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1908 Annexation of Bosnia in the Serbian Press

Sırp Basınında Bosna'nın İlhakı (1908)

Abstract: This study delves into the Serbian press's role during the Bosnian annexation crisis in 1908, a pivotal episode in Balkan and European history. Following the provisions of the Treaty of Berlin (1878), Austria-Hungary's occupation of the Bosna Vilayet and subsequent administrative control set the stage for a protracted legal and political conflict. The crisis reached its zenith in the autumn of 1908 when Austria-Hungary unilaterally annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), provoking a formidable reaction across Europe particularly in Belgrade. Serbia, perceiving BiH as a historic territory of paramount significance, emerged as one of the staunchest opponents of Vienna's actions. This resistance was fervently articulated in the Serbian press from August 1908 to March 1909, with leading newspapers such as *Politika*, *Mali Žurnal*, *Pravda*, and *Carigradski Glasnik* playing a central role in shaping public sentiment. This study aims to analyze the impact of the Serbian press on national opinion during the annexation crisis, examining the portrayal of domestic and international news, the coverage of protests and demonstrations in Belgrade and other Serbian cities, the movements of Chetnik detachments, mobilization announcements, and political statements. By scrutinizing these elements, the research seeks to illuminate the state of Serbian public opinion at the close of 1908 and throughout 1909 and assess the significance of the annexation for Serbian politics and national identity. The findings reveal that the Serbian press exerted substantial influence, inciting vigorous public reactions, sharp protests, and demands for military engagement.

Key Words: Bosnia and Herzegovina, annexation, Austria-Hungary, Balkans, Serbian press

Öz: Bu çalışma, 1908 Bosna Hersek ilhak krizi sırasında Sırp basınının rolünü incelemektedir. İlhak krizi, Balkanlar ve Avrupa tarihi açısından dönüm noktası niteliğinde olduğunu söylemek mümkündür. Berlin Antlaşması'nın (1878) hükümlerine göre, Avusturya-Macaristan'ın Bosna Vilayetini işgal etmesi, ardından bu bölgede idari kontrolü sağlaması, uzun süreli bir hukuki ve siyasi çatışmanın zeminini hazırlamıştır. Kriz, 1908'in sonbaharında Avusturya-Macaristan'ın Bosna Hersek'i tek taraflı olarak ilhak etmesiyle zirveye ulaşmış, bu durum Avrupa genelinde, özellikle Belgrad'da büyük bir tepkiye yol açmıştır. Bosna Hersek'i tarihi olarak büyük öneme sahip bir bölge olarak gören Sırbistan, Viyana'nın eylemlerine karşı en kararlı muhaliflerden biri olarak öne çıkmıştır. Bu direniş, Ağustos 1908'den Mart 1909'a kadar Sırp basınında yoğun bir şekilde dile getirilmiş, *Politika*, *Mali Žurnal*, *Pravda* ve *Carigradski Glasnik* gibi önde gelen gazeteler kamuoyunu şekillendirmede merkezi bir rol oynamıştır. Bu çalışmanın amacı, Sırp basınının ilhak krizi sırasında ulusal görüş üzerindeki etkisini analiz etmektir. Bu bağlamda, yerel ve uluslararası haberlerin sunumu, Belgrad ve diğer Sırp şehirlerinde gerçekleşen protestolar ve gösteriler, Çetnik birliklerinin hareketleri, seferberlik ilanları ve siyasi açıklamalar incelenmiştir. Çalışma, 1908'in sonu ve 1909 yılı boyunca Sırp kamuoyunun durumunu, ilhakin Sırp siyaseti ve ulusal kimliği üzerindeki önemini aydınlatmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bulgular, Sırp basınının önemli bir etkiye sahip olduğunu, kamuoyunu şiddetli tepkilere, keskin protestolara ve savaş ilanı taleplerine yönlendirdiğini ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Bosna Hersek, ilhak, Avusturya-Macaristan, Balkanlar, Sırp Basını

Introduction

The Austro-Hungarian annexation of BiH in the autumn of 1908 culminated in the imposition of complete Austro-Hungarian dominion over the country. The annexation was not an isolated event but rather the culmination of Vienna's long-term strategic agenda. The origins of this plan can be traced to the mid-19th century, with the 1878 occupation serving merely as a preliminary phase in the establishment of comprehensive Austro-Hungarian authority over BiH. Resolving the legal status of BiH was of significant strategic import for Vienna. Among the

other Vienna's foremost strategic objectives were the curtailment of Serbian political influence in BiH and the facilitation of Austria-Hungary's invasions into the southern Balkans.¹

Austria-Hungary had contemplated the annexation of BiH on several occasions before 1908. As early as 1869, General Wagner, the governor of Dalmatia, advocated for the initiation of annexation preparations. Following the occupation, Austria-Hungary began implementing measures that foreshadowed the annexation: on December 20, 1879, BiH was integrated into the state customs system, leading to the abolition of Ottoman currency. Further consolidating its control, Austria-Hungary abolished foreign consular privileges in BiH on February 22, 1880, and imposed compulsory military service on October 5, 1881. These actions, contravening the Istanbul Agreement of 1879, progressively steered BiH towards annexation.²

With the endorsement of some major European powers, Austria-Hungary was able to legitimize its plan for the annexation of BiH. This support is documented in the correspondence of Count Kalnoky, the Austro-Hungarian ambassador in Petrograd, which was addressed to the Monarchy's Foreign Minister Haymerle. In a letter dated September 7, 1880, Kalnoky articulates this matter with particular emphasis, stating: *If the Turkish (Ottoman) rule ends (in Bosnia), what can this country be? It can only be Austro-Hungarian beatis possidentibus* ("sacred possession"), *to whom the Treaty of Berlin gave unlimited rights of occupation*.⁴

In 1882, the prospect of annexing BiH was revisited by Austria-Hungary. Hungarian politicians proposed a division of the territory, advocating for the annexation of the Banja Luka region by Hungary, while suggesting that Sarajevo, Mostar, Travnik, and Tuzla be ceded to Austria. However, the proposal faced resistance from the Austrian government, leading Emperor Francis Joseph to reject it.⁵ A similar scheme resurfaced during the Cretan Crisis of 1896 when Austria-Hungary sought to exploit the Ottoman Empire's vulnerabilities and internal distractions. Despite these efforts, the annexation of BiH remained unrealized. The year 1908, marked by an internal crisis and a change of government within the Ottoman Empire, presented a timely opportunity for Austro-Hungarian intervention.

1. The Annexation of Bosnia (1908): A Turning Point in Balkan Politics

1.1. Echoes of Annexation: The Balkan and European Implications

The annexation of BiH was officially announced in the early hours of October 7, 1908. The proclamation, issued in both Latin and Cyrillic alphabets, was made public in Vienna and subsequently printed in Budapest. On that same day, the announcement was affixed to all government buildings, schools, hospitals, and post offices throughout BiH.⁶ On the occasion of this event, the Sarajevo City Council convened a formal session. Following this meeting, all city representatives attended a formal reception hosted by the Head of State and the Civil Adlatus.⁷

The political representatives of the Bosniaks were informed of the impending annexation declaration before October 7. The planned meeting of the largest Bosniak political organization

¹ In scholarly discourse, the term "Drag nach dem Osten" refers to strategic endeavors aimed at extending Austrian-Hungarian influence. This strategy encompassed not only the consolidation of control over the Western Balkans but also facilitated Austria-Hungary's incursion into Southeastern Europe. See: Andrej Mitrović, *Prodor na Balkan: Srbija u planovima Austro-Ugarske i Nemačke: 1908-1918*, (Belgrade: Zavod za udžbenike Beograd, 2011): 10.

² Kosta Milutinović, "Prvi pokušaj aneksije Bosne i Hercegovine i Vojvodina", in *Zbornik za društvene nauke XII*, ed. Vladimir Stipetić (Novi Sad: Matica Srpska, 1956): 101-102.

³ Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

⁴ Ferdo Hauptmann, *Austrougarska politika, Trojecarski savez i tajna konvencija sa Srbijom godine 1881*, in *Godišnjak Istorijskog društva Bosne i Hercegovine*, IX, ed. Anto Babić (Sarajevo: Istorijsko društvo Bosne i Hercegovine, 1958): 64.

⁵ Iljas Hadžibegović, Mustafa Imamović, *Bosna i Hercegovina u vrijeme Austrougarske vladavine*, in *Bosna i Hercegovina od najstarijih vremena do Drugog svjetskog rata*, ed. Ibrahim Tepić, (Sarajevo: Bosanski kulturni centar, 1998): 277.

⁶ Archive of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ministry of Finance (ZMF), Pr. BH, No: 1570/1908.

⁷ "Svečana sjednica grad. zastupstva", *Hrvatski Dnevnik*, no. 230 (October 8th, 1908): 1.

MNO⁸ in Sarajevo was thwarted. Following this setback, a meeting was scheduled to take place in Slavonki Brod.⁹ Nonetheless, this meeting was also hindered by the authorities. Noticing the impossibility of acting politically in BiH and the region, the leadership of MNO decided to travel to Budapest.¹⁰ The purpose of the trip is rooted in Budapest's historical significance as the location where support for Bosniak demands was sought during 1906 and 1907. During the train journey to Budapest, MNO and SNO¹¹ representatives held a joint session.¹²

A few days after the announcement of the annexation, on October 11, a short proclamation was issued by the representatives of the MNO and the SNO. The proclamation highlights that since 1878, Bosnians have struggled to confront and reconcile with the realities of occupation and Austro-Hungarian administration. Demands for autonomy are also reiterated in the proclamation.¹³

Apart from the Bosniaks, Serbs also contemplated the annexation with great disappointment. The SNO leadership hoped to organize a new congress that would prevent the unilateral conquest policy of the Monarchy. This political organization also relied on the support of Russia. Although a minority of Serbian politicians¹⁴ exhibited a measured response to the annexation, indicating a form of passive acceptance, the overwhelming majority of Serbs expressed considerable dissatisfaction. In contrast to Muslims and Orthodox Christians, Catholics of Croatian descent welcomed the annexation. This phenomenon is particularly evident in the press. Croats also repeated their demands from 1878 of Bosnian's annexation to the Kingdom.¹⁵

In the Austrian part of the Monarchy, both the press and the parliament¹⁶ expressed support for the annexation of BiH as well as the independence of Bulgaria.¹⁷ On the other hand, the Hungarian political opposition criticized this move because it believed that Hungarian interests were threatened by this move and that the dualistic spirit of the monarchy was cast into doubt. Germany also endorsed the annexation, a development that was anticipated given its alliance with the Monarchy since 1879.¹⁸ France, Italy, Russia, and Serbia, on the contrary, were dissatisfied with this move by Vienna. France was displeased with the annexation but tried to avoid the tightening of relations with Austria-Hungary. Italy, a neighbor, also expressed dissatisfaction with the expansion of the monarchy.¹⁹ Austria-Hungary, although an Italian ally at the time, was still Italy's rival in the Balkans. Italy's dissatisfaction stems from the fact that, as early as 1887, it had reached an understanding with Austria-Hungary stipulating that any alterations to the status of the Balkans would be addressed through a bilateral agreement between the two countries. As anticipated, Russia expressed dissatisfaction with this action by Francis Joseph. However, due to its internal challenges, it was compelled to refrain from escalating tensions with Austria-Hungary. The Ottomans also expressed their displeasure. The Ottomans voiced their discontent, leading to a boycott of Austro-Hungarian goods. Additionally, a significant protest against the Austro-Hungarian annexation of BiH was organized in the Fatih district of Istanbul, attracting approximately 50,000 participants.²⁰

⁸ Bosnian: Muslimanska narodna organizacija-MNO; Muslim (Bosniak) People's Organization.

⁹ Croatian territory.

¹⁰ "Put u Budimpeštu", *Musavat*, no. 42 (October 15th, 1908): 1.

¹¹ Serbian: Srpska narodna organizacija- SNO; Serbian People's Organization.

¹² See: "Sjednica MNO-a", *Musavat*, no. 42 (October 15th, 1908): 1.

¹³ "Madžari i aneksija", *Hrvatski Dnevnik*, no. 229 (October 7th, 1908): 4.

¹⁴ Serbs from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

¹⁵ This signified the incorporation of Bosnia and Herzegovina into the Kingdom of Croatia and Slavonia.

¹⁶ Bosnian: Carevinsko vijeće.

¹⁷ "Budimpešta", *Hrvatski Dnevnik*, no. 226 (October 5th, 1908): 1.

¹⁸ See: Vasilije Krestić, *Istorija srpske štampe u Ugarskoj: 1791-1914*, (Novi Sad: Matica srpska, 1980): 103.

¹⁹ Andrej Mitrović, *Prodor na Balkan Prodor na Balkan: Habsburška monarhija i Balkansko poluostrvo 1867-1914* (Belgrade: Istraživački centar za društvene nauke, 1984), 11.

²⁰ "Bosanskohercegovački muslimani u Carigradu", *Carigradski glasnik*, no. 46 (November 14th, 1908): 1-2.

Serbia strongly reacted to this move by Vienna and the already difficult situation caused by the Pig War was further complicated.²¹ Radical groups in particular, especially Chetnik²² divisions and formations as well as volunteers expressed dissatisfaction which led to large protests throughout Serbia, mostly in Belgrade. The Serbian parliament also experienced significant turbulence. Minister Milovanović's²³ speech in December 1908 provided valuable insight into Serbia's perspective on the annexation as well as the broader strategies of the Monarchy. *By annexing Bosnia, pushing Serbia away from the Adriatic Sea, and preventing our unification with Montenegro, Austria-Hungary is imposing a life-and-death struggle on Serbia and its people in the near or distant future*, Milovanović stated.²⁴ The Serbian assembly demanded the autonomy of BiH under the sovereignty of the Ottoman sultan.²⁵

1.2. The Serbian Press at the Dawn of the 20th Century

Printing technology was introduced to Europe in the early 17th century, marking a pivotal advancement in the dissemination of knowledge and the transformation of cultural and intellectual life across the continent. The inception of the Serbian press can be traced back to 1768, when the first Serbian magazine, *Slavensko-Serbski Magazin*, was published in Venice. This seminal work was edited and published by the distinguished figure Zaharije Stefanović Orfelin, marking a significant milestone in the cultural and intellectual history of the Serbian people.²⁶ The aforementioned Serbian magazine was printed in a printing house owned by the Greek Dimitrios Theodosius. Orfelin's 96-page magazine was published only once.²⁷ The first newspaper to be printed in Serbia was *Novine Srbske*, which commenced publication in 1834 in the city of Kragujevac. This publication represented a foundational moment in the development of Serbian journalism and the broader dissemination of information in the region.²⁸

Before the 1880s, the Serbian press was predominantly composed of political papers serving as the mouthpieces of specific political parties, with financial backing from these political factions. Consequently, the broader public interest was often neglected. However, post-1880s, there emerged a shift in the press landscape with the advent of newspapers funded by private individuals, which catered to a more diverse audience beyond the confines of narrow political affiliations.²⁹ The development of the Serbian press was significantly advanced by the introduction of single-issue sales and street colportage. In the 1890s, new evening papers began to emerge which, despite their political affiliations, were designed to appeal to a broader readership. At the dawn of the 20th century, certain Serbian newspapers expanded their readership beyond national borders, garnering audiences in regions and countries such as Southern Hungary, Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. In this context, official statistics from the period provide a detailed overview of the geographical reach and influence of these publications.

²¹ The Pig War or (Customs War), was a trade war between Austria-Hungary and Serbia from 1906 to 1908 during which the Habsburgs unsuccessfully imposed a customs blockade on Serbian pork. See: Stevan K. Pavlowitch, *A History of the Balkans: 1804-1945* (Longman, 1999); Robin Okey, *The Habsburg Monarchy: From Enlightenment to Eclipse* (Macmillan, 2001).

²² Serbian: Četnici.

²³ Milovanović was a Serbian politician, diplomat, writer, and constitutional lawyer, who served as the 45th Prime Minister of Serbia.

²⁴ For the speech in the parliament, see: Dimitrije Popović, *Izvoljski i Erental: diplomatske uspomene iz aneksione krize*, (Belgrade: Izdavačka knjižarnica G. Kona, 1927): 40.

²⁵ In the realm of diplomacy, Serbia undertook additional strategic maneuvers. During the crisis, Serbian Prime Minister Nikola Pašić traveled to Petrograd to engage in negotiations with the leaders of the Russian Empire.

²⁶ Milica Kisić, Branka Bulatović, *Srpska štampa: 1768-1995* (Belgrade: Medija centar, 1996): 11; Also see: *Dva veka srpskog novinarstva*, ed. Mihailo Bjelica (Belgrade: Institut za novinarstvo, 1992).

²⁷ Svetislav Šumarević, *Štampa u Srba do 1839* (Belgrade: Zadruga profesorskog društva, 1936): 38.

²⁸ Milica Kisić, Branka Bulatović, *Srpska štampa: 1768-1995* (Belgrade: Medija centar, 1996): 15.

²⁹ Jovan Skerlić, *Istorijski pregled srpske štampe 1791-1911* (Belgrade: Srpsko novinarsko udruženje, 1911): 71.

Year	Number of copies of newspapers sent from Serbia abroad	Number of copies of newspapers sent to Serbia from abroad
1904	69.408	403.868
1905	50.920	387.966
1906	51.806	337.052
1907	63.741	399.522
1908	120.709	481.610
1909	125.830	-

The annexation of BiH was subject to meticulous scrutiny by the Serbian press throughout the late summer and continued to be closely examined during the autumn and winter of 1908.³⁰ In 1908, Belgrade, the capital of Serbia, was home to 23 daily newspapers. Each day, a total of 24,000 copies of the three daily newspapers (*Politika*, *Pravda*, and *Mali Žurnal*) were sold. According to statistical data derived from the 1905 population census, Belgrade had a population of 80,747 inhabitants.³¹ It can be inferred that, in comparison to other capitals in the Balkans, Belgrade was the smallest. For instance, during the same period, Sofia had a population of 83,000, while Bucharest's population stood at 290,000. It is also noteworthy that, at that time, Belgrade had a population of only 3,000 greater than that of Zagreb. The newspapers *Politika* and *Pravda* began publication in 1904. *Politika*, with Vladislav Ribnikar as its initial owner and editor, and *Pravda*, the organ of the progressive youth political organization, owned by Pavle Marinković and edited by S. Petrović, were both established during this period.³² *Mali Žurnal*, which commenced publication in 1894, and *Carigradski Glasnik*, which began in 1895, were also among the most significant Serbian newspapers of that era. From this, one can infer that during the kingdom period, the Serbian press was instrumental in shaping both political and social dynamics. Newspapers and periodicals not only mirrored significant developments such as political transitions, social reforms, and international relations but also actively influenced these processes through their reporting and editorial perspectives. Branka Bulatović, who dealt with the Serbian press in her analyses, asserts that the press in the Kingdom of Serbia functioned both as a mirror and a catalyst for political and social change, highlighting the substantial role newspapers played in shaping public opinion and interacting with the political and social structures of the time.³³

2. Serbian Press and the Annexation of BiH in August 1908

In August³⁴ 1908, several weeks before the annexation of BiH, the most widely circulated Serbian newspapers extensively examined the legal status of BiH, characterizing it as an internal matter of the Ottoman Empire.³⁵ Possible constitutional changes in this Balkan country as well

³⁰ For more detailed information on the Serbian press from the beginning of the 20th century, see: Milica Kisić, Branka Bulatović, *Srpska štampa: 1768-1995* (Belgrade: Medija centar, 1996): 32-33.

³¹ Državna štamparija Kraljevine Srbije, *Prethodni rezultati popisa stanovništva i domaće stoke u Kraljevini Srbiji 31 decembra 1905 godine* (Belgrade: Izdanje uprave državne statistike, Državna štamparija Kraljevine Srbije, 1906): 10.

³² For documentation related to censorship and control of the press, as well as reports on the activities and influence of the media at that time see: Fond Ministarstva unutrašnjih poslova Arhiva Srbije (Fund of the Ministry of Internal Affairs Archives of Serbia).

³³ Bulatović, Branka, *Srpska štampa*, (Belgrade: Udruženje novinara Srbije, 1991): 65.

³⁴ According to the Julian calendar. According to the Gregorian calendar, these dates cover the period from mid-August to mid-September. Serbia employed the Julian calendar as its civil calendar until the year 1919. This practice persisted until the adoption of the Gregorian calendar, which marked a significant shift in the country's chronological framework.

³⁵ On the first day of August 1908, the 31st issue of *Carigradski Glasnik*, a newspaper published in Serbian and Cyrillic, characterized the Bosnian Question as the most pressing among the numerous internal issues facing the Ottoman Empire. It is noteworthy that this publication recognized BiH as part of the Sultan's domain, despite the fact that administrative control over the region had been fully vested in the Austro-Hungaria since the autumn of 1878. The same newspaper continues in a very long and detailed analysis: *The gendarmerie administration kills the spirit of the people in the name of civilization and culture. The new constitution would be a problem due to the general situation in BiH*. See: "Bosna i Hercegovina", *Carigradski Glasnik*, no. 31 (August 1st, 1908): 1-2.

as possible cantonization were also considered during this period.³⁶ In this context, *Politika* in issue no. 1631 reported, based on reliable sources, that Vienna's provision of constitutional freedoms in BiH was notably restricted, applying only to district-level areas. *Politika* further asserts: *Thus, six districts would have some kind of cantonal self-government.*³⁷ The cantonal administrations and the administrative framework proposed in 1908 were ultimately realized in 1995 with the Dayton Agreement, and the post-Dayton structure of BiH is conceived along similar lines.

The potential goals of the Austro-Hungarian administration in BiH were also analyzed by the Serbian press.³⁸ During this period, there was specific mention of the potential drafting of a constitution for BiH, as well as concerns about a possible uprising by Bosnians and Herzegovinians in reaction to these changes. Additionally, Serbian newspapers conducted a detailed analysis of the conditions in BiH, with particular emphasis on the perceived pressure exerted by Austria-Hungary on the Serbian population.³⁹

During this period, the term "annexation" was explicitly introduced, for the first time, in mid-August 1908. A few days later, the Serbian press brought news about the annexation of BiH on its front pages. In addition, at the end of August, *Politika* published an article called "Annexation".⁴⁰ *Vienna's desire is annexation. Vienna is looking to find ways to make these wishes come true. There are two roads: by force or grace. The first one has been a long time coming. With the help of agents provocateurs, a revolution should be provoked, which would be suppressed. The second path is also being made due to the sudden political transitions in Turkey.*⁴¹ *This is Vienna's main weapon*, as noted by *Politika*.⁴²

Within this timeframe, Serbian newspapers reported on news from Vienna concerning the Young Turks, highlighting that such reports had created turmoil within Vienna's political circles. Initially, *Politika* published the text of a Viennese newspaper from Paris under the title "Young Turks and Bosnia".⁴³ This proclamation underscores the movement's ambition to

³⁶ One of the foremost newspapers in Belgrade, *Politika*, provides a detailed analysis of the constitutional and legal status of BiH. The publication observes a renewed period of inactivity among official Viennese circles that had previously advocated for the adoption of a new constitution in the region. *Politika* reports that on August 1, 1908, Viennese newspapers suggested that Bosnians, particularly the Orthodox population, were prepared for a new phase in their political development. However, this sentiment was concurrently met with criticism from Austrian authorities. *Politika* further elucidates that: *It's written that the Serbs are barbaric and a pestilence should be sent against them.* See: "Bosanski ustav", *Politika*, no. 1631 (August 2nd, 1908): 1.

³⁷ "Bosanski ustav", *Politika*, no. 1631 (August 2nd, 1908): 1.

³⁸ According to Serbian newspapers, Vienna's plans for Bosnia and Herzegovina did not encompass the establishment of a parliament. One of the underlying reasons for this omission was Austria-Hungary's apprehension that such a parliamentary institution might serve as a forum for deliberating contentious issues, including the legal status of BiH. *Politika* asserts that: *The parliament would have to resolve the question of sovereignty of "Serbian lands". To avoid this, Austria-Hungary will partly give BiH a constitution. It will be given within the limits of the district autonomies.* According to *Politika's* analysis, Austria-Hungary's objective is to pacify the Bosnian populace and project a favorable image to European powers, while simultaneously seeking to preclude any intervention by the Ottoman Parliament in the matter. *Politika* further articulates that: *The people will calm down at least a little, and it will appear to Europe that they are reconciled to their fate. The intention of the Turkish parliament to request a constitution for BiH will be suppressed.* See: "Bosanski ustav", *Politika*, no. 1631 (August 2nd, 1908): 1.

³⁹ "Ustav u Bosni", *Politika*, no. 1631 (August 2th, 1908): 1; "Bosansko-Hercegovski Parlament", *Politika*, no. 1633 (August 4th, 1908): 1; "Bosna i Nastić", *Politika*, no. 1634 (August 5th, 1908): 1.

⁴⁰ "Bosansko-Hercegovski Parlament", *Politika*, no. 1633 (Ağustos 4th, 1908): 1.

⁴¹ The term *Turska* (in Serbian) / *Türkiye* is used by Serbian Press.

⁴² "Bosansko-Hercegovski Parlament", *Politika*, no. 1633 (Ağustos 4th, 1908): 1.

⁴³ In a declaration by an influential figure within the Young Turk movement, it was asserted that upon the reassembly of the Ottoman Parliament, a proposal would be put forth advocating for the restoration of BiH to Ottoman rule. *Politika* articulates: *The Vienna Deutsches Volksblatt reports from Paris that the Young Turks reliably expect to have a large majority in the new Ottoman parliament. One of the most influential leaders of the Young Turks, who is still in Paris, told our correspondent that as soon as the parliament meets, the Young Turks will submit a proposal to take the administration of BiH out of the hands of the Habsburgs and to put these provinces back under Turkish rule.* See: "Mladoturci i Bosna", *Politika*, no. 1636 (August 7th, 1908): 3; On August 12, *Politika* reported

reassert Ottoman sovereignty over territories that had been lost, reflecting a broader agenda of territorial reclamation and political revitalization within the Empire. Following this news, *Politika* featured a substantial article titled "One Turkish Denial and the Bosnian Question" in its issue no. 1644, dated August 15.⁴⁴ In the subsequent analysis, *Politika* intriguingly examines the maneuvers of the Young Turks regarding BiH, interpreting them as potentially indicative of a strategic bluff. *This denial cannot give the Austrians any satisfaction. If the Young Turks, as it seems, spread the news themselves, which they are now denying, they did so because of the moral effect it should have and to see how the matter will be received in European opinion, Politika* contends.⁴⁵

Serbian newspapers also provided commentary on the conference of the SNO and the session of the Austro-Hungarian government in Vienna.⁴⁶ By mid-September 1908, *Politika* published articles speculating about significant potential changes in the Balkans and anticipated the possibility of impending conflict.⁴⁷

During this period, Serbian newspapers meticulously tracked Belgrade's political stance, which rejected the Austro-Hungarian administration and advocated for autonomy in BiH under the Sultan. The Austro-Hungarian administration was consistently criticized as a detrimental force contributing to the decline of Bosnian society and impeding the progress of its local population. The press adeptly analyzed Austria-Hungary's objectives, making accurate predictions about its intentions. Additionally, it offered a thorough examination of the situation in BiH, portraying Serbs as victims of the regime's policies.

3. Serbian Press and the Annexation of BiH in Early September 1908

Throughout September 1908, the Serbian press continued to monitor developments in the Austrian press. This is exemplified by an interview with Dr. Bärnreuther, a member of the Austrian Parliament, who offered commentary on the positions of German representatives within the Austrian Parliament concerning potential constitutional changes in BiH.⁴⁸ In addition

that the pronouncement by the Young Turks, originating from Paris, had provoked considerable consternation in Vienna. In issue no. 1641, *Politika* elucidated that Austria-Hungary intended to devise a comprehensive response to the declarations and objectives of the Young Turks. According to the publication, this response was to be executed through a dual strategy: either by implementing a constitution or by formally proclaiming annexation. This strategic dilemma reflects Austria-Hungary's desire to maintain control over BiH in the face of the Young Turks' aspirations for Ottoman restoration. See: "Aneksija i Turska", *Politika*, no. 1641 (August 12th, 1908): 1.

⁴⁴ The report indicates that the Young Turks Committee has repudiated both the news disseminated by certain European newspapers and the statement attributed to an unnamed member of the Committee. This statement allegedly pertained to the Ottoman Empire's demand for the return of BiH from the Great Powers. *Politika* states that: *All the Austrian newspapers had previously threatened to break off all relations with the Ottomans if such an issue was even attempted. According to them, this issue is an internal issue of the Monarchy. Now some newspapers bring with satisfaction the first denial, which means the first concession in the relations between the two empires, which will have constant reasons for similar misunderstandings.* See: "Jedan turski demant i bosansko pitanje", *Politika*, no. 1644 (August 15th, 1908): 1.

⁴⁵ "Jedan turski demant i bosansko pitanje", *Politika*, no. 1644 (August 15th, 1908): 1.

⁴⁶ In issue no. 1648, *Politika* reported that the main board of the Serbian National Organization (SNO) convened a conference to which all prominent Serbian figures were invited. This gathering aimed to consolidate Serbian political influence and coordinate a unified response to the evolving political landscape. *Politika* writes: *At that conference, it will be announced that on behalf of the Serbian people in BiH, the introduction of a constitution is requested as an urgent need of the people. Serbs distance themselves in advance from the approved constitution and election law.* Another prominent Belgrade newspaper, *Pravda*, provided coverage of the SNO meeting, highlighting that the SNO extended invitations to several distinguished individuals, notably including Jefanović and Šola. This strategic move underscores the SNO's intent to engage influential figures in deliberations crucial to shaping the Serbian political agenda. See: "Bosanci za ustav", *Politika*, no. 1648 (August 19th, 1908): 1; "Srpska narodna organizacija za ustav", *Pravda*, no. 227 (August 20th, 1908): 1.

⁴⁷ "Miriše barut!", *Politika*, no. 1660 (August 31th, 1908): 1. *We must not welcome our enemies with tambourines in hand, We must welcome them as our ancestors welcomed Germanic aggressors on the Vistula*, states *Politika*.

⁴⁸ On September 1, in issue no. 239, *Politika* published a news item titled "Introduction of the Constitution," featuring an interview with the parliamentarian Dr. Bärnreuter. In the interview, Bärnreuter discussed the likelihood that the

to the Vienna press, the Serbian and Belgrade newspapers also closely monitored the activities and decisions of Austro-Hungarian statesmen. In this context, *Politika* issue no. 1667 features an article detailing a meeting between Izvolzky and Aehrenthal. *Two statesmen discussed the situation in Turkey, the open proclamation of the constitution, the Pazar Sanjak, and Bosnia*, *Politika* reports. The paper also notes that public opinion cannot ascertain with certainty whether the two statesmen discussed BiH. Nonetheless, given the prevailing circumstances, Serbia must prepare for the possibility of the most serious developments.⁴⁹

The Serbian press also maintained a close watch on the activities of the inhabitants of BiH, particularly Serbs and Bosniaks, as well as on events occurring within the region.⁵⁰ In addition to covering events in BiH, the Serbian press also scrutinized the statements made by Serbian military officials.⁵¹ In mid-September, the Serbian press intensified its critique of the Austrian press through extensive and detailed analyses. Notably, *Mali Žurnal* engaged in a protracted response to the writings and allegations of Austrian newspapers, fostering in-depth discussions about the Berlin Treaty.⁵² *Two events, in particular, gave rise to this situation: the persistent assertion that Austria intended to annex Bosnia and the equally persistent assertion that Bulgaria was completing large and far-reaching preparations to become a kingdom. Both events would be a direct violation of the Berlin Treaty*, *Politika* remarked.⁵³

During this period, the Serbian press also published analyses concerning the Young Turks and their stance on potential changes in BiH.⁵⁴ Serbian newspapers also disseminated articles from other European press outlets, notably including favorable reports from the Russian press, such as those from *Novoye Vremya*. On September 16, *Politika* reported on developments related to BiH, which were under discussion by Austro-Hungarian delegations and had elicited significant reaction in the Russian press.⁵⁵ *The English, Turkish, Italian, and French press stood up against Austria's aspirations to poll BiH. It is becoming an unquestionable fact that Austria*

Germans would, with the necessary prudence, favorably consider the constitutional aspirations of the Bosnians. He emphasized that the implementation of self-government in the occupied provinces must be unconditional, as it is crucial to ensure that the influence of other powers is not perceived. See: "Uvođenje ustava", *Pravda*, no. 239 (September 1st, 1908): 1.

⁴⁹ "Izvolzski i Erental", *Politika*, no. 1667 (September 6th, 1908): 1. *Mali Žurnal* also covers the meeting between Izvolzky and Aehrenthal in Buhlava. The paper reports that the two statesmen exchanged views on the broader European situation and the developments within the Ottoman state, where a radical shift had taken place. See: "Bečki Communiqué", *Mali Žurnal*, no. 247 (September 4th, 1908): 2.

⁵⁰ On September 5, *Carigradski Glasnik* reported on a memorandum dated August 25. According to the newspaper, envoys representing both Bosniaks and Serbs presented their memorandums to Burian. See: "Bosna i Hercegovina", *Carigradski Glasnik*, no. 36 (September 5th, 1908): 1; On September 17, *Politika* reported news from BiH, indicating that the government had prohibited the SNO from convening in Sarajevo prior to the assembly of the Austrian delegations. *If the meeting was allowed, everyone would believe that Austria wants to resolve the issue of the constitution by agreement with Bosnians, but banning the assembly shows the exact opposite*, *Politika* comments. See: "Uoči ustava", *Politika*, no. 1677 (September 17th, 1908): 1; In issue no. 261, dated September 18, *Mali Žurnal* reports on a meeting between Izvolzky and Titoni, focusing on discussions regarding railway projects in the Balkans.

⁵¹ *Politika* reports a statement from a Serbian officer, who expresses a firm conviction that Austria will not relinquish BiH or Sanjak in the manner that is anticipated. See: "Austrija zastrašava", *Politika*, no. 1665 (September 5th, 1908): 1.

⁵² *Mali Žurnal* states: *Austrians, oppressors of BiH are talking about some charity towards Serbia. Nobody is afraid of you. If one bullet is fired at Belgrade, in three days a revolution would break out among all the Slavs in your country*. See: "Velika hajka protiv Srbije", *Mali Žurnal*, no. 249 (September 6th, 1908): 1.

⁵³ "Berlinski ugovor", *Politika*, no. 1678 (September 18th, 1908): 1

⁵⁴ *Politika* also addresses the Ottoman perspective, reporting that Ali Ahmet Riza, a leading figure among the Young Turks and editor of *Mesveret*, was interviewed by the Press. During this interview, Riza articulated the Young Turks' desire to preserve the status quo in BiH, aiming to prevent any form of annexation. See: "Mladoturci i Austrija", *Politika*, no. 1671 (September 11th, 1908): 1.

⁵⁵ "Rusi o Bosni", *Politika*, no. 1676, September 16th, 1908, p. 1; *Novoje Vremja* reported that the situation involved altering the status quo and breaching the Berlin Treaty. Additionally, *Slovo* discussed the intention to annex BiH, noting that the Geshov conflict in Istanbul was orchestrated to support this agenda, alongside an offer to Bulgaria to vote in favor of the kingdom.

can abnormally attempt annexation without seeking any consent of the Great Powers or the signatory states of the Berlin Treaty. This can be seen from the writing of English newspapers, including those close to the English government, *Politika* observes.⁵⁶

3.1. Reactions of the Serbian Press to Protests Against the Annexation and the Demonstrations in Belgrade

3.1.1. Reactions in Serbia

In the latter half of September, *Politika* persistently featured reports that strongly criticized the Monarchy. *The Serbian nation is going through one of the most critical moments*, *Politika* asserts. The same paper further claims that the Monarchy is threatening to plunder BiH.⁵⁷ *Nowadays there is not a single person in Serbia who does not think that Serbia must go to war against Austria if it starts to carry out its intention to annex BiH. It seems that even Ottomans will not allow Monarchy and Bulgaria to steal its land.*⁵⁸ *Politika* also publishes notable patriotic texts suggesting that the Serbian people are prepared to rise against the Monarchy and its ambitions.⁵⁹

At the end of September, *Politika* reported from Sarajevo on the declaration of the annexation, adding information about Vienna's plans to imprison all prominent figures in BiH.⁶⁰ *Pravda* also analyzes the annexation, issuing a call for war.⁶¹ *Only war is being preached in coffee houses. We will go to war. If it was led by Serbia alone, then that too would be a foregone defeat, but it is led by Montenegro and Bosnia. The war will be both regular and irregular. There will be large armies and small divisions, regular regiments, and guerrillas*, *Pravda* asserts in the 1685th issue.

Other Belgrade newspapers also voiced their protests against the act of annexation. In an article entitled "Open Questions," *Samouprava*, the organ of the Radical Party and the government's semi-official newspaper, asserts that the "Bosnian issue" is, in any case, more significant and consequential for Serbia than it is for the Monarchy. In an article titled "Annexation of BiH," the newspaper *Srpska Zastava*, an organ of the People's Party, emphasizes that composure and sound judgment are needed now more than ever.⁶²

In its 1685th issue, *Politika* informs its readers that the Serbian government has sent a formal note to all major powers protesting the annexation. In the note, the government highlights the Monarchy's efforts to unilaterally terminate the Berlin Treaty, thereby threatening Serbia's interests. The Serbian government concludes by demanding appropriate compensation for the country.⁶³ It also reports on the Chetniks, who fought in Serbia and Macedonia, and their decision to resist Austria, which is threatening to occupy two of the most beautiful "Serbian lands." *The Chetniks will hand over to the government their resolution that they passed at last night's meeting, and tomorrow they may head towards the Drina*, *Politika* writes.⁶⁴ *Politika* also

⁵⁶ "Bosna i delegacije", *Politika*, no. 1680 (September 20th, 1908): 1

⁵⁷ "Beogradani, otadžbina je u opasnosti", *Politika*, no. 1683 (September 23rd, 1908): 1

⁵⁸ "Srbija se oruža", *Politika*, no. 1684 (September 24th, 1908): 1.

⁵⁹ "Srbija se oruža", *Politika*, no. 1684 (September 24th, 1908): 1.

⁶⁰ On the same day. See; "Proglas aneksije", *Politika*, no. 1684 (September 24th, 1908): 3; The Monarchy undertook this action by mobilizing all of its resources, including opening all its casemates and filling them with significant figures. In Sarajevo and Mostar, all prominent local leaders and newspaper editors were detained. See: "Hapšenja u Bosni", *Politika*, no. 1685 (September 25th, 1908): 1.

⁶¹ "Proklamacija za aneksiju Bosne i Hercegovine", *Pravda*, no. 282 (September 24th, 1908): 1.

⁶² "Srpska štampa protiv aneksije", *Mali Žurnal*, no. 268 (September 24th, 1908): 1. *Pravda* writes in its article titled "A Warning for the Times" that, should the annexation of BiH occur, Serbia will find itself in a perilous situation.

⁶³ "Protest srpske vlade", *Politika*, no. 1685 (September 25th, 1908): 2.

⁶⁴ "Komite napred! ", *Politika*, no. 1685 (September 25th, 1908): 2; *Politika* also reports on the enrollment in the *Legion of the Thousand*, a unit comprised of students, young clerks, and merchants. This organization, which was limited to just one thousand volunteers, was designated to be the first to be deployed to the battlefield.

commented on reports concerning a group of Macedonian Chetniks who expressed a desire to join the volunteers.⁶⁵

Serbian newspapers also provided detailed reports from BiH. They conveyed news from the *Berlin Tageblatt*, which reported that significant riots had erupted in Sarajevo. According to these reports, the Austrian authorities were concealing the disturbances and suppressing newspaper coverage of the events.⁶⁶ *Mali Žurnal* reports on an uprising in Trebinje, noting that many Austrians from Herzegovina fled to Sarajevo in response.⁶⁷ In issue 1688, *Politika* provides a detailed account of the situation in BiH and Sarajevo, reporting widespread public dissatisfaction.⁶⁸

On September 30, the Serbian National Assembly, for the first time since the annexation, discussed its rights in BiH, as asserted by Serbian politicians. On September 27, the Montenegrin government in Cetinje protested the annexation, declaring it a breach of the Berlin Treaty. *In response to the news of the annexation, Montenegrins threw stones at the windows of the Austrian representative's office*, as reported by *Politika* in its 1688th issue.

3.1.2. The Demonstrations in Belgrade

The annexation of BiH also triggered large-scale protests in Serbia and Montenegro beginning in early October 1908. Significant demonstrations were organized in Belgrade, Cetinje, Smederevo, and Šabac. On September 23rd, *Politika* called upon all citizens of Belgrade to attend a large public meeting, which was subsequently organized on the same day.⁷⁰ The same newspaper reports that a second rally was held later that evening at the Knez Monument, where young people, merchants, and officials had planned to assemble.⁷¹ In a detailed analysis, *Politika* reports that 20,000 Belgraders assembled at the initial meeting, calling for war. *Politika* states: *At 3 pm, there were 20 thousand people in front of the National Theater and around the Prince Mihailo monument. The President of the Belgrade municipality Vulović opened the meeting with a short speech, which immediately elected him as president. Vulović suggested that merchants Milorad Pavlović, Kosta Raznić, Toša Mihailović, David Simić, and Bešion Buli be elected as a vice president.*⁷²

In issue 268, *Mali Žurnal* provides an analysis of the large public meeting held at Prince Mihailo Square. The newspaper also reports on protests by Belgraders in front of the monument and the National Theater, noting that all shops in Belgrade were closed in solidarity.⁷³

⁶⁵ "Legija smrti", *Politika*, no. 1685 (September 25th, 1908): 3; *Mali Žurnal* reports on a proclamation issued by a group of Chetnik division.

⁶⁶ "Demonstracije u Sarajevu", *Politika*, no. 1686 (September 26th, 1908): 2. *The Monarchy press now admits that the situation in BiH is very serious. In several larger towns, people began to crowd the streets, while demonstrations against the annexation broke out.* See: "Demonstracije u BiH", *Politika*, no. 1686 (September 26th, 1908): 2.

⁶⁷ "Ustanak u Hercegovini", *Mali Žurnal*, no. 272 (September 28th, 1908): 1; *Mali Žurnal* reports that an uprising has erupted in Trebinje, prompting many Austrians from Herzegovina to flee to Sarajevo. In issue 1688, *Politika* provides a detailed account of the situation in BiH and Sarajevo, indicating that the local populace is experiencing significant dissatisfaction. See: "Prvi dan aneksije u Bosni", *Politika*, no. 1688 (September 28th, 1908): 1. "U Bosni vri", *Politika*, no. 1689 (September 29th, 1908): 3.

⁶⁸ "Demonstracije u Sarajevu", *Politika*, no. 1686 (September 26th, 1908): 1.

⁶⁹ According to the Julian calendar. Beginning of October according to the Gregorian calendar.

⁷⁰ "Veliki narodni miting", *Politika*, no. 1683 (September 23rd, 1908): 1.

⁷¹ "Jučerašnje manifestacije", *Politika*, no. 1683 (September 23rd, 1908): 2.

⁷² "Miting", *Politika*, no. 1684 (September 24th, 1908): 2; On the same day, *Politika* adds that the Serbian government protested with all major powers against the Austro-Hungarian annexation. "Protest Srbije", *Politika*, no. 1684 (September 24th, 1908): 3; Also see about the protest: "Kraljevina Srbija protiv aneksije", *Mali Žurnal*, no. 269 (September 25th, 1908): 1; *Pravda* also provides information about the protest in its 282nd issue. See: "Jučerašnji miting", *Pravda*, no. 282 (September 24th, 1908): 1-2.

⁷³ According to *Mali Žurnal*, approximately 10,000 individuals gathered at the monument. This significant turnout reflects the event's considerable public interest and the monument's symbolic importance within the community; "Beograd protiv aneksije", *Mali Žurnal*, no. 268 (September 24th, 1908): 2. In the same issue, *Mali Žurnal* reported that a large crowd assembled in front of the National Theater, displaying tricolors. Notably, alongside the Serbian

Additionally, the paper features a speech by Vedislav Vulović, the president of the Belgrade municipality, who addressed the crowd from the balcony of the National Theater.⁷⁴ Similarly, *Politika* covers student protests occurring in the center of Belgrade and at Kolarac.⁷⁵

In addition to Belgrade, protests were also organized in Cetinje. On September 25, *Politika* reports that a substantial meeting took place in Cetinje, where a resolution was adopted affirming that Serbia and Montenegro would unite in defense of Serbian rights. Beyond Belgrade, similar protests were held in Kragujevac, Šabac, and Smederevo.⁷⁶

3.2.1. European Responses to the Annexation and Their Reflections in the Serbian Press

In its September 22 issue (no. 1682), *Politika* published an extensive analysis examining the situation within Austria-Hungary, the potential annexation of BiH, and the broader European reactions to these developments. The newspaper also reported on the gathering of Francis Joseph's parliaments, where a decision was to be made regarding the implementation of the annexation. Furthermore, *Politika* observes that both the Serbian government and the Austrian press lack reliable information regarding this matter.

The next important analysis is the question of the Great Powers' acceptance. Regarding the Western European press, *Politika* underscores claims concerning the declaration of the annexation. Its detailed analysis reveals that while Austria-Hungary is intent on executing the annexation, its ability to do so remains uncertain. The primary issue is the question of which country BiH should belong to, followed by the crucial matter of the Great Powers' acceptance of the annexation. *Russia has no intention of allowing annexation, as it would allow its old rival to take root in the Balkans. Italy also cannot let go of its rival and does not agree to change the situation in the Balkans, even if it receives some compensation*, *Politika* reports. Regarding the English press, *Politika* highlights that Britain is expected to oppose the annexation. *France, which is not directly interested, will join Russia and England. Turkey cannot allow a large province to be wrested. The Young Turks cannot allow this because it would mean the collapse of their regime*, *Politika* commented. On the same day, the newspaper further assesses the military capacity required for the annexation, noting that Austria-Hungary currently maintains only 35 army battalions in BiH.⁷⁷ In this manner, the Serbian press scrutinized the preparedness of the Austro-Hungarian army to withstand potential resistance, particularly armed opposition, that might arise from a unilateral declaration of annexation.

flags, a prominent Turkish flag was also present. By approximately 3 p.m., the gathering had swelled to around 20,000 individuals, reflecting the event's significant mobilizing power and the complex interplay of national and transnational symbols in the public sphere. See: "Dolazak sveta", *Mali Žurnal*, no. 268 (September 24th, 1908): 2.

⁷⁴ *Brothers, this suffering country is doomed to survive terrible events. We must defend Serbia. This did not and cannot be good for Austria. Our thoughts came true. Today or tomorrow, Austria will annex Bosnia. Austria's gluttony brought us together to protest, which is our duty. After Vulović, Ljuba Davidović, a retired minister and former president of the National Assembly of Serbia, took the floor.* See: "Vulovićeva reč", *Mali Žurnal*, no. 268 (September 24th, 1908): 2.

⁷⁵ On September 25, at 8 a.m., male and female students from all high schools attended a meeting. By 9 a.m., a crowd of 3,000 to 4,000 young individuals had assembled in front of Prince Mihailo's monument. Later, at 4 p.m., a significant youth meeting was jointly convened near Kolarac by all student clubs of the university. This sequence of events underscores the active engagement of the youth in civic matters and their ability to mobilize in substantial numbers for collective action. "Veliki omladinski miting", *Politika*, no. 1685 (September 25th, 1908): 3.

⁷⁶ "Kragujevac", *Mali Žurnal*, no. 271 (September 27th, 1908): 3; *Mali Žurnal* reported that an anti-annexation protest took place in Šabac on September 25th at 3:00 p.m., attracting approximately 5,000 participants. This demonstration highlights the widespread opposition to annexation within the region and reflects the populace's commitment to voicing their political dissent through organized public gatherings. See: "Šabac protiv aneksije", *Mali Žurnal*, no. 272 (September 28th, 1908): 1; 26 In September, a protest organized by school youth took place in Smederevo. This event exemplifies the active political engagement of the younger generation and their willingness to participate in civic discourse and express their perspectives on contemporary issues. See: "Smederevo protiv aneksije", *Mali Žurnal*, no. 274 (September 30th, 1908): 2.

⁷⁷ "Vojska u Bosni", *Politika*, no. 1682 (September 22th, 1908): 2.

The following day, *Politika* extended its analysis to Bulgaria, scrutinizing its political landscape and condemning Ferdinand for negotiating an agreement with Vienna that was perceived as antagonistic to Belgrade. The newspaper accused Bulgaria of violating the Berlin Treaty and reassured the public that the Ottomans would declare war on Bulgaria should it seek independence. In this context, *Politika* also reported on the Ottoman mobilization in response to the evolving geopolitical situation.⁷⁸ On the same day, *Politika* reported that the official announcement of the annexation of BiH was scheduled for October 7.⁷⁹ In contrast, *Mali Žurnal* reports that the Austro-Hungarian parliaments are set to conduct a special deliberation on BiH before reaching any final decision.⁸⁰

In September, *Politika* focused its attention on the English press, reflecting its vigorous opposition to the actions of Vienna. The newspaper highlighted the English press's robust critique of Austro-Hungarian maneuvers, underscoring its significant role in shaping public discourse on the issue. *All the English press wrote against Austria's act. The English press writes in such a tone that Serbia can count on the sympathy of the great English people as soon as it goes to war against Austria*, as *Politika* emphasizes. The newspaper also referenced specific articles from the most widely circulated English newspapers. *The Morning Post emphasizes that by annexing Bosnia, Austria-Hungary did something far worse than any country had ever done in the darkest times of the Middle Ages. The Standard says that the annexation of BiH must not be allowed. The Daily Chronicle writes that Austria is an ugly European. The Times writes that the annexation of Bosnia will undoubtedly raise questions that can be very dangerous for European peace and have great and serious consequences*, *Politika* commented.⁸¹

Other Serbian newspapers, notably *Mali Žurnal*, also tracked developments reported by the English press. This newspaper provided extensive analyses and covered a range of reports from leading British publications. *Mali Žurnal* specifically highlighted that the British government was unlikely to acknowledge any power's right to breach the Treaty of Berlin without the consent of the other signatories, particularly the Ottoman Empire. *Therefore, England would not recognize the Kingdom of Bulgaria or the annexation of Bosnia until the Ottomans and other powers recognized it*.⁸² Simultaneously, *Politika* underscores that prior to the announcement of the annexation reaching London, the British government had already reminded Austria-Hungary of its obligations under the Treaty of London (1871), to which Austria-Hungary was a signatory.⁸³ *Accordingly, the English ambassador in Vienna announced that the British government would not allow violations of the Berlin Treaty or any changes to its text without the prior consent of the other powers*.⁸⁴

⁷⁸ "Ratni izgledi", *Politika*, no. 1684 (September 24th, 1908): 2. On the same day, *Politika* brings the news that the annexation will be announced on October 8. *Mali Žurnal*, on the other hand, writes that the Austro-Hungarian parliaments will hold a special discussion on Bosnia, but not on annexation, but on internal land administration. On the same day, *Politika* reported that the formal announcement of the annexation was scheduled for October 8. In contrast, *Mali Žurnal* indicated that the Austro-Hungarian parliaments would conduct a special session focused on BiH, not to address annexation, but rather to discuss issues concerning internal land administration. This divergence in reporting highlights differing emphases on political developments and their potential implications. See: "Aneksije", *Politika*, no. 1684 (September 24th, 1908): 2. "Bosansko pitanje", *Mali Žurnal*, no. 268 (September 24th, 1908): 1.

⁷⁹ "Aneksije", *Politika*, no. 1684 (September 24th, 1908): 2.

⁸⁰ Not on annexation but on internal land administration. See: "Bosansko pitanje", *Mali Žurnal*, no. 268 (September 24th, 1908): 1.

⁸¹ "Šta veli Engleska?", *Politika*, no. 1684 (September 24th, 1908): 2.

⁸² "Izjava engleske vlade", *Mali Žurnal*, no. 268 (September 24th, 1908): 3.

⁸³ It is explicitly stipulated that no country shall contravene the provisions of the treaty without first securing the consent of all signatory powers. This requirement underscores the collective agreement and mutual assent that underpin the treaty's implementation and enforcement.

⁸⁴ "Engleska protiv aneksije", *Politika*, no. 1686 (September 26th, 1908): 1. *Mali Žurnal* further reports that the British government notified the Austro-Hungarian representative in London upon receipt of a communication from the

At the beginning of October, *Mali Žurnal* also remarked on the intense indignation expressed by England regarding Austria-Hungary's actions. *Neither the government nor the press misses a single opportunity not to condemn and protest against the illegal act of Austria. In his speech, Secretary of State Gray said that Europe wants disarmament, but it cannot be expected that spending on weapons will be reduced because Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria have brazenly shown how treaties can be trampled even without the consent of the other signatory powers.*⁸⁵ The same publication further notes that the English press has been unrelenting in its severe criticism of Austria-Hungary for its actions, and has similarly reproached Bulgaria with harsh condemnation.

In addition to monitoring the political reactions in England, the Serbian press also closely tracked developments in France. *Some newspapers report from Paris that the relevant political circles will not allow the annexation. In this regard, France has joined forces with England, Russia, and Italy, as highlighted by Mali Žurnal in issue no. 268.*⁸⁶ *Mali Žurnal* further reports the French government's firm rejection of the annexation.⁸⁷ *Negotiations are underway in Paris between the French Minister of Foreign Affairs and representatives of England, Serbia, Russia, Italy, and Greece on the Eastern Question and the program for the international conference, as reported by Mali Žurnal.*⁸⁸

During this period, the Serbian press levied considerable criticism against Russia's position and political maneuvers. *The Serbian press was disappointed by Russia's weak resistance. Political circles and the Russian government agreed to the annexation, but the Tsar did not, writes Mali Žurnal.*⁸⁹ *Politika* reports on the Serbian student protests taking place in Moscow. *In Moscow, Serbian students held an assembly where it was decided to protest against the annexation. At the same time, the government in Serbia and Cetinje was informed by telegraph that the Serbian students were ready to give their lives for the good of the fatherland.*⁹⁰ Nonetheless, certain Russian newspapers have published vehement critiques of the annexation, a development that *Politika* duly reports. *Novoje Vremja* calls the annexation a criminal crime. *Slovo* writes that Austria will declare annexation and that Prince Ferdinand is participating in it, recognizing the annexation, analyzes *Mali Žurnal*.⁹¹ *Carigradski Glasnik* reported that the situation had become increasingly complex, leading Russian newspapers to concentrate their coverage on BiH.⁹² Additionally, *Pravda* conveyed that the Russian government publication *Rossiia* had denounced the annexation as a significant breach of the Berlin Treaty. *This violation is considered by Russia as the reason why it does not adhere to the agreement.*⁹³

In addition to monitoring developments in England, France, and Russia, the Serbian press also meticulously tracked the unfolding events within the Ottoman Empire. *Grand Vezir Kamil*

Austro-Hungarian government regarding the annexation. The British government unequivocally stated that it could not, and would not, endorse any actions that would contravene the Berlin Agreement. It emphasized that no modifications to the agreement could be sanctioned without the consent of all signatory powers, thereby reaffirming the necessity of collective approval for any changes. See: "Odgovor Engleske na notu Austrougarske vlade", *Mali Žurnal*, no. 271 (September 27th, 1908): 1. *Mali Žurnal* also reported *Reuters* news about the telegraphic announcement of the English government. See: "Engleska protiv aneksije", *Mali Žurnal*, no. 271 (September 27th, 1908): 1.

⁸⁵ "Engleska protiv Austrije", *Mali Žurnal*, no. 271 (September 27th, 1908): 2.

⁸⁶ "Držanje Francuske", *Mali Žurnal*, no. 268 (September 24th, 1908): 1.

⁸⁷ "Because it cares about the progress of constitutional of the Ottoman Empire", *Mali Žurnal* states. See: "Držanje Francuske", *Mali Žurnal*, no. 268 (September 24th, 1908): 3.

⁸⁸ "Dogovaranje u Parizu", *Mali Žurnal*, no. 271 (September 27th, 1908): 2.

⁸⁹ "Držanje Rusije", *Mali Žurnal*, no. 268 (September 24th, 1908): 3.

⁹⁰ "Za rat!", *Politika Gazetesi*, no. 1685 (September 25th, 1908): 2.

⁹¹ "Ruska štampa o aneksiji", *Mali Žurnal*, no. 269 (September 25th, 1908): 2.

⁹² On September 13, the Russian newspaper *Novoje Vreme* analyzed BiH and the situation in this country since the transition of the Vienna Treaty. See: "Bosna i Hercegovina", *Carigradski Glasnik*, no. 39 (September 26th, 1908): 3.

⁹³ "Rusija o aneksiji", *Pravda*, no. 264 (September 26th, 1908): 3.

Pasha claimed that there could be no talk of negotiations between Ottomans and the Monarchy on the annexation. Turkey will ask for Bosnia back, as reported by *Mali Žurnal*.⁹⁴ *Pravda* reports that an Austrian deputy submitted a formal note regarding the annexation of BiH to the Sublime Porte. According to *Pravda*, the note references both the Berlin Treaty and the Turkish Convention, which pertain to the occupation of BiH and the Sanjak.⁹⁵ *Mali Žurnal* also reports significant public outrage towards Austria-Hungary. *Many newspapers no longer hide their justified anger against the biggest Balkan enemy. The newspaper Millet is especially fierce, which points out that Europe has trembled before the Turks twice so far. The Turks came under Vienna and their grandchildren will fight with the same courage.*⁹⁶ The Serbian press reported that, at its most recent session, the Council of Ministers resolved to postpone the formal declaration of BiH's annexation and Bulgaria's independence by two or three days. This delay was strategically intended to gauge the reactions of the major powers, particularly the Ottomans, regarding the forthcoming decisions.⁹⁷

Throughout October, the Serbian press consistently underscored Montenegro's supportive stance towards Serbia. *Montenegro expressed its attitude towards annexation and made some moves. It is known that according to Article 29 of the Berlin Treaty, Austria has the right to keep its police in the Montenegrin coastal cities of Bar and Ulcinj and that Montenegro may not build a railway except in agreement with Austria. Montenegro now declares that the obligations no longer apply to it when Austria tears up the Berlin Treaty, Politika reports.*⁹⁸ According to the Belgrade press, public sentiment in Cetinje mirrors that of Belgrade, with Montenegrins resolutely opposed to any proclamation of the annexation of BiH. *If Austria annexes Bosnia, Serbia will enter the war at the same time, followed by Montenegro, Politika writes.*⁹⁹ Foreign newspapers report that Montenegrin Prince Nikola dispatched a communication to King Petar, indicating that upon the Serbian army's crossing of the Drina River, he would advance into Herzegovina with his forces, as detailed by *Mali Žurnal*.¹⁰⁰

The Serbian press meticulously tracked developments within Austria-Hungary, with Belgrade newspapers noting that, before the commencement of the delegation session, there was a marked divergence of opinions among the delegates concerning the annexation of BiH. *There is especially indignation among the South Slavic delegates who vigorously protested what was mentioned in the proclamation because the appeal was proclaimed also concerning some rights that the Hungarians assert in Bosnia, Mali Žurnal writes.*¹⁰¹ On September 27 in Vienna, the Austrian delegations for foreign affairs continued their deliberations on the annexation issue. *Mali Žurnal* highlights that Delegate Šusterić, representing the South Slav faction, expressed support for the annexation, asserting that its progression would serve both the interests of the South Slavs and the strategic objectives of the monarchy and the dynasty.¹⁰²

In addition to the developments in Austria-Hungary, the Serbian press also closely monitored Italian newspapers, which reported extensively on the annexation and its ramifications for the Balkans. *Tribune* examined the unfolding events, asserting that they would not disrupt the peace. *L'Italie* critiqued the actions of Austria and Bulgaria, suggesting that these moves merely reconfigured existing arrangements rather than introducing entirely new

⁹⁴ "Ćamil paša o bosanskom pitanju", *Mali Žurnal*, no. 268 (September 24th, 1908): 3.

⁹⁵ Sanjak of Novi Pazar.

⁹⁶ "Raspoloženje u Carigradu", *Mali Žurnal*, no. 271 (September 27th, 1908): 2.

⁹⁷ "Držanje Turske", *Mali Žurnal*, no. 271 (September 27th, 1908): 2; *Mali Žurnal* reports that the Ottoman government dispatched a formal note requesting the convening of a conference. This diplomatic initiative reflects the Ottomans' intent to engage in formal negotiations and address pertinent issues through a structured deliberative process. See: "Turska protestvuje", *Mali Žurnal*, no. 271 (September 27th, 1908): 3.

⁹⁸ "Prvi korak Crne Gore", *Politika*, no. 1685 (September 25th, 1908): 2.

⁹⁹ "Crna Gora i rat", *Politika*, no. 1683 (September 23th, 1908): 1.

¹⁰⁰ "Knez Nikola kralju Petru", *Mali Žurnal*, no. 271 (September 27th, 1908): 1.

¹⁰¹ "Delegacije o aneksiji", *Mali Žurnal*, no. 271 (September 27th, 1908): 1.

¹⁰² "Delegacije o aneksiji", *Mali Žurnal*, no. 271 (September 27th, 1908): 2.

dynamics, and emphasized that recent agreements among the Great Powers provided a guarantee for maintaining peace. *Reggione* supported this view, arguing that Austrian actions merely formalized what had already been in practice. In contrast, *Osservatore* contended that Bulgaria's actions, while seemingly assertive, were effectively orchestrated by the Monarchy, which was the primary violator of the Berlin Treaty through its annexation of BiH. *Popolo Romano* further argued that these actions fundamentally altered the Eastern Question and arbitrarily breached the signed agreements, although it posited that these issues had likely been the subject of prior diplomatic discussions among European statesmen.¹⁰³

3.2.2. Repercussions of the Proposed European Congress in the Serbian Press

Immediately following the annexation, the Serbian press disseminated rumors and reports regarding the potential convening of a European congress to address the issue of BiH. On September 25, *Politika* analyzed the Russian diplomatic correspondence. This note, delivered to the Serbian Minister of Foreign Affairs, conveyed Russia's disapproval of Austria's breach of the Berlin Treaty through the annexation of BiH. Additionally, it revealed that the Russian government had proposed a conference of the Great Powers to resolve the matter.¹⁰⁴

The following day, *Politika* reported that a Congress of the Great Powers was scheduled to convene.¹⁰⁵ On September 28, *Politika* published a comprehensive analysis of the forthcoming Congress of the Great Powers. Drawing from diplomatic sources, the newspaper provided crucial insights into the congress's agenda. According to *Politika*, the congress is indeed set to take place; however, it is anticipated that the adverse effects stemming from the annexation of BiH will remain unaddressed. The analysis reveals that Britain has consented to the congress under the condition that the agenda is established in advance, a stance echoed by Rome.¹⁰⁶ This arrangement suggests that the congress will primarily aim to solidify the new status quo in Bosnia and Herzegovina, thus reinforcing the territorial changes imposed by the annexation. In compensation, Montenegro is expected to be granted permission to navigate the Adriatic Sea under its own flag, while Russia is to be granted unobstructed passage from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean. Additionally, Serbia is set to gain the right to establish a railway connection to the Adriatic Sea. *Politika* concludes that, amid these developments, the sole positive outcome for Serbia is the acquisition of the right to construct the Adriatic railway.¹⁰⁷

4. Responses to the Bosnian Annexation: The Serbian Press from November 1908 to March 1909

Throughout October, Serbian newspapers persistently covered developments from Istanbul and other Serbian cities, focusing particularly on the ongoing demonstrations. By mid-October, *Politika* reported on the widespread protests against Austria-Hungary within the Ottoman Empire, with particular emphasis on the significant demonstrations in Istanbul. Additionally, the newspaper highlighted the widespread boycott of Austro-Hungarian goods within the country.¹⁰⁸ The same newspaper also reports on the protests against Bulgarian goods that occurred in Thessaloniki.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, *Carigradski Glasnik* provides an in-depth

¹⁰³ "Talijanska štampa o aneksiji", *Mali Žurnal*, no. 271 (September 27th, 1908): 2.

¹⁰⁴ "Kongres velikih sila", *Politika*, no. 1685 (September 25th, 1908): 2.

¹⁰⁵ "Kongres velikih sila", *Politika*, no. 1686 (September 26th, 1908): 1. The congress would discuss the amendment of the Berlin Treaty, states *Politika*.

¹⁰⁶ Rastović Aleksandar, *Štampa Velike Britanije o Srbiji za vreme aneksije Bosne i Hercegovine*, *Zbornik Matice srpske za istoriju*, 69/70 (2004), p. 119-136.

¹⁰⁷ See: "Program kongresa", *Politika*, no. 1688 (September 28th, 1908): 1; *Many of our despondents think that Europe will give us a congress of great powers. Fortunately, there are not many such cowards in our country, but unfortunately, the current government also belongs to that type. The congress will indeed take place, but that congress will not improve the desperate situation that Serbia was brought into by annexation. We claimed it from the beginning and we have now received confirmation in the very attitude of the Great Powers.*

¹⁰⁸ "Turci protiv Austrije", *Politika*, no. 1691 (October 1st, 1908): 1.

¹⁰⁹ "Turci protiv Austrije", *Politika*, no. 1695 (October 5th, 1908): 2.

account of the ongoing demonstrations in Belgrade.¹¹⁰ *Mali Žurnal* further emphasizes the women's demonstrations held in front of the Prince Mihailo Monument in the Serbian capital, whereas *Carigradski Glasnik* provides a detailed account of the broader manifestations occurring within the same city.¹¹¹ In addition to the coverage of Belgrade, *Mali Žurnal* reported on the protests occurring in Soko Banja. Furthermore, *Politika* provided updates from BiH, detailing the proclamations made by Bosnian politicians at the outset of October.¹¹²

In mid-October, the press coverage was predominantly centered on Austro-Hungarian diplomatic activities. During this period, *Politika* reported that Pallavicini¹¹³, the Austro-Hungarian representative in Istanbul, had commenced negotiations with the Ottoman authorities regarding the formal recognition of the annexation. Additionally, the newspaper highlighted that the Russian government was in the process of preparing a formal note on the matter.¹¹⁴ During this period, Serbian newspapers continued to provide updates on the prospect of a potential international conference. Detailed analyses were conducted regarding the proposed annexation program and the strategic objectives of the Great Powers. However, by mid-November, *Politika* reported that the anticipated conference would not be convened.¹¹⁵ *Politika* attributes the failure to convene the conference to Russia's insistence on listing the issue of BiH as a distinct item on the agenda. Austria-Hungary, foreseeing that such a request would not be accommodated, opposed this proposal, thus contributing to the ultimate dissolution of the conference plans.¹¹⁶

Throughout November, according to the Julian calendar¹¹⁷, Serbian newspapers persistently covered Serbian resistance to Austro-Hungarian policy. In addition to reporting on Serbian opposition, these newspapers also detailed the stances of Italy, Russia, Ottomans, and France against the Austro-Hungarian annexation and broader strategic moves. Concurrently, in mid-November, the Italian Parliament engaged in an extensive debate regarding its policy in the Balkans, with a particular focus on the recent annexation.¹¹⁸ During the same period, *Pravda* reported on Alibeg Firdus's¹¹⁹ departure to Istanbul. Concurrently, *Carigradski Glasnik* provided extensive coverage of BiH in issues 45, 46, and 47, offering detailed accounts of the annexation and its severe repercussions.¹²⁰

In December, newspapers maintained their focus on the widespread opposition to the annexation. *Politika*, in issue no. 1752, reported on a speech delivered by Géza Polónyi in the Hungarian Parliament, where he vocally opposed the annexation.¹²¹ During the budget debate in the Hungarian Parliament, Lajos Holo, a prominent member of the Hungarian Independent Party, delivered a notable speech that was prominently featured in the press. In his address, Holo expressed strong opposition to the annexation of BiH, reported by *Politika* in issue no.

¹¹⁰ "Srbija protiv aneksije", *Carigradski Glasnik*, no. 40 (October 3rd, 1908): 2.

¹¹¹ "Srpkinje protiv aneksije", *Mali Žurnal*, no. 287 (October 13th, 1908): 1; "Srbija protiv aneksije", *Carigradski Glasnik*, no. 42 (October 17th, 1908): 2.

¹¹² "Proklamacija Bosanaca", *Politika*, no. 1694 (October 4th 1908): 1; For news about the rebellion, see: "Bosanci se bune", *Mali Žurnal*, no. 281 (October 7th, 1908): 3; For news about the protests in Sokobanja, see: "Sokobančani protiv aneksije", *Mali Žurnal*, no. 282 (October 8th, 1908): 2.

¹¹³ Marquess Johann von Pallavicini was an Austro-Hungarian nobleman and diplomat, notably serving as ambassador.

¹¹⁴ Declaring that Russia does not recognize the annexation. See: "Završetak bojkota", *Politika*, no. 1699 (October 9th, 1908): 1; "Rusija protiv aneksije", *Politika*, no. 1712 (October 22th, 1908): 1; "Rusija ne priznaje aneksiju", *Mali Žurnal*, no. 296 (October 22th, 1908): 1.

¹¹⁵ *Politika* in issues no. 1682, 1693, 1696, 1710; *Mali Žurnal* in issue no. 277, *Pravda* in issues no. 282, 289.

¹¹⁶ "Autonomija Bosne", *Politika*, no. 1717 (October 27th, 1908): 2.

¹¹⁷ Mid-November to mid-December.

¹¹⁸ "Titoni i aneksija", *Politika*, no. 1722 (November 1st, 1908): 1.

¹¹⁹ Bosniak politician, leader of MNO organization.

¹²⁰ "Aliaga Firdus u Carigradu", *Pravda*, no. 301 (November 3rd, 1908): 1. *Politika* emphasized that the Turks were against annexation, but so were the French and the Russians. See: "Francuska i aneksija", *Politika*, no. 1735 (November 14th, 1908): 1; Rusi protiv aneksije, *Politika*, no. 1737 (November 16th, 1908): 1.

¹²¹ "Protiv aneksije", *Politika*, no. 1752 (December 1st, 1908): 1.

1753. Meanwhile *Carigradski Glasnik* published a series of articles detailing the boycott of Austro-Hungarian goods in the Ottoman Empire as well as the ramifications of the annexation of both BiH and Serbia. In December 1908, the press also resumed coverage of the ongoing negotiations. *Politika* and *Mali Žurnal* reported that Austria-Hungary had proposed a compensation of 2.5 million lira to the Ottomans, an offer which was subsequently rejected.¹²²

At the outset of January 1909, *Politika* reported that Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire were on the verge of reaching a nearly final agreement.¹²³ According to *Politika*, in issue no. 1783, following the conclusion of negotiations with the Ottoman Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy extended an offer to enter into discussions with Serbia. However, *the news about the agreement is wrong, the negotiations between Austria and the Ottomans are still ongoing. The Council of Ministers does not want to easily agree to all points of the agreement*, *Politika* writes on January 5, 1909.

Another significant Belgrade publication, *Pravda*, also provides an analysis of the ongoing negotiations, observing that the negotiators are endeavoring to broker a peaceful resolution between Serbia and the Austro-Hungaria.¹²⁴ On January 7, in issue No. 7, the same newspaper reports that several prominent Viennese newspapers have confirmed the signing of the protocol regarding the Turkish-Austrian agreement in Istanbul on January 5. This protocol was subsequently dispatched to the Viennese government for ratification. The report further notes that the negotiations have concluded, and Vienna is now preparing to issue an ultimatum to Belgrade.¹²⁵ In issue no. 1825, dated February 14, *Politika* provides a detailed account of the Turkish-Austrian agreement, noting that while Russia has consented to the terms, Serbia remains opposed.

Following a period of extensive and inconclusive reports regarding numerous negotiations, *Politika*, in issue no. 1842 dated March 3, reported that Serbia had submitted a formal response to the Austro-Hungaria, explicitly rejecting the recognition of the annexation.¹²⁶ The rejection of the agreement and refusal to acknowledge the annexation prompted a series of definitive actions by Vienna. Accordingly, on March 6, *Politika* reported the mobilization of the Austro-Hungarian army. Following several days of heightened diplomatic tension, a settlement was reached between Russia and the Ottomans, and an agreement was also finalized between Britain and Austria. Consequently, on March 19, in issue no. 1858, *Politika* conveyed to the Serbian public that Serbia would ultimately acquiesce to the annexation. In its commentary, *Politika* remarked that the issue was resolved, with Serbia acknowledging the annexation.¹²⁷ The Serbian government's decision to formally recognize the Austro-Hungarian annexation of BiH marked a significant shift in regional diplomatic dynamics and brought an end to the intensive media coverage and public debate surrounding the annexation.

With the Serbian government's recognition of the Austro-Hungarian annexation of BiH, the news coverage and public discourse surrounding the issue effectively subsided. This decision marked a significant turning point in the Balkan political landscape and signaled the end of a period of heightened regional tension and diplomatic maneuvering.

¹²² "Bojkoti", *Carigradski Glasnik*, no. 49 (December 5th, 1908): 1. "Odbijen predlog", *Mali Žurnal*, no. 368 (December 30th, 1908): 1.

¹²³ "Još nije završeno", *Politika*, no. 1782 (January 2nd, 1909): 1.

¹²⁴ "Sporazum između Srbije i Austrougarske", *Pravda*, no. 5 (January 5th, 1909): 1.

¹²⁵ "Tursko-austrijska pogodba završena", *Pravda*, no. 39 (February 8th, 1909): 1; "Austrougarska šalje ultimatum Srbiji", *Pravda*, no. 40 (February 9th, 1909): 1.

¹²⁶ "Nova situacija", *Politika*, no. 1842 (March 3rd, 1909): 1.

¹²⁷ "Svršeno je", *Politika*, no. 1858 (March 19th, 1909): 1.

Conclusion

The annexation of BiH in 1908 was a significant political event that provoked intense reactions in the Serbian press, holding the attention of the public and politicians until its diplomatic resolution in the spring of 1909. This crisis further strained the already tense relations between Austria-Hungary and Serbia, sparking a wave of nationalist sentiment in both societies. Serbian journalists and intellectuals seized the opportunity to criticize the imperialist ambitions of Austria-Hungary while simultaneously calling for the unity of the Balkan nations against a common enemy. The issue of the annexation of BiH not only tested the diplomatic capacities of European powers but also reshaped the political landscape of the Balkans, laying the groundwork for future conflicts in this turbulent region.

The recognition of annexation came after a series of complex negotiations and diplomatic efforts involving major European powers. Initially, Serbia had staunchly opposed the annexation, leveraging international support and regional discontent to resist the Austro-Hungarian consolidation of BiH. The Serbian press, including notable newspapers, had played a crucial role in articulating and amplifying this opposition, reflecting broader national sentiments and contributing to the discourse on Balkan geopolitics.

However, as meticulously documented in newspaper reports, the diplomatic landscape underwent a significant transformation in early 1909. The mobilization of the Austro-Hungarian army, combined with the strategic agreements reached between major powers such as Russia, Ottomans, and Britain, altered the dynamics of the conflict. The successful negotiation of these agreements by Vienna, which included concessions to Ottomans and compromises with other European powers, eventually compelled Serbia to reconsider its position.

Between August 1908 and March 1909, the Serbian press was singularly preoccupied with the unfolding events in BiH. This period was marked by a concentrated focus on several key aspects: the parliamentary situation within BiH, the potential consequences of annexation, the state of the Serbian community and its responses, as well as the political maneuvers of Serbian politicians. The discourse extended to include the actions and official political objectives of the Serbian government. Major Serbian newspapers, such as *Politika*, *Pravda*, and *Mali Žurnal*, which were published in Belgrade, prominently featured coverage of BiH during the annexation crisis. Similarly, Serbian newspapers based abroad also dedicated significant coverage to developments in BiH. This extensive media coverage reflected the centrality of the BiH issue in Serbian public life and the pervasive impact of the annexation crisis on Serbian political and social discourse.

Additionally, the Serbian press provided its readers with comprehensive analyses and reports from major European capitals, including London, Vienna, Istanbul, Paris, Petrograd, and Rome. Notably, however, the Serbian press scarcely covered developments from Berlin. This omission can be attributed to Berlin's unequivocal support for Vienna's political maneuvers regarding the annexation of BiH. The alignment of Berlin with Vienna's stance significantly diminished the perceived relevance of German perspectives in the Serbian press's narrative, thereby limiting the coverage of news emanating from Berlin.

Since early August 1908, when rumors and reports regarding the potential annexation of BiH began to circulate, the Serbian press persistently criticized Austria-Hungary and its policies. The press framed Austria-Hungary's actions as an assault on the autonomy and dignity of the Bosnian people, characterizing the annexation as a severe imposition of authoritarian control that oppressed and subjugated the local population. This relentless critique by the Serbian media cultivated a deeply negative perception of Austria-Hungary among its readers, establishing a narrative of imperial overreach and injustice that resonated throughout the latter part of the summer and into the autumn of 1908.

The Serbian press responded to news emanating from Vienna regarding the alteration of BiH's legal status with substantial skepticism and criticism. The media portrayed the Austro-Hungarian administration in BiH as an exemplar of poor governance, highlighting its alleged shortcomings and failures. In addition, the Serbian press accused the local Bosnian government and administrative bodies of systematic mistreatment of Serbs, particularly targeting their political representatives and parties. Attacks on the Serbian National Organization (SNO), as the predominant and most influential political faction among the Serbs in the region, were especially criticized. The press's portrayal thus reinforced a narrative of administrative incompetence and political disenfranchisement, contributing to the broader perception of the annexation as an act of oppressive misrule.

In its August editions, the Serbian press explicitly highlighted the significance of Istanbul in the context of the Bosnian Question, underscoring that BiH remained under the sultan's sovereignty. Concurrently, during August and September, the Serbian press rigorously examined and critiqued the stances of the Great Powers, particularly those of London, Petrograd, and Paris. The analysis clearly articulated a deviation from any potential endorsement of the annexation by these capitals, reflecting a deep-seated skepticism regarding the international legitimacy and political implications of Austria-Hungary's actions in the region.

Consequently, following the announcement of the annexation, the Serbian press provided its readers with detailed accounts of the perspectives held by the British, Russian, French, and Turkish governments concerning the annexation. Each issue prominently featured the opposition of the Great Powers to Austria-Hungary's actions, alongside a critical examination of Bulgarian policies. During this period, the Serbian press meticulously documented the daily responses from Turkish, French, Italian, and British media outlets in their opposition to the annexation. In reaction to the vitriolic critiques from Austrian newspapers, the Serbian press mounted vigorous rebuttals, offering extensive historical analyses that traced conflicts as far back as the Slavic-Germanic disputes on the Vistula River.

Following the announcement of the annexation, the Serbian press meticulously chronicled and reported on the protests occurring in Belgrade, Šabac, Smederevo, and Cetinje, providing daily updates on these demonstrations. Concurrently, the press disseminated a range of unverified and often erroneous reports regarding uprisings within BiH. It also covered the mobilization of Chetnik units prepared to intervene in Bosnia, as well as the formation of student-led militias, both of which served to bolster national morale among the Serbian populace. Additionally, the Serbian media fervently reported on the prospects of a forthcoming European congress, emphasizing the anticipated support of the Great Powers for Serbia and thereby reinforcing the country's political and diplomatic aspirations.

At the dawn of 1909, the Serbian press experienced a notable shift in its coverage. With the initiation of direct negotiations between the major European powers, reports on the prospect of a congress began to diminish, giving way to more focused analyses of the diplomatic dialogues between Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire. The conclusion of these negotiations was met with palpable disillusionment in Belgrade's media. By March, this sense of discontent deepened as negotiations between Serbia and Austria-Hungary commenced, revealing the extent of frustration felt by Serbian reporters. The formal recognition of the annexation by Serbia marked a significant turning point in the press's engagement with the Bosnian issue. The once vigorous and daily reporting on BiH gradually subsided, reflecting the broader shift in political focus. This reduction in coverage underscored a transition from intense nationalistic fervor to the pragmatic realities of a diplomatic settlement.

The Serbian press played a pivotal role in shaping public opinion throughout the crisis. Its extensive and often sensationalized reporting had galvanized public sentiment, fostering an atmosphere ripe for outrage and demands for decisive action. By mobilizing popular support

and articulating vehement critiques of both Austria-Hungary and the international community, the press significantly influenced the Serbian public's responses and expectations. In summary, while the end of the annexation crisis marked a decline in the press's daily scrutiny, the period demonstrated the profound impact of media on national consciousness and political dynamics in early 20th-century Serbia.

The cessation of reporting on the annexation underscores the profound impact that political agreements and the delicate equilibrium of power exert on the shaping of both regional and international discourse. This transition from active resistance to formal recognition highlights the fluid and dynamic nature of diplomatic relations, illustrating how international negotiations can profoundly influence national policies and public sentiment.

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