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BRITISH PRESS COVERAGE OF SERBIA 1890–1895 (BASED ON REPORTS OF THE SERBIAN LEGATION IN LONDON)

Abstract: This paper presents the attitude of the leading English newspapers towards Serbia and the Serbian people in the last decade of the 19th century based on archival materials – reports of Serbian diplomats in London. These diplomats reported almost every day to the Government and Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the British press coverage of Serbia.

Keywords: British press, London, Serbia, Serbs, Čedomilj Mijatović, Serbian Legation.

In the 19th century, British policy regarding the Balkans was based on two main postulates. The first was to prevent Russian presence in the Balkan Peninsula. The second was to avert the creation of a large Slavic state with a federal or confederal system of government, which would be a “dangerous tool” for exerting Russian influence and interests in Southeast Europe.¹ These two complementary principles were founded on the prevailing doctrine of Russophobia, which permeated the policy and public opinion in the United Kingdom starting from the 1830s, whose main promoter was the controversial diplomat and actual creator of British policy in the Balkans, David Urquhart, an ardent Turkophile. Russian historian Elena Kudravceva called Urquhart as pathological russophobe.² After 1878, the United Kingdom started to apply another principle regarding the Balkans – preservation of the status quo reached at the Congress of Berlin, which in essence entailed keeping Russia as far from the Balkans as possible.³

After 1878, the United Kingdom protected its geostrategic interests in Southeast Europe most efficiently via its ally, Austria-Hungary, which in those years became the

¹ A. Растовић, *Велика Британија и Србија 1903–1914*, Београд 2005, 41.

² Е. П. Кудрявцева, *Русские на Босфоре. Российское посольство в Константинополе в первой половине XIX века*, Москва 2010, 194.

³ А. Растовић, *Велика Британија и Србија 1903–1914*, 41.

principal decision-maker in the Balkans and monitor of implementation of decisions made at the Congress of Berlin. Even after 1878, London largely mistrusted Serbia, always seeing it as a potential ally of Russia, even though it became entirely linked to Austria-Hungary after 1881, both in its domestic and foreign policies.

In the 1890s, the British public, and in particular its press, became increasingly interested in events in Serbia, which had by then still been unknown to the average British citizen. One should keep in mind that in the latter half of the 19th century, the English press had a strong, and perhaps even decisive influence in the shaping of not only the public opinion in the country, but also of the official positions of the Foreign Office and the Government as a whole.⁴ British press historian Alan Lee rightfully claimed that newspapers had become the most significant individual means of communicating ideas in the United Kingdom. Therefore, the press played a decisive integrative role in Late Victorian and Edwardian eras in the United Kingdom – it was a powerful brains trust of the time.⁵

Starting from 1890, i.e. in the period of the rise and flourishing of British journalism, Serbia-related topics became increasingly prevalent in the British press, and may be classified into several broad categories (Serbian foreign policy after gaining independence, Serbia and European powers, with special emphasis on relations with Austria-Hungary and Russia, Serbia and its neighbours, Serbia's position vis-à-vis the creation of a large Slavic state in the Balkans, Serbia and the Balkan Alliance, domestic political situation, political crises and struggle between political parties, Serbian rulers Milan and Aleksandar Obrenović, attitude of Serbian authorities towards Queen Natalija Obrenović, the idea of Greater Serbia, Serbia in relation to the Macedonian and Albanian questions, the situation in the Kosovo Vilayet, Serbian economy, loans and trade agreements, activities of cultural and educational organisations).

In the 1890s, the Serbian Government was regularly informed about the great interest of the British press in events in Serbia, by its diplomatic representatives in London, specifically Aleksandar Jovičić, chargé d'affaires e. p. at the Serbian Legation, who sent articles between 1890 and 1895, and Čedomilj Mijatović, Serbian Ambassador, who reported on the press coverage in 1895. Mijatović not only reported regularly on the attitude of the British press towards Serbia and the Serbian Question, but he also often wrote for prominent newspapers himself, most frequently comments and editorials. It is interesting to note that in 1892 and 1893, together with his wife Elodie Lawton, he regularly wrote and spread the truth about Serbs and Serbia in a new magazine *Eastern and Western Review*. Unfortunately, the printing of the magazine stopped in late 1893.⁶ In those five years, they sent over a hundred

⁴ P. M. Kennedy, *The Realities Behind Diplomacy: Background Influences on British External Policy 1862–1880*, London 1996, 52.

⁵ J. O. Baylen, *The British Press 1861–1918*, ed. By D. Griffiths, *The Encyclopedia of the British Press 1422–1992*, London 1992, 33.

⁶ С. Марковић, *Гроф Чедомилъ Мијатовић. Викторијанац међу Србима*, Београд 2006, 199–200.

reports on the writing of newspapers in the country, sending entire articles or excerpts along with their own comments. They often reacted by denials, announcements and communiqués to numerous untruths and biased information on Serbia and the Serbian people disseminated by British journalists and their reporters in the Balkans.

Serbia was the topic of both major and most influential British newspapers and of those less known, from both the capital and the provinces, with the readership of several hundred thousand to only a few thousand. The topic of Serbia and its people was covered by the following papers: *The Times*, *The Standard*, *The Daily News*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Daily Graphic*, *The Daily Chronicle*, *The Evening Standard*, *The Morning Standard*, *The Morning Post*, *The Pall Mall Gazette*, *Echo*, *The Sunday Times*, *The Globe*, *Star*, *The Yorkshire Post*, *The Evening News Post*. In the period from 1890 to 1895, the British press published over two hundred news, articles, reports, comments and news briefs on Serbia. Statistics show that the Serbian state and people and the Serbian Question were the most prominent on the pages of *The Times*, *The Standard* and *The Daily News*, while the other papers wrote about it, though far less than these three.

In value terms, the press supported the principles of the United Kingdom's foreign policy in the Balkans, and texts concerning Serbia were largely malicious and biased. They were deeply prejudiced against Serbs, seeing them as "little Russians", and Serbia as the "exponent of Russian policy in the Balkans". Indeed, these assessments were in line with the prevailing Russophobia in the British political and social spheres.⁷ As a constant rival of the British Empire in the East and in European affairs, Russia was a constant topic in the British press, and parliamentary and other debates.⁸ Not even British literature remained immune to Russophobia, which reached its peak in this area in the mid-1870s. The leading British Russophobe was Arminius Vámbéry, a Hungarian whose poisonous comments and severe criticism against Russia were expressed in his study *The Coming Struggle for India: Being an Account of the Encroachments of Russia in Central Asia, and of the Difficulties Sure to Arise Therefrom to England*.⁹ Certainly, there were some objective and value-neutral articles, however these were far less frequent than sensationalist and negative texts.

The pivotal role in the creation of Serbia's negative image in British newspapers was played by their journalists and permanent, special and war reporters in the Balkan Peninsula. In the late 19th century, the most reputable British papers, such as *The Times*, *The Standard* and *The Daily Telegraph*, sent their special correspondents to the Balkans and Serbia, though they also had permanent reporters. They were the

⁷ J. Gleason, *The Genesis of Russophobia in Great Britain: A Study of the Interaction of Policy and Opinion*, Cambridge 1950, 1.

⁸ Н. В. Дронова, *Россия и Русские глазами британского журналиста: Версия Арчибальда Форбса*, in: *Россия и Британия*, вол. 5, Москва 2010, 133.

⁹ Г. Метан, *Русија-запад хиљаду година рата. Русофобија од Карла Великог до украјинске кризе*, Нови Сад 2017, 201.

elite of the crop of British journalists. These newspapers for the most part had foreign bureaus in Vienna, Budapest and Sofia. The renowned *Times* wrote about events in Serbia and the Balkans based on reports of its permanent Vienna correspondent, sending the “occasional reporter” there from time to time as well. Thus, in the early 1890s, the Vienna correspondent of *The Times* was the famous journalist Brinsley Richards, while the well-known journalist David Bourchier became an occasional correspondent of *The Times* in the Balkans in 1892, and its permanent Sofia-based correspondent in 1895. Though he was heralded as highly knowledgeable about the reality in the Balkans, his writing was often problematic, given that his pro-Bulgarian and often anti-Russian orientation could clearly be discerned in his reports. Czech journalist Henri Blowitz, the Paris correspondent of *The Times* from 1873 to 1902, also sometimes wrote about Serbia and the Balkans. He became world famous in 1878 by being the first to exclusively publish the text of the Treaty of Berlin. *The Standard* often wrote about topics concerning Serbia and also had a permanent correspondent in the Balkans based in Vienna – the famous journalist Arden George Beamen. Henry Norman, the editor of *The Daily Chronicle* who became known for uncovering the truth about the Dreyfuss affair in France, also wrote about Serbia.

The Times published the most negative texts about Serbia, which Aleksandar Jovičić wrote about in his dispatches from time to time. In his report of February 12, 1890 he assessed that the negative treatment of Serbia in this paper was due to the influence of “our neighbours”, especially those in Vienna, i.e. persons in states bordering Serbia who reported to *The Times* on the situation in Serbia. They sent negative news in advance to *The Times* editorial board, which then shaped that information and published biased texts.¹⁰ The extent to which *The Times*’ coverage of Serbia got out of hand was described vividly in Jovičić’s letter of November 21, 1891 to Mihailo Kr. Đorđević, Serbian Minister of Foreign Affairs. The Serbian chargé d’affaires noted, among other things: “*The Times*’ peculiar Vienna correspondent will not leave us be! Day by day, his writings are getting longer and his news of Serbia direr. Even today he appears to be developing the same idea of presumptive inheritance, following the last act of King Milan, which I already had the honour of reporting to you...”¹¹

However, Jovičić presented the clearest assessment of the negative treatment of Serbia in the British press in the report he sent to Sava Grujić, President of the Ministerial Council and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Serbia on April 9, 1890. On this occasion, he accused some English correspondents of expressing their personal and partisan interest in their texts, and that after the abdication of King Milan, they described all events in Serbia as being caused by Russian influence and directives.

¹⁰ АС, МИДС, ПО, 1890, Ф-І, И/5, Д-V, Пов. бр. 179, 31. јануар/12. фебруар 1890, in: Посланство Краљевине Србије у Лондону I, прир. М. Перишић, С. Рајак, Београд 2018, № 220, р. 398–399.

¹¹ АС, МИДС, ПО, 1891, Ф-II, И/5, Д-VI, Пов. бр. 74, 9/21. новембар 1891, in: Посланство Краљевине Србије у Лондону II, прир. М. Перишић, С. Рајак, Београд 2017, № 52, р. 105.

Remarking that their influence on governance policy was very strong, he concluded that their only objective was to “praise Bulgaria at the expense of Serbia, or point their finger at Russia whenever Serbia did something to protect its rights and interests”. Jovičić rightly noted that the British public opinion, personalised by the press, was the “most powerful element of social and state life”.¹² Correspondents of *The Standard*, *The Daily News* and *The Morning Post* also entertained negative opinions about Serbia.

One of the most frequent topics that British newspapers wrote about and discussed was the Serbia-Russia relationship. Obsession with the Russian Empire and its “imperialist aspirations” in the Balkans was an everyday occurrence in the British public. This topic was covered the most by *The Times* and *The Standard*. British newspapers were particularly interested in Russian influence on relations between Serbia and Bulgaria.¹³ In his text *Serbia* of May 5, 1891, David Bouchier, in the context of tightening relations between the two countries, expressed the view from Sofia that “the Serbian Government is merely carrying out orders received from Saint Petersburg and the Russian outpost may at any moment become dangerous to the Principality”.¹⁴

In the article *Balkan States* of May 31, 1891, Bouchier published his conversation with Jovan Ristić, head of the Governorship. Talking about the deteriorating relations between Serbia and Bulgaria, Bouchier said he understood Bulgaria’s fear of Serbia and its military intervention, justifying their trepidations with the claim that “Russian influence is currently prevalent in Belgrade”. According to Bouchier, Ristić claimed that Russia was advising Serbia to use peaceful methods in resolving its issues with Bulgaria.¹⁵

In the August 23, 1892 issue, the editorial board of *The Times* published a long text entitled *Serbia*, which concerned the former Serbian ruler Milan Obrenović, while a part of the article pertained to Serbia-Russia relations. The journalist, who talked to the former Serbian King, quoted him as saying that there was no clear anti-Russian sentiment in Serbia, and that Serbs had in the past been quite sympathetic to Russia, as they still were, which is completely natural because of the Russian language, as well as tradition and history. However, in a bid to demonstrate the years-long divergence of Milan Obrenović from Saint Petersburg, he emphasized his opinion that Serbs were leading their own policy, and not someone else’s. “But Serbia is above all Serbo-phile. It has its goals and aspirations, just like any other people, and it is necessary for it to choose the means by which it will make its dreams a reality”.¹⁶

¹² АС, МИДС, ПО, 1890, Ф-II, И/5, Д-V, Пов. бр. 493, 28. март/9. април 1890, in: Посланство Краљевине Србије у Лондону I, № 225, р. 407.

¹³ Љ. Ристић, *Србија у британској политици (1889–1903)*, Београд 2014, 71.

¹⁴ АС, МИДС, ПО, 1891, Ф-III, К/3, Д-V, Пов. бр. 20, 25. април/7. мај, in: Посланство Краљевине Србије у Лондону II, № 16, р. 30.

¹⁵ АС, МИДС, ПО, 1891, Ф-II, И/5, Д-V, Пов. бр. 603, 21. мај/2. јун, in: Посланство Краљевине Србије у Лондону II, № 24, р. 46.

¹⁶ АС, МИДС, ПО, 1892, Ф-III, И/5, Д-II, Пов. бр. 98, 13/25. август, in: Посланство Краљевине Србије у Лондону II, № 106, р. 189.

Editors of English newspapers evidently overlooked the excellent assessment of British Russophobia given in 1862 in the book *Servia and the Servians* by William Denton, a reputable Anglican priest and Vicar of the Church of St. Bartholomew the Great in London. Referring to the accusations made by the Government and the public regarding alleged Russian schemes and encouragement to Christians to resist Ottoman authorities, among other things Denton wrote “But, in fact, the whole outcry about Russian influence and intrigue is as unfounded as such panic or partisan cries generally are. More substantial assistance is afforded by the English Government against the Christians of Turkey, than we can ever pretend to have been given by Russia in favour of the oppressed.”¹⁷

Denton also accused his government that its Turkophilia and rigid attitude toward the Christians contributed to their turning to Russia for support and assistance. “But to talk of Russian intrigues, and to point to these as the cause of the agitation amongst the Christians of Turkey, can only originate in ignorance or in an attempt to pervert the truth. If these people look to Russia for sympathy and support, this arises less from Russian ambition than from British impolicy. So long as grievous wrong remains unredressed in Turkey, Russia has the opportunity for interference, and the wrong exists, because England encourages the evil-doer.”¹⁸

The interference of the Russian Emperor and Government in political life in Serbia was the topic of several ill-intentioned articles published in *The Standard*. For example, on February 26, 1891, its Sofia correspondent directly accused Russia of being responsible for the change of government of Sava Grujić because it had refused the Russian demand to prohibit former King Milan from returning to Serbia, which was contrary to the Constitution and the state’s interests.¹⁹

In November 1892, *The Standard*’s Bucharest correspondent informed its readers that the Russian Emperor Alexander III had refused the radicals’ plea to support them in the struggle against the Governorship and Jovan Avakumović’s new liberal government because the Russian Emperor and Government were dissatisfied with the previous radical cabinet in Serbia, which had not given “complete liberty to Bulgarian fugitives and others who had come to Serbia with the aim of carrying out their operations in the conspiracy against the Bulgarian Government and Prince Ferdinand”.²⁰

Russian presence in Serbia was also the subject of a somewhat objective article ***Serbia – views of Serbian leaders***, published in *The Daily News* on August 25, 1892. The text was arranged by its Belgrade correspondent. Recognising that a number of Austrian and Hungarian newspapers were fiercely attacking Serbia for pursuing a pro-

¹⁷ В. Дентон, *Србија и Срби*, Београд 2013, 232.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*.

¹⁹ АС, МИДС, ПО, 1891, Ф-II, И/5, Д-V, Пов. бр. 9, 14/26. фебруар, in: Посланство Краљевине Србије у Лондону II, № 7, р. 14.

²⁰ АС, МИДС, ПО, 1892, Ф-III, И/5, Д-II, Пов. бр. 1860, 20. новембар/2. децембар, in: Посланство Краљевине Србије у Лондону I, № 109, р. 198.

Russian policy, the journalist concluded that the Austro-Hungarian policy towards Serbia had always been “ungenerous from a trade and political standpoint”, but he also accused Russia of “using” Serbia for its goals numerous times. Owing to considerable pressure from Vienna, Serbs were forced to “seek Russian support, or to ask Austria for assistance when Russia went too far”. However, the journalist denied the claim that there were two parties in Serbia: Austrian and Russian, because “the same statesmen and parties were at times favoured by Austria, and at other times by Russia, depending on the situation, which may happen again”.²¹

The horror at the idea of Greater Serbia and Pan-Slavism, which was allegedly present in Serbia and the Balkans, also frequently occupied British papers. This topic was again most often covered by *The Times* and *The Standard*. On January 21, 1890, *The Times* published the article ***Balkan States***, in which the public in England and Europe were warned about the revival of the idea of Greater Serbia. The author was motivated to make this allegation by the publishing of the book ***Serbian songs and customs in Macedonia*** by Ivan Jastrebov, Russian Consul-General in Thessaloniki. According to the journalist, this work posited the thesis that Macedonia was predominantly populated by Serbs, which contravened the positions of other Russian authors, who refuted that thesis “whenever it suited the Russian Government to use Bulgaria as a wedge for its actions in the East. Since Serbia has now taken the role of its neighbour as the Russian favourite, the Pan-Serbian idea has revived and is being propagated in every possible way”. The author also accused Pan-Slavic committees of encouraging, and the Serbian Government of allowing the crossing of thirteen families from Herzegovina to Užice, where they found refuge from hunger in their own country. “This very much looks like a little comedy arranged by Pan-Slavic committees to fuel dissatisfaction with the Austrian administration. Mr. Ristić’s tool “*Odjek*” of course reaps the most benefits from this affair”.²²

On October 6, the same paper published a text accusing the Saint Sava Society of being an exponent of Pan-Slavic circles and a means of spreading the idea of Greater Serbia. The author claimed that the educational aim of the Society was merely a front for the creation of Greater Serbia. “The prevalence of the political element can be seen from the fact that there are a hundred young men from Turkish areas of Macedonia and Old Serbia among the students who will be educated at the expense of this society”.²³ Aleksandar Jovičić immediately reacted to this condemning text, and his dementi entitled ***The Saint Sava Society*** was published by the paper’s editorial board the following day.

On November 1, 1893, *The Daily Telegraph* published an extensive article entitled ***The European Situation***, in which it reflected on the rise of Greater Serbian ideas in

²¹ АС, МИДС, ПО, 1892, Ф-III, И/5, Д-II, Пов. бр. 1884, 14/26. август, in: Посланство Краљевине Србије у Лондону I, № 107, p. 191.

²² АС, МИДС, ПО, 1890, Ф-I, И/5, Д-V, Пов. бр. 61, 11/23. јануар, in: Посланство Краљевине Србије у Лондону I, № 217, p. 389.

²³ АС, МИДС, ПО, 1890, Ф-II, И/5, Д-V, Пов. бр. 1239, 25. септембар/7. октобар, in: Посланство Краљевине Србије у Лондону I, № 241 pp. 438–439.

Serbia. The author accused Serbian authorities of pursuing an “adventurous policy” aimed at “fulfilling the Serbian mission”, which in practice meant joining Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia to Serbia. It was also claimed that popular leaders in Serbia were encouraging hostile protests against Austria-Hungary, and that Belgrade harboured fugitives who publically supported the demand that “Serbia should annex Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia”.²⁴ This extremely biased and ill-intentioned text concluded that all these activities raised great concern in the United Kingdom and European cities.

British favourites in the Balkans were undoubtedly the Bulgarians, which can clearly be seen from the writing of almost all newspapers in the country. When writing about relations of Serbia with its neighbours, they took note of the development of Serbia-Bulgaria relations the most. Almost all texts covering this theme were sympathetic of Bulgarians and had reservations about Serbs. Tensions in Serbia-Bulgaria relations in the late 1880s and early 1890s in particular concerned the Macedonian Question and ethnographic and territorial possession of that area. British newspapers almost always favoured Bulgaria, justifying its territorial aspirations regarding that province of the Ottoman Empire. In this context, various ethnographic data were presented, which always exaggerated Bulgarian numbers and minimised or even negated the presence of Serbs. For example, on July 24, 1890, the Vienna correspondent of *The Times* listed the statistical data of a French consul, which stated that people of various nationalities and creeds lived in Macedonia. Those numbers indicated that “Bulgarians made up the majority of the population in Macedonia, while there were no Serbs there at all”.²⁵

In his text *Balkan States* published in *The Times* on June 8, 1891, David Bourchier, referring to the issue of Serbia-Bulgaria relations, defended Bulgarian positions, reiterating the familiar pattern of Russian influence on domestic political circumstances and political parties in Serbia, quoting the trepidation of Bulgarian circles that Jovan Ristić, head of the Regency, would not have the strength required to “restrain the radical party and suppress the chauvinist spirit spurred by Russian diplomacy...”. In this exceptionally Bulgarophile text, one can see Bourchier’s intent to present in the most positive light the views of the Bulgarian Government on various aspects of issues in the Balkans. Among other things, Bourchier claimed that the Bulgarian Government was expressing “peace-loving messages” to the Ottoman Empire, a desire to maintain good neighbourly relations, above all with Serbia, and that the people in Macedonia were progressing “materially and intellectually”. Unlike the great mistrust and accusations levelled at the Saint Sava Society by British journalists, Bourchier wrote with deep understanding about the Society of Saints Cyril and Methodius, which was acting in the territory of Macedonia, and had undoubtedly

²⁴ АС, МИДС, ПО, 1893, Ф-II, И/6, Д-VI, Пов. бр. 98, 28. октобар/9. новембар, in: Посланство Краљевине Србије у Лондону II, № 142, pp. 270–271.

²⁵ АС, МИДС, ПО, 1893, Ф-VI, У/2, Д-II, Пов. бр. 958, 12/24. јул, in: Посланство Краљевине Србије у Лондону II, № 233, p. 423.

been created under the auspices of the Bulgarian Government. In contrast to the Greater Serbian orientation of the Saint Sava Society, the Society of Saints Cyril and Methodius was presented as a “charity organisation whose goal was to build schools and churches in impoverished parts of Macedonia”.²⁶

The negation of Serbian interests in Macedonia and claims of a Bulgarian majority and Serbian minority in this territory also pervaded the text *Serbia and the Porte*, published by *The Standard* on February 25, 1892. While not contradicting Serbia’s right to request the appointment of a Serbian bishop for the municipalities in Macedonia where Serbs made up the majority, the journalist also warned that granting Serbs this request would cause huge problems, opening up the ethnic question in Macedonia, given that Serbs believed that Serbian people lived there and Bulgarians saw the area as populated by Bulgarian people. If The Porte allowed this question to be opened, “terrible hate between the large Bulgarian majority and Serbian minority would flare up again, which enemies of peace in the Balkans would greatly welcome”. The text also accused Serbs of wishing to provoke riots in Turkey.²⁷

Several dozens of texts in the British press in late 1891 and early 1892 also pertained to the decision of the Serbian Government to take in a number of Bulgarian refugees. They were particularly dissatisfied when asylum was granted to Dimitar Rizoff, Bulgarian politician, Member of Parliament and later diplomat. These persons fled Bulgaria because they had the intention to overthrow the Bulgarian Government and Prince Ferdinand I. Both *The Times* and *The Standard* sided with Bulgaria in this issue, reproaching the Serbian authorities for taking in conspirators and opponents of the Bulgarian authorities.

Still, *The Standard* went the furthest in accusations and threats levelled against Serbia. In February 1894 it published a series of sensationalist texts written by its Vienna correspondent, entitled *The Serbian Crisis*. Speculating that the Serbian political situation was so tense that there was danger of a civil war, the journalist caused great dissatisfaction and protests with his sentence about the potential occupation and division of Serbia. Belgrade youth and students even organised a demonstration against the warmongering text which malevolently called for a military intervention and division of Serbia. Writing about the highly volatile situation in the country, in mid-February 1894 *The Standard’s* journalist gave his disputable assessment that “if Serbs indeed cause a rebellion due to their internal squabbles, Europe will not allow anyone’s interference, but it may easily happen that a part of Serbia will be taken from it and given to Bosnia, and another to Bulgaria, so that it will no longer be a constant threat to European peace!”.²⁸

²⁶ АС, МИДС, ПО, 1893, Ф-II, И/5, Д-V, Пов. бр. 31, 28. мај/9. јун, in: Посланство Краљевине Србије у Лондону II, № 26, pp. 50–51.

²⁷ АС, МИДС, ПО, 1892, Ф-III, И/5, Д-I, Пов. бр. 421, 25. фебруар/8. март, in: Посланство Краљевине Србије у Лондону, II, № 76, pp. 140–141.

²⁸ АС, МИДС, ПО, 1894, Ф-I, И/2, Д-VII, Пов. бр. 19, 11/23. фебруар, in: Посланство Краљевине Србије у Лондону, II, № 153, p. 294.

Over the following weeks and months, the same paper published texts with provocative headlines and content alleging that Serbia was a country of thievery and brigands where incidents and murders were an everyday occurrence. The aim was to present Serbia in the worst way, as a country of barbarians and savages.

Aside from extremely biased and factually untrue texts about Serbia, some British papers also published texts that presented the Serbian reality “dispassionately and without ire”, in an affirmative way. On February 3, 1895, *The Times* published an offprint *Trade Between Great Britain and Servia*, which constituted a summary of Mijatović’s lecture entitled *Some proposals for the development of trade between the United Kingdom and Servia*, which he had given to members of the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry. In the lecture, he presented the state of the Serbian economy and pledged to improve economic ties between Serbia and England. Among others, the lecture was attended by Sir Alberth Rollit, Member of Parliament and Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, British consuls general in Serbia and Japan, and many reputable English economists. This text allowed English readers to learn more about the Serbian economy and the social situation in the country.²⁹ On January 3, 1896, *The Daily Chronicle* published an article **England, Servia and the Eastern Question**, authored by Adolphe Smith, who was himself a journalist and a friend of the Serbian people. In fact, Smith spent several months in a visit to Serbia, getting to know the Serbian people.

In this text he strongly criticised the imperialist ambitions of Austria-Hungary in the Balkans, warning of its intention to conquer “an even greater part of Serbian lands”. He also criticised the Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, admonishing that the population there did not live any better under their new masters. He vividly emphasised that “under the Turks, Christian Serbs were discontented, but under the Austrians both Christian and Muslim Serbs are far from satisfied”. He believed that his country should not underestimate the military power of the Serbs and that “the Serbian tribe has the strength to fight, which will be an important factor in the final resolution of the Eastern Question”. He saw the further strengthening of Serbia in its economic potential based on natural resources. A combination of economic and military power opened up prospects for the creation of a powerful Serbian state.

He characterised Serbs as a freedom-loving people with a strong democratic sentiment, wealth of traditions and customs, and a friendly disposition to the English people, who should extend a hand of friendship so as to “build Servia as a democratic buffer state which will be able to stop usurpations by neighbouring despots, whether they be Austrian, Prussian or Russian. But that force, which may considerably help the liberal Europe resolve the Eastern Question, should not go to waste in a deadly struggle against another Austrian invasion of Serbian lands.”³⁰

²⁹ *Trade Between Great Britain and Servia*, *The Times* (February 3, 1895) 11.

³⁰ АС, МИДС, ПО, 1895, Ф-II, И/13, Д-III, Пов. бр. 116, 22. децембар 1895/3. јануар 1896, in: Посланство Краљевине Србије у Лондону, II, N° 243, pp. 457–459.

After the Congress of Berlin, the British public opinion, and in particular the press, played an extremely important role in the creation of first the foreign, and then the overall policy of the British Government. In the late 19th century, British journalism and newspapers reached their golden age. At that time, the interest of the British public became increasingly oriented toward the Balkans and Serbia, which had during the “long 19th century” more or less still been unknown to the average British reader. Serbia-related topics became increasingly interesting to editors of English newspapers. Major newspapers sent special correspondents to the Balkans and Serbia or opened permanent bureaus, where they reported on turbulent events in the Balkans.

Their interests were quite broad (relations of Serbia with its neighbours, great powers, the domestic political situation, dynastic and partisan struggles). It is estimated that in the early 1890s alone, over twenty newspapers wrote about Serbia, publishing over 200 texts on Serbia-related topics. In line with entrenched patterns, value judgments of Serbia in those articles were most often negative. However, it is undeniable that the British press played an important role in raising the awareness of the English people about Serbia and the Balkans in the late 19th century.

Aleksandar Rastović

**STAMPA BRITANNICA SULLA SERBIA 1890–1895.
(IN BASE ALLA RELAZIONE DELL'AMBASCIATA SERBA A LONDRA)**

Sommario

Lo scrivere della stampa britannica sulla Serbia e sul popolo serbo dopo il Congresso di Berlino, si basava sui postulati fondamentali della politica britannica nei confronti dei Balcani che rimase quasi completamente invariata e costante per tutto il XIX secolo. Questa politica si basava su tre principi fondamentali: il monitoraggio dell'influenza russa in Serbia e, in questo contesto, l'attenzione speciale rivolta verso le attività dei comitati pan-slavi; l'impedimento della creazione di una grande comunità dei popoli balcanici; e dopo il Congresso di Berlino, il mantenere lo *status quo*, il che sottintendeva impedire una rinnovata presenza russa nella penisola balcanica. La stampa britannica, sia quella della capitale che quella provinciale, era molto interessata a tutto ciò che stava accadendo nei Balcani nell'ultimo decennio del XIX secolo. I più prestigiosi giornali britannici avevano i loro giornalisti regolari e gli inviati speciali nella zona, che quasi quotidianamente informavano l'opinione pubblica su tutto ciò che stava accadendo lì. Per quanto riguarda la Serbia, i direttori dei giornali britannici erano particolarmente interessati agli eventi politici, alle questioni dinastiche, al rapporto tra la Russia e la Serbia, all'atteggiamento della Serbia verso i suoi vicini, all'atteggiamento della politica ufficiale nei confronti della Questione orientale, alla questione macedone come parte della Questione orientale, all'atteggiamento della Serbia verso la sempre più difficile posizione della popolazione cristiana nella Vecchia Serbia. La maggior parte dei giornali scriveva con pregiudizi e sensazionalismo su tutto ciò che stava accadendo in Serbia. I giornalisti dei giornali britannici accusavano la Serbia e il popolo serbo di essere un semplice strumento nelle mani russe, di essere "Piccoli russi", di essere l'avamposto dei cosacchi russi nei Balcani. C'erano anche degli articoli con un approccio oggettivo, ma purtroppo erano in minoranza. I diplomatici serbi a Londra riferivano regolarmente al governo serbo e al Ministero degli Affari esteri sugli scritti della stampa britannica e sul suo atteggiamento nei confronti della Serbia e del popolo serbo.

Parole chiave: stampa britannica, Londra, Serbia, serbi, Čedomilj Mijatović, Ambasciata serba

Александар Раствоић

**БРИТАНСКА ШТАМПА О СРБИЈИ 1890–1895.
(НА ОСНОВУ ИЗВЕШТАЈА СРПСКОГ ПОСЛАНСТВА У ЛОНДОНУ)**

Резиме

Писање британске штампе о Србији и српском народу након Берлинског конгреса заснивало се на основним постулатима британске балканске политике која је скоро у потпуности била непроменљива и константна током читавог 19. века. Та политика се заснивала на три основна принципа: праћење руског утицаја у Србији а с тим у вези посебно деловање панславистичких комитета; онемогућавање стварања једне велике заједнице балканских народа; и након Берлинског конгреса одржавање статуса кво које је подразумевало спречавање поновног руског присуства на Балканском полуострву. Британска штампа, како престоничка тако и провинцијална, веома се интересовала за све оно што се дешава на Балкану у последњој деценији 19. века. Најугледнији британски листови имали су своје редовне и специјалне извештаче са тог простора који су готово свакодневно информисали своју јавност о свему ономе што се тамо дешава. Што се тиче Србије, уредништва британских листова нарочито су интересовала тамошња политичка дешавања, династичка питања, однос Русије и Србије, став Србије према суседима, однос званичне политике према Источном питању, македонском питању као делу Источног питања, односу Србије према све тежем положају хришћанског становништва у Старој Србији. Највећи број листова писао је са предрасудама и сензационалистички о свему ономе што се дешава у Србији. Новинари британских листова оптуживали су Србију и српски народ да су обично оруђе у рукама Руса, да су „Малоруси“, да су предстража руских козака на Балкану. Било је и текстова са објективним приступом али су они, нажалост били у мањини. Српски дипломате у Лондону су редовно извештавали српску владу и Министарство иностраних дела о писању британске штампе и њеном односу према Србији и српском народу.

Кључне речи: британска штампа, Лондон, Србија, Срби, Чедомиљ Мијатовић, српско посланство.

