by supporting the acquisition of Transylvania. Although a prominent personality, Burián was not in power in 1909–1913 to promote his plans, therefore only elements were applied quite inconsequentially. This resulted many half-measures with long-term consequences.

In order to trace back the roots of tighter Austrian-Bulgarian relations, it is useful to take a closer look on the meeting between Prince Ferdinand and Aehrenthal on 13 March, 1908. Here Prince Ferdinand mentioned that he could not count on Russia’s benevolent support in his foreign policy, and – in the case of a Turkish-Bulgarian war – it is fairly probable that Romania and Serbia would exploit the situation. Aehrenthal was asked to halt Romania, which would be eager to seize the Ruse – Shumen – Varna line. As a deal, he offered the Dual Monarchy to incorporate Serbia, reversing Burián’s concept.

Some remarks must be added here. First, the term “war” reveals, that the Bulgarian policy showed strong determination to act quite before the declaration of independence. Second, the Dual Monarchy knew the pretensions of Bulgaria. Third, the request for the Romanian neutrality was granted during October, 1908. Although the Monarchy never promised to hold back Romania, in 1908 the Austrian-Romanian cooperation did exist (while it failed in 1913). Fourth, the offer of incorporating or dismembering Serbia was repeated several times as a key element of the Bulgarian foreign policy toward Austria-Hungary (even in 1913): it would have offered an opportunity for Bulgaria to get rid of a rival with the same pretensions on Macedonia, but also would have brought closer another one – the Dual Monarchy.

Just before the coup d’etat of the CUP, on 6 July, in order to alienate Bulgaria and to hinder its interference into the course of events, Russia hinted to Prince Ferdinand, that a secret agreement was concluded between Turkey and the Dual Monarchy, in which the Sultan

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7 Diószyegi I., pp. 205–212. Unfortunately Burián’s plan sharpened the Bulgarian-Romanian controversy by promising Southern Dobruja to Romania, if Bulgaria acquires Turkish territories, which proved to be the main drawback by 1913.
8 Whether it is a result of a Bulgarian attack on Macedonia or the result of the declaration of independence.
10 We should not forget that in 1908 a conservative cabinet ruled, while in 1913 a liberal-nacionalist one, which also had effect on the behavior.
authorized Austria-Hungary to occupy some areas in case of unrest in the country, on condition that the dual state guarantees the status quo for 3 more years. Nevertheless, this imposed a threat on the Bulgarian plans. After these years elapsed, Austria-Hungary would be the only Great Power to auspice the reforms implemented by the Sultan in the mentioned territories, and would be given special rights in Kosovo and Monastir for her services\textsuperscript{11}, excluding other Powers from the Macedonian reform movement. But Aerenthal denied the existence of such agreement – that could have been a revival of the „Drang nach Salonika” – in his private letter to Prince Ferdinand.

This rumour about the Austrian-Turkish agreement was not the only one referring to the activity of Russian foreign policy: on 5 July – according to Thallóczy’s diary – Forgách, the ambassador in Belgrade warned Aehrenthal that the Serbs count on acquiring Bosnia under the aegis of Russia, while in this case Bulgaria gets Macedonia – a plan denied by the official Russia\textsuperscript{12}. Iswolsky’s plans in connection with the Straits were already known by the end of 1907.\textsuperscript{13} Furthermore, in the very first months of 1908 a constitutional crisis developed in Bosnia, prior to the revolution of the Young Turks: these events all hastened the decision on the annexation, well before Buchlau, as Thallóczy’s diary confirmed\textsuperscript{14}.

Therefore Aehrenthal decided to renounce from the Sanjak of Novi pazar – in this case it still could fulfil its geopolitical task, separating the two Serb states, while the Monarchy gets rid of the „apple of Eris” and the negative sentiments associated with it (now inherited by Turkey), while annexing Bosnia-Herzegovina\textsuperscript{15}. These factors led to the Semmering Denkschrift, a re-evaluation of Austria-Hungary’s foreign policy, in which – beside a tighter

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{11} ÖUA, I. Nr. 27. Privatschreiben an den Fürsten Ferdinand. 5. Aug., 1908.
\item \textsuperscript{12} Tömöry, M., p. 892.
\item \textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{14} Tömöry, M., p. 890.
\item \textsuperscript{15} ÖUA, I. Nr. 29. Privatschreiben an den österr. Ministerpraesidenten, Freiherrn von Beck. 7. August, 1908.
\end{itemize}
cooperation with Bulgaria – the annexation of Serbia was also mentioned, as it was offered by Prince Ferdinand\textsuperscript{16}.

These were the circumstances, when the meeting in Buchlau took place. When early on 19 August Russia announced that they would not oppose the annexation, if Austria-Hungary supported Iswolsky’s pretensions to change the status of the Straits, Russia did not mention the independence of Bulgaria\textsuperscript{17}. Later in Buchlau (16 September) Austria-Hungary accepted the idea mentioned, above, and that Serbia may extend its boundaries into southern direction, in order to satisfy Russian wishes, and to deepen Serbian and Bulgarian rivalization for Macedonia. Both Powers agreed that no other disturbance of the status quo could be approved. Iswolsky and Aehrenthal had the opinion that Turkey should keep some territories that it \textit{de facto} possessed. Thus as a compensation, Crete was offered to Greece and the possibility of Bulgarian independence \textit{together with} Eastern Rumelia was also mentioned\textsuperscript{18}.

Meanwhile Dobrovich, a trustee of Ferdinand, on 24 August warned the prince to pursue a precautious policy regarding the independence, but on 29 August Prime Minister A. Malinov urged the prince to enhance activity\textsuperscript{19}. Russia warned Bulgaria on 6 September, not to step forth alone, since Russia needed a strong Turkey, and advised to let the first step done by others\textsuperscript{20}. Ferdinand, staying in the Castle of Murany (Hungary) evaluated the Russian warning as the unfriendly "old song" and immediately turned toward Budapest\textsuperscript{21}. Early on 7 September A. Malinov informed Prince Ferdinand, that Budapest supported the idea of the

\textsuperscript{16} ÖUA, I. Nr. 32. Semmering-denkschrift. 9, August, 1908.
\textsuperscript{17} ÖUA, I. Nr. 40, Protokoll des zu Wien am 19. Aug. abgehaltenen Ministerrathes... Nr. 75, Protokoll des zu Budapest am 10 Sept. abgehaltenen Ministerrathes... 79.
\textsuperscript{18} ÖUA, I. Nr. 79. Aufzeichnung über eine am 16. Sept. 1908. im Buchlau geführte Unterredung... The recognition of the Bulgarian independence first arose in a letter written to Bülow on 26 September, after the visit of Prince Ferdinand in Budapest. See: ÖUA, I. Nr. 89. Privatschreiben an Fürsten Bülow. 26, Sept. 1908. Aehrenthal\textsuperscript{19}.
\textsuperscript{19} ЦДА, ф. 3, оп. 18, а.е. 25/2, л. 68–70; а.е. 24/7, л. 9–12. In: Paskova, I.: Documents for Bulgarian Independence in the Private Archive of Tsar Ferdinand I. (Nr. 2. 4. pp. 123–127.). Izvestija na Darzhavnite Arhivi 95–96. 100 godini ot objavjavaneto na nezavisimostta na Balgarija.
\textsuperscript{21} ЦДА, ф. 3, оп. 18, а.е. 23/7, л. 34. In: Paskova, I.: Documents for Bulgarian Independence in the Private Archive of Tsar Ferdinand I. (Nr. 10. p. 135.). Izvestija na Darzhavnite Arhivi 95–96. 100 godini ot objavjavaneto na nezavisimostta na Balgarija.
Bulgarian independence\textsuperscript{22}, and parallel with the Gueshoff-incident, on 11 September, the Bulgarian Ministers agreed on announcing Bulgarian independence without much hesitation\textsuperscript{23}.

Summing up the events, the Bulgarian leaders tended to declare the independence even before the Gueshoff-affair reached its peak, and the incident was an excellent opportunity to exploit the situation. In accordance with the arrival of Burián, Beck (the Austrian Prime Minister), and Aehrenthal to Budapest, Prince Ferdinand also visited the town on 23 September, where he was immediately told about the details of the Buchlau agreement\textsuperscript{24}. Tömöry goes further, and – based on Thallóczy’s diary – claims, that Burián also admitted to Prince Ferdinand that the realization of the annexation had already been decided\textsuperscript{25}. However, the promises regarding Macedonia towards the Serbian state and the exact date of the annexation were not mentioned. The necessity of the maintenance of Ottoman Turkey within its \textit{de facto} possessed properties was emphasized. Austria-Hungary denied assistance if war was provoked, nor it supported adventures, but confessed, that 'legitime demands' would be approved. Since East-Rumelia was \textit{de facto} Bulgarian, it gave the opportunity to declare Bulgarian independence including Eastern Rumelia\textsuperscript{26}.

So, Prince Ferdinand had certain knowledge on Austria-Hungary’s intentions, and he also knew that the annexation would stir up the European diplomacy, rather than the Bulgarian declaration of independence – even if it was announced together with Eastern Rumelia. He did not tell a word about the timing of his plan to the leaders of Austrian diplomacy.

\textsuperscript{22} ІЦА, ф. 3к, оп. 18, а.е. 23/7, л. 39. In: Паскова, И.: Documents for Bulgarian Independence in the Private Archive of Tsar Ferdinand I. (Nr. 6. p. 133.). Izvestija na Darzhavnite Arhivi 95–96. 100 godini ot objavjavaneto na nezavisimostta na Bulgarija.
\textsuperscript{23} ІЦА, ф. 3к, оп. 18, а.е. 23/7, л. 119–120. In: Паскова, И.: Documents for Bulgarian Independence in the Private Archive of Tsar Ferdinand I. (Nr. 15. p. 139.). Izvestija na Darzhavnite Arhivi 95–96. 100 godini ot objavjavaneto na nezavisimostta na Bulgarija.
\textsuperscript{24} ÖUA, I. Nr. 87. Aufzeichnung über die Unterredungen mit Fürst Ferdinand.... 23–24. September, 1908.
\textsuperscript{25} Tömöry, p. 894.
\textsuperscript{26} The plan of the annexation was so well-known by this time, that even the Neue Freie Presse wrote about it on 24, Sept. 1908, reasoning why it was so important to remove the wives of soldiers and their children from the Sanjak immediately Neue Freie Presse, 24, Sept, 1908., ÖUA, I. Nr. 87. Aufzeichnung über die Unterredungen mit Fürst Ferdinand.... 23–24. September, 1908.
Those, who deny the tighter cooperation between Bulgaria and Austria, or just thought that it would be better if Austria acted first, quote Thallóczy and Burián, who both were surprised, and they evaluated the forthcoming events as „Sofia spits in the soup of Austria“27, accusing Ferdinand of exploiting Austria-Hungary’s deteriorating situation and declaring the independence prematurely. Their account was confirmed by documents of the private archives of Ferdinand: the Russians advised Bulgaria that the declaration of independence should not precede the annexation of Bosnia and the same was advised by Baron Fejérváry, former Prime Minister of Hungary, and the trustee of Francis Joseph28. The problem was not the act, but the timing, since both Thallóczy and Burián were aware that Bulgaria decided to declare its independence after the meeting in Budapest29.

Others claim that for the Dual Monarchy it was important to find someone who acts violating the Treaty of Berlin first, that’s why Prince Ferdinand seemed to be a perfect partner within some certain limits.

It is worth examining both possibilities. A strange event seems to verify the latter statement. When Khevenhüller, Austrian ambassador in Paris informed Fallières in Paris about date of the annexation – unfortunately too early, thus ruining the plans of Austria-Hungary, the French president warned him that this step would persuade Bulgaria to declare its independence. Khevenhüeller replied: “No, Bulgaria will not follow us. They’ll precede us by one day”. This account confirms Austria-Hungary’s willingness to cooperate30. Even if Prince Ferdinand hadn’t known anything about the proposed timing, the French newspapers, spreading the rumour of the annexation, had offered him a splendid opportunity to step forth.

But the question still remains which was the best solution: (1) whether the Bulgarian declaration of independence precedes the annexation, or (2) it emerges as a consequence?

27 Tömöry, p. 898.
The latter would have been more convenient for Bulgaria, and Burián was on the same opinion. Austria-Hungary planned the annexation on the 6th of October, the Russians asked it to happen in mid-October. However, the original timing became inconvenient for Austria, because of the Czech-German antagonism and the Slovene-German debate exacerbated the situation early in October. But Burián wrote to Francis Joseph, that the longer the annexation is postponed, the harder it would be made later. Unfortunately, the "premature" Bulgarian step made it impossible to postpone the declaration of the annexation. "Ferdinand's step forced Austria to act immediately" – wrote Thallóczy\textsuperscript{31}. As it is written in his diary, the Austrian diplomats were excited not only because of the German-Slav debate, and not only because of Khevenhüller’s mistake, but also serious debate started between Austrians and Hungarians regarding the incorporation of the 2 provinces. Indeed, according to Thallóczy, the annexation was ill-prepared by 6 October and the date was not favoured by Hungarians. Their behaviour indeed confirms the opinion of those, who – contrary to Khevenhüller’s statement – denied, that the Bulgarian declaration should have preceded the Austrian one. Even if there had been any agreement in timing, due to the problems of the Austria-Hungary, 5 October, as the date of the declaration of independence became definitely unfavourable for the Dual Monarchy.

A third possibility was emphasized by Cemal Tukin, who was of the opinion that Ferdinand considered the meeting in Budapest as an encouragement. Certainly, it did not mean that the cooperation rooted here, and that the evolution of the Gueshoff-incident was a result of this agreement. After the proclamation of the incorporation of the railway, Austria-Hungary immediately warned Bulgaria to keep her hands off the lines, and according to him, it is fairly possible, that for the Austrian renouncement from the railways the price was doing a favour for the Dual Monarchy, like declaring the independence prior to the annexation. Thus

\textsuperscript{31} Tomóry, pp. 894–896. Because of the 13 martyrs of Arad, who were executed on 6 Oct. 1849.
Bulgaria attracted Turkey’s attention and violated the Berlin Treaty first, but gained a supporter.

This might be true as well, but it did not explain the surprise of Burián and Thallóczy. According to Tukin, Ferdinand on the 4th of October wanted to postpone the declaration, but finally his government convinced him not to do this, because if Bulgaria was able to act independently, no one could interfere into the incorporation process of the railways. So Ferdinand decided to declare the independence immediately, however, he admitted, that originally he wanted to announce it weeks later.\textsuperscript{32}

While the Bulgarian intentions on declaring the independence were well-known among the Austrian diplomats after the Gueshoff-affair (except the date, of course), even Otto Czernin, ambassador in Sofia, did not have any knowledge on the annexation itself: he was informed by the French on 4, October, only after having read Khevenhüller’s letter.

Pallavicini, the ambassador in Constantinople, was informed about the annexation only on 30, September\textsuperscript{33}, and he did not connected this event to the Gueshoff-affair as a part of the cooperation between the Dual State and Bulgaria. In fact, Pallavicini had a constant fear, that the Bulgarian independence would be connected to the annexation of Bosnia, and Powers would consider this a joint cooperative step\textsuperscript{34}. This reveals that even Pallavicini did not know anything about an intentional cooperation in timing. According to his opinion, this parallel (whether intentional or accidental) movement would only bring drawbacks for Austria-Hungary, since Turkey would never accept the declaration of independence including Eastern Rumelia, while it would not oppose the Bulgarian independence declared without Eastern Rumelia. He warned that Turkey tended to accept the annexation, if it did not coincide with

\textsuperscript{33} ÖUA, I. Nr. 99. 30. September, 1908.
\textsuperscript{34} ÖUA, I. Nr. 100. Bericht aus Konstantinopel, 30. September, 1908. Pallavicini
the Bulgarian declaration\textsuperscript{35}. Pallavicini was convinced that Turkey would recover within few years and solve the problem of Eastern Rumelia in her favour.

But as far as it regards Prince Ferdinand, the declaration of independence not including Eastern Rumelia was not a deal. He would have never entered into such a critical diplomatic situation, i.e. to assist the Dual Monarchy, without any prize. From the Bulgarian point of view, the Monarchy had to offer something for Bulgaria to make the first step if wanted the Bulgarian declaration of independence to happen in accordance with the annexation.

When Kiamil Pasha warned Pallavicini (30 Sept.) that the independence of Eastern Rumelia would mean a war, and that Turkey could count on the support of Romania, Greece and Serbia, for Bulgaria the timing became a splendid occasion to avoid war with Turkey and to secure the support of Austria-Hungary\textsuperscript{36}. For the Romanians the Bulgarian declaration of independence (together with Eastern Rumelia) produced a dangerous precedent, since it violated the Berlin Treaty, the same treaty that gave Dobruja to Romania\textsuperscript{37}. But as Dimitrie Sturdza agreed not to interfere into the case without the approval of Austria-Hungary on 2, October, the number of opponents was reduced\textsuperscript{38}. After Serbia had communicated, that they would mobilize its troops in the case of the annexation (5 Oct.)\textsuperscript{39}, the interdependency of Bulgaria and Austria-Hungary seemed to be beneficial for both states\textsuperscript{40}.

After the declaration of independence and the annexation, the main problem for the Dual Monarchy remained, that both the English and the Turks were of the opinion that Bulgaria and the Dual Monarchy cooperated\textsuperscript{41}, while the Monarchy accused Bulgaria of being...
ignorant. The peculiarity of the situation was that the Turks would have tended to accept the annexation, if it had not been taken place together with the independence of Eastern Rumelia\textsuperscript{42}. Pallavicini was right: England did not intend to recognise the annexation, until the Turks did, and the Turks did not recognise the annexation because it happened parallel with the Bulgarian independence. So the sophisticated plan of Austria-Hungary, if such ever existed, collapsed, as Thallóczy foresaw: the cooperation with Bulgaria seemed to be advantageous at first sight, but virtually it produced only problems\textsuperscript{43}. As Pallavicini interpreted, while for the Turks the annexation meant a smaller problem, for the Powers the independence of Bulgaria together with Eastern Rumelia was of lesser importance. This constellation luckily resulted that the joint action of Powers and Turkey to undo the events failed, which meant a diplomatic success for Bulgaria and Austria-Hungary.

The diplomatic duel was lost by Russia, which was unable to reach England’s and France’s consent – both opposing the annexation as well – to the proposed changes in the status of the Straits\textsuperscript{44}. Russia originally wanted to secure Austria-Hungary’s support in a conference of Powers, while Austria-Hungary interpreted the Buchlau agreement as a bilateral agreement (like the Goluchowski-Muravieff pact) that the Powers has nothing to do with\textsuperscript{45}. This (mis)interpretation resulted as displease of England and Iswolsky, and that the latter changed his mind on 5 October opposing the idea of the annexation\textsuperscript{46}. But since Bulgaria took action, Austria-Hungary could not let the opportunity slip away.

Russia warned Bulgaria twice, that they cannot support Bulgaria’s independence, if it causes critical situation in the diplomacy, and also let the Italians, French and English know

\textsuperscript{42}ÖUA, I. Nr. 149. Tel. aus Konstantinopel. 6. Oct. 1908. Pallavicini
\textsuperscript{44}The wester powers feared that the loss of Bosnia, Crete and East-Rumelia (ans the Straits) would hasten the collapse of the CUP, and for this reason both Germany and England refused the unification of Greece and Crete. ÖUA, I. Nr. 104. Tel. aus Konstantinopel, 1. Oct. 1908. Pallavicini. ÖUA, I. Nr. 120. Somssich aus Rom. 3. October, 1908.; Nr. 142. Tel. aus Paris, Khevenhüller, 5. Oct. 1908.
\textsuperscript{45}That’s the reason why the Dual Monarchy referred to the Reichstadt agreement, and the contract between the Monarchy and Turkey in 1879. ÖUA, I. Nr. 154. Tel. aus Paris 6. Oct. 1908. Khevenhüller
\textsuperscript{46}ÖUA, I. Nr. 142. Tel. aus Paris 5. Oct. 1908. Khevenhüller
about this warning\textsuperscript{47}. It was evident for Russia that Bulgaria cooperated with Austria, since it had diplomatic support – and it did not come from Russia. However, the Bulgarians replied that Russia’s change in mind caused the tensions. The Monarchy also warned Bulgaria not to act without Russian consent, but it seems that Prince Ferdinand tricked the Austrians as well, leaving them in an inconvenient situation\textsuperscript{48}. A serious consequence of the events was, that while in 1908 a possibility existed for cooperation between Russia, Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria as well, after the annexation Russia’s cooperativeness vanished. This also affected the cooperation of the Dual Monarchy and Bulgaria in the future.

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In the following part of our contribution we aimed to examine and reveal some myths still prevailing concerning the relations between the Dual Monarchy and Bulgaria, like the Austrian plans to reach the Aegean Sea by occupying Salonika or the promised Austrian support for Bulgaria on the eve of the second Balkan War. Our hypothesis is that the political behavior of Berchtold, Foreign Minister of Austria-Hungary in 1913 deeply rooted in the attempts of Aehrenthal to create a pro-Austrian alliance system on the Balkans between 1908–1911 in order to avoid the alteration of status quo which was favourable for Austria-Hungary.

After the occupation of the Sanjak of Novi pazar in 1878, the Dual Monarchy had two possibilities – (1) whether to continue the march towards Saloniki and thus compelling the Balkan States to build an alliance against her, or (2) to create an alliance system in the Balkans that helps in realising the interests of the Monarchy, but in this case the direct control of Vardar valley had to be given up.

Since the first choice was not a prosperous perspective, the dual state renounced from occupying further territories by giving back the Sanjak to Turkey in 1908. The creation and


\textsuperscript{48} ÖUA, I. Nr. 87. Aufzeichnung über die Unterredungen mit Fürst Ferdinand... 23–24. September, 1908.
the failure of the Abbasian Entente can be regarded as an experiment for the latter concept. But this alliance did not prove to be viable. Without including or controlling Serbia, the Entente of Abbasia (1901–1904) failed to stop Russia that increased its sphere of influence in Bulgaria with the military alliance of 1902. Serbia also turned against the Dual State in 1903 that led to the Serbo-Bulgarian treaty of 1904. So the Abbasian Entente proved to be useless to hinder Russian penetration, and to mitigate the rivalry of interests between the small states. (When after the defeat at Mukden Russia turned to the East, the unripen alliance of Serbia and Bulgaria failed). A similar alliance without Turkey, but containing Serbia, would have been a rival for the Monarchy in the Balkans and an enemy of the 'protected' Turkey, so creating such alliance systems was also not the best solution. It seemed to be impossible to control the Vardar Valley without controlling Serbia, and also seemed to be futile to control the alliance not containing Serbia, because of the lack of physical contact. The way to Saloniki led through Serbian and Turkish territories – the Sanjak lacked railway connections, but the Monarchy was unable to unite these two states in one alliance on her side. After the annexation in 1908 a Serbo-Turkish alliance was not impossible, but it definitely considered the Monarchy as enemy. So the Monarchy needed to build up an other alliance to counterbalance the Serbo-Turkish threat and to secure the way to the Sea. Therefore, the Monarchy tried to establish a Bulgarian-Austrian, or Romanian-Bulgarian alliance early in 1909 and only after the failure of this decided to establish a Turkish-Romanian alliance in 1910–1911 counterbalancing the formation of the 2nd Balkan League, which also ended with a failure.

Establishing Bulgarian-Austrian cooperation in 1909 failed mainly because the Monarchy refused to allow Bulgaria to seize Macedonian territories – some Serbian lands were promised instead – and the Monarchy insisted on Bulgaria giving compensation to Romania. In 1912 the Monarchy tried to adopt her previous plan once more with a smaller modification. But
winning Bulgaria to the Austrian cause was not as contradictory in 1909 as it became by 1913. Previously Bulgaria had territorial claims only against Turkey, which was not supported by Russia (but by Germany) – but by 1914, Macedonia, the ‘Promiseland’ had laid in the hands of the Serbs supported by the Russians. The Monarchy did not risk to win Bulgaria’s benevolence by offering Turkish areas in 1909, while offering the same territories occupied by the Serbs 4 years later, would definitely strengthen the threat of a world war.

The policy toward Bulgaria was ambivalent, dual between 1909–1912: Bulgaria had to be hindered to make steps alone and seize territories without the help and approval of the Monarchy, so the other powers had to be deterred from gaining influence in Bulgaria by offering territorial compensations. Therefore a friendly behavior characterised the Monarchy towards Bulgaria, but an alliance with Bulgaria was thought to be unnecessary, as Tarnowski, the Austrian ambassador in Sofia wrote – because it is Bulgaria’s ‘Lebensinteresse’ to do the job – preventing Serbia to occupy Macedonia – even without Austrian support. But if Austria fails to support the Bulgarian claims, the country may turn to Russia. So, between 1909–1913 Austria was about to support Bulgarian territorial growth verbally and unofficially. 49 Berchtold pointed out in his letter to Tarnowski that the main policy of the Monarchy aims to reach an agreement between Romania and Bulgaria and to alienate them from Serbia.50

However, the Monarchy never gave up her intentions to reach Saloniki – not even in 1913, but after refraining from the incorporation of the Sanjak of Novi Pazar, Aerenthal re-evaluated his policy. The resignation from the Sanjak meant losing the control above Serbia and Montenegro, and losing the opportunity to prevent an intervention of Serbia against Turkey. But the new plan, the Romanian-Bulgarian alliance could have equalised this disadvantage, and also could have secured the way to the Aegean sea, as Teodor Teodorov,

49 ÖUA. IV. Nr. 3747. 29. 08. 1913. Tarnowski: A parallelism can be seen between the interest of the Monarchy and Bulgaria. Bulgaria without or against us can do nothing on the peninsula. „…es ohne, oder gegen uns nichts unternehmen könne.” In 1913 this policy failed.

50 ÖUA. VI. Nr. 6989. 10. May. 1913
Bulgarian Minister of Finance, has pointed it out (if Bulgaria reaches the Aegean). It could have been used also to counterbalance the Romanian pretentions on Transylvania\textsuperscript{51}.

This process was not successfully finished till 1912, before the war broke out. Then, Berchtold hoped that a Romanian-Bulgarian alliance would enable the Monarchy to reach the Aegean Sea, if Bulgaria gained Saloniki, or – in case Romania opposes a Great-Bulgaria, which was expected to happen – through Kavala. If this became impossible, the Monarchy would reach the warm seas through Albania. So, numerous parallel alternatives existed. Instead of occupying the Sanjak of Novi Pazar and cutting Serbia from Montenegro, which would have created anger against the Monarchy, the birth of a Greater Bulgaria had been better – while the Serb relations with the Turks – who got back the Sanjak – deteriorated.

Without being aware of these aforementioned pretentions, one might think that a real cooperation based on mutual and parallel interests of the Monarchy and Bulgaria did exist. But this is not true. Bulgaria refused to join the block built by Austria-Hungary, and to offer territorial compensations to Romania, and Austria-Hungary refused to interfere with weapons into the course of the events in 1913.

When underlining the willingness of Austria to intervene the 2nd Balkan War on the side of Bulgaria, historians claimed, that King Ferdinand gave order to launch an attack on Serbian forces hoping that after the first shots, the troops of the Monarchy will cross the Danube and smash Serbia or settle a peace\textsuperscript{52}. Some French historians believed that Romanian troops after occupying Dobrudja would join the fight of the Bulgarian forces against Serbia\textsuperscript{53}. Indeed, Berchtold promised to give financial aid to Bulgaria – he spoke about 50 million francs\textsuperscript{54}. It is

also true that Berchtold told Tschirschky, German ambassador in Vienna on 9 May, that if the Serbs won a decisive victory against the Bulgarians, the Monarchy would interfere, though not with a purpose of annexing Serbia\textsuperscript{55}. The Bulgarians hoped that an intervention of the Monarchy would urge the intervention of other powers who finally settle the order. Ferdinand himself also claimed that the Monarchy promised support\textsuperscript{56}. After having destroyed Turkey, he wanted to annihilate Serbia and share the territories with Romania and the Monarchy, and his plans were earlier known by Vienna\textsuperscript{57}.

Were there any reasons that confirm Bulgarian hopes, the Dual Monarchy’s intention to intervene? In our opinion, the signs show, that Berchtold’s policy was not getting more and more aggressive\textsuperscript{58}, because he wanted to join Bulgaria in the fight against Serbia. He let the dirty work be done by others, but because he wanted to divert Romania away from attacking Bulgaria, thinking that the latter would be able to handle Serbia and Greece. But Romania didn’t decrease her pretentions, and since the Monarchy was not able to satisfy Romania’s territorial claims on Southern Dobruja by peaceful means (by increasing the pressure on Bulgaria), Berchtold just cannot intervene to help Bulgaria against Serbia, because this would have absolutely alienated Rumania from the disgraced Austria. Bulgaria thought that Romania could be satisfied with Serbian territories. Salabashev, the Bulgarian ambassador in Vienna, asked whether Vienna would agree if Bulgaria promised Serbian territories to Rumania as compensation, in case of a war between Serbia and Bulgaria, and if Bulgarians

\textsuperscript{56} HHStA Nachlass Baermreithers, Kt. 8. Tagebücher, 23. 11. 1913. Wien. Quoted by Löding, p. 81. „Österreich habe Bulgarien darin bestärkt Serbien anzugreifen, und Bulgarien habe Gründe gehabt auf österreichische Hilfe zu rechnen...“
\textsuperscript{58} Albertini, p. 469.
won – and Austria didn’t object. Of course not – it would have been a dream comes true. This kind of attitude from the Dual Monarchy suggested, that they would not oppose a war – but it neither meant encouragement, nor Austrian intervention.

A war between the members of the Balkan League would certainly have some advantage for Austria-Hungary, while settling a peaceful agreement would have been disastrous according to Burián’s opinion: „Berchtold is in a constant fear of promoting a Serbo-Bulgarian agreement under the aegis of Russia. If Russia – as an arbiter – decides to support Bulgaria (in the debate), later they will give a full support to Serbia against the territories of the Monarchy... (The same fears mentioned by Forgách in 1908). By now Bulgaria can expect nothing from Russia – claimed Burián few days later to convince Berchtold – but may expect some Serbian (and still not Macedonian!) land from us.” Burián wanted to avoid the first aforementioned possibility by forcing the second one! Bulgarians might have come to the same conclusion, that’s why they thought of Austrian intervention, but Berchtold adapted a different plan.

So, a peaceful outcome that may conserve the Balkan League intact, was not in the interest of the Monarchy. Tarnowski in May 1913, when analysing the future policy of the Monarchy, claimed that in case of a war ”...Bulgaria winning a victory only by self-effort is not a desired solution, because as a consequence they reach an overwhelming position in the peninsula forcing Serbia into her arms and into an alliance led by Bulgaria, both freeing themselves from the Austrian influence. The best solution would be a Bulgarian victory, but only if it was realised with the support of the Monarchy. The making of Greater Bulgaria by self-effort might be dangerous, if the state decides to join Russia’s side. It is much better, if
Bulgaria’s desires won’t be fulfilled now, and due to the circumstances becomes an enemy of the Serbo-Russian coalition, that forces the country to the Monarchy’s side – without any official contract. Due to the fear of diverting Romania from the Triple Alliance, Austria-Hungary did not risk military intervention (not to speak about provoking a world war). The very last lines of the evaluation above also reduced the possibility of a military intervention by Austria, but it increased the probability that the Dual Monarchy would give verbal support (and nothing beyond this) to Bulgaria. According to Löding, Tarnowski’s dual policy aimed to force Bulgaria into a war with the promise of the Austrian support, a promise which won’t be realised. In that case, the defeated Bulgaria would have no other choice than to join the Dual Monarchy. A Bulgarian victory would humiliate the Serbs, but would make Austrian support useless in the future, excluding Austria-Hungary from the Balkans forever.

After the rupture of the Balkan League – which was a political success for the Monarchy – the Hungarian press immediately turned on the side of Bulgaria trying to win it for the political concept of Austria. „Our vital interest is to hinder the creation of an alliance between Rumania, Greece and Serbia (which the Germans wanted so much) against Bulgaria” – claimed Tisza. Thus a combination with Bulgaria emerged again. The end of 1913 resulted a complicated situation for the political positions of the Monarchy.

“We mustn’t bind our forces and ourselves to Bulgaria – warned Burián after the Peace Treaty of Bucharest – They’ll complete their „duty” against the Serbs even without our help – because it is their condition of existence and it is their destiny.” But the situation was not so easy as Burián claimed, since Berchtold feared that if Serbia gave back territories they could count on Bulgaria again, thus creating a new Balkan League.
The fear from the resurrection of some kind of a new Balkan League did not necessarily mean the need of an Austrian-Bulgarian alliance, as the only viable choice: after failing to hinder an anti-Bulgarian Balkan Coalition (‘3rd Balkan League’) in 1913, the Monarchy tried to build a new Turkish-Bulgarian-Romanian alliance once again after 1909\textsuperscript{66}. The evidence of the proposed anti-Serbian contract from the end of 1913 can also be found in the manuscript of the HHStA, Vienna\textsuperscript{67}. This meant a return to the policy of 1909, when the Monarchy offered Serbian territories to Bulgaria in case of a Serbo-Turkish war against Bulgaria and the Monarchy – showing that the possibilities of the Monarchy decreased after the 2nd Balkan War. The proposal of the contract pointed out that the Monarchy is willing to help Bulgaria, if it was attacked by two states – from among them at least one should have common borders with the 2 contracting parties (excluding Romania), nevertheless it meant Russia and Serbia, or Serbia and Turkey. Bulgaria was supposed to give help, if the Monarchy was attacked by a Great Power and a state, having common borders with the two contracting parties. Nevertheless, a Russian and Serbian attack was meant by this scheme. The treaty was realised only by 1915 by the same conditions.

From 1913 on, the lonely Dual Monarchy definitely needed the alliance of Bulgaria, which was not evident and inevitable 3 or 4 years ago. But Bulgaria now couldn’t be won by offering Turkish territories any more (because now Serbia owned them), and could have been converted only against Rumania or Serbia. Gaining the friendship of Bulgaria would have now meant an anti-Serbian step that may lead to a world war, which was not so obvious 4 years ago. This meant that the integration of Bulgaria into the Triple Alliance would consequently strengthen the political party in the Monarchy that wanted to destroy Serbia –

\textsuperscript{66} ÖUA., VII. Nr. 8574., 09.09.1913, Berchtold

\textsuperscript{67} HHStA PA I. Kt. 494. Liasse XLV/17. Die Balkankonflagration. Hauptsächliche Bestimmungen eines Geheimvertrages zwischen Österreich-Ungarn und Bulgarien. Fol. 326–327, „Falls die Monarchie von einer Grossmacht in Bunde mit einer zweiten Staat angegriffen wird, verpflichtet sich Bulgarien zur militärischen Cooperationen vorausgesetzt, dass betreffende Staat mit Bulgarien limitroph ist. Falls Bulgarien von zwei Staaten angegriffen wird, verpflichtet sich die Monarchie zur militärischen Cooperationen vorausgesetzt, dass wenigstens einer der beiden Staaten mit der Monarchie limitroph ist.“ The next point stated, that if the attacking state is Romania, the contract is not valid, and the Monarchy supports Bulgarian claims on Macedonia in case of revising the Treaty of Bucharest.
though the original intention of integrating Bulgaria into the alliance system was not to serve this scenario.