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**A Re-appraisal of the Austro-Hungarian Reform Policy  
in Macedonia (1903)<sup>1</sup>**

At the end of December 1902, the Russian Foreign Minister, Count Vladimir Nikolayevich Lamsdorff, met his Austrian counterpart, Count Agenor Goluchowski, in Vienna. The two ministers decided to intervene in the European provinces of the Ottoman Empire, a specifically in Macedonia, with a view to preserving peace<sup>2</sup>. The outcome of their meeting was the Vienna reform plan, which was drawn up early in February 1903 and accepted by the Sultan soon afterwards, on the twenty-third of that month.

The February plan marked the conclusion of a process that had begun in the summer of 1902, when Goluchowski had agreed with the proposal of the Russian Ambassador to Vienna, Count Peter Alexeyevich Kapnist, that a concerted effort should be made to maintain order in Turkey's European provinces<sup>3</sup>. The acceptance of the plan gave the

1. I am grateful to Dr. Basil Gounaris and Maria Yeroyanni for their valuable advice and comments.

2. It was not the first time that the Austrians had intervened in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire with a view to promoting a process of reform: see Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv Wien (hereafter HHStA) Politisches Archiv (PA) XII/Karton 316, for the twelve-page memorandum titled "Zusammenstellung über die Seitens der europäischen Mächte seit 1880 bei der Pforte geforderten Reformen", which was written after September 1909.

3. See F. R. Bridge, *From Sadowa to Sarajewo: The Foreign Policy of Austria-Hungary, 1866-1914*, London 1972, pp. 257-8; Douglas Dakin, *The Greek Struggle in Macedonia 1897-1913*, Thessaloniki 1966, p. 86. Count Heinrich Calice, Austro-Hungarian Ambassador in Constantinople, expressed his satisfaction that both the Tsar and the Russian Foreign Minister agreed that only the two eastern Powers should intervene (the participation of the other Powers might further complicate the situation) with a view to setting in train a process of reform in Turkey's European provinces and preventing misconduct: see HHStA PA XII/317, Calice to Goluchowski, Yenikioy, 10 July 1902, reg. No. 34 B. At about that time (12 July) Calice discussed the matter with the Turkish Foreign Minister, Tewfik Pasha: HHStA PA XII/317, Calice to Goluchowski, Yenikioy, 16 July 1902, reg. No. 35 C (extremely confidential).

green light to the intervention of the two eastern Powers in an internal matter of the Ottoman Empire. Russia and Austro-Hungary would not only influence, but from 1903 to 1908 would also have the last word on the efforts to restore order in Macedonia<sup>4</sup>. This intervention was diplomatically legitimised first by the Vienna reform plan and then, in October 1903, by the Mürzsteg programme.

The diplomatic developments leading up to the drafting of these two plans have been thoroughly investigated. As a purely political matter, the plans were the subject of all manner of publications in their own time, including the diplomatic papers published by the countries involved in the Macedonian Question<sup>5</sup>. Published documents were a good source of information for contemporary and later analysts of the Question, who thus had at their disposal official data concerning the policies of the Powers involved. But since the documents had been selected by the foreign ministries of those countries, one cannot say that they contained adequate information for a complete understanding of their policies, particularly the policies of the two eastern Powers who played the leading role.

The purpose of this study is to clarify the policy of Austro-Hungary and interpret the choices it made for Macedonia, and thus to demonstrate that the reform programmes were intended to serve purely short-term diplomatic objectives and deliberately took no account of the actual situation. To this end the study makes use of the correspondence

4. Concerning the rapprochement between Russia and Austro-Hungary in the period 1897-1902, see Francis Roy Bridge, "Izvolsky, Aehrenthal, and the End of the Austro-Russian Entente, 1906-8", *Mitteilungen des österreichischen Staatsarchivs* (hereafter MÖStA), 29 (1976), 315-22; K. B. Winogradow and J. A. Pissarew, "Die internationale Lage der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie in den Jahren 1900-1918", in Fritz Klein (ed.), *Österreich-Ungarn in der Weltpolitik 1900-1918*, Berlin 1965, pp. 20-1; Erich Rathmann, *Die Balkanfrage und das Werden der Tripelentente (vom Mürzsteger Abkommen bis zum Beginn der bosnischen Krise)*, *Ausgewählte Hallische Forschungen zur mittleren und neuen Geschichte*, 7, Halle Saale 1932, p. 7.

5. See the publications by the Austro-Hungarian K.u.k. Ministerium des Äussern, *Diplomatische Aktenstücke über die Reformaktion in Mazedonien, 1902-1906*, Vienna 1906; by the French Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, *Documents diplomatiques: Affaires de Macédoine, 1902, 1903-1905, 1906-1907*, Paris 1902 and after; by the German Auswärtiges Amt, *Die grosse Politik der europäischen Kabinette, 1871-1914*, Berlin 1924; and the British Foreign Office, *British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1898-1914*, vol. 5, *The Macedonian Problem and the Annexation of Bosnia, 1903-1908*, London 1928.

between the Austrian Foreign Minister and his Ambassador in Constantinople, chiefly after the drafting of the Vienna reform plan and the dramatic events in Macedonia in the summer of 1903, when the diplomats found themselves in a real quandary as to how the reform process was to go ahead.

Before arriving in Vienna, in December 1902, Count Lamsdorff went first to Serbia and then to Bulgaria. The purpose of his visits was to inform the governments of these two countries about the impending decision of Austro-Hungary and Russia to take steps to preserve the *status quo* in Macedonia and not to initiate processes likely to lead to autonomy for the Macedonian *vilayets* of the Ottoman Empire<sup>6</sup>.

King Alexander of Serbia told the Russian Minister that Serbia was in favour of maintaining Turkish dominion over Macedonia for as long as possible<sup>7</sup>. During his talks with the King and the Prime Minister in Sofia, Lamsdorff stressed the need to improve the public administration in Macedonia and made it clear that there must be no change in the region's territorial status<sup>8</sup>. This was an important point. It reflected Austro-Hungary's need for reassurance, for the Empire was not disposed to tolerate the creation of an autonomous Macedonia stretching from Bulgaria to Albania, with the prospect (or rather the threat, as far as Austro-Hungary was concerned) of its uniting with Bulgaria and thus realising the vision of the Great Bulgaria enshrined in the San Stefano Treaty<sup>9</sup>.

6. See Bridge, *From Sadowa*, p. 258.

7. HHStA PA XII/317, Freiherr von Heidler to Goluchowski, Belgrade, 28 December 1902, reg. No. 221 A-B (extremely confidential).

8. Lamsdorff was in Sofia from 26 to 28 December: HHStA PA XII/317, Ladislaus von Müller to Goluchowski, Sofia, 31 December 1902, reg. No. 70 D.

9. This was an old fear of Austro-Hungary's: see F. R. Bridge, *The Habsburg Monarchy among the Great Powers, 1815-1918*, New York 1990, pp. 244-5. It was the effort to prevent the creation of a Great Bulgaria that determined the Austro-Hungarian attitude to the reforms in Macedonia. The Austrians regarded the Russians' agreement that the Ottoman Empire's Macedonian *vilayets* should not receive autonomy as positive in this respect, as Goluchowski pointed out on 19 November 1903 at the meeting of the joint ministerial council of Austro-Hungary when commenting on the Mürzsteg reform programme. See the proceedings of meeting No. 439 of the joint ministerial council, Vienna, 19 November 1903, in Eva Somogyi (ed.), *Die Protokolle des gemeinsamen Ministerrates der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie, 1867-1918*, vol. 5: *Die Protokolle des gemeinsamen Ministerrates der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie, 1896-1907*, Budapest 1991, pp. 314-16.

Indeed, what Vienna told the other Powers on 17 February and the Porte on 21 February 1903 was based on this convergence of Austrian and Russian views on the Macedonian Question. The plan had been sketched out by Baron Heinrich Calice and Ivan Alexeyevich Zinoviev, Ambassadors in Constantinople of Austro-Hungary and Russia respectively, in a joint memorandum sent to their governments on 4 February<sup>10</sup>. The two eastern Powers' subsequent concerted action on the international diplomatic scene is well known. They had little difficulty in persuading the other Great Powers —Great Britain, France, Italy, and particularly Germany<sup>11</sup> (which had hitherto strongly resisted the idea of imposing reforms)— to allow them to handle the Macedonian Question alone. The plan was also accepted by the Christian Balkan nations (Serbia, Romania, Greece, and Bulgaria) and by the principal factor, the Sultan<sup>12</sup>.

Among the provisions of the Vienna plan was the stipulation that the Inspector-General of Macedonia, whom the Sultan had appointed early in December 1902<sup>13</sup>, could not be dismissed without the consent of Austro-Hungary and Russia. He was also granted the authority to call in the army without prior agreement with the central government. The security forces were to be reorganised with the help of European officers, and there was also talk of appointing Christian gendarmes. Political prisoners were to receive an amnesty and steps would be taken to avert

10. HHStA PA XII/318, Calice to Goluchowski, Constantinople, 4 February 1903, reg. No. 6 B (top secret), published in *Diplomatische Aktenstücke*, pp. 7-10, doc. No. 5.

11. For the reactions of the other signatories of the Treaty of Berlin, see Horand Horsa Schacht, *Die mazedonische Frage um die Jahrhundertwende*, Halle and Saale 1930, pp. 58-62; Bridge, *From Sadowa*, pp. 259-60. For the attitude of Germany in particular to the Vienna plan, see Albert Geschke, *Die deutsche Politik in der mazedonischen Frage bis zur türkischen Revolution von 1908*, Danzig 1932, pp. 56-61. Geschke uses archival material from the published correspondence of the German diplomats.

12. For the reactions of the Bulgarian, Serbian, and Greek governments, see Nikolaos V. Vlahos, *To Μακεδονικόν ως φάσις του Ανατολικού Ζητήματος, 1878-1908*, Athens 1935, pp. 255-6; for the Sultan's reaction, see *ibid.*, p. 257, and Schacht, *Die mazedonische Frage*, p. 61.

13. In an attempt to forestall forceful intervention by the Great Powers, at the beginning of December 1902 the Sultan had appointed Hussein Hilmi Pasha Inspector-General of the *vilayets* of European Turkey: see Vlahos, *To Μακεδονικόν*, pp. 240-41; Fikret Adanır, *Die makedonische Frage: Ihre Entstehung und Entwicklung bis 1909*, Frankfurter Historische Studien, 20, Wiesbaden 1979, pp. 155-6.

future conflict between the various ethnic groups. It was also intended to create a separate budget for each *vilayet* to cover the cost of maintaining the army; and, finally, the tithe would be levied by community, not by district. The purpose of these measures was, first, to restore order in Macedonia and, second, to improve conditions for the Sultan's Christian subjects.

The provisions of the Vienna plan reveal that the extent and nature of the problem was determined by the diplomats of the two Powers concerned. They initially regarded it as a question of law and order, which it was their primary aim to restore. This meant, on the one hand, putting a stop to the terrorist activities of the Bulgarian *komitata* which were based in Bulgarian territory and, on the other, re-organising the Ottoman security forces so that they would be in a position to maintain public order. As Calice saw it<sup>14</sup>, a prerequisite for the success of the whole enterprise was the application of effective pressure both to stop the terrorist activity of the *komitata* and to persuade the Sublime Porte to further the task of reform. On the other hand, the diplomats did realise that the problem of social unrest also had an economic basis, namely the malaise induced by high-handed actions in the course of tax collection. For this reason, they felt that a few economic reforms would not come ammiss<sup>15</sup>.

Both the Austrian and the Russian diplomats agreed that the solution had to be implemented within the framework of the Ottoman state. Their first concern was to preserve the *status quo* in the region, and they also considered it undesirable to involve external agencies. But the political and economic situation in both empires precluded their undertaking more vigorous initiatives in the Balkans for the time being. Having a number of problems to contend with in their own troubled empire, the Austrians were reluctant to involve themselves in affairs that they could not confront effectively. The Russians, for their part, were chiefly concerned with what was going on the Far East<sup>16</sup>.

14. HHStA PA XII/318, report from Calice to Goluchowski, Constantinople, 4 February 1903, reg. No. 6 A-E (top secret).

15. Fikret Adanır rather exaggerates the significance of this parameter, regarding it as a crucial cause of unrest in Macedonia at the turn of the century: Adanır, *Die makedonische Frage*, pp. 253-4.

16. Concerning the problems which the two empires were facing and which eventually

As a result of the two Powers' inability to establish any sort of mechanism for supervising the reforms, the principal role in ensuring their implementation was eventually conceded to the Sublime Porte. The same weakness characterised the Austrian and Russian governments' moves to halt the activities of the *komitata*. The pressure applied upon the Bulgarian government was inadequate and Bulgaria continued to serve as the pool that steadily supplied the growing nationalist fervour in Macedonia. Corps of guerrilla fighters continued to pour into Macedonian territory throughout the spring and summer of 1903<sup>17</sup>.

It was only after the eventuality that everyone most dreaded had taken place —a rebellion in Macedonia, in the form of the Bulgarian-fomented Ilinden uprising— that the authors of the first reform plan began to worry about the need for a more realistic approach to the problem. But the situation was out of control, for the Turkish troops that were sent to quell the rising wreaked greater havoc than the rebels themselves<sup>18</sup>.

While the uprising was still in progress, the Austrian Foreign Ministry's experts composed a memorandum<sup>19</sup>, in which they analysed why all the provisions of the Vienna plan had not been implemented. In their view, there were two main reasons: i) the attitude of the Bulgarian government, which should not have been supporting the activities of the Macedonian *komitata*; and ii) the slow and ineffective implementation of the reforms by Turkey. The analysis was correct, but all the thinking it entailed should have been done earlier. The Bulgarian government officially deplored the *komitata*'s activities; yet it was obvious and

led them to join forces on the Balkan issues, see Francis Roy Bridge, "Österreich(-Ungarn) unter den Grossmächten", in Adam Wandruszka and Peter Urbanitsch (eds), *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848-1918*, vol. 5.1, *Die Habsburgermonarchie im System der internationalen Beziehungen*, Vienna 1989, pp. 299-300.

17. See Dakin, *The Greek Struggle*, p. 108.

18. See, for instance, Archives du Ministère des affaires étrangères/Nouvelle série (hereafter AMAE/NS) Turquie-Macédoine, vol. 36, f. 83r, L. Maurouard to T. Delcasse, Athens, 22 August 1903, reg. No. 135, and *ibid.*, ff. 108r-110r, L. Steeg to T. Delcasse, Thessaloniki, 25 August 1903, reg. No. 38, published in A. A. Chotzidis, B. C. Gounaris and A. A. Panayotopoulou (eds), *The Events of 1903 in Macedonia as Presented in European Diplomatic Correspondence*, Thessaloniki 1993, pp. 93-5.

19. HHSStA PA XII/319, Liasse XXXV, Entwurf einer neuen Abgrenzung der Balkan-Vilajets mit Ausnahme des Vilajets Adrianopel, mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der in denselben obwaltenden nationalen Verhältnisse, August 1903.

absolutely predictable that it was unable (and probably had not the slightest desire) to prevent guerrilla bands from entering Macedonian territory. Besides, the Austrian consular authorities were well aware from past experience that these bands were frequently led by Bulgarian army officers<sup>20</sup>. For its own part, Turkey had not suppressed the guerrillas' activities firmly and vigorously enough to create a suitable climate of peace for the implementation of the reforms. This too should not really have surprised the Austrian diplomats, for they had had first-hand experience of Turkish foot-dragging and knew how hard Turkey had had to be pressed to accept the European proposals<sup>21</sup>.

The observations contained in the memorandum set the Austrians to wondering how feasible the reforms ultimately were in the circumstances, when factors beyond their control were a constant fly in the ointment and yet direct intervention was out of the question. It was obvious by now that proper guarantees were required, over and above the promises and feigned willingness of the Ottoman government. The writer of the memorandum went even further and wondered how much longer the Sultan's continuing authority could be reconciled with the increasingly urgent bids for national emancipation by the various ethnic groups under Ottoman rule.

The writer's final proposal concerned changing the administrative régime of the subjugated peoples by creating new, ethnically homogeneous, administrative districts, in which the Sultan's subjects would enjoy a certain amount of administrative autonomy and there would thus be no obstacles to their modernisation and well-being<sup>22</sup>. Needless to say, these

20. See, for instance, the following reports from the consuls in Thessaloniki and Monastir: HHStA PA XXXVIII/407, Richard Hickel to Goluchowski, Thessaloniki, 21 February 1903, reg. No. 7 (extremely confidential); HHStA PA XXXVIII/392, A. Kral to Goluchowski, Monastir, 25 August 1903, reg. No. 105; HHStA PA XXXVIII/393, A. Kral to Goluchowski, Monastir, 1 September 1903, reg. No. 110, published in Chotzidis et al., *The Events of 1903*, pp. 36-40, 95-6, 97-8 respectively.

21. For Turkey's dilatory attitude both before and after the Vienna programme, see Dakin, *The Greek Struggle*, pp. 86, 90.

22. In a letter to Baron Aloys Lexa von Aehrenthal, Ambassador in St. Petersburg Julius Zwiedeneck von Södenhorst, who was head of the Foreign Ministry Department of Eastern Affairs and very influential throughout Goluchowski's term of office, explained that better conditions for the Christians in Macedonia would mean above all an improvement in their economic situation, as also the possibility of offering them greater cultural and educational freedom: HHStA Nachlass Aehrenthal/4, Zwiedeneck to Aehrenthal, Vienna, 20

proposals were prompted not by humanitarian motives but by hopes of considerable economic gain from the Christians' prospective well-being<sup>23</sup>. The writer added the *caveat* that it would be unwise to create fully autonomous areas, because this would encourage secessionist tendencies. He therefore proposed that areas of only limited autonomy be specified for the Serbs, the Bulgarians, the Greeks, the Turks, and the Albanians of Macedonia and Albania<sup>24</sup>. Indeed, to ensure that the whole Albanian population was provided for, he suggested that, apart from the three Macedonian *vilayets* of Thessaloniki, Monastir, and Kosovo, the area scheduled for administrative reform should also include the *vilayets* of Scutari and Ioannina. It was planned to create a large Albanian administrative district by amalgamating the *vilayet* of Scutari and the greater part of the *vilayet* of Ioannina, and including some *sanjaks* from the *vilayets* of Kosovo and Monastir.

Shortly afterwards, on 1 September, Count Goluchowski asked Calice for an appraisal of the reforms, in the light of recent events and with reference to three questions<sup>25</sup>: i) whether, once the uprising were crushed, there would be better prospects for implementing the reforms; ii) whether it would be enough simply to put the Vienna plan into force or whether further provisions would be required; and iii) whether it would

February 1903.

23. For the economic relations between Austro-Hungary and the Balkan countries in the early 20th century, see Emil Palotas, "Die Aussenwirtschaftlichen Beziehungen zum Balkan und zu Russland", in Wandruszka and Urbanitsch, *Die Habsburgermonarchie*, vol. 5.1, pp. 620 ff.; Winogradow and Pissarew, "Die internationale Lage", p. 25; V. Paskalewa, "Über den wirtschaftlichen Einfluss Österreich-Ungarns in Bulgarien (1878-1912)", in Klein, *Österreich-Ungarn*, p. 202.

24. It is interesting to note the statistical data on which the writer of the memorandum based his argument. For the five European *vilayets* of the Ottoman Empire —Scutari, Ioannina, Kosovo, Monastir, and Thessaloniki— he gives a total population of 3,910,360, divided up into "1,393,076 [people] of Albanian, 1,209,660 of Slavonic, i.e. Bulgarian or Serbian, 577,520 of Ottoman Turkish, 487,208 of Greek, and 129,390 of Vlach (Romanian) descent", the rest being Circassians, Jews, Gypsies, etc. As regards religion, there were 1,970,890 "Moslems" [(1,133,490 "Albanians", 229,870 "Slavs (Bulgarians and Serbs)", 23,020 "Greeks", and 577,520 "Ottomans")], 1,715,179 "Orthodox Christians" (149,470 "Albanians", 603,710 "Exarchist" and 368,417 "Patriarchist Slavs", 464,190 "Greeks", and 129,390 "Vlachs"), and 117,780 "Roman Catholics" (110,120 "Albanians" and 7,660 "Slavs").

25. HHStA PA XII/319, directive from Goluchowski to Calice, Vienna, 1 September 1903, reg. No. 804.



be feasible effectively to monitor the whole process of putting the reforms into practice.

The Ambassador replied on 7 September<sup>26</sup>. His answer to the first question was affirmative, because once the Bulgarian *komitata* ceased their activities he anticipated that the situation would be calm enough. To the second question he replied that, while it would be beneficial to go ahead with the reforms, in the present circumstances, and particularly in view of Bulgaria's active disagreement, such a procedure would be extremely hazardous. It would probably lead to the collapse of the whole programme, as had been the case with the Vienna programme. At this point the Ambassador pointed out once more the need for a speedy resolution of the economic situation in the three *vilayets* scheduled for reform, so that the needs of the army and the police force could be met and the areas in question pacified. With regard to the third question, Calice averred that it was absolutely vital that the process be closely monitored, and noted that this could be done by the local Russian and Austrian consuls, who should point out the weak spots and press for speedy implementation of the reforms. It went without saying that their reports to their ambassadors should be impartial and confined to a straightforward account of events.

Calice finished, despite his superior's opposing views, by underscoring the need to use Russian and Austrian officers for the efficient reorganisation of the gendarmerie, and he suggested that Italian officers also be included, since their successful previous employment on Crete had given them the necessary experience. Otherwise, there was a real risk that the relevant provisions in the plan would remain a dead letter.

In a lengthy private letter to the Minister on 21 September<sup>27</sup>, Calice again underlined the negative role of the Bulgarian *komitata* in the peace process. He knew how determined they were to achieve their aim of Macedonian autonomy, and he quoted a statement made to him by a Bulgarian priest: "The sacrifice of 40,000 or 50,000 Christians slain by the Turks would not be too high a price to pay for the autonomy of Macedonia".

26. HHStA PA XII/319, Calice to Goluchowski, Yenikioy, 7 September 1903, reg. No. 48 A-D (top secret).

27. HHStA PA XII/319, private letter from Calice to Goluchowski, Yenikioy, 21 September 1903.

The Ambassador also mentioned the Bulgarians' partially successful efforts to present Macedonia as a Bulgarian country, despite the fact that two thirds of the population consisted of other nationalities, "Patriarchist Slavs (Serbs), Greeks, Koutsovlachs, Albanians, Turks, and Pomaks". But what set the Bulgarians apart from the other ethnic groups was the strenuous and varied activity of IMRO, which had the effect of over-bolstering the Bulgarian element. It was obvious too that Bulgarian politicians and even King Ferdinand himself were succouring IMRO. Weighing up all the evidence, the Ambassador was of the opinion that the Great Powers ought to lean heavily on the Bulgarian government to restrict the *komitata*'s activities.

As Goluchowski noted later<sup>28</sup>, he took serious account of these comments when, on 2 October, he met his Russian counterpart at Mürzsteg in Styria, where the reform plan of the same name was drawn up. Essentially this was a supplement to the Vienna programme, the purpose of which was, precisely, to prepare the ground for putting into force what had been decided in February. Most important in this respect was the first article, according to which the Ottoman Inspector-General of Macedonia was to be flanked by two Civil Agents, one Austrian and one Russian, who would each serve a two-year term and oversee the implementation of the reforms. This was an attempt by the two Powers to play a direct part in the reform process, which was something they had sidestepped in February.

The new plan, again, laid stress on the restoration of order, and to this end it was stipulated that the re-organisation of the security forces would be carried out by a European officer, with the support of senior officers from all the Great Powers. All the officers would thus be overseeing the re-organisation process together. It was also decided that the boundaries of the administrative districts in the areas scheduled for reform would be redrawn on the basis of ethnic homogeneity. The ethnic factor was also a consideration in the reorganisation of the administrative and judicial institutions, for it was stipulated that Christians were also to be employed in the administration. Lastly, it was emphasised that the inhabitants who had suffered financial distress from the summer

28. HHStA PA XII/319, directive from Goluchowski to Calice, Vienna, 8 October 1903, reg. No. 888.

troubles would receive compensation.

A few days later<sup>29</sup>, in his initial comments on the provisions of the Mürzsteg programme, Goluchowski wrote to Calice that the point of limiting the Civil Agents' term of office to two years was to show the Sultan that the two Powers did not regard their intervention as a permanent factor and that active intervention would cease as soon as they had achieved their purpose of pacifying the region. This comment alone reveals how little determined the two Powers were to intervene forcefully in Macedonian affairs. On the one hand they were adopting radical interventionist measures to implement the reforms, and on the other they were showing that they did not want those measures to seem forceful and coercive, so as not to arouse the Sultan's displeasure.

The Minister manifested a similar aversion to more long-term intervention in his comments, in the same document, on article 3 of the programme, concerning the creation of ethnically homogenous and partially autonomous areas. While acknowledging this particular administrative modification to be especially important for the economic and educational affairs of the local ethnic groups, he again concluded that the main objective was to preserve the essential authority of the central government. Goluchowski also referred elsewhere<sup>30</sup> to the leading role of the Ottoman government in the whole pacification effort, stating that the two Powers took the Porte's support for granted if the *status quo* were to be maintained and peace ensured. Moreover, in the same context, he initially postponed the serious question of judicial reform indefinitely<sup>31</sup>.

It is interesting to note what Goluchowski regarded as the chief aims of the Mürzsteg reform programme. They were: i) to supervise the implementation of the reforms prescribed by the Vienna plan; ii) to conduct a humanitarian campaign to help the Christians who had suffered in the summer troubles; iii) to allay public fears regarding the fate of the

29. *Ibid.*

30. HHStA PA XII/319, directive from Goluchowski to Calice, Vienna, 8 October 1903, reg. No. 887.

31. It was not until 1907 that, on the Porte's initiative under pressure from the two Powers, a few changes were made in the system whereby justice was dispensed in Macedonia: see Jakob Ruchti, *Die Reformaktion Österreich-Ungarns und Russlands in Mazedonien 1903-1908: Die Durchführung der Reformen*, Gotha 1918, pp. 80-2. Ruchti based his study of the implementation of the reforms in Macedonia on the relevant published documents of Austro-Hungary, France, Germany, and Great Britain.

Christians; and iv) to respond to the Bulgarian government's demand to stem the flow of refugees from Macedonia to Bulgaria<sup>32</sup>.

In conclusion, it must be said that, as regards the implementation of the reforms in Macedonia, the joint action of Austro-Hungary and Russia was chiefly characterised by their anxiety to retain the sole privilege of handling the Macedonian Question, to the exclusion of the other Great Powers who had signed the Treaty of Berlin. In view of their incapacity for forceful action in the Balkans from as early as 1897, this determination was a negative factor from the start. A consequence of the two eastern Powers' inability to impose forceful solutions was their insistence on preserving at all costs the territorial *status quo* in the European provinces of the Ottoman Empire, followed, naturally enough, by the failure of the reform programmes.

As far as defining the problem was concerned, it is clear that the Austrian diplomats correctly detected that the basic parameter was the growing nationalism of the various Christian peoples in European Turkey, particularly the Bulgarians. It was a factor that no longer permitted the ethnic groups concerned to tolerate the present situation, for they were all, to a greater or lesser extent, now openly demanding national emancipation. But it was precisely this fundamental consideration that the authors of the Austrian foreign policy failed to address. The reason was their refusal to instigate substantial changes in the administrative régime of the Macedonian *vilayets*, owing to their profound reluctance to weaken the Sultan's authority and thus possibly bring about the secession of these provinces from the body of the Ottoman Empire.

Similarly spineless was the Austrians' approach to the other principal factor in the problem, namely Ottoman misgovernment. Having pin-pointed the cause of this as the inefficient organisation of the security forces and the other administrative and judicial services, they proposed that these be re-organised, but essentially left control of the

32. Speaking before the joint ministerial council on 19 November 1903, Goluchowski described the Austro-Russian joint efforts on the Mürzsteg programme as extremely successful, and the whole process as a major advance towards the pacification of the region. As Somogyi comments, it is interesting to note (after Goluchowski's address) the interpolation of the Minister of War, Ritter von Pitreich, who asked to be informed at once in the event of complications arising in Macedonia that might call for military intervention: see Somogyi, *Die Protokolle*, vol. 5, pp. xxxiii and 316.

whole reform effort, as also the financial cost, with the Sultan. The appointment of the two Civil Agents to serve a two-year term alongside the Ottoman Inspector-General was hardly an indication of decisive intervention in the whole procedure. The Sultan still had the last word, and it was in his interest to delay the reform process.

Ultimately, the point of the Austrians intervention was simply to restore normal conditions within the Ottoman Empire and above all to smooth out the social and economic problems arising out of the Christian subjects' disadvantageous position in relation to the dominant Ottomans. However, they overlooked the fundamental problem of co-existence that had arisen among the Christian groups themselves. And the interventions of the Balkan states were in various ways actually aggravating the Christians' differences. Not only did Austrians make no attempt radically to deal with this interference (particularly Bulgaria's), but article 3 in the otherwise conservative Mürzsteg programme unwittingly fuelled it. Henceforth, and within the next year, they would find themselves having to cope not only with the Turks' delaying tactics and the Bulgarians' irredentist plans, but also with the Greeks', Serbs', and Romanians' demands.

As far as the Austrian diplomats were concerned, then, the reform question was simply a matter of restoring public security and order in Macedonia. Though it was recognised as the crux of the problem, the ethnic strife was not an object of any serious concern in their efforts to find a solution. The upshot was that the *status quo* was maintained in the region for a further nine years, together with the steadily increasing conflict between the contending ethnic groups. Unless one is to accuse the Austrian diplomats of lacking the most rudimentary foresight, it is reasonable to suppose that their interest in Macedonia was probably confined to sustaining a controlled and very promising crisis which would not, however, excite the compassion of European public opinion.