

"Foreign Royalty and Balkan Thrones in the 19th Century – The Case of Serbia"

This article will explore and explain the reasons and circumstances behind this. The article describes several attempts in installing foreign monarchs in Serbia. The modern Serbian monarchy existed from 1804 to 1918, while in Montenegro a secular monarchy which was strongly related to Serbian state traditions was established in 1852 and dissolved after the end of WWI. During the period of the existence of national monarchies in the Balkans (during the 19th and first half of the 20th century), foreign dynasties were installed on the thrones of all Balkan national states, save Serbia and Montenegro. The main hypothesis is that the interests and aspirations of Austria-Hungary and Russia stopped all of the said attempts

Serbia and the Monarchy in the 19th Century

The status of Serbia was defined during the 19th century. Until the Uprising against Ottoman rule in 1804, Serbs did not enjoy any kind of autonomy. The rebel state and later the autonomous principality was established in the Belgrade Pashalik, previously a military-administrative territory at the Northern border of the Ottoman Empire, and had the same status as other pashaliks.¹ During the First Serbian Uprising (1804-1813) the Belgrade Pashalik and some neighbouring territories were united together in a revolutionary state² in which a hereditary monarchy was established. Black George (Karadjordje Petrovič³), the leader of the First Serbian Uprising, thus became the first monarch of modern Serbia.

Defined by the constitutional laws in 1808 and 1811, the post of the modern Serbian monarch was not overwhelmingly influenced from abroad – even including from Russia, which was a protector of the Serbian uprising.⁴ The institution of monarchy, however, was abolished after the uprising had failed. The later autonomy of Serbia - instigated following the victory of the Holy Alliance (which was spearheaded by Russia) and the Second Serbian Uprising (1815) – was, however, based on the ideas of the uprising as well as on the concepts defined during the last decade of the 18th century. The foundation of the autonomy – based on experiences following the long negotiations which coincided with the Greek War for Independence, the internationalisation of the Eastern Question and the imposing of the reforms to the Ottoman Empire - was the institution of the monarch as the chief of state.

¹Roger Viers Paxton, *Russia and the First Serbian Revolution: A Diplomatic and Political Study. The Initial Phase, 1804–1807*, (Stanford University: Stanford 1968), 11-13.

²Wayne S. Vucinich, *The First Serbian Uprising, 1804–1813*, (Social Science Monographs, Brooklyn College Press, 1982), 21-27

³(Karadjordje Petrovič, Karađorđe Petrović, Карађорђе Петровић).

⁴Miloš Blagojević, "Arhiepiskop Sava - vožd otačastva". u: Ćirković S. [ur.] *Sveti Sava u srpskoj istoriji i tradiciji - Međunarodni naučni skup*, (SANU: Beograd, 1998), 64-73.

1 The autonomy of the Serbian Principality that had been defined by the
2 Sultans hatti-sherifs decreed from 1829 to 1838, had the institution of Prince as
3 its main pillar. Since 1830, the Obrenovich⁵ dynasty was established⁶ and its
4 ruling members carried the title of prince.

5 The principality of Serbia thus had two dynasties - the ruling and
6 pretending one- which fought over the throne until 1903.

9 National Dynasties, Foreign Candidates

11 Except for Serbia, all other nations in the Balkans in the 19th century were
12 ruled by foreign dynasties.

13 From 1832, Greece was ruled by the Wittelsbach dynasty, and 30 years
14 later by the Glücksburgdynasty⁷. Following the unification of Wallachia and
15 Moldavia, the rule of elected princes from the ranks of the Constantinople
16 Phanariots was abolished. Initially, the Romanian AlexandruIoanCuza was the
17 ruler, but was toppled in the 1860s and replaced by Prince Karl of
18 Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen⁸. The autonomous Bulgarian principality was
19 founded following the 1878 Congress in Berlin, and ruled by Alexander of
20 Battenberg, who was replaced several years later due to his support for the
21 Plovdiv Coup. He was succeeded by Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha.
22 Even in Albania, which was proclaimed as an independent state in 1912,
23 Wilhelm of Wied was erected as its prince.

24 Therefore, out of the six national states established in the Balkans, four
25 had foreign dynasties and only two – which were, at the time, predominantly
26 inhabited by Serbs – had their own. The reasons for this are not explicitly
27 explained in historiography.

28 Placing national candidates on the thrones of the other four states was not
29 rejected in principle. AlexandruIoanCuza thus became the first ruler of the
30 united Romanian state, while the first head of modern Greece was a Russian
31 diplomat of Greek origins - IoannisAntoniosKapodistrias. He was the
32 "governor" of Greece, which at its beginnings was classified as a republic.
33 Kapodistrias remained at that post for less than four years (1828-1831) when
34 was assassinated. He was succeeded by his brother Augustinos Kapodistrias
35 who managed to sustain the "first republic" for another six months.

36 The international status of those states was also not an issue. The
37 Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen and the Saxe-Coburg and Gotha would rule as the
38 Ottoman tributaries for decades. The latter would, together with the title of

⁵(The Obrenovich, Obrenovići, Обреновићи).

⁶'Obrenović dynasty, Serbian family', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Obrenovic-dynasty>, (visited on 21 April 2021).

⁷John Van der Kiste, *Kings of the Hellenes*, (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing, 1994), 9-13.

⁸Carol I or Charles I of Romania (20 April 1839 – 27 September [O.S. 10 October] 1914). see. Keith Hitchins, *Rumania 1866–1947* (Oxford University Press, 1994), 31-37.

1 prince of autonomous Bulgaria, bear the post of sultan's general-governor of
2 the Autonomous Province of Eastern Rumelia.

3 Curiously, only German princes were brought as rulers of the Balkan
4 thrones during the 19th century. It is believed that the reasoning behind this was
5 that just princes of the former Holy Roman Empire were perceived as fit and
6 deserving to wear the crowns of “newly” established states.

7 There are two possible reasons why this was never the case in Serbia and
8 Montenegro. The first lies in the interests of the Habsburg monarchy. The
9 second comes down to the fact that Serbia was – in name - included in the title
10 of the Hapsburg monarch. In 1914 the title read:

11 Seine Kaiserliche und Königliche Apostolische Majestät von Gottes Gnaden
12 Kaiser von Österreich; König von Ungarn und Böhmen, von Dalmatien,
13 Kroatien, Slawonien, Galizien, Lodomerien und Illyrien; König von Jerusalem
14 etc.; Erzherzog von Österreich; Großherzog von Toskana und Krakau; Herzog
15 von Lothringen, von Salzburg, Steyer, Kärnten, Krain und der Bukowina;
16 Großfürst von Siebenbürgen, Markgraf von Mähren; Herzog von Ober- und
17 Niederschlesien, von Modena, Parma, Piacenza und Guastalla, von Auschwitz
18 und Zator, von Teschen, Friaul, Ragusa und Zara; Gefürsteter Graf von
19 Habsburg und Tirol, von Kyburg, Görz und Gradisca; Fürst von Trient und
20 Brixen; Markgraf von Ober- und Niederlausitz und in Istrien; Graf von
21 Hohenems, Feldkirch, Bregenz, Sonnenberg etc.; Herr von Triest, von Cattaro
22 und auf der Windischen Mark; Großwojwode der Woiewodschaft Serbien etc., etc.⁹

23 In English:

24
25 His Imperial and Royal Apostolic Majesty, By the Grace of
26 God Emperor of Austria, King of
27 Hungary and Bohemia, Dalmatia, Croatia, Slavonia, Galicia, Lodomeria and Ill
28 yria;
29 King of Jerusalem, etc.; Archduke of Austria; Grand Duke of
30 Tuscany and Cracow;
31 Duke of Lorraine, Salzburg, Styria, Carinthia, Carniola and Bukovina; Grand
32 Prince of Transylvania, Margrave of Moravia; Duke of Upper and Lower
33 Silesia, of Modena, Parma, Piacenza and Guastalla, of Auschwitz and Zator,
34 of Teschen, Friaul, Ragusa and Zara; Princely Count of Habsburg and Tyrol,
35 of Kyburg, Gorizia and Gradisca; Prince of Trento and Brixen; Margrave of
36 Upper and Lower Lusatia and in Istria; Count of
37 Hohenems, Feldkirch, Bregenz, Sonnenberg etc.;
38 Lord of Trieste, of Cattaro and on the Windic March; Grand Voivode of the
39 Voivodeship of Serbia etc., etc.

40
41 This title, therefore, also included the ruling rights over Serbia. The
42 Austrian Archduke, who was until 1806 also the Emperor, since 1527 had the

⁹J. H. W. Verzijl, *International Law in Historical Perspective, Volume VI: Juridical Facts as Sources of International Rights and Obligations*, (Leiden: A. W. Sijthoff, 1973), 173.

1 title of the king of Hungary which also included Serbia. During the 15th century
2 this title read (*in English):

3 "By the grace of God, king of Hungary, Bohemia, Dalmatia, Croatia,
4 Rama, Serbia, Galicia, Lodomeria, Romania, and Bulgaria, Duke of Silesia and
5 Luxemburg and Margrave of Moravia and Lusatia, for the everlasting memory
6 of the matter. It is fitting that kings and princes who by heavenly decree are
7 placed at the summit of the highest office, be adorned not only by arms but also
8 by laws and that the people subjected to them, as well as the reins of authority,
9 are restrained by the strength of good and stable institutions rather than by the
10 harshness of absolute power and reprehensible abuse."¹⁰

11 Following the Revolutions of 1848, the revolutionary government in
12 Hungary denied any political rights to Serbs who lived in the southern parts of
13 the realm. Serbs resisted and during the war that followed, they declared the
14 Serbian Dukedom (Srpska vojvodovina).¹¹ Being on the side of the Habsburgs,
15 the permission for such an act had been previously obtained, and the Austrian
16 Emperor was the formal head of the newly established autonomous territory,
17 which never became a new realm of the crown. After the war, several rights
18 promised to Serbs were denied, and the name of the region was also changed to
19 the Dukedom of Serbia. This was an elegant solution to the question of the
20 status of the Serbs in the Habsburg monarchy, whose territory was named after
21 Serbia, the land which was south of the Sava and the Danube rivers and which
22 was at the time an autonomous principality protected by Russia, within the
23 Ottoman Empire.

24 These were politically very tense times. Thus in 1896, as a part of the
25 events commemorating a millennium of Hungarian statehood, one of the
26 millennial towers was erected at the celebration in Zemun, on the border with
27 the then-independent Kingdom of Serbia. On the other hand, during the solemn
28 parade, symbols of Serbia were carried together with heraldic symbols of other
29 lands of the Crown of Saint Stephen. This caused a diplomatic scandal.¹²

30 Austrian aspirations for expanding towards the south and incorporating
31 Serbia were changing over centuries. More interested in German lands and
32 Italy, the Habsburg Empire initially disregarded several opportunities to divide
33 the Balkans with Russia during the 18th and 19th centuries, turning to the region
34 at the beginning of the 20th century.¹³

35 Even if it wanted to, Austria was reluctant about the possible occupation of
36 Serbia. Even after the conclusion of the Secret Convention (1881), when Serbia

¹⁰János Bak, "The Late Medieval period (1382–1526)", In Peter F. Sugar, Péter Hanák, Tibor Frank, (eds.), *A History of Hungary*, (Indiana University Press. 1994), 41.

¹¹Konrad Clewing, 'The double foundation of the Serbian voivodship 1848–1851. Ethnopolitics in the Habsburg Empire'. In: Konrad Clewing, Oliver Jens Schmitt ed., *Southeast Europe. Of premodern diversity and national standardization*. Festschrift for Edgar Hösch. (= Southeast European Works Volume 127) Verlag Oldenbourg, Munich 2005, 253-302.

¹²Слободан Јовановић, *Влада Александра Обреновића*, 2., ("Просвета": Београд, 2005), 138-139, 167.

¹³A. V. Florovsky, John Keep and Leslie Collins, ' Russo-Austrian Conflicts in the Early 18th Century', *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 47, No. 108 (Jan., 1969), 111-114.

1 was in a position similar to Tunisia at the time, as one high-ranking Serbian
2 politician noted, the entry of Austrian forces in Serbia would have been
3 politically unsustainable.

4 Also, during the period of its autonomy -between 1830 and 1878 - Serbia
5 was still a part of the Ottoman Empire (which until 1867 held the military
6 garrisons in Serbian border-fortresses) which had not lost any territory to
7 Vienna since the end of the 17th century. The protection of Russia ensured the
8 security of the Serbian principality. Even though during the Crimean War
9 (1853-1856) that protection was lifted and that there was even a defiant Serbian
10 Memorandum to the Great Powers, Serbia was not occupied (while Wallachia,
11 Moldavia and Greece were) nor militarily attacked. This happened only in
12 1914.

13 These were probably the most important reasons why the issue of foreign
14 royalty taking over the throne of Serbia was discussed only on the margins.

17 **Arthur of Connaught**

19 One of the rare occasions where a foreign dynasty had the opportunity to
20 take over the Serbian throne was following the 1903 Coup. In difference to the
21 circumstances at the time of the assassination of Prince Mihailo Obrenovich in
22 1868, Serbia was now an independent country and the Obrenovic dynasty
23 (which, except for a 16-year-break - ruled the country from 1815/1830) had
24 now been removed from power. Even though Russia and Austria-Hungary
25 quickly agreed on the Karadjordjevic dynasty asserting power, whispers about
26 declaring a republic or even a new – foreign – prince to be brought in,
27 were heard in Belgrade. This was despite the powerful military clique and the
28 will of the political parties. Although the minority favouring the republic
29 quickly gave up on the idea, even later claiming that at the time it was too soon
30 to consider forming a republic, from 1903 to 1911 there were suggestions and
31 ideas about replacing the Karadjordjevic dynasty with an English prince as
32 the king of Serbia.

33 That prince in question was Arthur of Connaught, Queen Victoria's
34 grandson.¹⁴ These ideas were influenced by several factors. After the 1903
35 Coup, Serbia went through several political crises: it was exposed to heavy
36 pressure from Austria-Hungary during the Customs War (1905-1911) and the
37 Bosnian crisis (1908-1909); there were internal tensions as well as
38 questions relating to crown prince George's renunciation of the right of
39 succession, Prince Alexander's illness and the issue of paying for the royal
40 family.

41 International circumstances also didn't suit the Karadjordjevic dynasty:
42 the agreement over the Balkans between Austria-Hungary and Russia ceased to
43 exist, and the Russian monarchy was weakened following the defeat in the war
44 with Japan and the scars from the 1905 revolution. Furthermore, because of the

¹⁴Prince Arthur of Connaught KG KT GCMG GCVO GCSJ CB PC (Arthur Frederick Patrick Albert; 13 January 1883 – 12 September 1938).

1 brutal way in which the Obrenovich dynasty had been disposed of, the new
2 government in Belgrade was faced with pressure from the United Kingdom and
3 the Netherlands, which cut diplomatic ties and demanded the punishment of
4 those responsible for the gruesome act.

5 The idea of Arthur of Connaught becoming the new king of Serbia
6 allegedly comes from the Serbian diplomat and politician Chedomilj
7 Mijatovich¹⁵, who was a supporter of the Obrenovich dynasty. Mijatovich was a
8 politician and the Serbian representative in London who – following the 1903
9 Coup – stayed in self-imposed exile.¹⁶In 1911, Mijatovich made a truce with
10 king Petar Karadjordjević.

11 The closest a British prince was to claiming the throne of Serbia was in
12 1907 Serbian Army captain Milan Novakovich¹⁷, who organised the “Society
13 for the lawful resolution of conspirators issue” (and who also served a prison
14 sentence following the conviction for attempting to organise a counter-coup),
15 came to London. Novakovic openly called for the toppling of the
16 Karadjordjević dynasty and even published a newspaper in which he wrote
17 against the officers involved in the 1903 Coup who were influential in the
18 politics of Serbia. The British press and the biographer of King Edward the
19 Seventh reported about the visit of envoys from Serbia trying to gain the
20 support of the British government and the monarch for the candidacy of Prince
21 Arthur. Allegedly, Britain declined this offer.

22 In 1906 it was reported by Reuters that “envoys from Belgrade” visited
23 London on two occasions during that year in an attempt to receive support for
24 the desired change at the Serbian throne. The newspapers were briefed about
25 this by Chedomilj Mijatovich, who said he refused to aid the envoys, saying
26 that King Edward would most certainly reject such an idea. Interestingly, a
27 short report notes that the envoys also came to talk to Mijatovich “in order [for
28 him] to help them” to persuade prince Arthur to accept the throne. The report
29 also notes that they claimed King Peter “could be forced to abdicate”.¹⁸This
30 story was later reported in various newspapers around the world.

31 The conspirators returned from Britain without getting any promises, but
32 they brought back many photographs of the prince instead.

33 Strangely, the conspirators travelled to London after Belgrade officially
34 agreed to British conditions and diplomatic ties between the two countries had

¹⁵(Chedomily Mijatovich, Čedomilj Mijatović, Чедомиљ Мијатовић)

¹⁶Slobodan G. Marković, 'Count Čedomilj Mijatović, a Leading Serbian Anglophile', *Balkanica* (38), Belgrade, 2007, 121.

¹⁷(Milan Novakovich, Milan Novaković, Милан Новаковић).

¹⁸'PRINCE ARTHUR OF CONNAUGHT AND SERVIA LONDON. Startling Rumor', *National Advocate*, Bathurst, NSW, 20 December 1906, 2; 'EMPIRE NEWS', *Western Mail*, Perth, WA, 22 December, 31; Истувест пренелесу и француске новине, 'Informations', *La Charente*, Organerépublicain quotidien, 17 Decembre 1906, 1; Viennise press published several articles arguing the same. 'Will duke of Connaught become king of Servia', 7 January 1909, European Monarchies as well, <https://royalmusings.blogspot.com.blogspot.com/2009/01/will-duke-of-connaught-become-king-of.html>

1 been re-established.¹⁹ Captain Novakovich was killed in a Belgrade prison in
 2 September 1907. The photographs of Prince Arthur appeared on the streets of
 3 Belgrade as late as 1911.²⁰

6 **Eugen de Czernucki - Stephan Lazar Lazarovich Hrebelianovich**

8 If the Great Powers themselves did not want to consider a foreign prince to
 9 the Serbian throne, foreign pretenders have occasionally appeared on their
 10 own.

11 The Habsburg subject Constantine Ignatieff, who originated from Karlovci
 12 (Srem; at the time part of Southern Hungary), was, during his turbulent life, a
 13 theology student, petty officer in the Austrian army, and later a Serbian official
 14 in Belgrade. In 1825 -when Prince Milos Obrenovic suppressed the Djak
 15 rebellion - Ignatieff appealed to the French king Charles X for support of his
 16 candidacy for the Serbian throne. Claiming that he was a descendant of the
 17 Serbian medieval Nemanjic dynasty, Ignatieff styled himself as Constantine
 18 Nemanja, but was not successful in his efforts.²¹

19 The fate of another self-imposed candidate, "Prince Stephen" (Stephen
 20 Dusanovic²²), was not much different. His origins and identity remain vague.
 21 He tried to get recognition and, later, some benefits from the US State
 22 Department between 1907 and 1911. We know something about this man only
 23 from the US government archives. Despite the US policy on not intervening in
 24 issues of royal legitimacy, "Prince Stephen's" letters reached the Secretary of
 25 State in person and even the king of Spain got involved. Although the case had
 26 never been fully researched and the alleged Stephen Dusanovich was never
 27 interviewed, apart from the conclusion that he was not an American citizen, it
 28 is indicative that he appeared with his claims in a very sensitive period for the
 29 Karadjordjevic dynasty. Bogdan Lj. Popovich²³, who revealed this story,
 30 convincingly explained the motives and probable psychological condition of
 31 "Prince Stephen". However, it is surprising how much time and energy was
 32 spent on this case, including that of the then Secretary of State Elihu Root²⁴. It
 33 is also interesting that Spanish officials got interested in the case, via their
 34 ambassador in Washington.²⁵

¹⁹Aleksandar Rastovic in his account on Anglo-Serbian relations between 1903 and 1914 does not mention the case. Александар Растовић, *Велика Британија и Србија 1903-1914*, (Историјски институт: Београд 2005).

²⁰Гргур Јакшић, "Кнез Константин Немања, лажни претендент на српски престо у Паризу 1825. године", *Српски књижевни гласник*, 1906, XVI, 30.

²¹Богдан Љ. Поповић, "Два претендента на српски престо, *Прилози за књижевност, језик и фолклор*, Том. 71. Бр. 1-4, 81.

²²(Dusanovic, Dušanović, Душановић).

²³(Bogdan Ly. Popovich, Bogdan Lj. Popović, Боград Љ. Поповић).

²⁴Elihu Root (15. February 1845 – 7. February 1937), the 38th United States Secretary of State (1905-1909). Needham, Henry Beach. "Mr. Root and the State Department". *The World's Work: A History of Our Time*, vol. 6 (November 1905), 6835–6840; Богдан Љ. Поповић, 83.

²⁵Ibid., 85.

1 The third pretender and probably the most successful one was Eugen
 2 Czernucki. He was born in Zagreb as a son of lieutenant colonel Francis
 3 Czernucki. This captain of the Austro-Hungarian army was born in 1864 to
 4 Odilia Lazarovic and was of Serbian origin. According to the Lazarovich
 5 family tradition, they originated from one of Herzog Vladislav Kosaca
 6 numerous descendants. Vladislav Kosaca was the last ruler of the Medieval
 7 Serbian state of Herzegovina and a son of its founder, Stefan Vukcic Kosaca.
 8 After in 1481 his land fell under Ottoman rule and Vladislav Kosaca fled to
 9 Hungary to become a minor nobleman. Vladislav's mother was Jelena Balsic (a
 10 descendant of Prince Lazar Hebrljanovic, who led the Serbian army at the
 11 Kosovo battle in 1389) and Princess Milica (Lazar's wife) who was the
 12 connection with the Nemanjic dynasty.²⁶ According to the family tradition, the
 13 descendants of Vladislav Kosaca adopted the surname Hrebeljanovic as their
 14 own in the late 15th century. Eugen Czernucki's grandfather, Jan Lazarovich, is
 15 claimed to have transferred all his titles to his grandson before he passed away.
 16 Until his death, Czernucki styled himself as (the fourteenth) duke of St. Sava.²⁷

17 Despite a promising career in the Austro-Hungarian army, Czernucki
 18 resigned his position and renounced his citizenship in the 1890s. He was not
 19 granted Serbian citizenship so he spent the next 50 years being stateless, living
 20 in France, the United Kingdom, the United States and Germany.

21 This energetic but adventurous, flighty and over-imaginative man saw
 22 himself as someone destined for great deeds. After making technical
 23 innovations on an Austrian military rifle, he embarked on various other
 24 projects. In France, he married Maria Sreerier and attempted to regain her
 25 family's estate and aristocratic dignities which had been revoked previously.
 26 He also proposed a constitutional reform of the Ottoman Empire. In Paris and
 27 London, presenting himself as Prince Stephan Lazarovic Hrebelianovic,
 28 he energetically pursued a campaign for the liberation of Macedonia.
 29 Lazarovich Hrebelianovich was in constant touch and correspondence with
 30 several ministers and diplomats and also published two papers.²⁸ He had three
 31 children and gave them names of medieval Serbian rulers.

32 The death of his wife in 1900. brought Lazarovich Hrebelianovich to a
 33 new crossroad. He moved to London and three years later married an
 34 American, Eleanor Calhoun.²⁹ She was a famous actress at the time, well-
 35 known for her roles in Shakespeare's plays. Her paternal grandfather founded a
 36 city, while her grandfather's brother was the first US Vice president born on
 37 American soil.

²⁶ Zaga Gavrilović, , "Women in Serbian politics, diplomacy and art at the beginning of Ottoman rule", in Elizabeth M. Jeffreys, (ed.), *Byzantine style, religion, and civilization: in honour of Sir Steven Runciman*, (New York: Cambridge University Press., 2006), 77–78.

²⁷ Čedomir Antić, 'The Fourteenth Duke', Paschalis M. Kitromilides and Sophia Matthaïou, ed., *Greek-Serbian Relations in the Age of Nation-Building*, (NATIONAL HELLENIC RESEARCH FOUNDATION INSTITUTE OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH SECTION OF NEOHELLENIC RESEARCH, ATHENS 2016)., 100.

²⁸ *Eastern European Review and Autonomie*, both published in Paris in 1902. Богдан Љ. Поповић, 93.

²⁹ Богдан Љ. Поповић, 89; Čedomir Antić, 95.

1 Lazarovich Hrebelianovich financed the making of plans for a project for
 2 the construction of the channel between the rivers of Morava and Vardar,
 3 which would have connected Northern Europe and its ports with the
 4 Mediterranean, via river streams from Rhine and Danube to the Morava and
 5 the Aegean Sea, near Salonika. When finished, the channel would have
 6 shortened the voyage on the main global route by more than 1,000 kilometres.
 7 Lazarovich Hrebelianovich was working on this project for more than two
 8 decades: in 1913 he tried to create an international (Russo-American)
 9 consortium.³⁰ In 1920 he presented the plan to American engineers, and six
 10 years later he published it in the States.³¹ Many years following Lazarovich
 11 Hrebelianovich's death, the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts adopted his
 12 project, and it became part of the Socialist Yugoslavia spatial plan. Amazingly
 13 enough, this project was one of the most important election promises in the
 14 2012 elections in Serbia.

15 Lazarovich Hrebelianovich never directly raised his claim to the Serbian
 16 throne. On several occasions, he even supported the Serbian cause and the
 17 ruling dynasty. At the beginning of the First Balkan War (1912-1913), he gave
 18 a large interview to the *New York Times* in which he explained and fully
 19 supported the Serbian war efforts.³² He was hopeful that in some reformed
 20 Balkan confederation he would be offered the throne of Macedonia.
 21 Lazarovich Hrebelianovich had plenty of ideas, and even suggested to the
 22 republican supporters in the region an idea of a federal republic.

23 Just before the breakout of WW1, together with his wife Eleanor
 24 Calhoun, Lazarovich Hrebelianovich published a very well-received history of
 25 Serbian people.³³ Soon after, he published a study on the Eastern Question.³⁴

26 Unaccepted by Serbia – Chedomilj Mijatovic, the Serbian envoy to the
 27 Court of St. James, labelled him as an adventurer³⁵ - Czernucki divided
 28 opinions even among influential American Serbs. Mihailo Pupin, a respected
 29 scientist, professor at Columbia University and a friend of President Roosevelt,
 30 criticized Lazarovich Hrebelianovich on the pages of American newspapers;
 31 while the famous inventor of Serbian origin, Nikola Tesla, defended him.³⁶

32 It seems that "Princess Lazarovic-Hrebeljanovic" had greater ambitions for
 33 "the restoration" than those of her husband. At the end of 1907, she succeeded
 34 in meeting with State Secretary Root. She acquainted him with the royal

³⁰"For Danube-Aegean Canal", *New York Times*, 18 January 1913; Čedomir Antić, *Ibid...* 96.

³¹E. Lazarovich-Hrebelianovich, *The Danube-Aegean Waterway Project*, (Somerville: Mara de Czernucki-Lazarovich-Hrebelianovich, 1926); Čedomir Antić, *Ibid*.

³²E. Marshall, "A New Balkan Nation May Save Europe's Peace", *The New York Times*, 3 November 1912.

³³S. L. E., Lazarovich-Hrebelianovich, Eleanor Mulda Calhoun Lazarovich-Hrebelianovich, *The Servian people, their Past Glory and their Destiny*, (New York: C. Scribner's sons, 1910).

³⁴S. L. E., Lazarovich-Hrebelianovich, *The Orient Question To-Day and To-morrow*, (New York: Duffied and Co., 1913).

³⁵Ch. Mijatovitch, *The Memoirs of a Balkan Diplomatist*, (London, New York, Toronto and Melbourne: Cassel and Co., 1917), 305.

³⁶"Servian Princess Clashes With Pupin", *New York Times*, 30 November 1912.; N. Tesla, "Servian Prince Defended", *The New York Times*, 4 December 1912.

1 inheritance of her husband and mentioned pilgrimages to the Ravanica
 2 Monastery, where the "entire nation is gathering around the old dynasty".³⁷
 3 Her requests, however, remained unanswered, so four months later – in March
 4 1908 – she wrote to President Theodor Roosevelt, but without success. The
 5 only partial trace of official interest in this letter is noted in a minute written on
 6 the letter's margins, according to which the status of Macedonia could not be
 7 the issue for the United States, but for the Great Powers that had signed the
 8 Berlin treaty of 1878. However, the State Department now showed more
 9 interest than in the case of Prince Stephen (Dusanovich). The documents also
 10 contain a report from a detective agency, which claimed that Lazarovic-
 11 Hrebeljanovic was just an adventurer going under a false name, who fled
 12 France after he was due to testify in the Dreyfus process and that he then fled
 13 Britain after facing pressure from the Russian police.³⁸

14 After divorcing Eleanor Calhoun in 1926, Lazarovich Hrebelianovichs
 15 eemed to have come to terms with his fate. In the late 1930's he settled in
 16 Germany, together with his daughter Mara who was studying biology at the
 17 University of Heidelberg. After 1945 the Yugoslav communist authorities had
 18 some information that father and daughter had not cooperated with Nazis.
 19 Lazarovich Hrebelianovich died in Germany in September 1941 *TheTimes* and
 20 *The New York Times* published obituaries that read that the fourteenth Duke of
 21 St. Sava had died .

22
 23

24 **Maclemburg-Streliz**

25

26 Lazarovich Hrebelianovich's daughter Mara was a dedicated follower and
 27 secretary of her father. After the Second World War she moved to Belgrade,
 28 then the capital of Socialist Yugoslavia and its federative republic of Serbia.
 29 She was employed at one of the scientific institutes. Recognised as an eminent
 30 scientist, Mara Lazarovich Hrebelianovic died childless in 1971. Her personal
 31 fund is preserved in the State Archive of Serbia.

32 According to a document from her papers, Lazarovich Hrebelianovich
 33 claimed that following the 1903 Coup, at the session of the Great National
 34 Assembly in Belgrade there was a political group that intended to bring him to
 35 the vacant throne of Serbia.

36 In one undated document preserved among the papers, which was
 37 undoubtedly created after WW1, Mara Lazarovich Hrebeljanovic claimed that, in
 38 the case of a separate peace treaty unfavourable for Serbia in 1917, the Serbian
 39 prime minister at the time, Nikola Pasic, planned to put forward her father as a
 40 candidate for the throne³⁹. So far, there has been no other source that
 41 corroborates this claim. Nevertheless, according to the same letter, the German
 42 candidate for the Serbian throne was the Grand-Duke of Maclemburg-Streliz

³⁷Богдан Љ. Поповић, *Исто*, 90.

³⁸*Исто*, 91.

³⁹AS, MLH, Mara Lazarovich-Hrebelianovich to an Englishman (undated).

1
2 (as this was supposed to be an agreement between the powers in case of an undecided war outcome).⁴⁰

3 Despite the fact that the most relevant and largest accounts of German and
4 Austro-Hungarian policy towards Serbia do not mention the Grand-duke's
5 candidature for the post of the king of a Serbian state (which would have been
6 destined to be a satellite of these two Central Powers), as a cousin of both the
7 German imperial and Montenegrin royal families he could have been the
8 obvious and logical, if not the only possible, choice. Adolf Friedrich VI.,
9 Großherzog von Mecklenburg [-Strelitz] (17. June 1882 - 24. February 1918)
10 was the brother of Jutta, who was the wife of Montenegrin Crown Prince
11 Danilo. The Grand Duke died in February 1918, aged 36. The Central Powers
12 lost the war several months later. However logical this thesis may be, to this
13 day it has not been confirmed in primary sources.

14 It is obvious that during the 19th and early 20th century, there were no
15 serious foreign candidates for the throne of Serbia. The reasons were
16 numerous, but the most important one was related to the interests of Austria-
17 Hungary. Its interests were not to weaken Serbian statehood and to prevent
18 further foreign affirmation. Russia also had no real interests in installing a
19 German dynasty in Serbia. The only exception was the self-imposed, unofficial
20 candidacy of Montenegrin Prince Nicolas in 1868 and 1903 which only in the
21 former case enjoyed some support of Russia.⁴¹ Montenegro was perceived as an
22 ethnic Serb state, thus prince Nicolas' candidacy could not be taken as foreign,
23 but as a part of national unification process of the time.

24 It is indicative that majority of foreign candidates were ethnic Serbs by
25 origin and that they raised their candidacies in the period of crisis between
26 1903 and 1912. Although not so influential, this represents a very interesting
27 chapter in Serbian modern history, and the story about the Balkan politics and
28 policies of Great Powers.

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