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Montenegro as perceived by a British Diplomat The Report of Colonel Hugh Rose in 1852

During the last decade the ways in which we perceive one another have presented a popular topic in historiography. When studying the popular culture and the opinions of the public in general, historians have rarely seemed to research the mutual perception of peoples by examining individuals —the main protagonists of historical events. The perception of others among diplomatic élites has been usually thought to be in opposition to the hitherto unresearched views of common people and their cultures. Popular culture and levels of general knowledge have aroused more interest in so far as they comprised ancient prejudices and long-time delusions. However, no matter how far removed from the basic idea underlying the study of the perception of others, the view of the world held by diplomatic élites constitutes a significant factor in historical events as well as a significant part of a specific history.

During the winter of 1852/1853 there was an unstable peace in the European Southeast. War between the Ottoman Empire and the newly proclaimed Principality of Montenegro broke out in December 1852, after the Montenegrins conquered the City of Zabljak on the Lake of Skadar. The ensuing crisis lasted for two months and had no impact on the struggle over the jurisdiction over the Holy Places, which flared up only a few weeks after the Powers had stopped the onslaught of the Ottoman army, thus saving Montenegro from its imminent fall. The Montenegrin crisis for the first time seriously tested the short-lived balance of power established among the European states after the 1848 and 1849 revolutions. Soon after, in January 1853, Russia and Austria supported Montenegro, whereas Great Britain took the side of the Ottomans. The nature of British relations with the Ottoman Porte was very complex[1]. Great Britain made every effort to stop the conflict

1. Relations between England and the Ottoman Empire originated from the second half

which was threatening to escalate into a war between the Great Powers, since, according to its judgment based on the current balance of power, a new war in January 1853 would have broken out too soon and not been in its interest. The Montenegrin crisis was of utmost concern for the British Cabinet and as such was handled by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Earl of Malmesbury, the Queen's Ambassador to Constantinople, Stratford Canning and the Charge d'Affaires at the Constantinople Embassy, Colonel Hugh Rose.

One contemporary report written by Colonel Rose reveals some very interesting facts about the prior knowledge, perceptions and prejudices of a diplomat who, as a representative of the Foreign Office, took a close interest in the Montenegrin crisis and was able to exercise direct influence on it[2].

In the mid-19th century the political élite of Great Britain came from a rather limited, oligarchical circle for whose members one's origins were just as important as education. Throughout the 19th century, Great Britain was, alongside France, the centre of world education. However, famous British diplomats were not specialized for service in specific parts of the world. Great Britain was a world empire and its diplomacy was, as the best service in the World, accordingly structured. A classic example of a contemporary British diplomat is that of Stratford Canning —a reputed British ambassador to Constantinople, who, in the course of his diplomatic service had moved from Washington to Constantinople[3]. The historical education that a British diplomat received

of the 16th century. The two Empires had a mutual enemy —Spain. There exists a very interesting anecdote about the first English ambassador to the Serene Porte, Edward Barton at a time of extreme danger for England, before the attack of Great Armada in 1588. The English diplomat tried to present Anglicanism as a type of Islam: Radovan Samardžić, *Istorija srpskog naroda III/1*, (*A History of Serbian People*) Beograd 1993[2], p. 222; It was mere political interest that made the British empire an unreserved ally of "the Sick-man on the Bosphorus" during the entire 19th century. Very interesting are Lord Palmerston's remarks concerning the crisis between the Ottoman Empire and Mohamed-Ali's realm in Egypt, L. S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans 1815-1914*, p. 35.

2. Rose's writings (report or memoir) are attached to the correspondence of the British Embassy in Constantinople, preserved in the *British National Archive* (PRO, Kew, London) – Rose to Malmesbury, Constantinople, 26. December 1852, FO 78/895, No 168.

3. Stratford Canning (from 1853 de Redcliffe) during his long career in British diplomacy served in the Ottoman Empire, the United States, Switzerland and Austria, *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, www.bartleby.com/65/st/StrtfdRdc.html, visited, 26.07.2002.

was no doubt broad. However, the history of the newly formed or recently recreated semi-independent Christian states in the Balkans could not have been included in the classical historical education those diplomats were getting.

Colonel Hugh Rose (Rose, Hugh Henry), Charge d'Affaires at the British Embassy in Constantinople, seemed to be quite the opposite of his superior, the above mentioned Stratford Canning. Rose entered the diplomatic service relatively late, in 1840, after a twenty-year long diplomatic career. As a Lieut. Colonel, he was appointed as representative of the British army with the Omer-Pasha Brigade headquarters in Syria. At the beginning of 1841, he was wounded there and consequently awarded a high Ottoman decoration. Soon after, there arose an opportunity for him to distinguish himself again by rescuing a Lebanese prince from Druse captivity. The year 1842 was the year of new decorations for Colonel Rose: he became Knight of the Prussian Order of St. John of Jerusalem as well as being decorated with the Queen's Gold Medal and the Sultan's Sebra. These distinctions probably recommended him, in 1851, for his next appointment —that of the Secretary at, for Great Britain the very important, British Embassy in Constantinople. A year and a half later, on June 23, 1852, he was promoted to the post of Charge d'Affaires. Thereby he was to play an important role in the crises arising over the Holy Places, Montenegro and the Crimean War. Despite the fact that through his career he appeared to be firmly linked to the Ottoman Empire, the 1858 Foreign Office List assigned him a high-rank military office in far-away Bengal, on the eve of the Great Mutiny[4].

So, what prior knowledge of Montenegro or the Balkans could an Englishman posted to the European East have[5]?

4. Rose, Lieutenant-general Sir Hugh Henry, K.C.B, *Foreign Office List*, London 1858.

5. The British public did not have much confidence in official reports from the Balkans and the preparedness of British diplomacy. A short story published in Blackwood's Magazine at the beginning of 1862 is good illustration of this. The author ascribed the following dilemmas to a young diplomat: "What I did at Belgrade ... to master the Servian question, whatever that is, and come back strong in Montenegro and the Lower Danube ... I'll get up my Servia, you'll see; and if I blunder, I have the supreme felicity of feeling that none can detect me". C. Lever (Bob Considine, pseud.) "What I did at Belgrade", Blackwood's Magazine 103 (Jan. 1868.), p. 73; Dr Wendy C. Bracewell, "Opinion-Makers: The Balkans in British Popular Literature, 1856-1876", Yugoslav - British Relations, Kragujevac, September 1987, Belgrade 1988, p. 94.

The 1842 edition of *The Encyclopaedia Brittanica*, generally thought of as a cornerstone of enlightenment, contained no entry for Montenegro[6]. The same edition contained a rather extensive entry for Serbia, whose history was, however, barely mentioned, except for the brief overview of the 18th and 19th centuries history[7]. With textbooks the situation was similar. It is interesting to note that in a later textbook edition Montenegro was for the first time mentioned but in the last chapter. Here a distinction was drawn between Montenegro and Serbia by pointing out that "the former had never lost its freedom"[8].

There existed, however, numerous travel records[9], Colonel Rose partly based his report on. In December 1852 he wrote a report on Montenegro and sent it to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lord Malmesbury[10]. In early December 1852, Colonel Rose had visited the Grand Vizier by the order of his Minister. After expressing his satisfaction with British foreign policy, the Ottoman high official had told the British diplomat about the atrocities committed by the Montenegrins against the Christians living in the Ottoman borderland. Further, in the letter Rose informed Malmesbury that even Russian diplomats in Con-

6. *The Encyclopedia Britannica or Dictionary of Arts, Sciences and General Literature*, Seventh edition, Volume XX, Edinburgh 1842.

7. *Ibid.* The article about Turkey (p. 158), mentions that Sultan Murad I fell as victim of assasination, but the Kosovo battle (1389), during which he died, is not even mentioned.

8. Edvard A. Freeman, *Historical Course for Schools*, General Sketch, London 1874, 8, p. 356: "After the Crimean war Servia had won its freedom and Montenegro had never lost /it/". In the first half of the 19th century school textbooks in the modern sense of the word did not exist.

9. Wendy C. Bracewell has written that a small number of traveller entered into deeper political analyses when writing about the South-East Europe. For the period before the Crimean war she mentions only one book, see Bracewell, *op.cit.*, p. 92.

10. Rose did not mention diplomatic reports as his source on Montenegro. Let us mention only one interesting report written by the British Consul-General in Belgrade, Fonblanque (Thomas Gernier de Fonblanque) which contains interesting remarks about Montenegro. Fonblanque wrote about bad conditions in that region which refused to recognize the suzerainty of the Porte. He claimed that Montenegro had survived only thanks to subsidies from Serbia and Russia, and was led by an agent of Tsar Nicholas I covered with a mitra. Fonblanque estimated the population of Montenegro on unbelievable 350.000, half of which supported themselves by brigandage. Finally, Fonblanque concluded that those unfortunate circumstances were just a reflection of deep poverty, which made it impossible for Montenegrins to support themselves by decent work. The transformation of Montenegro into a Principality, after centuries of theocracy, Fonblanque described as an event bordering on satire. Fonblanque to Canning , 20. April 1852, FO 78/896, No 26.

stantinople had assumed a more acceptable attitude with reference to the Montenegrins. Colonel Rose based his "unrelenting" attitude on the terms of the Svishtov Peace Treaty (1792) according to which Montenegro was part of the Ottoman Empire. He also insisted that, in accordance with the terms of "Capitulations", the resolution of any conflict between the British and the Montenegrins should involve the participation of the Ottoman State. Finally Rose pointed out that the Vladika of Montenegro (Orthodox bishop with secular power) was not recognized by Britain as an independent authority[11].

Rose incorporated the above mentioned report about Montenegro in his next despatch to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, dated December 26, 1852. The despatch was written in reply to Malmesbury's previous letter and within it, Rose also, remarked on the letter Russian diplomats had sent to the Grand Vizier Fuand-Effendi, in which Russian views on Montenegro and the developing crisis were given[12].

The British diplomat endeavoured to contest the assertion of the Russian ambassador that Montenegro had been independent since the Middle Ages, never having been conquered by nor having ever paid tribute to the Ottoman State. In this brief historical treatise Rose presented himself to Earl Malmesbury not only as an advocate of Ottoman interests —not properly defended by the Turks themselves, but also as a true scholar and diplomat[13].

11. During the next few years, in articles published in British newspapers, Montenegro's Prince was not called Hospodar, as Wallachian, Moldavaian or Serbian monarchs were. "The Morning Herald", 6. December, 1853; Rose to Malmesbury, Therapia, November-December 1852, FO 78/895, especially 20. November 1852, Montenegro, No. 141.

12. The copy of Mons. de Siniavine of September 2, 1852: *Avant tout, établissons les faits: Qu'est-ce que le Montenegro? Une peuplade chrétienne de vingtcinq à trente mille familles, refugiée de temps immémorial dans un district montagneux sur le littoral de l'adriatique, et qui s'est maintenne juisqu'à "ce jour indépendante dans son asile et sa pauvreté" n'obeissant à autre autorité qu'à elle de ses shefs spirituales, ilus dans son propre sein, et presque toujours dans une seule famille. A aucune époque que nous sachions, le Gouvernement Ottoman n'a occupé ce petit pays, n'a imposé tribut à ses habitants, ni exerce sur eux des droits de suzeraineté réelle ou même nominale.*

13. "... so little are the Turks acquainted with their own rights, that the documents which prove them lie often hidden and unknown in the chancery of the Porte, or the trunk of a Pasha; and sometimes no record remains of them but of (on) Map or the pages of a foreign history. For these reasons and because the clearest right in Turkey often becomes a most confused one, it is desirable not to come to a decision till patient inquiry has unravelled the matter in discussion; and for this reason I recommended to Fuad Effendi patience and caution

Colonel Rose tried to contest the Russian claims on the basis of six separate sources of argumentation which he listed, according to their importance, in the following order: 1) Historical facts; 2) Statements of Montenegrins; 3) Documents from the archives of the Porte and Greek Patriarchate; 4) Contacts; 5) Official procedure of all foreign embassies and missions in Constantinople based on capitulations and 6) Recent official and military maps.

In the historical overview, Rose went more than three centuries back into the past. According to his sources the status of Montenegro was established in 1523, when, during the reign of Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent, this region was declared an Ottoman province[14]. Identifying the above year as crucial to the beginning of the historical process relevant to the legitimacy of the Ottoman claim on Montenegro, the author did not venture into the country's earlier history.

The next significant date Rose found in the writings of Ami Boue. Ignoring a whole century of Ottoman-Montenegrin relationships, Rose cited a quotation from Boue relating to the 1620s. Here again we find that Montenegro was independent of the Porte. In 1620, the Montenegrin attack led by Metropolitan Visarion provoked Suleyman Pasha's revenge expedition. The Ottoman commander succeeded in crushing Montenegrin resistance and getting as far as Cetinje, upon which the Montenegrins were forced to pay tribute again[15].

It was through Boue's work that Rose learnt about an event known in folk tradition as "Istraga poturica" (Annihilation of Converts):

... at the beginning of the 18th century Vladika Daniel Petrovich planned a revolt against the Porte's authority in Montenegro, adopting at the same time a model of conversion singular for a Christian Bishop. He selected Christmas night for the treacherous massacre of all the

in the matter of Montenegro".

14. Montenegro was annexed to the Sanjak of Skadar in 1499, it became a separate sanjak at the beginning of the 16th century (1514-1528), when the region temporarily gained independence under the rule of Skender-Bey Crnojević, see: *Istorija srpskog naroda* II, (*A History of Serbian People*) Beograd 1994, pp. 429, 430 i; V. Ćorović, *Istorija Srba* II. (*A History of Serbs*) Beograd 1989, p. 218.

15. Vladika Visarion (Bessarion) Borilović (1685-1692), was a predecessor of Vladika Danilo Petrović. He led Montenegrins to war against the Ottomans over sixty years after the date mentioned in Rose's report. During the Great Vienna War, Montenegrins were faithful allies of the Venetian Republic.

Musslimans in Montenegro; only those who embraced Christianity were saved.

According to Boue, the revolt led by Vladika Danilo brought independence to Katunska *nahia* (*Nahia* of Catt) but the remaining Montenegrin regions continued to pay tribute. After Petrovich's Revolt[16], the Porte's attempts at conquering Montenegro became more frequent and the last of these attempts was made in 1832. However, some Montenegrin districts continued to pay a special tax, known as Sultan's Hasse, till 1791[17].

Colonel Rose found further proof of Ottoman sovereignty in the writings of A. A. Paton, former British consul in several Balkan cities. In his travel book, published three years earlier, Paton wrote that Piperi and Kuci, two important Montenegrin districts (*nahias*) had recognized Ottoman rule as late as 1846[18].

Colonel Rose thought it probable that Montenegrin aspirations to independence had also been encouraged by the political intrigues of the Powers. After all, but for the interest of the Powers, Montenegro would never have become so significant to the British. Even the Montenegrins themselves could testify in favour of the Ottoman Empire —this was a claim which Colonel Rose based on J. Hammers *History of Turkey*[19].

The third argument in support of the Porte's rights over Montenegro was to be found, according to Colonel Rose, in the archives of the Porte and the Greek Patriarchat. Apparently ignorant of the traditions of the medieval Serbian Church and State, the British diplomat argued in favour of the Ottoman claim to sovereignty over Montenegro by invoking the fact that, only sixty or seventy years before, Montenegrin bishops (Vladike) had been consecrated by Turkish authorities and Greek Patriarchs of Ipek[20]. The next argument in support of this he found in the petrified

16. The *Petrovich's revolt* is better known in Montenegrin tradition as *Istraga poturica* (*Purge of the converts to Islam*).

17. *Sultan Hasse* or the Ottoman ruler's personal fief.

18. A. A. Paton, *Highlands and Islands of the Adriatic*, London 1849.

19. Rose invoked Hammer's authority but did not precisely identify the quoted place in his book. It is interesting that in the Serbian translation of *Hammer's History of the Ottoman Empire* (till 1774) I could not find such a quotation. (Joseph von Hammer, *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches*, Pesth 1836).

20. After the suspension of the Patriarchate of Peć (Ipek) in 1767 eighty-five years had passed.

form of Sultan's Firmans, by which the Ottoman authorities had confirmed the investiture of the newly elected Ecumenical Patriarch as that of both *Patriarch of Ipek and Montenegro*[21].

While trying to make out a case for the Ottoman claim to Montenegro, Colonel Rose placed the arguments based on the propositions of international treaties in the fourth place. Only a few months later, when the Great Powers became involved in a dispute over the Holy Places of Palestine, international treaties would gain first-class importance. Vying for precedence were the 1774 Treaty of Küchük Kaynardji and the 1841 Agreement on the Straits. The British diplomat invoked the first article of the Svishtov Peace Treaty whereby Austria confirmed that Montenegrins were subjects of the Porte. Rose's invocation of this particular article carried even more weight because Austria was supporting Montenegro at that time (winter crisis 1852/1853). Finally, Rose stressed the fact that even the Austrian Embassy Charge d'Affaires at the Porte had in all circumstances conceded that Montenegro was an Ottoman province.

Colonel Rose's one last argument involved the procedure of foreign embassies and missions. According to him, foreign missions had in all legal proceedings treated Montenegrins as Ottoman subjects. Even Montenegrins themselves were not opposed to deriving some benefit from this status: Rose claimed that around two thousand of them, living in Constantinople and its surroundings, paid tribute and used all the privileges they were entitled to as Ottoman Christian subjects according to the act of capitulation.

Since the British diplomat obviously regarded Austria as the most important adversary in the matter of Great Britain's policy on Montenegro, for his final argument he chose what he considered to be proof of Austrian inconsistency. Namely, a map of European Turkey commissioned by the Austrian army headquarters and drawn by Colonel Wiess

21. "... they prove some of the historical facts which I have adduced and they also stear (swear?) that the Vladika of Montenegrians used, so late as sixty or seventy years ago, to be consecrated as Vladika by the Turkish Greek Patriarch of Ipek in Albania, who was under the direct jurisdiction of the Greek Patriarch of Constantinople. Therefore the Vladika owed His appointment exclusively to a Turkish Authority. Montenegro formed part of the diocese of Ipek. In the Firman of investiture given six weeks ago to the New Greek Patriarch as well as in those formerly given he is called "Patriarch of Ipek and Montenegro".

in 1829, treated Montenegro as part of the Ottoman Empire[22].

Colonel Rose was not truly satisfied with these six points of argumentation. There remained one detail, ethically unimportant but politically perhaps essential. That detail was the fact that Montenegro had actually been independent for a very long time. With reference to this, however, the British diplomat wondered if it was not common knowledge that for a long time the Porte had had no effective power over Palmira or the right bank of the river Jordan (near St. Jean d'Acre and Jerusalem). Those regions, he went on to assert, were *far less Ottoman than Montenegro*, but the Powers still regarded them to be as much Ottoman as Rumelia.

It is only from the report's conclusion that one gets a clear picture of how Colonel Hugh Rose perceived Montenegro and its history. The extremely negative impression of Montenegro and Montenegrins was somewhat softened due to the concerns of political realism. Rose claimed that it would be a bad thing if Britain was the only Power which openly doubted the Ottoman rights over Montenegro. Therefore he urged the Cabinet to exert all its influence on the Porte and to acknowledge the Porte's rights over Montenegro, thus securing for it a peace-loving and good government "in accordance with its tradition". On the other hand, Rose believed that it was for Great Britain to prevent Montenegro from being a great "Gibraltar on the Flank of a vulnerable side of Turkey, a rallying point for Turkish irredentists, indemtials, garrisoned by twenty five or thirty thousand warlike bandits, and sympathizing with, and in intimate connection with a Power whose historical, political and geographical position with regard to Turkey has always caused uneasiness to the wisest statesmen in Europe"[23].

22. Francis von Weiss, *Map of Turky-in-Europe*, 1829, arc 7th, *British Library*, 145. d. 25.

23. "... I venture therefore, earnestly and respectfully to represent that Her Majesty's Government, for the Porte's integrity and independence, and of our useful influence over her councils, should acknowledge the Porte's rights over Montenegro and employ the influence which we should acquire by so doing to incline to act with humanity and political prudence towards that province, to take measures which on the one hand, would secure to Turkey rights and to Montenegro pacific and good government in accordance with traditions, and on the other hand prevent Montenegro from being a great Gibraltar on the Flank of a vulnerable side of Turkey, a rallying point for Turkish irredentists, indemtials, garrisoned by twenty five or thirty thousand warlike bandits, and sympathizing with, and in intimate connection with a

Colonel Rose's perception of Montenegro represented, above all, the system of values of British diplomacy. Accordingly, the issues of international rights and sovereignty rested, first and foremost on history, then on some kind of national self-determination, on state treaties and finally on tradition. Rose showed no interest in examining the reasons and causes of the Montenegrin crisis (1852/1853). His attitude to Montenegro was negative and his report aimed to provide scholarly justification of a specific political standpoint. Rose's sources were mostly contemporary. He did not choose any of the generally accepted European or world histories. He used the writings of Boue, Hammer and Paton whilst completely ignoring Ranke's History of Serbia, which along with an essay on Montenegro penned by Cyprian Roberts, had recently (1852) been translated into and published in English[24]. Unlike Roberts, Rose did not mention any historical or ethnic ties between Montenegro and Serbia. It is also interesting that among his sources were not the works of David Urquhart, who, having visited the Balkans several times during the first half of the 19th century, could have been considered the greatest British expert on the European East[25].

In support of the Ottoman claim on Montenegro, Rose mentioned the year 1523 as the year when Montenegro allegedly became part of the Ottoman Empire, whereas any previous history of the region he completely ignored. He then went on to invoke a 17th century event —the Montenegrin revolt led by Metropolitan Visarion— which he presented as yet another defeat of the Montenegrins. And when Montenegrins rebelled for a third time, according to the British diplomat, they won their freedom but only after committing a terrible crime against their fellow-countrymen. To this event, however, Colonel Rose did not attach much significance. On the contrary, he maintained that even if Montenegro had gained freedom on that occasion, not all of its districts (clans) had managed to do so. As an argument in favour of Ottoman

Power whose historical, political and geographical position with regard to Turkey has always caused uneasiness to the wisest statesmen in Europe".

24. C. Roberts, *The Slavonic provinces in Turkey*, (in) L. Ranke, *The History of Servia*, London 1852 (eng. trans.), pp. 375-500.

25. About the dispute between Stratford de Redcliffe and David Urquhart from 1854/1855: Political Tractats 1712-1856: W. Cyples, *Is Mr. Urquhart A Tory or A Radical? Answered by His Constitution for the Danubian Principalities*, Sheffield 1856, p. 1.

rights[26] and as an excuse for entirely disregarding the medieval and a large part of modern Montenegrin history Rose, paradoxically, even used the fact that Montenegrin Metropolitans (Vladike) had been consecrated at Ipek (Peć, the medieval seat of Serbian Patriarchs). The British diplomat was not, however, the only one who regarded the regions of Kosovo and Albania as a part of historical province of Albania. His contemporaries, Ilija Garasanin and Konstantin Nikolajevic, creators of Serbian national programmes, did the same[27].

Colonel Rose was, no doubt, well acquainted with all international agreements concerning the Ottoman Empire, which were often invoked by the Powers' diplomats. Rose, however, opposed Austrian diplomacy and derived his arguments exclusively from the articles of the Svishtov Peace Treaty, hoping to influence Habsburg diplomacy by exposing the contradictions of its own policy. From the anthropological point of view, also very interesting is Rose's attitude that Palmira and St. Jean D'Acre are much less Ottoman than was Montenegro. To him, apparently, geographic, racial and religious principles were secondary in importance to civilizational. Irrespective of all the differences existing between the Turks and Montenegrins on the one hand, and all the similarities between the Turks and Syrian and Palestinian Arabs on the other, what they all had in common, according to Rose, was a deep abyss separating them from Western Europe. This attitude was typical of that of a British diplomat of the Victorian Age, who thought of his imperial mission as primarily civilizing in aim. And yet, no matter how determinedly Great Britain protected the interests of the Ottoman Empire throughout the whole of the nineteenth century, there existed a political faction that, on moral grounds, expressed a rather negative opinion about the Ottoman Empire. At one of its sessions, the British Cabinet discussed the problems the Ottoman Empire was facing in the Western Balkans. In the minutes it was pointed out that the whole of the Ottoman Empire, with the exception of some minor trouble in Bosnia and parts of Bulgaria, was peaceful, but this peace was, however, threatened

26. Rose knew that the Metropolitans of Montenegro were not ordained in Peć (Ipek) at the end of 18th century any more, but he did not know that before that date Peć had not been under the jurisdiction of Constantinople.

27. R. Ljučić, *Knjiga o Načertaniju*, (A Book about Nacertanie), Beograd 1993, pp. 95,105.

by the Porte's ambition to establish sovereignty over Montenegro:

> ... But the Porte is hankering after Montenegro, and though for many centuries the Turkish armies have uniformly been discomfited when attempting to penetrate into that small, but nearly impregnable country, the divan now mediates a praish (fresh?) attack upon it, and loudly "eaxants" the notion of its Independence[28].

Colonel Rose was, therefore, instructed to advise the Porte not to impose its "more than doubtful rights over Montenegro", and to point out that, obliging as the Svishtov Peace Treaty might be, neither Austria nor other Powers would condone the subjugation of Montenegro. Two months later, a similar viewpoint was expressed in a letter written by British Prime Minister Lord Aberdeen:

> ... These Barbarians (Turks) hate us all, and would be delighted to take their chance of some advantage by embroiling us with other powers of Christendom. It may be necessary to give them moral support and to endeavour to "propose" their existence; but we ought to regard as the greatest misfortune any engagement which compelled us to take up arms for the Turks[29].

That decisive importance of the civilizational gap was also confirmed, to a certain degree, by Rose himself. With his report he enclosed a copy of a letter written by a Russian diplomat, Seniavin, to the Ottoman Grand Vizier, Fuad Efendi. Seniavin, his tone somewhat pitiful, as the only argument in favour of the Montenegrins, pointed out the fact that they had always been truly independent.

But can we consider Rose's perception of Montenegro to be a reflection of his political or historical consciousness?

It appears that in the case of Colonel Rose, historical and political consciousness were not separated. His attitude towards Montenegro was based on the contemporary historical and travel literature. However, as his report was written at the time when the anti-Russian movement in Britain had reached almost its highest point, it was only natural that

28. *Aberdeen papers* 43357, vol. CCCXIX pp. 50, 51, Home Office, December 1852, *British Library* (BL).

29. Correspondence to Sir John Rusell, Argyll House, 15 February 1853, *Aberdeen papers*, 43069, XXX, 1841-1859, (BL).

Rose should deviate from the strictly historical. The sole purpose of his memoir was to prove the proposed political thesis. Therefore, history was subordinated to the dictates of political pragmatism. It is probably this fact, rather than Rose's wish to be objective, that accounts for his choice of mainly foreign sources. There obviously existed a duality between the diplomat's reasoning and that of a historically-minded individual. The scientific and pragmatic approach blended, producing discrepancies and "nonclarities" in the perception of other peoples and their history. Historicism as an ideological foundation of state policies and national programmes prevailed in 19th century Europe[30]. It was to be abandoned by the peoples of the Balkans only two decades later. While with small nations historicism served to invoke the splendour of their states in olden times, in the case of empires its function was to establish these empires' sovereignty over the lands and peoples against which they had won victories in the past. Therefore, logically and ethically speaking, Rose's argumentation was based purely on the right of the conqueror.

Three years later, in 1855, after the Austrian navy's attempt to occupy entire region of the Bay of Cattaro (Boka Kotorska), Britain moved to protect the interests of the Ottoman Empire and defend its right over the small corridor of Suturina, the only part of the bay which was still in its possession. It was then that, for a political purpose, a group of anonymous authors issued in London a much more formal memorandum. To this relatively minor political subject they dedicated forty eight pages, quoting from as many as nineteen bibliographic units. So, a hundred years' shorter period merited four times more extensive literature and accurately quoted archival sources[31].

30. Dimitrije Djorčević, "*Uloga istoricizma u formiranju balkanskih država 19. veka*", Zbornik Filozofskog fakulteta u Beogradu, *Spomenica Vase Cubrilovica*, (The Role of Historicism in development of the Balkan states in 19th century, Volume of Philosophical Faculty in Belgrade, Commemorative volume of Vasa Cubrilovic), Beograd 1968, pp. 309-326.

31. *Memorandum Relative to Cattaro, Foreign Office*, 22. june 1855, pp. 1-48, FO 146/620. Seymour to Clarendon, based on the following literature: Wilkinson, Dalmatia, & etc, I, on 1603 and 1621; Paul Rycott, page 116, on 1669; *Encyclopedia Brittanica*, ed. 1842, Vol. XX, *on 1699;* Gio Carnaro, (*History of Peace of Pasaroviz*), *Doge of Venice, about 1718*; Busching, Vol. II, on 1726; Anderson, Vol. II *on 1764;* Wilkinson, *on 1797;* Edinburgh Gazeteer, Vol. II, 1822; Boue, *La Turquie d'Europe*, Paris 1840; L. Ranke, *The*

The question that still remains open today is the following: what sources is Serbian and Montenegrin historiography using in order to reconstruct Montenegrin 17th and 18th century history? In *The History of the Serbian People*, known as the best historical synthesis of the entire history of Montenegro, first published in the 1980s, the chapters on Montenegro do not refer the reader to a single Ottoman source[32]. It is difficult to tell what knowledge could be gained from a comparative study of Ottoman and Western sources, but Colonel Rose's report might yet prove to be a relatively reliable secondary source[33].

Finally, it is necessary to go back to Colonel Rose's writings and their influence on British foreign policy once again. The political dictates of the time determined their quality and range, entailing both an exhaustive and lucid historical presentation. This kind of approach is well illustrated by a lapidary observation of the aforementioned British

History of Servia, London 1852, Prince Metternich to Lord Castlereagh, 1814, Continet, *Vienna Archives*, MS, Vol. II.

32. It would be interesting here to mention an example of a perception of Great Britain by a diplomat from another country. During this period Montenegro did not have organized diplomacy. An image of the English in certain regions of Bosnia, whose parts would soon become incorporated into Montenegro, might be a good example of it. At the same time British Consul-General Fonblanque mentioned in one of his reports, that it was common belief in some districts of Herzegovina that Bosnia would be placed under British protection. Fonblanque was informed that local priests were starting to spread rumours that Englishmen "are heathen who would destroy Orthodox churches and convert them into temples. The British diplomat could not resist making a note: ... ludicrous as may be the image of Englishmen erecting Druidical monuments ...". Fonblanque to Canning, Belgrade, 23. January 1852, FO 78 896, Copy No. 3.

33. The authors rarely quoted foreign sources. The example, which confirmed the rule, was an article by V. Vuksan ("Jedan ferman sultana Osmana III", Zapisi XXIV /*A Firman of the Sultan Osman III*/), works by D. Modrovceff and V. Makusheff (about Šcepan Mali) or one older study by Vladan Djordjević (about Austro-Montenegrin relations during the 18th century), *Istorija srpskog naroda*, IV/1, Beograd 1993[2]: (chapters) *Srbi u 18. veku*, *Crna Gora prvih decenija 18. veka*, pp. 31-39 i *Crna Gora od 1735 do 1797*, pp. 498-531. The thesis of the continuous independence of Montenegro was for the first time presented at the end of 18th century by Vladika Peter I himself. That belief prevailed till the second half of the 19th century and the appearance of the book by D. Ruvarac, *Montenegrina. Prilosci istoriji Crne Gore (Montenegrina, Contributions for the History of Montenegro)*. D. Ruvarac's thesis was confirmed by J. Tomić, based upon research in the Archive of Venice. On the basis of all research carried out by Serbian and Montenegrin historians, R. Ljučić argues that Montenegro had got virtual independence in 1796, during the life of Vladika Peter I Petrović. R. Ljučić, *Istorija srpske drzavnosti. Srbija i Crna Gora (A History of Serbian Statehood)*, Beograd 2001, pp. 251-254 and 321-324.

Ambassador to Constantinople, Sir Stratford Canning (by then already ennobled as de Redcliffe). The British diplomat returned to Constantinople in April 1853, at the time when Mentshikoff's mission had brought the crisis over the Holy Places to a new peak. During his first audience at the Sultan's court, he was treated to Sultan Abdul-Mejid's prolonged lamentation over the Montenegrin Crisis. Whilst the Sultan despondently insisted that the Ottoman Empire was fully entitled to establish sovereignty over Montenegro, de Redcliffe consoled him indifferently, remarking that "the right and sound policy do not always come together"[34].

34. De Redcliffe to Earl Clarendon, 7 April. 1853, FO 78/931, p. 72.