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Revolution (1788–1858)



Fateful Encounters

Nemenikuće was a predominantly Christian village located just south of Belgrade. It formed part of a *timar* belonging to an Ottoman agha, a ‘young, blonde, tall man, with a pot-marked face [...] who was so good he could have been a Christian’, recalled Nemenikuće-born Milovan Vidaković (1780–1841), the author of the earliest Serbian novels. One of six siblings raised by a widowed farmer Stefan Vidaković, Milovan was born and spent his childhood in the village. Milovan’s uncle had fled to Hungary following a dispute with one of the agha’s men, but generally the relationship between the Muslim agha, who married a local woman, and the Christian villagers was good. In common with many other inhabitants of the Smederevo sanjak, the Vidakovići were ancestors of refugees – in this case Herzegovinians who had settled in ‘Serbia’ in the late seventeenth century, at the time of the population movements discussed in the previous chapter. This was a patriarchal society that functioned according to a long-established set of norms and customs specific to the region. As heads of extended households (*zadruga* or *kuće*), elder men usually had the final say on family matters, but collective decision-making based on consensus was practiced.¹ Although sometimes romanticized

¹ M.-J. Calic, *Društvena istorija Srbije, 1815–1941*, transl. from German by R. Gašić, Belgrade, 2004, 48–57; N. Mišković, *Bazari i bulevari: Svet žrvota u Beogradu 19. veka*, transl. from German by R. Gašić, Belgrade, [2010], 106–24; St. K. Pavlowitch, ‘Society in Serbia, 1791–1830’, in R. Clogg (ed.), *Balkan*

as pre-modern peasant democracies, it was indeed possible for individual voices to be heard and considered in these traditional households. Thus, Milovan's sister refused to marry a wealthy elder man, who came to ask for her hand having been given permission by the girl's father and grandfather. Vidaković's claim that this man was Koča Andjelković (1755–88), the future hero of the Austrian–Ottoman war, has been disputed by scholars.²

Not far from another Ottoman periphery to the east of the Balkans, a very different encounter took place in Spring 1787. Catherine the Great and Joseph II met in Sevastopolis (Sevastopol), a port city in Crimea, recently built by Catherine's lover Prince Potemkin. Russia had occupied and then annexed Crimea in 1783, causing perhaps 100,000 Muslim Tatars to flee to the Ottoman Empire.³ On the way to Sevastopolis (the name of which was meant to recall classical Greek presence in the area), Catherine's yacht passed under a triumphal arch that bore the inscription 'The Way to Byzantium' – one of Potemkin's many creations aimed to please the empress who dreamt about the 'restoration' of the 'Greek Empire'. It was to be located roughly in modern Greece, Bulgaria, and North Macedonia and given to her young grandson Konstantin Pavlovich (1779–1831), rather obviously named after Constantine the Great. The Russian empress and Austrian emperor plotted the partition of Ottoman European possessions, although Joseph was mainly interested in Poland and in securing Russian support in an event of Austria's war against Prussia.⁴ The imperial rendezvous in Crimea and the Great

Society in the Age of Greek Independence, London, 1981, 137–56; O. Srdanović-Barać, *Srpska agrarna revolucija i poljoprivreda od Kočine krajine do kraja prve vlade kneza Miloša, 1788–1839*, Belgrade, 1980.

² P. Popović, *Milovan Vidaković*, Belgrade, 1934, 8; cf. M. Vidaković, *Uspomene*, Belgrade, 2003.

³ D. Lieven, *Empire: The Russian Empire and Its Rivals*, New Haven, CT, 2001, 15.

⁴ L. S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans since 1453*, London, 2000 (first publ. 1958), 192–94; cf. D. Howard, *A History of the Ottoman Empire*, Cambridge, 2017, 226–27; P. Bushkovitch, *A Concise History of Russia*, Cambridge, 2011, 133.

Powers' rivalry set in motion events that would directly affect the lives of the people of the Smederevo sanjak.

A long conflict between the Ottoman state and the Janissaries, which had begun during the reign of Sultan Mahmud I (1730–54) – one of the reasons why the Ottoman Empire was perceived as internally weak, and not only by Catherine and Joseph – would also have a profound impact on the history of the Serbs. Pushed out of the core regions by Mahmud's western-inspired military reforms, formerly elite but now mostly ill-disciplined Janissaries moved to remote parts of the empire, including the Balkans, where they frequently terrorized Christian population (through raids, raised taxes, arbitrary executions) and clashed with local Ottoman authorities.

With the backing of Britain and Prussia, and hoping to retake Crimea, the Ottomans declared war on the Russian Empire in August 1787. Ideally, they would have liked to also overturn the 1774 Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca, which, as we have seen, formally made Russia the protector of the Ottoman Orthodox. Austria meanwhile closely monitored developments in the Balkans, looking for an opportunity to retake Belgrade and the strategic Morava valley, the aquatic spine of the Smederevo sanjak. There, rebel Janissaries clashed with the Belgrade pasha, large Muslim landowners and Christian peasants. The latter were exposed to growing taxation demands and requests to surrender personal weapons, which led to frequent skirmishes. An Austrian spy reported that 'Serbia' was in a state of anarchy. This seemed to ring true in January 1788, following public execution of a group of Serbs accused of treason for their alleged pro-Austrian activities, which led to an escalation of violence in the province. Sensing an opportune moment, Vienna declared war on the Ottoman state the following month.⁵

⁵ ISN, IV-1, 355–64; S. Novaković, *Tursko carstvo pred srpski ustanak, 1780–1804*, Belgrade, 1906, 57–58; D. Pantelić, *Vojno-geografski opisi Srbije pred Kočinu krajinu od 1783. i 1784. god.*, Belgrade, 1936.

The conflict that broke out in February 1788, and would go on until August 1791, was the fourth Habsburg–Ottoman war of the past century (1683–99; 1716–18; 1739; 1788–91). This time, it took place in the backdrop of the Russian–Ottoman war in the east and the French Revolution in the west, but once again much of the fighting took place in what is today Serbia. It may be argued that the century of Habsburg–Ottoman conflict had had a more profound impact on the Serbian history than the previous two and a half centuries of Ottoman rule. Memories of the temporary ‘restorations’ of ‘Serbia’, albeit within the Habsburg imperial framework, lived on among the local population; as did the legacy of violence and forced population movements. In the late eighteenth century, present-day central Serbia was a sparsely populated area, covered in forest. The mass emigration of Christians into the Habsburg monarchy was somewhat offset by the arrival of Orthodox Slavs from neighbouring Ottoman provinces, who helped maintain a clear Christian majority in the sanjak. While Muslims had also emigrated, many, mostly from Bosnia, had also moved into the Smederevo sanjak in the eighteenth century. They would feel increasingly uncertain about their future, despite, or perhaps because, they belonged to the ruling minority, and the vast majority will depart from Serbia in the decades that followed.⁶

Back in early 1788, as news reached Nemenikuće that Janissaries were pillaging and burning Christian villages, the Novakovićs and their neighbours sought shelter in a nearby forest. As the fighting escalated, they set on a longer journey, along the well-established route to the Habsburg Monarchy. Christian

⁶ M. B. Petrovich, *A History of Modern Serbia, 1804–1918*, New York, 1976, 2 vols, I, 21; Š. Hodžić, ‘Migracije muslimanskog stanovništva iz Srbije u sjeveroistočnu Bosnu između 1788. –[sic] 1862. godine’, *Članci i gradnja za kulturnu istoriju istočne Bosne*, II, Tuzla, 1958, 65–143, 65; cf. J. Cvijić, *La péninsule balkanique: géographie humaine*, Paris, 1918, chs 10–12.

peasants abandoned their homes in a hurry, taking with them only what they could. Sometimes this included domestic animals – sources of food and income and, perhaps, sentimental reminders of the home they may never see again. Refugee columns passed by deserted villages, vineyards and orchards, tree branches bowed under the weight of unpicked apples, pears and plums. Some changed their mind, unable to leave and apparently preferring to risk their lives rather than start afresh in exile. Many others left never to return, joining a sizeable Serb diaspora in Hungary and Austria. Echoing the abbot of Hopovo during the ‘Great Migration’ a century earlier, Milovan Vidaković compared Serb refugees to ‘Israelites fleeing to Egypt’.⁷ However, the Danube and the Sava Rivers were no Red Sea. Just like during the previous centuries, the movement of peoples and goods continued despite frequent fighting. This ensured that the border between the two seemingly very different empires, and between large Serb communities on the two sides of the frontier, was not a pre-modern Iron Curtain.⁸

Once they reached the apparent safety of southern Hungary, refugees of fighting age were recruited by Habsburg officers of Serb origin, the Orthodox clergy and traders and merchants, whose networks of contacts extended on both sides of the border. The latter included Koča Andjelković. A farmer from Panjevac, a village on the banks of the Velika Morava River near Jagodina, he too hailed from a family of migrants, whose origins were probably in modern Kosovo. Koča made his fortune through livestock export, but marriage to a woman from a well-off family helped too⁹ – and must have gone some way towards compensating for the earlier romantic rejection, if Vidaković’s version of events is to be trusted.

⁷ Vidaković, *Uspomene*, 43–44.

⁸ St. K. Pavlowitch, *Serbia: The History behind the Name*, London, 2002, 26.

⁹ D. Pantelić, *Kočina Krajina*, Belgrade, 1930, 16–18.

Andjelković was quickly promoted to the rank of captain in Major (later Colonel) Mihailo Mihaljević's 'Serbian' Freikorps. Lack of food and fear of Ottoman reprisals made the mobilization of the peasants difficult, but Andjelković's pre-war reputation and contacts helped him overcome these obstacles. Consisting mainly of Habsburg and Ottoman Serbs, *Kapetan Koča's* 10,000-strong militia quickly gained control of the countryside south of Belgrade. Low morale among the Ottoman troops due to food shortages, irregular wages and internal conflicts contributed to Koča's success, though his troops did not manage to capture any towns. This allowed the Ottoman troops to regroup and launch a successful counteroffensive. Hit by hunger and desertion, and with no aid from Austria forthcoming, the Freikorps were forced to retreat. Andjelković's men, however, continued to raid Ottoman garrisons in 'Serbia', until their leader was captured and publicly executed near the modern Serbian–Romanian border in September 1788. The war that continued for three more years is remembered in the Serbian tradition as *Kočina Krajina* (Koča's War).¹⁰

The peace agreement signed in Svishtov (modern Bulgaria) in August 1791 re-established the Ottoman sanjak of Smederevo. The Habsburgs' sense of loss was heightened by the death, the

¹⁰ The legend of *Kapetan Koča* survives to this day and was fostered in both royalist and socialist Yugoslavia. Panjevac was renamed *Kočino Selo* (Koča's Village) in the 1930s. Several decades later, a popular Yugoslav comic book series featured a two-part issue on *Kapetan Koča* and his military campaign against the Ottomans. The series was best known for its main characters, World War II-era Partisan children-soldiers *Mirko* and *Slavko*, but it also featured other historical Yugoslav and pre-Yugoslav resistance leaders and historical events. An old oak tree just outside *Kočino Selo*, on the left bank of the *Velika Morava* River, where Andjelković allegedly recruited his troops, still stands. It has been a state-protected 'monument of nature' since 1958. This was a place where the author of this book and his younger sister were sometimes taken as children in the late 1970s and early 1980s. An ideal spot for a break in nature and a 'history lesson' from grandparents, retelling the story they had themselves once heard on the very same spot (our paternal grandmother was born and grew up in the village). A good example perhaps of how oral history works in practice.

previous year, of Emperor Joseph II and of Field Marshal von Laudon, the military governor of Habsburg-occupied Serbia. (In 1792, Sultan Selim III (1789–1807) finally ceded the Crimea and the surrounding territory near the Black Sea to Russia). There was a familiar post-war pattern. Ottoman reprisals against Christians caused further emigration to the Austrian Empire. Probably only a general amnesty granted by the sultan prevented another mass exodus of Orthodox Serbs. The amnesty also caused a sense of resentment among some Muslims when former Freikorps fighters returned to start or resume the profitable live-stock trade.

The war of 1788–91 anticipated the ‘Serbian revolution’, or the First Serbian Uprising, the beginning of which is traditionally dated to 1804. Andjelković had belonged to the same, emerging social class of prosperous farmers and livestock traders who would lead the 1804 insurgency, having had their privileges taken away by the Janissaries. Frequent warfare and forced population movements of the eighteenth century disadvantaged settled farmers but encouraged more entrepreneurial among them to start dealing in livestock, especially pigs, that found customers in neighbouring Habsburg-held Hungary. In the late eighteenth century, the trade between Ottoman ‘Serbia’ and central European markets boomed, forcing the authorities to employ 62 staff at the Zemun border crossing to oversee the import of livestock. Towards the end of the century, 160,000 pigs and 4,000 cattle annually were exported from Ottoman ‘Serbia’ into central Europe. In 1777–86, Hungary imported on average 1,300,000 francs worth of pigs annually from the Ottoman Empire, mainly from Serbia. The Treaty of Svishtov allowed free trade between the Habsburg and Ottoman states, boosting the economy and the standard of living of Christian farmers in the Smederevo sanjak. In the 1790s, most Christians in the province owned between 20 and 200 pigs, but the richest among them possessed even more. Karadjordje

Petrović, who would lead the 1804 uprising, apparently owned 300 pigs, 3,000 sheep, 70 cattle and 16 horses.¹¹

The First Serbian Uprising, 1804–13

Post-war reforms introduced by Selim III improved the position of the Balkan peasantry, but it was the appointment, as the Belgrade vizier, of Haji Mustafa Pasha in 1793 that would prove especially popular among the local population. The new pasha expelled the Janissaries and fully restored the autonomy of Serb village communities (*knežine*). The *knezes* (village leaders) resumed their role as tax-collecting intermediaries between the Christian peasantry and Muslim landowners. The highest-ranked *knezes* were known as *obor-knezes* (sing. *obor-knez*), from German *ober* (upper, higher) and Slav *knez*. They were essentially Christian chiefs of *nabije* (pl. from *nabija* – a word of Turkish origin meaning district); this linguistic mix perfectly captured the historical legacies in what was soon to become modern Serbia.

The Christians nicknamed Haji Mustafa Pasha ‘*srpska majka*’ (the Serbian mother). If public opinion surveys existed at the time, he would have been well ahead of Leontije (Leontius), a not especially popular Phanariot Greek Metropolitan of Belgrade. Further concessions followed, including permission to (re-)build churches and, crucially, the right to bear light arms. Made in order to help defend the province from Janissary raids, the decision would have profound consequences. It enabled village leaders and other prosperous Christians to keep menservants, who acted, if necessary, as armed bodyguards.¹²

¹¹ M. Ekmečić, *Stvaranje Jugoslavije, 1790–1918*, Belgrade, 1989, 2 vols, I, 93; T. Stoianovich, ‘The Conquering Balkan Orthodox Merchant’, *Journal of Economic History*, 20:2 (1960), 234–313, 282–83.

¹² ISN, IV-1, 402–19; R. Zens, ‘In the Name of the Sultan: Haçi Mustafa Pasha of Belgrade and Ottoman Provincial Rule in the Late 18th Century’, *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 44:1 (2012), 129–46.

Fiercely loyal to their masters, the *momci* ('bachelors', 'lads') were provided with weapons, clothes, food and share of the booty (which sometimes included Christian women kidnapped as would-be brides for the *momci*). Numbers varied, but prominent Serbs employed up to 50 *momci* and were able to recruit additional men when required.¹³ Aleksa Nenadović, the *obor-knez* of the Valjevo *nabija* in western Serbia, could apparently mobilize around 1,800 men.¹⁴ Members of these peasant militias, employed by the pasha against the Janissaries, often had prior combat experience, as veterans of the 1788–91 war and/or as former brigands.

The main source of instability in the Belgrade province was the neighbouring sanjak of Vidin (modern north-western Bulgaria). There, Pasvanoğlu Osman Pasha (1758–1807) effectively created a breakaway statelet in the early 1790s, which in addition to Janissaries attracted demobilized Muslim veterans and brigands, collectively known as *kirjalis* or *yamaks*, as well as Christian rebels and adventurers.¹⁵ The former included Muslim refugees from 'Serbia' who sought to force their way back into the province; among the latter was Rigas Pheraios (1757–98), a Greek writer and revolutionary of Vlach origin, and a certain Nedeljko Popović, probably a Habsburg Serb who served as Pasvanoğlu's bazirgân-pasha, or 'finance minister'.¹⁶

In November 1801, together with a Greek teacher and a friend of Pasvanoğlu's, Popović delivered to Napoleon the pasha's offer

¹³ L. Ranke, *History of Servia and the Servian Revolution, from original mss. and documents*, transl. from German by Mrs Alexander Kerr, London, 1847, 68–69, 119; Stoianovich, *Balkan Worlds*, 166.

¹⁴ Prota Mateja Nenadović, *Memoari*, Belgrade, 2001 (originally publ. 1893), 37.

¹⁵ R. Zens, 'Pasvanoğlu Osman Paşa and the Paşalık of Belgrade, 1791–1807', *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 8:1–2 (2002), 89–104. *Kirjalis* sometimes included Christians, and were in any case 'multi-ethnic', consisting of Albanians, South Slavs and Turks.

¹⁶ Smederevo refugees: Zens, 'Pasvanoğlu', 91; Pheraios: R. Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 2nd edn, Cambridge, 2002, 28–29. Popović: Novaković, *Tursko carstvo*, 383. Pheraios was captured and killed by Hacı Mustafa's men in Belgrade, where a street is named after him today.

of an alliance against the sultan. The French were about to settle their differences with the Ottoman state, so nothing came out of the proposed collaboration.¹⁷ However, while the Porte deployed its troops against the French, the defence of the Smederevo sanjak was left solely to Haji Mustafa's men, commanded by his son, and Serb peasant militias. The Janissaries captured Belgrade in December, executed the pasha and abolished the Christian privileges. Four Vidin Janissaries, who called themselves *dabis* (*dabije*, *dayis*),¹⁸ were the real rulers of the sanjak even after a new pasha sent by the Porte arrived in Belgrade the following year. The *dabis*, Mehmed Foça-oğlu, Küçük-Ali, Aganli-Bayraktar and Mülla Yusuf, divided the province into their own fiefdoms and kept closer ties with Vidin than with Constantinople. As it would turn out, the province would never be again fully incorporated into the Ottoman state, although not in the way the *dabis* would have imagined.

They raised local taxes, oppressed the Christians and clashed with Muslim *sipahi* landowners. Initially at least, the conflict ignored supposedly deep religious divisions and it had elements of a local, 'civil' war. Küçük-Ali was born into a Djevrić family of the Rudnik *nabija* in western Serbia,¹⁹ and at least two other *dabis* were probably also Balkan-born. Late Haji Mustafa Pasha was a Greek Muslim from Plovdiv (modern Bulgaria), while Pasvanoğlu's father was from Tuzla, in north-eastern Bosnia.

As the Ottoman control of the Balkans faced a near collapse, loyalty often shifted and crossed ethno-confessional boundaries. Apart from Belgrade and Vidin, a semi-autonomous province of Ioannina, which included parts of modern Greece and Albania,

¹⁷ Novaković, *Tursko carstvo*, 383–85.

¹⁸ Probably after the *deys* of North Africa, Muslim rebel soldiers who around the same time clashed with the Ottoman authorities there. Ranke, 66.

¹⁹ Miloš Obrenović, who would lead the Second Uprising and become the prince of autonomous Serbia, came from the same region.

was established under Ali Pasha, an ethnic Albanian.²⁰ Following the *dabis*' takeover, Albanian and Bosnian Muslim Janissaries and *kirjalis* moved to 'Serbia', attracted by opportunities for quick profit at the expense of Christians and Muslim landowners, thus making the predicament of the local population even more difficult.²¹ From their Serbian base, the *dabis* raided nearby Ottoman provinces. Thus, for example, Aganli-Bayraktar's men looted and pillaged Muslim property in eastern Bosnia, apparently with little regard for the lives of their co-religionists. By contrast, aforementioned Aleksa Nenadović enjoyed a good relationship with the Muslims of Srebrenica, the previously mentioned mining town situated just across the river Drina from his *knežina* in western Serbia. 'I want you to raise your army, and Turks from all towns [in the sanjak] will join us too, so that we can fight your friend Haji-bey and burn down Srebrenica', Aganli-Bayraktar told Nenadović. The latter protested, aware of the likely tragic consequences for the Bosnian Muslim population, especially after the *dabi* instructed him to provide his *momci* with plenty of *rakija* (a strong type of local brandy) to drink before battle.²²

Meanwhile, friends of late Haji Mustafa, well-off Muslims and Christians, who included Petar Ičko, a Hellenized Vlach from Belgrade, plotted to overthrow the *dabi* regime from their temporary exile in Zemun.²³ Contacts existed also with Habsburg Serb and other South Slav merchants, who controlled trade in the lower Danube and who would provide food and weapons in exchange for livestock. In January 1804, Montenegrin Prince-Bishop Petar I Petrović Njegoš (1784–1830)

²⁰ Ali Pasha probably spoke little Turkish and made Greek the language of his 'court'. Although he fought loyally against Napoleon, the pasha effectively ruled over his own mini state in which a Greek Ottoman culture prospered. Howard, *A History of the Ottoman Empire*, 234.

²¹ V. Ćorović, *Istorija srpskog naroda*, Belgrade, 2013, 602.

²² Nenadović, *Memoari*, 37–38.

²³ Ćorović, *Istorija srpskog naroda*, 603–604; Ekmečić, *Stvaranje Jugoslavije*, I, 97–98.

informed the abbot of the Dečani monastery in Kosovo that he was ready to send troops in aid of the Belgrade Serbs.²⁴

In the end, a rebellion broke out across the province in February 1804 in response to a massacre of prominent Christians ordered by the *dabis*. Sources vary, but over the course of several days in late January and early February between 70 and 150 *knezes*, livestock merchants and Orthodox priests were executed, apparently in an attempt by the *dabis* to prevent a rebellion. The ‘slaughter of the *knezes*’, as the event is known in the Serbian tradition, caused both fear and anger. People fled to hills and mountains in anticipation of further violence; some joined hajduk bands; others simply hid. According to popular tradition, desperate and homeless among the *reaya* called upon surviving leaders to resist the *dabis*’ terror. The latter had little choice anyway, as their lives and livelihoods were threatened. Uncoordinated resistance broke out across the sanjak.

In the central region of Šumadija, the insurgency was led by the previously mentioned wealthy pig farmer Djordje Petrović (1762–1817). Known as Karadjordje (Black George), either for his dark complexion or for his temper or perhaps both, his background and career resembled that of Koča Andjelković: both men were first-generation migrants (Karadjordje’s parents were born in Montenegro), both came from humble backgrounds but became successful livestock traders, and both served in the Austrian *Freikorps* in 1788–91. After the war, Karadjordje returned home to take advantage of the amnesty. Before ‘legitimizing’ his business, he spent some time with the band of Stanoje Glavaš, a well-known hajduk from Šumadija who clashed with both the Ottomans and Serb *knezes*, whose property his men looted. Karadjordje also fought against Vidin Janissaries as a *bölükbaşı*

²⁴ Petrović, *A History of Modern Serbia*, I, 26; T. Stoianovich, ‘The Segmentary State and *La Grande Nation*’, in E. D. Genovese and L. Hochberg (eds), *Geographic Perspectives in History*, Oxford, 1989, 256–80, 270–72.

(*buljubaša* in Serbian, an Ottoman military rank equivalent of captain) in the Serb militia loyal to Haji Mustafa Pasha.²⁵

It was Glavaš whom an assembly of around 60 prominent Serbs – disguised as a wedding party – held in the village of Orašac on 14 February 1804 (Candlemas according to the Julian calendar) initially asked to lead the insurgency.²⁶ Glavaš, however, thought himself unsuitable due to being a hajduk, so the choice then fell on Karadjordje. A little bit of all at once – a respected farmer-trader, a war veteran and a former hajduk, Karadjordje's humble origins were also likely to appeal to 'ordinary' people mistrustful of the wealthy *knezes*. If things were to go wrong, the *knezes* could always place the blame on a former brigand thus hopefully protecting them and the people from reprisals. Karadjordje too initially expressed reservations about his suitability for leadership, due to his short fuse and bad temper, but such qualities were deemed necessary for the task by the assembly. The new leader swore an oath in front of a local priest, giving the occasion a sacral dimension. (Figure 4.1). The same day the insurgents burnt a nearby road inn (*ban*), killing or expelling its Muslim staff. This was the symbolic beginning of the First Serbian Uprising. Road inns were burnt elsewhere in the early stages of the insurgency, as relatively easy targets symbolic of the Ottoman rule. They had been typically built through forced labour (*kuluk*) of the Christians, including apparently Karadjordje himself. In retrospect, these acts anticipated large-scale anti-Muslim violence and destruction of property, but for the time being no suggestion was made that Christians and Muslims could not coexist.²⁷

²⁵ R. Ljušić, *Vožd Karadjordje*, Belgrade, 2000, 2 vols, I, 35–36; Petrovich, *A History of Modern Serbia*, I, 31.

²⁶ Ekmečić, *Stvaranje Jugoslavije*, I, 98–99.

²⁷ Ibid, 99; Pavlowitch, *Serbia*, 30; Petrovich, *A History of Modern Serbia*, I, 29–31; Ranke, 127; cf. B. Jelavich, *The Establishment of the Balkan National States, 1804–1920*, Seattle, WA, 1986, ch. 2.



FIGURE 4.1 *The Orašac Assembly* (1804), Karadjordje standing in the middle, holding a banner. A nineteenth-century illustration, unknown author (Wikipedia)

The myth of Black George, a fearless hero who defied the ‘Turks’, spread quickly. It probably had something to do with millenarian beliefs, common throughout Europe at the time and with a long history among Serbs, as previously mentioned. A seventeenth- or eighteenth-century (depending on source) Montenegrin prophet Stanj Šćekić foretold the appearance of a man of dark complexion somewhere between the rivers Lim (northern Montenegro, near Karadjordje’s ancestral home) and Danube (therefore in the Smederevo sanjak), to bring ‘the long era of troubles to an end’ and liberate ‘many Serbians’. A series of natural phenomena in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries only added to widespread expectations of the arrival of a messiah, St Sava, Kraljević Marko or perhaps a new hero-liberator. Several decades later, a woman in Kosovo told Ami Boué, a Vienna-based geologist and traveller, that ‘Christians here await Prince Miloš

[Obrenović, Karadjordje's successor – see below] like a messiah, to liberate us at last from our oppressors'.²⁸

Initially Karadjordje's influence did not extend beyond Šumadija. To the west, in the Valjevo *nabija, prota* (protoiereus or archpriest) Mateja, son of late *obor-knez* Aleksa Nenadović, sought help from Austrian/Hungarian officials and prominent Habsburg Serbs, who, however, instructed him that as an Ottoman subject he should negotiate with the 'Turks'. In an attempt to coordinate the resistance, Protá Mateja travelled to Šumadija in late March 1804, but failed in meeting Karadjordje. 'Black George knows not how to write, nor does he have a secretary, but he is good at fighting the Turks', Karadjordje's men told the visitor before instructing him to go back, mocking the priest's attempts to correspond with potential allies.²⁹

As much as they detested the *dabis*' rule, 'ordinary' people were often unwilling or afraid to fight. A combination of financial incentives, forced mobilization and manipulation on part of rebel leaders was used to boost up the ranks. Protá Mateja, whose word as a clergyman carried a certain weight, told exaggerated stories of Karadjordje's victories and manipulated both Christians and Muslims into joining the rebellion by persuading a local Muslim to pretend to be the sultan's envoy. The belief that 'the tsar [sultan] was with us' encouraged those otherwise fearful of the Janissaries and sceptic about armed resistance to join the ranks. According to Vuk Karadžić, one of the main chroniclers of the

²⁸ The sightings of comets of 1781, 1797 and 1807; strong thunderstorms on 14 January (OS) 1801, on the eve of St Sava's Day, the eclipse of the moon on the same day in 1804 and of the sun two weeks later. Stojanovich, *Balkan Worlds*, 168–70. Could have Šćekić heard about the teachings of Sabbatai Zevi (1626–76), an Ottoman Jewish prophet and a self-proclaimed messiah who spent the last years of his life in Ulcinj (present-day Montenegro)? On Zevi see M. Mazower, *Salonica, the City of Ghosts: Christians, Muslims and Jews, 1430–1950*, London, 2004, 71–74. Boué cited in V. Stojančević, *Miloš Obrenović i njegovo doba*, Belgrade, 1966, 332.

²⁹ Nenadović, *Memoari*, 59–60.

rebellion, the insurgents had to reassure the Christian peasantry until as late as 1806 that their fight was not against the Ottoman authorities.³⁰

A series of rebel victories led to Austrian-mediated peace talks in May 1804 in Zemun, which failed when no guarantees for the withdrawal of the Janissaries could be given by the Belgrade pasha.³¹ The Serbs then communicated their demands to the Porte through church channels and simultaneously approached Russia's diplomatic representatives in Constantinople. They sought a kind of autonomy enjoyed by the Greek Ionian islands and the Danubian principalities, in both cases guaranteed by the Russian tsar. Meanwhile, they continued to acquire weapons from Habsburg Serbs, often in exchange for livestock or with money earned through the sale of pigs. Habsburg authorities turned a blind eye to arms and men-in-arms illegally crossing the border, as volunteers from Hungary and the Military Border joined the insurgents. Reinforcements came also from Montenegro, Bosnia–Herzegovina and other neighbouring provinces; the volunteers included a handful of Bulgarians and Greeks.³²

At this time, the insurgents enjoyed support from regular Ottoman troops in Bosnia. By summer 1804, they had all but defeated the enemy, despite Pasvanoğlu sending supplies as well as 1,000 *kirjalis* commanded by Kosançali Halil Agha (in the Serbian tradition known as Gušanac-Alija – another local Muslim, whose family hailed from Gusinje, on the modern Albanian–Montenegrin border). When the *dabis* attempted to flee to Vidin, they were captured at Ada Kale, a Danubian island, and executed in early August – either by Karadjordje's men or regular Ottoman troops, depending on source, but in any case, with the approval of the Porte.

³⁰ Karadžić quoted in D. Djordjević, *Ogledi iz novije balkanske istorije*, Belgrade, 1989, 18; cf. Nenadović, *Memoari*, 48–53, 98–99.

³¹ Nenadović, *Memoari*, 64–65.

³² *Ibid.*, 47–48; Djordjević, *Ogledi*, 148–49.

It seemed as if the rebellion was over, and that peace and order would be restored in the province. However, Bekir Pasha, the sultan's envoy who had previously suppressed a revolt of Bosnian *ayan* (local notables), considered the Serbs' demand for autonomy guaranteed by Austria as unacceptable because it would have violated the Ottoman sovereignty. The *kirjalis*, who held the Belgrade fortress, then kidnapped the pasha, agreeing to release him only after the insurgents paid a ransom. A tense, unofficial truce followed as the winter approached.³³

Continuing their search for an empire-protector – in their view only another emperor could speak to the sultan directly – the Serb insurgents sent a delegation to Russia that, after several weeks of travelling, reached St Petersburg in early October. Having listened to what they had to say, Prince Adam Czartoryski, a Polish-born Russian Foreign Minister, told his guests that 'Serbia is far away from Russia, and anyway we are friends with the Turks.' He gave them some money, symbolic gifts and a piece of practical advice: choose a leader and elect a government so that Russia and other countries would know who represented the Serbs (which suggests that Karadjordje had not yet been accepted by all insurgents as their leader).³⁴

³³ D. Djordjević, *Istorija moderne Srbije, 1800–1918*, Belgrade, 2017, 53; Ekmečić, *Stvaranje Jugoslavije*, I, 106; Petrovich, *A History of Modern Serbia*, I, 34; cf. Zens, 'Pasvanoğlu', 102–103. One hundred and ten years later, during the July 1914 crisis, the Serbian government rejected the presence of Austrian inspectors investigating the assassination of Franz Ferdinand, pointing out, not unreasonably, that this would have violated the country's sovereignty. The outcome would be the outbreak of the First World War, discussed later on in the book.

³⁴ V. St. Karadžić, '*Pravitel'stvoiušbchi soviet Serbskii' za vremena Kara-Djordjijeva, ili otimanje ondašnjijeh velikaša oko vlasti*, Vienna, 1860, 1; cf. Nenadović, *Memoari*, 88–92. Karadžić, ever the linguist, complained that instead of the Russian word *soviet* the Serbian equivalent *vijeće* should have been used when the first revolutionary government was established later on.

Despite failing to negotiate an agreement with the Ottoman officials and to secure support from either Austria or Russia, the insurgents refused to give up weapons unless their autonomy was restored, and the Janissaries were banned from returning to the province. As a result, by early 1805, the conflict transformed from a civil war between the renegade Muslims and the Christians and Muslims loyal to the Sultan into a war between Christian rebels and the Ottoman state. As the Serb insurgents won important battles during the summer, the sultan declared jihad and deployed troops from Bosnia, but these failed to crash the rebellion. The fighting continued simultaneously with unsuccessful attempts to find a diplomatic solution. Austria and Russia, and increasingly also France, became involved. In August–September 1806, it appeared that a peace agreement was within reach, after the sultan met with previously mentioned Belgrade merchant Petar Ičko and gave verbal assurances of autonomy for Serbia in exchange for an annual tribute. Then another Ottoman–Russian war broke out in late December, over the status of the Danubian principalities. Karadjordje's men captured Belgrade the same month and, encouraged by Russia, demanded full independence. Pasvanoğlu's death in January 1807, at the age of 69, removed another powerful enemy. Except for two Ottoman garrisons, the whole sanjak of Smederevo was now under the insurgents' control. Thus, in less than three years, more than three centuries of Ottoman rule, interrupted by short periods of Habsburg occupation, was effectively over. The Ottoman rule would be re-established, but only temporarily as it would turn out. Because of the profound political and social changes that followed, the rebellion has been described by Leopold Ranke, and subsequent historians, as a revolution.³⁵

According to traditional historiography, medieval Serbia had been restored in the early nineteenth century under Karadjordje's

³⁵ Ranke, op. cit.; R. Ljušić, *Tumačenje Srpske revolucije*, Belgrade, 1992.

leadership. However, neither he nor other rebel leaders saw themselves as successors of the medieval kings, emperors and despots, even when tradition of resistance against the Ottomans was recalled by the insurgents. Heraldic symbols of medieval Serbia, mostly invented in Central Europe and Dalmatia in the previous centuries, were circulated by Habsburg Serbs, as ‘visual reminders’, alongside saintly relics and church frescoes, of Serbia’s medieval ‘golden age’. However, the rebel leaders did not know where Serbia was supposed to be. Out of twelve *obor-knezes* who formed the first revolutionary government (the *soviet* – see the following text), only four were literate. When in 1807 Hajduk Veljko Petrović, a Robin Hood-type brigand from eastern Serbia, informed the soviet of his intention to occupy a territory near the Timok River (in present-day eastern Serbia) and thus extend Serbia’s borders, the ‘ministers’ did not seem to know where this region was. Even educated Serbs and ‘national revivalists’ and church leaders in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were not always sure where the Serbs lived, nor indeed which groups and individuals living in ethnically and religiously mixed Serbo-Croat speaking space of the central and western Balkans should be considered Serb.³⁶

A Russian diplomatic mission headed by Konstantin Rodofinikin (c.1760–1838), a Tsarist diplomat of Greek origin, arrived in Belgrade in August 1807. Russia’s ‘ambassador’ was given one of the best houses in the city, Küçük-Ali’s former residence. However, the relationship between Rodofinikin and Karadjordje was marked by tension and mistrust. The Serb leader suspected the Russian envoy of plotting with rival Serb leaders to limit his power, and it did not help that Rodofinikin established a close relationship with Metropolitan Leontije, a fellow

³⁶ Ćirković, *The Serbs*, 181; Djordjević, *Ogledi*, 19, 145; *ISN*, V-1, 12–14; M. Popović, ‘Vuk medju Ilirima’, in *Kovčezici: Prilozi i gradja o Dositeju i Vuku*, 6, Belgrade, 1964, 5–18, 5.

Greek whom the Serbs generally mistrusted.³⁷ Rodofinikin's diplomatic manners, dress and way of life were alien to the proud, but crude and illiterate insurgents, in a similar way that they found educated Habsburg Serbs' dress and manners eccentric and foreign to them. One example was Rodofinikin's failed attempt to introduce a tradition of tea drinking. The custom never took off among the *rakija* consuming Serb rebels, not even after the Russian mixed tea with rum.³⁸

Some sort of dual Ottoman–Serb government had been established previously in the main towns of the province, but by late 1806, inter-communal relations worsened. Things were not helped by a poor harvest, as Muslims and their property were attacked by Christians; many fled as a result, mostly to eastern Bosnia. When the insurgents captured Belgrade in December 1806, they pillaged the city for two days, killing or forcibly converting many Muslims, but Jews and Christians suspected of loyalty to the 'Turks' were targeted as well.³⁹ Despite being promised safe passage, around 250 Ottomans, including Suleiman Pasha, who had been trapped in the Belgrade fortress during the winter, were massacred in early March 1807. Adult Muslim men were killed in other places, too, and only those who converted to Christianity were spared.⁴⁰ Meanwhile, Muslim women were raped, made mistresses and forced to convert to Christianity (which for those born into

³⁷ G. Jakšić, *Evropa i vaskrs Srbije (1804–1834)*, Introduction by É. Haumont, Belgrade, 1933 (4th revised edn), 117–19; Ljušić, *Vožd Karadjordje*, I, 195–96.

³⁸ Ljušić, *Vožd Karadjordje*, I, 147–48 & II, 267–70. Russian officials therefore inspired the formation of the first Serbian government and attempted to tackle the problem of alcoholism among the Serbs. So much for national stereotypes.

³⁹ Ljušić, *Vožd Karadjordje*, I, 169; cf. S. Bandžović, 'Muslimani u Smederevskom sandžaku: progoni i pribježišta', in M. Arnautlić (ed.), *150 godina od protjerivanja muslimana iz kneževine Srbije*, Orašje, 2013, 9–49; Hodžić, 'Migracije muslimanskog stanovništva'.

⁴⁰ Ljušić, *Vožd Karadjordje*, I, 172; Ranke, 114.

Christian families would have been the second forced conversion). Some of them married Serbian men, which if anything offered protection. Turban-wearing Serb leaders therefore did not just resemble their enemy visually, but often behaved like the *dahis*. One of Karadjordje's commanders kept his own haram, despite already being married to a Christian woman.⁴¹

Contemporary accounts mention unmarked graves of Serb 'deserters' shot by the rebels; Serb and other Orthodox town population was mistrusted by Karadjordje's men for their 'Ottoman appearance' and suspected of collaboration with the 'Turks'. Similarly, Jews, known as the 'Turkish people' (*turski ljudi*) for their loyalty to the Ottoman state, were victims of violence, plunder and even murder, which forced many to flee the city. The attacks ceased only after the Russians and Karadjordje's Jewish contacts in Zemun intervened on behalf of remaining Belgrade Jews.⁴²

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In May 1807, Sultan Selim III was overthrown by the Janissaries, while Napoleon's army made gains against Russia. An Ottoman–Russian truce that followed extended to Serbia. With the help from Habsburg Serbs, the rebels went about organizing a government and rule of law over the territory they controlled. That same year saw the establishment of district magistrates followed by, in

⁴¹ Ljušić, *Vožd Karadjordje*, II, 267. It seems that polygamy was practised unofficially among Serbs. An early twentieth-century Serbian ethnographer recorded stories of Koča Andjelković's two wives: one from Serbia and another one from southern Hungary (S. Mijatović, *Belica (Naselja i poreklo stanovništva), Srpski etnografski zbornik*, LVI (Belgrade), 1948, 166n). Miloš Obrenović openly kept in mistresses, which in one instance led to tragedy when Princess Ljubica Obrenović shot one of her rivals, knowing she would avoid punishment because she was pregnant at the time. Miloš allegedly fathered several illegitimate children and continued to keep mistresses even at an advanced age while in exile.

⁴² B. Hrabak, *Jevreji u Beogradu do sticanja ravnopravnosti (1878)*, Belgrade, 2009, 225–26.

1811, the creation of the Grand Court (*Veliki sud*). Meanwhile, the *soviet* underwent a ‘reshuffle’ at the beginning of 1811 and now was comprised of six ministries – of war, defence, foreign affairs, finance, justice and education. Karadjordje presided over the new governing body but kept the overall military command as well. His official title now was the ‘supreme leader’ (*vrhovni vožd* – another Russian term), although his power was kept in check by the *soviet* and the rival *obor-knezes* and *vojvodas*.⁴³

The newly introduced portfolio for education was held by Dositej Obradović, albeit for a few months only; the first education minister in Serbia’s history died in April 1811. Obradović had moved to ‘liberated’ Serbia four years earlier. Approaching 70 and well-travelled, he must have seen Belgrade as a small, Oriental town. He initially stayed with a wealthy Serb *kafana* owner (and Karadjordje’s fellow former *Freikorps* veteran), whose cellar was well stocked with food and wine, something that Obradović appreciated. Karadjordje, who during peacetime resided in Topola, a village in Šumadija, sent his eldest son Aleksije (1801–30) to live with and study under Dositej. Previously dressed like any other Serbian peasant boy, Aleksije now wore ‘European’ clothes provided by Rodofinikin. Following the death of their landlord, the tutor and his pupil moved to the Russian ‘embassy’, much to the chagrin of Austrian envoys, who competed with the Russians for influence in Serbia.

Many Serbian leaders, including Karadjordje, were illiterate, but they understood the importance of education. The Ottoman

⁴³ *Vrhovni serbskoga naroda vožd* (Supreme leader of the Serbian people) was one of the versions of his title, but in the early years of the rebellion he was more of a military commander than a political, let alone ‘supreme’, leader. Karadjordje, or rather his secretaries, signed a letter to the Austrian emperor of 18 January 1807 as *servischer Ober Commandant, sammt den Ältesten der Nation*. In French, he was *Commandant en chef de nation Servienne*, but the French referred to him simply as *Général* (which he was not). Ekmečić, *Stvaranje Jugoslavije*, I, 99; Ljušić, *Vožd Karadjordje*, II, 256.

sanjak of Smederevo was an overwhelmingly peasant and illiterate society in which the only education available to Christian boys was that offered in Orthodox monasteries. It was therefore quite remarkable that by 1808 revolutionary Serbia had 50 secular elementary schools as well as the Belgrade Grand School, founded by Dositej. Within a year from opening in 1808, the Grand School moved to a larger house to accommodate a growing number of pupils. A three-year long education included classes in history, geography, mathematics, Serbian and German languages, law, church singing, fencing and gun shooting. Among those attending the Grand School was Vuk Stefanović Karadžić (1787–1864), a 20-year-old administrative employee of the revolutionary government. Within several years, Karadžić would emerge as the most important linguist, folklorist and cultural historian of his era, not just among the Serbs.⁴⁴

Educated and educating Habsburg Serbs were active on both sides of the imperial border. A Serb *gimnazija* (lycée) opened in 1810 in Novi Sad (then southern Hungary) thanks to a donation by a wealthy Serb businessman. It quickly became a prestigious institution, attracting, among others, eminent Slovak linguist Pavel Šafárik, who in the 1820s served as the school's master. The teaching staff included Milovan Vidaković, who had in the meanwhile become the author of the first Serbian novels – popular romances inspired by similar German-language literature and classical Greek and medieval Serb legends. Vidaković's work came under criticism from Vuk Karadžić for its low artistic value and for being written in archaic Serbian. The books, however, sold well among Habsburg Serbs, even after Vidaković's Bohemian lifestyle and an alleged homosexual affair with a pupil

⁴⁴ St. K. Pavlowitch, *Božid'art: istorije života, dela i okruženja Božidara Karadžordjevića, pariskog umetnika i balkanskog kneza (1862–1908)*, transl. by Lj. Mirković, Belgrade, 2012 (first publ. in French, 1978), 18–21.

cost him his job in 1824.⁴⁵ For all their differences, it is unlikely either Vidaković or Karadžić would have become men of letters had they not ended up as refugees in the Habsburg Monarchy.

The first modern theatre performances in Serbian were staged in 1813 in Pest (modern Budapest) thanks to Joakim Vujić, a Hungarian Serb who would establish Serbia's first theatre in Kragujevac 21 years later. It was also in Pest where wealthy Habsburg Serbs founded in 1826 the *Matica srpska*, a cultural association that 'from the very beginning aimed at presenting Serbian culture to Europe and at enlightening the people'. The *Matica*, the first such Slav cultural organization, later moved to Novi Sad with the financial support of Sava Popović Tekelija, one of the richest Serbs at the time. It remains there today, as a state-funded, oldest Serb cultural institution that preceded by over two decades the founding in Belgrade of the Serbian Learned Society, the predecessor of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts.⁴⁶

Tekelija, an Arad-born and Pest-based (in modern Romania and Hungary, respectively) merchant and lawyer, had sent financial aid to the Serb rebels and advocated their cause abroad. In June 1804, he urged Napoleon to support the creation of a large Serb or South Slav state that would act as a buffer against Austria and Russia. 'The Serbian uprising so far is in fact an act of brigandage and endless bloodshed', Tekelija wrote to Napoleon, 'but with the right support and guidance the Serbs would make an important contribution to European politics'. The future state would unite the ethnically and linguistically kindred population that lived between modern Slovenia in the north-west, the Adriatic in the south and the Black Sea in the east. Tekelija acknowledged the existence of religious divisions but believed these would be eventually overcome. '[I]f during the French revolution a desire and enthusiasm for freedom and equality

⁴⁵ Popović, *Milovan Vidaković*, 210–49.

⁴⁶ For a brief history of the *Matica srpska* see its website: www.maticasrpska.org.rs/en/matica-srpska/.

could unite the Catholics, Calvinists, Lutherans and Jansenists [a branch of Catholicism]', Tekelija wrote, 'would it not be possible that nationalism would similarly lead to the unification of the Serbs and to weaken religious fanaticism, removing the questions of faith by focusing on the issues of nationalism and fatherland?'⁴⁷

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Subsequent events anticipated the 'western' approach to the 'Serbian question' throughout the nineteenth century. When the Russian–Ottoman truce expired in 1809, the fighting returned to Serbia once again. The insurgents repelled the enemy attacks and launched counteroffensive in several directions, hoping to draw fellow Orthodox populations into the war and waiting to receive further outside help. Karadjordje sent an emissary to Napoleon after later that year a war broke out between Austria and France. In its essence, the envoy's message echoed Tekelija's letter. The rebel leaders wished 'to confide [Serbia's] destiny to the puissant protection of Great Napoleon' and invited the soldiers of *La Grande Nation* to Serb garrisons. The messenger was too late, however, as peace had been concluded between France and Austria before he was able to present the proposal. Then in February the following year, the Serbs informed the French that they would agree to an armistice with the Ottoman Empire providing France would guarantee Serbia's borders and acknowledge Karadjordje as a hereditary ruler. In return, Serbia would provide the French Illyrian Provinces cheap supplies of livestock and food and ensure the restoration of the Belgrade cotton route, diverted elsewhere by war. A loan of 1.5 million francs was also requested. If France did not respond to the proposal, Serbia would be forced to seek protection from Russia. The French noted but did not act. Napoleon assured Austrian

⁴⁷ S. Tekelija, *Opisanije života moga*, Belgrade, 1989, 137–38.

Foreign Minister Prince Metternich of his opposition to Russia extending its influence in the region through Serbia; the best way of preventing this would be to preserve the territorial integrity of the Ottoman state.⁴⁸

The priority for the ‘west’ was to maintain the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans, but if that were to become impossible, the Russian influence must be minimized, either through political control (Serbia after 1878) or occupation (Bosnia in 1878) by Austria. Thus, Karadjordje’s attempt to exploit the Powers’ rivalry failed. It would not be the last time Serb leaders attempted to profit from it, with varying degrees of success.

The French Revolution and the establishment of Napoleon’s Illyrian Provinces boosted the idea of the Sava-Kupa commercial system and by extension of the concept of a large Illyrian/South Slav state. When an autonomous Serbian principality was established in 1829/30, the ‘Napoleonic option’ was no longer there. Serb elites would seek other solutions to the ‘Serbian question’ from the 1840s, while never abandoning the idea of collaboration with other Balkan peoples. It may be argued that the creation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in 1918 saw the return to the original idea.⁴⁹

Meanwhile, the war against France forced Russia to conclude peace with the Ottomans. Article 8 of the Bucharest Peace Treaty, signed in May 1812, envisaged a limited autonomy for Serbia within the Ottoman Empire and amnesty for the insurgents. When the Serbs eventually learned of the terms of the Treaty, they ‘rejected’ it at an assembly convened in Kragujevac in January 1813. Demands to surrender weapons and allow the return of Ottoman soldiers and administrators were deemed unacceptable. Serbia was now alone against a large empire determined to retake the breakaway province.

⁴⁸ Stoianovich, ‘The Segmentary State’, 275–77. ⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 279–80.

Karadjordje had just over 40,000 lightly armed men under his command. He proposed to the Ottomans a ceasefire, to buy some time, and pleaded with Vienna and St Petersburg to allow his people to migrate to Russia via Austria. Migration – like several times before (and since) – seemed like the only way to survival. But these were desperate pleas made in desperate times and they fell on deaf ears. As Ottoman troops marched on during the summer and early autumn of 1813, they set whole villages on fire, killed or enslaved civilians, raped women and destroyed or looted Christian property. Made up mostly of Albanian and Bosnian Muslims, the Ottoman expedition force ruthlessly and quickly crushed the short-lived revolutionary state. People hiding in hills and forests and columns of refugees moving northwards once again dominated the regional landscape. In late October, with Belgrade about to fall, Karadjordje and his family, together with Metropolitan Leontije and Rodofnikin, crossed the Danube to the safety of Zemun. It is estimated that around 100,000 refugees may have fled to the Austrian Empire during this time.⁵⁰

In retrospect, the Treaty of Bucharest was not quite the complete disaster for the Serbs it seemed in late 1813. It was the first international guarantee of Serbia's autonomy. When the Principality of Serbia achieved full autonomy in 1829, it would be based on the Treaty.⁵¹

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Upon crossing the border into the Habsburg Monarchy in October 1813, Karadjordje and Aleksije (seen as heir apparent?) were placed in a separate quarantine from the other refugees, and were eventually transferred to Graz, in Austria. The defeated Serb leader and the veteran of Austria's lost war of 1788–91, Karadjordje was given accommodation and salary equivalent to an Austrian colonel but

⁵⁰ Pavlowitch, *Božid'art*, 22. ⁵¹ Jakšić, *Evropa*, chs 14–15, Article 8: 407.

was effectively kept under house arrest. Running out of money and patience, Karadjordje wrote to the Graz military commander on 31 March 1814, asking for financial help and to be allowed to be reunited with the rest of his family. Aleksije, who wrote the letter, signed it in the name of 'Djordje Petrović, Lieutenant General of His Imperial Majesty the Tsar of all Russia and holder of the Grand Cross of the Order of Saint Anna'. If Karadjordje hoped to impress his hosts with his honorary Russian titles, he failed. The Habsburg authorities cited the 1739 Treaty of Belgrade, which obliged them to prevent any subversive activities originating in their territory against the Ottoman Empire, and there was an additional pressure from Austrian and Hungarian merchants who demanded financial compensation from Karadjordje for damages their businesses suffered because of the rebellion. Meanwhile, the Russians hoped to persuade the exiled Serb leader to accept Article 12 of the Treaty of Bucharest.

The Treaty awarded Bessarabia to Russia, and it was there that Karadjordje, reunited at last with his family, was transferred in late October 1814. It was also there that he established contact with Philiki Etairia, a secret Greek revolutionary organization. His pleas to Tsar Alexander I (1801–25) to be allowed to return to Serbia and relight the insurgency were rejected. In the immediate aftermath of the Napoleonic wars and the 1814–15 Congress of Vienna, there was little appetite among the Powers for another war. The Russian authorities planned to send Karadjordje further east, but in June 1817, he secretly returned to Serbia with the help of his Greek contacts.

Language of the Nation

The 1813 defeat erased Serbia from the political map of Europe, where it had briefly reappeared as a breakaway Ottoman province (having previously been 're-established' by Austria in the eighteenth century). Within several years 'Serbia' will appear on a cultural map

of Europe, in no small part due to activities of Vuk Karadžić. Having joined the rebellion against the *dabis* in 1804 as a 17-year-old in his native western Serbia, Karadžić left for Sremski Karlovci, in southern Hungary, the following year in order to study. As already mentioned, he then continued his studies in Belgrade under Dositej Obradović, while simultaneously working as an employee of the revolutionary government. Young Vuk showed a greater affiliation for books than guns even before due to an illness he lost all function of his left leg.

During the 1813 debacle, Karadžić, together with tens of thousands of his compatriots, fled to the Austrian empire, eventually reaching Vienna. There he met Jernej Kopitar (1780–1844), an ethnic Slovene who worked as a librarian and a censor for publications in Greek and Slavonic languages at the imperial court. Impressed by Vuk's talent for languages and knowledge of South Slav folklore and customs, Kopitar encouraged Karadžić to study Serbian grammar and language and to publish oral poems he had already collected.⁵² The ambitious and bright Serbian refugee needed little encouragement. Building on the work of another Serbian language reformer, and under the influence of Kopitar and German linguists, he simplified the Serbian Cyrillic, introducing a 30-letter phonetic alphabet, in use today across former-Yugoslavia. Karadžić published two volumes of Serb/South Slav oral poetry in 1814–15 in Vienna (at the time of the peace congress there following the Napoleonic wars). In 1818, the first Serbian–German–Latin dictionary compiled by Karadžić appeared. It was followed by a short Serbian grammar, which Karadžić published in 1824 in Leipzig in German translation by Jacob Grimm (1785–1863), one of Europe's most eminent philologists and folklorists.

Thanks to Grimm, Karadžić caught attention of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832). Vuk visited the celebrated German poet

⁵² I. Merchiers, *Cultural Nationalism in the South Slav Habsburg Lands in the Early Nineteenth Century: The Scholarly Network of Jernej Kopitar (1780–1844)*, Munich, 2007, 251.

at his home in Weimar in October 1823. As he walked slowly due to his lame leg upstairs to Goethe's study, a large standing statue of Juno, a Roman goddess of fertility and state, and the great man himself greeted Vuk. Pointing at Grimm's letter of recommendation, a review of Karadžić's *Grammar* and a German translation of a Serbian folk poem collected by Vuk, Goethe told his visitor: 'You see, this is not the first time you are under my roof; you have been here a while.' They went on to have a long discussion during the rest of the day – 'the greatest day of my life', Karadžić wrote to Kopitar.⁵³ A largely self-taught Vuk took difficult and sometimes literally painful steps to meet Goethe, arguably the greatest representative of the European culture of his era. It was as if Serbia, for centuries under Ottoman rule, was being admitted into (western) Europe, a Serbian literary scholar noted.⁵⁴

Karadžić, who was soon to receive an honorary doctorate at Jena, one of the oldest German universities, befriended in Vienna a young German historian on sabbatical from his duties at Berlin University. Leopold Ranke, subsequently regarded as the founder of critical historiography, was fascinated with the destiny of small nations in the Ottoman Empire, including the Serbs, whose rebellion preceded but was much less known than the then ongoing Greek War of Independence. Karadžić provided source material for, and may have de facto co-authored, Ranke's *Die Serbische Revolution*, the first scholarly history of Serbia, published in Hamburg in 1829. The Serbian and South Slav oral poetry and *gusle* (a single-stringed instrument) players – such as Bosnian-born Filip Višnjić – became modern-day Homeric figures known and

⁵³ *Kopitar i Vuk*, ed. and compiled G. Dobrašinović, Belgrade, 1980, 149–52; M. Popović, *Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, 1787–1864*, Belgrade, 1964; D. Wilson, *Life and Times of Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, 1787–1864: Literacy, Literature and National Independence in Serbia*, Oxford, 1970.

⁵⁴ H. Zundhausen [Sundhaussen], *Istorija Srbije od 19. do 21. veka*, transl. from German by T. Bekić, Belgrade, 2009, 100.

admired by educated Europeans thanks above all to Karadžić. He became a celebrity within central European intellectual circles, and it may be said that his work contributed to a certain level of Serbophilia that at the time existed among educated Europeans, albeit on a much smaller scale than the early nineteenth-century Helenophilia.

Prior to the French Revolution and German Romanticism, nation was usually understood as a concept based on a special legal status, at least in that part of Europe. In the case of the Serbs, this translated to the status and privileges of the Serbian church, both in the Ottoman and in the Habsburg Empires, and so pre-modern ethnicity came to be closely associated with religion. Serb Enlightenment thinkers of the late eighteenth century moved beyond this by pointing out linguistic and cultural ties among the South Slavs, as discussed in the previous chapter. It was through the activities of Karadžić and his prominent central European supporters that Serbs were introduced to the modern concept of the nation as a community of people who spoke the same language. At the same time, educated Europeans came to know the Serbs as a nation with its own language, culture and history.

Most Serbs spoke, and speak, a dialect of Serbo-Croat known as *štokavski*, also spoken by many Croats, including those living in Dubrovnik where a rich South Slav literary tradition developed under the influence from Venice. In addition to Serbia and parts of Croatia, *štokavski* was also spoken in Bosnia, Herzegovina and Montenegro. A significant part of historic Croatia though was populated by speakers of distinct *čakavski* and *kajkavski* dialects (the latter of which is close to the Slovenian language). The founding fathers of Slavonic linguistic studies, including Czech Josef Dobrovský, Slovak Šafárik and Slovene Kopitar, believed that all *štokavski* speakers were Serbs. They disregarded confessional differences between the *štokavski* speakers (who included Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholics and Muslims), in line with the liberal-nationalist ideas of this era. Karadžić accepted this thesis.

Moreover, his interest in the *Volksgeist* (the spirit of the people) was inspired by the work of German philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803).

Meanwhile, the Serbian church maintained that Serbs can only be Orthodox Christian. Traditional Habsburg Serb intellectuals and writers similarly rejected or were slow to accept Karadžić's ideas and his language reform. During the early decades of its existence, the official journal of the *Matica srpska* was published in *slavenoserbski*, an archaic form of Serbian influenced by Russian. For cultural-symbolic and political reasons, both the main cultural organization of the Habsburg Serbs and the Metropolitanate of Sremski Karlovci rejected Karadžić's promotion of the Serbian language as it was spoken by the people, not how it was meant to be spoken or how it may have been spoken once. Vuk, however, gained followers among younger Serb and other South Slav intellectuals.⁵⁵

Indeed, and paradoxically perhaps, Karadžić was arguably better received among proto-Yugoslavist Croats than by many of his fellow Serbs. Known as 'Illyrians', a group of Croat intellectuals developed in the late 1820s and early '30s the first Yugoslav programme, largely in response to Magyarization policies by Hungarian authorities in Croatia-Slavonia. Essentially, they argued that Serbs and Croats, although separated by religion, belonged to one nation because they spoke the same language. The mainly *kajkavski*-speaking Illyrians switched to the *štokavski* dialect to strengthen their argument. While uncomfortable with Karadžić's 'all *štokavski* speakers are Serbs' thesis (which he later modified), the Illyrians published his work and that of his disciples. The Illyrians proposed a 'neutral' Illyrian moniker for the language and the people, which Karadžić and most Serbs rejected as artificial, that is not used by the people. Nevertheless, 'Serb' and 'Croat' positions on the language and national questions in the mid-nineteenth century

⁵⁵ Ž. Mladenović, *Vuk Karadžić i Matica srpska*, Belgrade, 1965.



FIGURE 4.2 *Dositej Obradović*, lithograph by Anastas Jovanović, 1852 (Wikipedia)

were not as removed as it may seem today, and in many ways Vuk Karadžić brought them closer together.

Karadžić experienced financial problems throughout his life, and his difficult relationship with Prince Miloš and the Serb Orthodox church did not help. Yet, he continued to work tirelessly and travelled across the region, collecting ethnographic data



FIGURE 4.3 *Vuk Karadžić*, lithograph by an unknown author, c.1850 (Wien Museum, Inv.-Nr. W 3354, CCo, <https://sammlung.wienmuseum.at/en/object/396039/>)

and spreading his ideas to those willing to listen. They included Prince-Bishop Petar Petrović II Njegoš of Montenegro – among the first South Slav authors to accept Karadžić's reform, despite also being a high Orthodox cleric. Karadžić's linguistic reform was eventually adopted in the second half of the nineteenth

century, and his work was celebrated almost universally across former-Yugoslavia until the disintegration of the country in the 1990s. He remains the central figure in the modern history of Serbia, as important to its emergence as Karadjordje and Miloš Obrenović. Without Karadžić, the standard languages spoken today in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia might have been different. The Serbo-Croat 'disintegrated' together with Yugoslavia, but it remains the same language, and Serbs, Croats and others do not require a dictionary or an interpreter to understand each other. Its standardization by Karadžić and other prominent South Slav linguists in Vienna in 1850 anticipated Yugoslavia by nearly 70 years. The Vienna agreement also decreed that Cyrillic and Latin would be equal alphabets of the language spoken by the Serbs and Croats. For this reason, the Serbo-Croat was among rare biglossial world languages. Even though Cyrillic has in recent years become Serbia's official alphabet, it has not replaced Latin. Despite later politicized readings of Karadžić's work, his language reform and his understanding of the nation were in line with progressive, liberal European ideas of his era.⁵⁶

The Second Serbian Uprising, 1815–30

The Serbia from which Karadžić and Karadjordje fled in 1813 initially resembled scenes from a horror film. Dead bodies lay outside Belgrade's Kalemegdan fortress all the way to the Terazije square. Stench of human flesh and fear of violence kept people away, leaving stray dogs to roam freely the city's abandoned streets. People continued to die after the war was over, initially from hunger and then from an outbreak of plague in Spring 1814. In April–May, between 10 and 15 plague-related deaths were

⁵⁶ Popović, *Vuk*, 326–38, and 'Vuk medju Ilirima'; Sundhaussen, *Istorija Srbije*, 98–108.

recorded daily in Belgrade alone. Towns across Serbia were abandoned, as people moved to countryside, afraid of infection. The epidemic reached its peak in mid-July when the number of daily cases in Belgrade alone approached 80.⁵⁷

The plague notwithstanding, an amnesty issued by the Porte encouraged exiled Serbs to return. They included Glavaš, now employed in the Ottoman service to help maintain order. Tensions remained high, however, leading, in Autumn 1814, to a short-lived rebellion in western Šumadija led by Hadži-Prodan Gligorijević, a veteran of the First Uprising. (Gligorijević fled to Bessarabia and would later join the Greek War of Independence). A more sustained resistance broke out roughly in the same area the following April. It subsequently became known as the Second Serbian Uprising. In reality, it was a 15-year-long chess game between Miloš Teodorović Obrenović (c.1780–1860), the *obor-knez* of the Rudnik *nabija*, the Belgrade pasha and the Porte. Like Karadjordje, Miloš hailed from a family of Montenegrin migrants. Although not among the main leaders of the First Uprising, he was close to Karadjordje – the two men were *kumovi* (sing. *kum*), a sworn kinship, and Serbian equivalent of best man and godfather combined. With the collapse of Karadjordje's state, Miloš did not flee abroad. An arch pragmatist, a skilled and patient politician with a strong survival instinct, he stayed out of the failed 1814 rebellion and may have even helped suppress it. He used a combination of military force or threat of force, negotiation and bribery to secure concessions from the Ottomans, starting with the restoration of the pre-1804 local autonomy, which he personally negotiated in 1815 with Marshli Ali, the new pasha of Belgrade.

In 'domestic' affairs, Miloš controlled nascent political institutions, trade and economy. In the process, he removed potential rivals, including Karadjordje, who was assassinated, together with a Greek aide, on Miloš's orders in 1817, soon after secretly

⁵⁷ M. Gavrilović, *Miloš Obrenović*, Belgrade, 1908, 3 vols, I, 72–74.

crossing into Serbia. Miloš wanted no part in what he thought would be another grand failure and he certainly did not wish to share leadership with anyone. His rejection of a Balkan-wide revolution also meant that he was content, initially at least, for the former Smederevo sanjak to remain within the Ottoman framework, so long as it enjoyed self-government under his and his heirs' rule. That same year Miloš was recognized by the Porte as a hereditary prince of Serbia, an act that ipso facto acknowledged the autonomy of the province.

Miloš personally delivered Karadjordje's severed head to the Belgrade pasha as proof of his loyalty; it was then sent on to Constantinople and placed on public display. Just over six centuries after Grand Župan Nemanja, the founder of first independent medieval Serb polity, had been publicly humiliated in Constantinople (see Chapter 2), the head of the first leader of modern Serbia was displayed there with similar purpose – to demonstrate the empire's victory over unruly barbarians from the periphery. The real winner, however, turned out to be Miloš. Besides eliminating his main rival among Serbs, he demonstrated to the Porte that he, rather than the pasha, was in control of the Belgrade province, at least when it came to Serb affairs. Indeed, Miloš fully controlled parallel Serb institutions that were established alongside the Ottoman ones as part of the agreement to restore the Christians' autonomy. This was the beginning of a 'dual government' in what was not Serbia yet but was no longer simply the sanjak of Smederevo either. It was a sort of a two-state solution for the 'Serbian question' in this Ottoman province.

There were frequent tensions and periodic outbreaks of limited violence, but this should not obscure peaceful coexistence and everyday interactions between Christians, Muslims and Jews, between South Slavs, Greeks, Turks, Tsintsars, Vlachs and Armenians, and between local and international traders and merchants. During the period of the 'dual government', Serbia's

TABLE 4.1 *Population of Serbia, 1815–1874*

Year	Population
1815	401,350
1833*	678,192 (increase of 276,842)
1840	828,895 (+ 150,703)
1847	928,648 (+ 99,753)
1854	998,919 (+ 70,271)
1861	1,118,646 (+ 119,727)
1874	1,353,890 (+ 235,244)

*Includes the population of the six new districts.

Source: Miloš Jagodić, *Naseljavanje kneževine Srbije, 1861–80*, Belgrade, 2004.

‘Christian’ capital was in Kragujevac. Belgrade remained the Ottoman seat until the last pasha left in 1867. Most Serbia’s Muslims lived in towns, around half of them in Belgrade. In 1818, their number was estimated at 5,000 households (2,500 of which in Belgrade) that probably amounted to at least 15–20,000 people.⁵⁸ The total population of the province around this time was c.400,000 (see Table 4.1).

Karadjordje’s assassination marked the beginning of nearly a century-long feud between the Karadjordjević and Obrenović families, whose male heirs would alternate on the Serbian throne during the nineteenth century.⁵⁹ It was the first major political assassination in Serbia’s modern history, but it would not be the last. It marked the beginning of a ‘tradition’ of conflict between

⁵⁸ Ibid, II, 256.

⁵⁹ It finally ended in 1903, when the last Obrenović king and queen were brutally murdered by a group of army officers. Karadjordje’s grandson Petar returned from exile to be crowned the following year, as the new, and last, as it turned out, king of Serbia; in 1918, Petar I became the first Yugoslav king. He did not play part in the conspiracy against Aleksandar Obrenović, but the officers involved in the 1903 regicide included a grandson of Karadjordje’s murdered Greek aide.

previously close friends and *kumovi* in the Serbian politics, infamously demonstrated again in late- and post-Yugoslav Serbia, when Slobodan Milošević eliminated his former political mentor Ivan Stambolić, first politically and then physically (see Chapters 7 and 8).

Autonomous Principality

Unsurprisingly, Miloš's rule resembled that of an Ottoman pasha, the only sort of government he had been familiar with. In some ways, he was more authoritarian than his Ottoman 'predecessors'. He collected tax (out of which he paid a tribute to the sultan and bribed Ottoman officials), acted as a supreme judge in the principality, often interfered in personal lives of his subjects and treated his employees as de facto slaves. This led to several failed rebellions. After a major revolt of 1826 was suppressed, Miloš ordered that its leaders be executed, but allowed the peasants who participated to pillage and loot his property. Winning over and keeping people on his side, in addition to being feared by them, was the recipe for his long rule.

Although he was unquestionably the leader of the Serbs of the Belgrade province, Miloš was not a Serb nationalist, at least not in the modern meaning of the word. Like Karadjordje, he did not see himself as a successor of the ancient kings and despots, although he did express an occasional interest in Serbia's medieval history. His daily routine included early morning prayer, in which no reference whatsoever was made to St Sava or any other medieval Serb saint.⁶⁰ Moreover, Miloš never let Sultan

⁶⁰ Gavrilović, *Miloš Obrenović*, II, 702–703, and chs 36–38 for more details about Miloš's private life, including his extramarital affairs. See also Pirh [Otto Dubislav von Pirch], *Putovanje po Srbiji 1829*, transl. into Serbian by Dragiša J. Mijušković, Belgrade, 1899, 63–71; cf. G. Stokes, 'The Absence of Nationalism in Serbian Politics before 1840', *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism*, 4:1 (1976), 77–90.

Mahmud II (1808–39) doubt his loyalty. Not only did Serbia regularly pay the annual *baraç* (tax) to the Porte, but it had stayed out of the Greek Revolution, which broke out in 1821. Similarly, several years later, Miloš would not support a rebellion of Bosnian Muslim beys opposed to the imperial reform. Indeed, the Serb leader offered military support and food to the Ottoman army; only food was accepted – and paid for. The Serbian prince even acted as a mediator between the two sides and at one stage the Porte communicated with the Bosnians through Miloš's office.⁶¹

As part of the dual administration, Miloš set up a People's Office (*Narodna kancelarija*), a successor to the old *soviet*. This de facto government was made up of *obor-knezes* and presided over by the prince, who soon established an absolute control over the body. The People's Office doubled-up as a supreme court for the Christians, while its 'foreign' section included the Turkish Office, staffed by local Muslims, Greeks and Serbs fluent in Ottoman Turkish. The office mainly served for the communication with the Porte. Interpreters were usually not required when it came to communicating with local Ottoman authorities, who typically spoke Serbian or a related South Slav vernacular.

Not unusually for a society that had developed within an empire, Serbia's inhabitants, regardless of their ethno-religious background, could converse in more than one language. Habsburg-born Nićifor Ninković, who joined Karadjordje's rebellion in 1807, spoke German, Hungarian and Serbian; after the collapse of the First Uprising, he spent some time in Constantinople training to be barber, where he also learned Ottoman Turkish, Greek and Vlach. While his biography and range of languages may have been atypical, Ninković's ability to converse in more than one language was by no means unique. He frequently mixed Serbian and Ottoman Turkish and sometimes Greek and Vlach

⁶¹ Gavrilović, *Miloš Obrenović*, III, ch. 18; M. Marinković, *Turska kancelarija kneza Miloša (1815–1839)*, Belgrade, 1999, 46–48.

in everyday communication with Christians, Muslims and Jews he encountered in Belgrade and Kragujevac, where he served as Miloš's personal barber in the 1820s.⁶²

By keeping in check domestic rivals and controlling the local trade, Miloš became the richest man in the principality and possibly beyond. This in turn enabled him to bribe Ottoman officials in Belgrade and Constantinople. Another Russian–Ottoman war, of 1828–29, ended in victory for the former. The September 1829 Treaty of Adrianople (Edirne) essentially confirmed a convention, signed between the Ottoman and Russian Empires three years previously in Akkerman (Bilhorod-Dnistrovskiy in modern Ukraine), which, among other things, provided for the restoration of Serbia's autonomy in its 1813 borders. Mahmud II issued a *hattı şerif* (charter) the following month, fulfilling the treaty obligations concerning Serbia, whose autonomy within the Ottoman Empire was to be guaranteed by Russia. (In addition to Serbia, Greece, Moldavia and Wallachia were also granted autonomy under the terms of the treaty; however, Greece became fully independent the following year, while Russian troops entered the Danubian principalities and practically ended the Ottoman rule there). Announcing the news to a hastily elected assembly in Kragujevac in February 1830, Miloš took much of the credit for Serbia's autonomy and used the language of the new era: 'It has been a full fourteen years since I have opened the imperial gate and have worked constantly to gain for our beloved Fatherland the rights that shall pass to us and to our posterity and that shall last forever as long as there is a Serbian race.'⁶³

Two more *hattı şerifs* followed in 1830 and 1833, extending Serbia's autonomy to include the right to have an army, judiciary,

⁶² N. Ninković, *Berberin kneza Miloša*, Belgrade, 2016.

⁶³ Cited in Petrovich, *A History of Modern Serbia*, I, 126. See also Gavrilović, *Miloš Obrenović*, III, 478–96; Jakšić, *Evropa*, the Akkerman convention: 321–22, 407–408, the Treaty of Adrianople: 336, 409.

health and postal service. The 1830 *battı şerif* was issued in time to be read at an assembly convened on 12 December (21 November OS) 1830 – St Andrew’s Day, the anniversary of Karadjordje’s victory at Belgrade in 1806 and the Karadjordjević family *slava* (family patron saint day). Miloš therefore symbolically linked his diplomatic success, which formally ended the Second Serbian Uprising, with one of Karadjordje’s major military victories during the First Serbian Uprising. The 1833 charter finally provided for the incorporation of the six adjacent districts into the Serbian principality promised by the 1826 Akkerman Convention (see Map 5.1).⁶⁴

In exchange for the autonomy, Serbia was to pay the Porte an annual tax (*baraç*) of 2,300,000 Ottoman *kuruş* (approximately £33,000), silver coins that replaced *akçe* in the eighteenth century. This was a reduced figure that Miloš secured through *bahşiş*, an Ottoman custom that essentially amounts to bribing, of Ottoman administrators and even the sultan himself. The tax was to be paid in the Ottoman currency, which would continue to lose its value, rather than in the more stable Venetian ducat. To provide some context, Miloš spent over 1.4 million *kuruş* on *bahşiş* in 1829, and another 1.2 million in 1833. He was able to afford this because the tax he collected from his Christian subjects far outweighed the annual tax paid to the Porte. According to a British report, in 1837, the head tax brought in £150,000, while the *baraç* that year amounted to £21,900.⁶⁵ Meanwhile, the ever-growing Ottoman government expenditure – due to the costs of the 1828–29 war against Russia and of the Tanzimat (administrative reform) – reached 400 million *kuruş* (7 million Venetian ducats) by the end of the 1830s; this was up from 18 million *kuruş* (2 million ducats) government expenditure of the late eighteenth century. The

⁶⁴ Jakšić, *Evropa*, 411–18. For full details see Gavrilović, *Miloš Obrenović*, III, parts 2 & 3.

⁶⁵ M. Palairot, *The Balkan Economies, c. 1800–1914: Evolution without Development*, Cambridge, 1997, 88.

near bankruptcy of the Ottoman state – prevented by loans from Armenian, Greek and Jewish bankers from Constantinople – undoubtedly suited Miloš's agenda.⁶⁶ Meanwhile, the Belgrade Metropolitanate was allowed to appoint its own clergy independently from the Patriarchate in Constantinople.⁶⁷ Thus, the direct Ottoman-Phanariot control of the Serbs of the Belgrade province ended at the same time, in 1829/30.

The departure of remaining Muslim *sipahis* during the 1830s facilitated Miloš's agrarian 'revolution'. As part of the deal with the Porte, remaining Muslim population – perhaps around 15,000 people – was to evacuate the principality, apart from those living in the garrisons. It is estimated that 40–50,000 Muslims lived in the sanjak of Smederevo prior to the 1804 uprising, out of perhaps less than 400,000 people. The principality became a land of small Christian peasant households, and while the prince ruled over his subjects through fear, he was also popular, having abolished both the direct Ottoman rule (1829) and serfdom (1835). The lure of free land and tax privileges for the peasantry made Serbia a small oasis of freedom in south-eastern Europe. It also transformed it from a land of emigration to one of immigration, at least as far as non-Muslims were concerned. Serbia was a frontier society whose agrarian reform led to a land grab and exploitation of nature resembling in some ways contemporaneous developments in America's Wild West. Meanwhile, Miloš invested his personal fortune in Austrian banks and Romanian property. A small, prosperous middle class formed, but the prince prevented the emergence

⁶⁶ Serbia's *haraç*: Ćirković, *The Serbs*, 191; Gavrilović, *Miloš Obrenović*, III, 483–84; Miloš's bribes: Stojančević, *Miloš Obrenović i njegovo doba*, 252–53; Ottoman government expenditure: Ş. Pamuk, *A Monetary History of the Ottoman Empire*, Cambridge, 2000, 189. One sterling pound exchanged for 69 *kuruş* in 1829, while two years later it was 80 *kuruş*. Ibid, 191; Constantinople bankers: Howard, *A History of the Ottoman Empire*, 249–51.

⁶⁷ Gavrilović, *Miloš Obrenović*, III, 497–504; Dj. Slijepčević, *Istorija Srpske pravoslavne crkve*, Belgrade, 2012 (first publ. in 1986), II, 207–10.

of a wealthy land-owning elite similar to Romanian boyars who might have threatened his position.⁶⁸

The emigration of Muslims radically changed urban life and reduced the population of Serbia's towns. Belgrade needed around 80 years to reach its 1780 population figure (perhaps around 20,000 people); similarly, towns such as Užice, known as the 'Little Istanbul' due to its minaret-laden landscape, underwent a rapid social-ethnic transformation. Muslims would remain in Serbia's main towns until the 1860s, but their life had by then increasingly evolved around the remaining Ottoman garrisons. Meanwhile, around 665,000 Eastern Orthodox from Bosnia, Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo, Sandžak, Vojvodina and Macedonia immigrated into Serbia in 1834–74.⁶⁹ During this period, the population of Serbia rose from close to 680,000 to over 1,350,000 people (Table 4.1). The principality also attracted non-Serb migrants, including Christians and Jews from the Habsburg and Romanian lands. The arrival of Ashkenazim Jews meant that Serbia's Sephardim were no longer the predominant Jewish group.

Meanwhile, Serb population in Hungary in the mid-nineteenth century was estimated at close to 900,000 (up from 750,000 in 1821). This figure does not include the population of the Military Border in Croatia-Slavonia, where, according to a Habsburg census, around 340,000 Orthodox/Serbs lived in 1843 (out of a total population of c.735,000; the rest were mostly Catholics/Croats). Meanwhile, Hungary's Serbs migrated south, to present-day Vojvodina or into the Serbian principality. Thus,

⁶⁸ Gavrilović, *Miloš Obrenović*, III, 464–81; J. R. Lampe and M. R. Jackson, *Balkan Economic History, 1550–1950*, Bloomington, IN, 1982, 111–14; Palairot, *Balkan Economies*, 85–88; Pavlowitch, *Serbia*, 34–35.

⁶⁹ Immigration number: Calic, *Društvena istorija*, 48; Belgrade population: Mišković, *Bazari*, 172; cf. H. Sundhaussen, *Historische Statistik Serbiens, 1834–1914: Mit europäischen Vergleichsdaten*, Munich, 1989.

for example, the Serb population of Szentendre decreased by one-third by the early 1840s, while in 1839, there were only 50 Serbs living in Esztrgom, previously home to a sizeable Serb community.⁷⁰

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In 1837, a plague that had allegedly originated in Egypt reached Niš and Pirot – in present-day Serbia but then Ottoman towns just south of the Serbian principality. With less than twenty qualified doctors and a handful of poorly equipped hospitals, Serbia sought assistance from the experienced medical staff of the Zemun quarantine.⁷¹ Within a short period of time, field hospitals and quarantines were built near border crossings and military-style trenches were dug along the entire border with (the rest) of the Ottoman Empire. Meant to prevent illegal entry and spreading of the virus, these measures in practice reinforced Serbia's physical separation from the Ottoman state – as well as from Serb communities south-east of the border. This impacted trade and human

⁷⁰ Ćirković, *The Serbs*, 194–97; Z. Djere (Györe), 'Skica promena etničkog sastava stanovništva na tlu današnje Vojvodine 1526–1910. godine', *Istraživanja* (Novi Sad), 15 (2004), 105–23. The Military Border population figure: G. E. Rothenberg, *The Military Border in Croatia, 1750–1888: A Study of an Imperial Institution*, Chicago, 1966, 125. The numbers fluctuated through the nineteenth century, depending, among other reasons, on the deployment of military regiments. Serbian and Croatian historians have sometimes disagreed over the numbers, identity and inter-communal relationship of the frontier population. See, for example, a debate between Vasilije Krestić and Mirko Valentić in *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* (Zagreb), 15:3 (1983), 119–68.

⁷¹ In late eighteenth century, around 20,000 people crossed 18 border crossings/quarantines along the 1,800-kilometres long Habsburg–Ottoman border. Nobody was exempt from quarantine rules, not even diplomats, but these border crossing facilitated rather than hinder trade and population movements. See J. Pešalj, 'Monitoring Migrations: The Habsburg–Ottoman Border in the Eighteenth Century', PhD dissertation, Leiden University, 2019.

traffic, after a large number of Christians had fled to Serbia following a recent anti-Ottoman rebellion in Pirot.⁷²

Despite strict quarantine measures, first cases of the ‘eastern plague’ were reported in Serbia in summer 1837. The virus was brought in via infected Ottoman soldiers on their way to the Belgrade garrison. They were allowed to enter Serbia after a compulsory stay at a border quarantine, despite several soldiers reporting feeling unwell; it turned out a quarantine doctor seconded from Zemun failed to detect plague symptoms. The plague reached central Serbia, but further spread of the infection was prevented thanks to Stefan-Stevča Mihailović, a capable Jagodina district chief and the future prime minister of Serbia (see the next chapter), who immediately placed infected civilians and the Ottoman soldiers in isolation.⁷³

The presence of the latter offered a reminder of Serbia’s vassal status; that the Ottoman military and civilian administration were obliged to obey strict quarantine rules, apparently much to the annoyance of the Belgrade pasha, testified of Serbia’s high degree of autonomy. Local population and foreign traders were affected by the closure of Serbia’s borders, but their objections fell on deaf ears. Wealthier Serbs moved to country houses or to the safety of Habsburg Hungary, which caused resentment and a near-rebellion among those with no means to seek social distancing and no connections to exit quarantine. It appears the northern border was less strictly observed. English traveller Julia Pardoe was able to briefly cross to Belgrade from Zemun

⁷² V. Stojančević, *Knez Miloš i istočna Srbija, 1833–1838*, Belgrade, 1957, 188–89.

⁷³ D. Dedić, *Kuga u Jagodini 1837. godine*, Jagodina, 2009, www.arhivja.org.rs/images/kuga_u_jagodini_1837.pdf; B. Kunibert [Cuniberti], *Srpski ustanak i prva vladavina Miloša Obrenovića, 1804–1850*, transl. from French by M. R. Vesnić, Belgrade, 1901, 506–17; Stojančević, *Knez Miloš i istočna Srbija*, 85–99.

in the middle of the epidemic thanks to a permission by the Ottoman authorities.⁷⁴

The epidemic lasted three months and claimed 230 victims (out of 283 confirmed cases), an extremely high death rate but a relatively low figure in total. In comparison, reportedly nearly two-thirds of the inhabitants of Niš died from the disease. Bartolomeo Cuniberti, Miloš's Piedmontese doctor, may have exaggerated when he claimed that the Serbian prince saved Europe from the plague. However, the swift measures implemented by the Serbian authorities almost certainly prevented the spread of the virus into Belgrade, Bosnia and Hungary. The epidemic provided Miloš with an opportunity to reaffirm his authority domestically and demonstrate the degree of Serbia's independence from the Porte. As the Covid-19 pandemic showed, major epidemics tend to lead to strengthening of state control over territory and over lives of citizens, and it was no different in Serbia of the late 1830s.⁷⁵

The Fall of Prince Miloš

A major rebellion against Prince Miloš's rule, which even his wife and brother supported, had broken out in early 1835. Several thousand people gathered outside the prince's residence in Kragujevac demanding a constitution, which they understood as a guarantee that Miloš's powers will be limited, and their own land and property protected. The prince was forced to give in.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ *The City of the Sultan and Domestic Manners of the Turks, in 1836*, London, 1838, 3 vols, III, 301–309.

⁷⁵ While Miloš's rule, as suggested above, resembled that of an Ottoman pasha, when it came to immigration, he behaved more like a Habsburg. The Austrian empire, like Miloš's Serbia, welcomed immigration, but of non-Muslims. This also explains why Serb/Orthodox refugees had been able to settle in the Austrian and Hungarian lands in frequent, and frequently large migratory movements, as already discussed.

⁷⁶ Pavlowitch, *Serbia*, 36–41.

Drafted by Dimitrije Davidović, Miloš's Habsburg Serb secretary and an admirer of the French constitutional system, Serbia's first constitution was adopted on 15 February 1835. It happened to be the anniversary of the Orašac assembly that, as mentioned previously, elected Karadjordje as the leader of the uprising in Šumadija. The *konstitucija* was a liberal document, inspired by French and Belgian constitutions; it envisaged a power share between the monarch and an elected people's assembly. A third stake holder was to be a council of elders, a remnant of the 1829 *hattı şerif*, retained perhaps to appease the Ottomans. The Ottoman-era serfdom, however, was abolished, making Serbia a land of free peasants. The constitution would be suspended after only two weeks (although the abolition of the serfdom stood) because it was opposed by almost everyone, including the three empires most closely involved in Serbia's affairs, none of which incidentally had a constitution at the time. The Porte disliked the fact that an autonomous province adopted a constitution on its own, and a highly liberal one at that; its liberalism was the main reason Austria and Russia, which especially detested the French influence, were also opposed to the constitution. Miloš gladly took the opportunity to suspend a legal document he did not want in the first place.⁷⁷

In June the same year, the prince was invited to Constantinople for talks, his first trip outside Serbia. Sultan Mahmud II arranged for a welcome full of respect for the Mir-i Sirb (Emir of Serbia), as the Ottomans usually addressed Miloš. The two sides exchanged generous gifts; Mahmud II awarded Miloš a medal, an expensively framed portrait of the sultan, which the Serbian prince would wear with pride. The visit left a deep impression on Miloš, who prolonged his stay to two and a half months, fascinated by life in the imperial capital and keen to learn more about Great Power diplomacy.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ S. Jovanović, *Političke i pravne rasprave*, Belgrade, 1932, 2 vols, I, 9–12.

⁷⁸ M. Aydin, 'Istanbul Visit of the Serbian Knez Miloš Obrenović', in M. Ünver (ed.), *Turkey and Serbia: Changing Political and Socio-Economic*



FIGURE 4.4 *Portrait of Prince Miloš Obrenović* by Josef Brandt, probably painted in Constantinople/Istanbul, 1835 (Wikipedia). Note the framed portrait of Sultan Mahmud II on Miloš's chest.

Following the examples of Austria and Russia, Britain and France opened consulates in Serbia in the second half of the 1830s. Because the pro-constitution opposition enjoyed Russia's

Dynamics in the Balkans, Istanbul, 2018, 33–46; Gavrilović, *Miloš Obrenović*, III, 511–43; Marinković, *Turska kancelarija*, 46–48.

support, the British and the French backed the autocratic prince.⁷⁹ This would not be the first time that foreign powers interfered in Serbia's domestic politics, nor that their interests abroad contradicted their self-confessed values at home.

The Porte and Russia, which respectively exercised sovereignty over Serbia and guaranteed its autonomy, supported 'Defenders of the Constitution', as the oligarchs who opposed Miloš became known. Finally in late 1838, a new Constitution was drafted in Istanbul by Serbian, Russian and Ottoman experts. It confirmed the hereditary rights of the Obrenović family; the monarch's power was to be limited, though not by a people's assembly, but by a 17-member council of elders. As Stevan Pavlowitch put it succinctly: 'The Porte had been anxious to limit Miloš's powers, to reduce his influence in the European provinces more generally, and to please Russia. The "Turkish" constitution – as it was called in Serbia – introduced government by prince-in council. Russia and the notables were the winners. Miloš was the loser.'⁸⁰ He abdicated in June 1839, after several tense months and after nearly 25 years in power. Miloš Obrenović would spend almost two decades in exile, living off his Romanian estate, until another political crisis resulted in his triumphant, if short lived, return.

Defenders of the Constitution

Sixteen-year-old Mihailo Obrenović (1839–42, 1860–68) became the new prince after his elder brother, and the original heir, Milan died from an illness within weeks following Miloš's abdication. Due to Mihailo's age, a three-man regency was appointed, consisting of Miloš's younger brother Jevrem Obrenović (1790–1856), Toma Vučić Perišić (1787–1859), a veteran of the Second

⁷⁹ St. K. Pavlowitch, *Anglo-Russian Rivalry in Serbia*, The Hague, 1961.

⁸⁰ Pavlowitch, *Serbia*, 37.

Uprising, and Avram Petronijević (1791–1852), another one of Miloš's former secretaries, who now also served as first minister. The regency competed with the exiled prince who continued to exert a significant influence through his supporters at home. In 1842, Vučić Perišić masterminded a palace coup forcing Mihailo to abdicate, ending, for the time being, the Obrenović rule in Serbia. With the approval of the Porte, Karadjordje's younger son Aleksandar was invited to return to the country and take the throne (his elder brother Aleksije had died in 1830). During Prince Aleksandar Karadjordjević's reign (1842–58), the real rulers of the country were the Defenders of the Constitution (or Constitutionalists). They built a modern, centralized state bureaucracy and set an ambitious foreign policy, with Serbia as the core of a future independent Serb or South Slav state. The state bureaucracy was built largely by educated Habsburg-born Serbs, who represented the country's only intelligentsia. The foreign policy was envisaged with the encouragement from exiled Polish and Czech nationalists and was inspired by German and Italian unification movements. Ilija Garašanin (1812–74), interior minister between 1842 and 1852, and briefly prime minister and foreign minister in 1852–53 (he would again serve as foreign minister in the 1860s), played a key role in both home and foreign affairs.⁸¹

Domestic reforms carried out by the Constitutionalists may be seen as the third phase of the Serbian revolution (the first two being Karadjordje's insurgency and the emergence of the autonomous principality under Miloš, respectively). The reforms rested on the ideas of progress and modernity, understood by Serbia's elites as synonymous with the emancipation from the Ottomans as well as from Miloš's autocratic rule. Ironically, as mentioned later, around this same time the Ottoman rulers sought to modernize the empire.

⁸¹ This section draws on S. Jovanović, *Ustavobranitelji i njihova vlada (1838–1958)*, Belgrade, 3rd rev edn 1933 (1st publ. 1912), which remains the best study of the Constitutionalist regime.

The Constitutionals faced an enormous challenge, worked under budget limitations and lacked qualified cadres. Nevertheless, they achieved a considerable success in the domestic affairs, if not quite fully meeting their ambitious goals. Among their key achievements were the regulation of land ownership and trade, a judiciary reform, modernization of the police and the country's postal service, and an improved road network. However, by the end of the 1850s, there were still only around 1,200 kilometres of roads in the whole of the country. Nascent industrialization was felt mainly in Belgrade and areas bordering the Habsburg monarchy – partly thanks to the navigation of the Danube and Sava, where an Austrian steamboat company operated from the 1830s and 1840s, respectively. In rural areas, things changed slowly following the radical land reform of the 1830s.

In 1844, Serbia's first Civil Law (inspired by the Austrian equivalent) was adopted, while two years later the country's first Supreme Court was established. The legal reform, however, was undermined by a shortage of qualified personnel. For example, in the mid-1840s, three regional court chiefs were illiterate, ten of them could barely read, only three had more than elementary education and only one was a lawyer. At the same time, courts were overworked, partly due to slow and inadequate expertise and partly because people frequently sued each other, enjoying the newly won rights, and sometimes simply out of *inat* (that allegedly Serbian character trait discussed in Introduction). Garašanin hoped to solve the problem by granting greater powers to the gendarmerie, but this encouraged police brutality and corruption.

Meanwhile, the peasantry was burdened by debt as loan sharks profited from a slow regulation of the banking system. There were complaints that Habsburg-born Orthodox bishops lived in luxury, while village priests behaved arrogantly and immorally. All these factors contributed to the loss of popularity of the Constitutionals, despite the benefits and progress they brought.

There was a feeling that Miloš's personal autocracy had been replaced by an autocracy of state bureaucracy.

The 1838 Constitution regulated trade, but it did not bring benefits to all of Serbia's citizens. Like Ottoman sultans and pashas, Miloš appreciated the loyalty and good business relations with Jewish merchants and traders. The Constitutionals, on the other hand, introduced discriminatory regulations concerning freedom of movement and trade of Serbia's Jews, favouring their Christian competition. Things would change in 1878, when Serbian Jews would receive equal citizen rights. In the meanwhile, discriminatory measures by the Constitutionals did not seem to discourage the immigration of Habsburg Jews, as their numbers steadily grew. Around 1,800 Jews lived in Belgrade in the late 1850s (around 10 per cent of the city's population), up from 1,500 in the early 1830s.⁸²

Well-paid and smartly dressed civil servants became a symbol of the Constitutionalist regime. Everyone wanted to become one or to know one, for such connections (*veze* – see Introduction) promised certain privileges. Habsburg-born civil servants tended to be more professional and less corrupt, perhaps because they did not have close friends and relatives in Serbia. This made them unpopular, and complaints could be heard about the domination of the 'Germans' (*nemačkari*), as they were pejoratively known. Even Metropolitan Petar of Belgrade (1833–59), a Croatian-born Serb, was dismissed as a 'foreigner' by his critics.

State schools employed Habsburg Serb teachers, but the government set out to create a 'native' educated elite. From 1839, state scholarships were awarded to brightest young men – and eventually women, too – to enable them to study, initially usually Law, in Austria, France and Saxony. The number of scholarships rose each year as Paris soon became the main destination for Serbian

⁸² Mišković, *Bazari*, 174–75.

students.⁸³ A vibrant, small group of young Serbs educated abroad, collectively known as ‘Parisians’ (*parizlije*) brought back ideas of progress and change. Belgrade’s Grand School (not to be confused with Dositej Obradović’s school of the same name) opened in 1863; in 1905, it became Belgrade University. Paradoxically, one of the Constitutionalists’ major achievements – the creation of a ‘native’ educated class – was also to prove to be their undoing.

*

Ilija Garašanin, according to historian Slobodan Jovanović, ‘always had a plan and a programme, like a typical European bureaucrat of his era.’ Despite his bureaucratic crudeness and lack of personal life due to an almost complete immersion in politics, Garašanin had charisma and a sense of humour. A tall, physically imposing man and a decisive politician, he proved popular with the liberal-nationalist youth. A self-educated representative of the older generation, Garašanin bridged the generational gap between the Old Men (*starc̑i*) and the ‘Parisians’. While he never really got on with the ‘Germans’, he could at least work with them. Vučić Perišić, meanwhile, was more effective communicating with the masses; above all a man of action, he would practically retire from politics during periods of relative stability.⁸⁴

Garašanin’s foreign policy motto was: ‘neither with Russia, nor with Austria, but with the western powers, above all France’. His Francophilia made him a natural ally of Prince Czartoryski and his transnational network of agents, established after the failed Polish revolution of 1830–31. As Russia’s foreign minister Czartoryski had in 1804 largely dismissed Serb overtures, as we have seen; several decades later, as a Polish exiled leader, he envisaged Serbia as

⁸³ Ibid, 93–94; Lj. Trgovčević, *Planirana elita: O studentima iz Srbije na evropskim univerzitetima u 19. veku*, Belgrade, 2003.

⁸⁴ Jovanović, *Ustavobranitelji*, 96, 327, 330–36.

a key member of a future Europe made up of smaller, independent states that would keep in check Austrian and Russian imperialisms. In 1844, František Zach, Czartoryski's Czech agent in the Balkans, drafted a plan for the creation of a large South Slav state around Serbia. Garašanin edited the document – which remained unknown to public until the early twentieth century – and turned it into a plan (known as *Načertanije*) to create a large state that would bring together Serb communities across the Balkans into a modern version of Stefan Dušan's empire. Like Czartoryski, Garašanin established a network of agents, mainly in Bosnia-Herzegovina, where his contacts extended beyond the Orthodox population when communication with Bosnian Franciscans was established.⁸⁵

Not all South Slav initiatives came from Belgrade or Paris. In addition to the Illyrian group in Zagreb, Serb-feeling Roman Catholics from Dalmatia also advocated cooperation with Serbia. Ethnic, historical and religious ties with Montenegro would give birth to plans – popular in both Montenegro and Serbia – for the unification of the two 'Serb states'.⁸⁶ Garašanin's work was subsequently interpreted by historians as 'Greater Serbian' or 'pan-Yugoslav', depending on author and context. He was above all interested in Serbia and the Serbs but understood the importance of cooperation with neighbouring peoples and friendly Powers. In line with many of his compatriots, especially the young liberals, Garašanin believed that Serbia's borders were unjust and

⁸⁵ Ekmečić, *Stvaranje Jugoslavije*, I, 460–84; P. N. Hehn, 'The Origins of Modern Pan-Serbism: The 1844 Načertanije of Ilija Garašanin', *East European Quarterly*, 9:2 (1975), 153–71, and 'Prince Adam Czartoryski and the South Slavs', *The Polish Review*, 8:2 (1963), 76–86; R. Ljušić, *Knjiga o Načertaniju: Nacionalni i državni program Kneževine Srbije (1844)*, Belgrade, 2004; D. Mackenzie, *Ilija Garašanin: Balkan Bismarck*, New York, 1985, 42–61.

⁸⁶ I. Banac, 'The Confessional "Rule" and the Dubrovnik Exception: The Origins of the "Serb-Catholic" Circle in Nineteenth-Century Dalmatia', *Slavic Review*, 42:3 (1983), 448–74; D. Vujović, *Ujedinjenje Crne Gore i Srbije*, Titograd [Podgorica], 1962.

that, like other European nations, the Serbs too should be able to unite and live in a free and independent state. Garašanin's ideas developed not in isolation but were influenced by European trends of his era; this was true even of his somewhat contradictory and romantic dream about the resurrection of medieval Serbia, which was neither a nation state nor did it overlap territorially with nineteenth-century plans for a Greater Serbia or Yugoslavia.

Garašanin saw Hungary and the Polish and Czech exiles as allies against Austria and Russia, respectively; he did not regard the Ottoman state as the main threat to Serbia's aspirations. Among the Powers it was France, and among national unification movements the Italians and the Germans who provided the inspiration for the Serbian politician. There, old divisions created by religion and history were to be overcome by loyalty to the nation, and this, too, was Garašanin's hope for the Serbs and the South Slavs.

A Society Transformed

As already seen, under Miloš's leadership, Serbia had transitioned from an Ottoman sanjak to a tributary principality that was also increasingly understood as a Christian Serb state. In the place of the departed Muslims came mainly Christian immigrants attracted by the promise of free land.⁸⁷ In the process, Serbia became less and Bosnia more Muslim, something that remains insufficiently acknowledged in historiography. Similarly, while much has been written about the importance among Serbs and other Balkan Christians of oral tradition of the 'Turkish yoke' and the Christians' resistance against the 'Turks', a similar tradition – of battles against the Empire, Janissaries and rebel Christians and

⁸⁷ Ekmečić, *Stvaranje Jugoslavije*, I, 78–79; V. Stojančević, 'Tursko stanovništvo u Srbiji pred Prvi srpski ustanak', *Zbornik za društvene nauke* (Novi Sad), 13–14 (1956), 127–34, 132; M. Jagodić, *Naseljavanje kneževine Srbije, 1861–1880*, Belgrade, 2004, 28.

the suffering of local Muslims – existed among the Muslims of Bosnia, many of whom were refugees or descendants of refugees from Serbia. Contemporary accounts show that Serbia's Muslims feared the brutality of Karadjorđe and his men.⁸⁸ Ottoman first-hand accounts of the Serbian Principality are similarly, and understandably, laced with bitterness and fear, though some sympathy existed for Prince Aleksandar and the Constitutionalist regime among Belgrade's remaining Ottomans.⁸⁹

When Melek Hanım arrived in Belgrade in 1847 with her husband Kibrıslı Mehmed Emin, the newly appointed Pasha of Belgrade, she found a shrinking 'Turkish' community of perhaps 500 families, who lived on Ottoman state support, 'in consideration of the prosperity they had formerly enjoyed, and which the Serbians had monopolized.' Belgrade Muslim women had paler skin and hair than the women of Constantinople; married women tended to use strong make-up and dye their hair dark, presumably to look more 'Turkish'. They were also more religious than the new pasha's wife, who drunk alcohol and did not mind eating from a table that included pork dishes at dinners hosted by Prince Aleksandar Karadjordjević (Iskender-bey, as the Ottomans called him) and Princess Persida (Figure 4.5). Melek Hanım found the Belgrade Ottoman fortress a depressing place, with no gardens and with poor supplies during winter months when the rivers and roads were frozen. She used her business acumen to help the locals, and in the process boost her finances. The monotony of everyday life was interrupted by an incident following the murder

⁸⁸ Ljušić, *Vožd Karadjordje*, II, 272; H. Kamberović, *Husein kapetan Gradašćević (1802–1834): Biografija*, Gradačac, 2002, 12.

⁸⁹ M. Marinković, 'Srbija prve polovine XIX veka u Istoriji čudnovatih događaja u Beogradu i Srbiji Rašida Beogradjanina i memoaru Ibrahima Mansur-Efendije', *Zbornik Matice srpske za istoriju*, 61–62 (2000), 179–86. E. A. Aytekin, 'Belgradî Raşid and his Vak'a-i Hayret-Nüma: A Local Muslim Perspective on Dual Administration in Belgrade During Serbian Autonomy', in S. Aslantaş et al. (eds), *Belgrade, 1521–1867*, Belgrade, 2018, 315–26.



FIGURE 4.5 *Princess Persida Karadjordjević* (1813–73), consort of Prince Aleksandar. Portrait by Uroš Knežević, 1855 (Wikipedia). Note Persida's oriental dress. Born into the prominent Nenadović family in western Serbia (the previously mentioned Prota Mateja was a close relative), Persida was just 17 when she married Karadjordje's younger son Aleksandar, six years her senior, in Khotyn, Bessarabia (then Russia, today Ukraine), where exiled members of the Karadjordjević family lived at the time. Persida played a prominent role in the social and cultural life of mid-nineteenth-century Belgrade. After Prince Aleksandar was deposed in 1858 (see below), they emigrated to Timișoara (Romania). The princely couple had 10 children, six of whom lived into adulthood. King Petar I of Serbia (and Yugoslavia) was their eldest surviving son.

of a Christian by a Muslim in summer 1848. The perpetrator escaped justice with the help of the Belgrade Ottoman authorities. Christians demonstrated outside the fortress and tensions threatened to get out of hand. Things calmed down thanks to those in positions of power – the prince, the pasha and his wife all appealed for peace and worked together to resolve the crisis.⁹⁰

Not all Belgrade Muslim women were strict believers and not all lived on state support. Some survived on the edge of the society, trying to make the most out of the dual government. A well-known Belgrade courtesan Bula Nesiba, who as a 2-year Christian child Katarina was converted to Islam following the fall of the city in 1813, fell foul of the Ottoman law in 1830. She avoided being expelled from the city by converting back to Orthodoxy. As a Christian, she was now outside the reach of the Ottoman legal system and was allowed to stay in Belgrade. In what may have been the case of a (presumably) attractive young woman playing on macho instincts of two powerful male rivals, Kata Nesiba, as she became known, had Prince Miloš personally intervene on her behalf with the Belgrade pasha. Following this, she continued to entertain a religiously mixed clientele until the Serb authorities eventually expelled her from the city in the 1840s, before she was able to re-convert to Islam.⁹¹

Kata Nesiba was one of approximately 150 Belgrade prostitutes in the first half of the nineteenth century. Her story is in some ways symbolic of this transitional period. Other courtesans

⁹⁰ [Melek Hanım] *Thirty Years in the Harem, or, The Autobiography of Melek-Hanım, Wife of H. H. Kibrizli-Mebemet-Pasha*, I, London, 1872, 138–49; cf. I. Čirović, '[An] Ottoman Woman, Agency and Power: Melek Hanım in Belgrade 1847–1848', in Aslantaş et al. (eds), *Belgrade, 1521–1867*, 363–82.

⁹¹ I. Janković, *Kata Nesiba: Istinita i ilustrovana istorija jedne beogradske bludnice i njene borbe za ustavna prava, 1839–1851*, illustr. by V. Mihajlović, Belgrade, 2014, and 'Opšte bludnice: Prostitucija u Beogradu u prvoj polovini 19. veka', *God. za društv. ist.*, 22:2 (2015), 25–51; cf. V. Jovanović, 'Prostitucija u Beogradu tokom 19. veka', *God. za društv. ist.*, 4:1 (1997), 7–24.

included former haram women, sex slaves imported from the Austrian Empire, and local Christian women, sometimes married or widowed, driven to prostitution by poverty. At politically sensitive times, Ottoman and Serbian authorities would arrest or temporary remove from Belgrade well-known troublemakers and prostitutes. A common cause of tension and physical conflict between the Christians and Muslims was jealousy and competition for women – not surprisingly perhaps considering that at the time Belgrade men outnumbered women (60 to 40 per cent in 1834 and 62 to 38 per cent fifteen years later). This was mainly due to the immigration pattern that saw single men moving to Serbia in search of jobs.⁹²

Unsurprisingly, women – rather than their male ‘clients’ – tended to be blamed for disturbing ‘public morality’. Thus, in January 1838, an army captain and commander of the prince’s guard asked the (Christian) police to prevent prostitutes from approaching and seducing his soldiers. Two years later, the Belgrade authorities received a request from the head of the Orthodox church in Serbia to expel from the city a well-known prostitute. The Belgrade police files include records of sexual violence against under-age girls and reports of ‘seduction and sodomy’ of young boys. Sexual violence was not uncommon in the countryside either. Most inmates of a late nineteenth-century female-only prison in Požarevac were women who killed men – often their husbands or other family members – after they had been abused and maltreated.⁹³

Old Muslim communities were not the only victims of Serbia’s nascent modernization. A rapidly growing population, due to immigration and birth rates higher than anywhere else in Europe

⁹² Mišković, *Bazari*, 173.

⁹³ M. Jovanović et al. (eds), *Žrtvi u Beogradu, 1837–1841: Dokumenta uprave grada Beograda*, Belgrade, 2003, 449–53; M. A. Popović, *Zatvorenice: Album ženskog odeljenja Požarevačkog kaznenog zavoda (1898)*, Belgrade, 2017.

bar Hungary and Russia (45 per 1000; in preindustrial western Europe the birth rates reached 30 per 1000), created the need for additional arable land that could only be created by deforestation.⁹⁴ The forests of Šumadija gave birth to modern Serbia – first as shelter and source of food for the insurgents, then as additional land their partial destruction created in autonomous Serbia. As geologist and travel-writer Ami Boué shrewdly observed, the Ottomans might have defeated Karadjordje's rebellion if they had slaughtered pigs rather than men and if they had burned the forests, which provided food for the pigs⁹⁵ – and shelter for the rebels, one might add.

The modernization also created smaller households and opened prospects for people willing to move to towns. This resulted in decline, if not quite the end of extended families that had formed the nucleus of the Balkan society during the pre-modern era. In the mid-1830s, Serbia, like the rest of the Balkans, remained a predominantly agricultural society. Out of around 700,000 population, which lived on a territory of 38,000 square kilometres, the urban population numbered only 50,000 people, of whom possibly around one-half lived in Belgrade. Many towns were in fact semi-rural societies, and their population remained diverse even as the Muslims were departing. In addition to Serbs, there were Jews, Greeks, Tsintsars (Hellenized Vlachs), Roma, Armenians and others; many would assimilate, even while preserving their old identity.⁹⁶

After the 1878 Congress of Berlin, Serbian Jews were fully emancipated, as the newly independent Balkan states were obliged to grant full citizen rights to their minorities. This encouraged further immigration of Ashkenazi Jews from neighbouring Austria-Hungary, who joined a long-established Sephardim community in Belgrade and several other towns. Roma continued to enjoy a separate status they had gained in the Ottoman Empire but were

⁹⁴ Calic, *Društvena istorija*, 49; Palairot, *Balkan Economies*, 98–103.

⁹⁵ Pavlowitch, *Serbia*, 32. ⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 34; Mišković, *Bazari*, 172–73.

finally fully integrated into the Serbian legal and tax system in 1884, when the nomadic communities were obliged, formally at least, to settle down. Regardless of whether they remained semi-nomadic or not, most Roma continued to be treated as de facto second-class citizens. On the other hand, because they were not regarded as ‘Turks’ by either Serbs or Ottomans, Muslim Roma were not included in the diplomatic agreements between the Serbs and the Ottomans, sanctioned by the Powers, which regulated the departure of Muslims from Serbia.⁹⁷

The Serbs and the 1848 Revolution

The Hungarian revolutionary manifesto of March 1848 triggered declarations demanding civic and religious freedoms, independent schools and use of their own language by several Serb groups in Habsburg Hungary. In the countryside, Orthodox peasants rebelled against large landowners. On 12–14 May (1–3 May O.S.) 1848, a Serb assembly was held in Sremski Karlovci (Figure 4.6). It was attended by the church and political leaders and various other ‘people’s representatives’. The assembly proclaimed a Duchy of Serbia (*Vojvodstvo Srbija*, today better known as Vojvodina), and elected as the *vojvoda* (duke) a Habsburg Serb army Colonel Stefan Šupljikac (1786–1848), who accepted his new rank only after the emperor’s approval (but died several months later from an illness). The deputies also proclaimed Metropolitan Josif Rajačić the ‘Serb Patriarch’. Amid declarations of loyalty to ‘our Emperor and King and Father Ferdinand’, those present also recalled Serbia’s ‘glorious past’. The legality of the assembly

⁹⁷ I. Janković, ‘Pravni status Roma u Kneževini Srbiji’, *Pravni zapisi* (Belgrade), VII:2 (2016), 297–323, and ‘Socijalni status Roma u Kneževini Srbiji’, *God. za društ. ist.*, 24:1 (2017), 7–24. The position of Roma was worse in neighbouring Romania, where they were kept as slaves in some cases. By contrast, slavery was not legalized in modern Serbia.



FIGURE 4.6 Pavle Simić, *Serbian National Assembly, [Novi Sad] 1 May 1848* (1848). The Matica srpska Gallery, Novi Sad, GMS/U 2873

was supposed to be based on the ‘privileges’ issued by Emperor Leopold I to their ancestors following the ‘Great Migration’, and on the (largely symbolic) continuity with the Serbian despotate, which ‘transferred’ to southern Hungary following the Ottoman conquest in the fifteenth century.⁹⁸

Meanwhile, young liberal-nationalist activists assumed a greater role. They introduced mass politics to Habsburg Serbs, by campaigning across southern Hungary and agitating for the ‘national cause’. To what extent their messages resonated among ‘ordinary’ Serbs is not known. Only a small, educated elite could read written proclamations, but by going

⁹⁸ Ćirković, *The Serbs*, 196–203; Ekmečić, *Stvaranje Jugoslavije*, I, 485–596; ISN, V-2, 45–108; cf. I. Deák, *Lawful Revolution: Louis Kossuth and the Hungarians 1848–1849*, New York, 1979; P. M. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History*, Cambridge, MA, 2016, ch. 4.

to the people the national agitators hoped to bring the nation to them. Savka Subotić, one of the first feminists among Hungarian Serbs, aged 14 during the Revolution, later recalled how liberals wore specially made hats that featured Serbia's tri-colour flag and the following written message: 'Long live Serb-Slavjan, Vojvoda Stefan!'.⁹⁹ Among them was a young lawyer and journalist Svetozar Miletić (1826–1901), the future leader of the Hungarian Serbs who would briefly serve as the mayor of Novi Sad.

Serbia officially remained neutral. It sent financial aid to Hungary's Serbs and volunteers crossed the border to join Hungarian Serb revolutionary units, but Vučić Perišić declared that the country had no business across the border. Concerned that his *Načertanije* plan would stand no chance without the Hungarian support, Garašanin urged Prince Aleksandar to resist the nationalists' calls for Serbia to intervene on behalf of Hungarian Serbs. He need not have worried. Aleksandar was a counter-revolutionary and knew that his rivals, the exiled Obrenovići, supported the Hungarian Serbs and Croats. Prince Mihailo was in Novi Sad at the time, while Prince Miloš travelled to Zagreb to meet with Croat 'Illyrians', where he was briefly detained on Serbia's request. However, not everyone within Serbia's establishment was opposed to the Hungarian Serb revolution. A high-ranking member of the Constitutionalist government resigned to join Serb volunteers in southern Hungary. Meanwhile, the Ottoman Empire officially protested because of Serbia's aid to the Hungarian Serbs, but secretly hoped for the unification between Vojvodina and Serbia, which would have meant the restoration of the Ottoman sovereignty over the lower Pannonian plain.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ S. Subotić, *Uspomene*, ed. by A. Stolić, Belgrade, 2001, 43.

¹⁰⁰ *ISN*, V-1, 276–77.

The prospect of revolutionary changes and in particular the Hungarian nationalism encouraged Serb–Croat cooperation. In March 1848, Ljudevit Gaj of the Illyrian Party in Zagreb approached Serbia for financial support, while at the same time Hungarian Serbs sought to establish closer ties with Croatia, within the Habsburg Monarchy. Meanwhile, General Josip Jelačić (born in what is now Novi Sad, Serbia) was elected in Zagreb as the new *Ban* (governor) of Croatia. This medieval title, and the *Sabor* (Assembly), provided symbolic links with the eleventh-century Croatian kingdom. Serb Patriarch Rajačić gave personal blessings at Jelačić's inauguration.

The government of Lajos Kossuth rejected the South Slav revolutionary proclamations. The Hungarian patriotism was in full swing, boosted by figures such as poet and revolutionary Sándor Petőfi (real name Alexander Petrovics), whose mother, like Kossuth's parents, was Slovak, while his father may have been of Serb descent.¹⁰¹ In June, there were armed clashes between local Serb militias and Hungarian troops. The Hungarians sent a loyalist descendant of Patriarch Arsenije III to mediate in the conflict and a 10-day ceasefire was agreed. However, a Russian offensive against the Habsburg state in July led to renewed fighting in southern Hungary. This time Serb refugees fled south, closer to or into Serbia. Those from wealthy families, such as Savka Subotić, found it hard to live without the comfort they had been used to, even though Savka's temporary exile in Zemun was not comparable to the experiences of earlier Orthodox refugees who

¹⁰¹ R. A. Kann, *A History of the Habsburg Empire, 1526–1918*, Berkeley, CA, 1974, 381. Petőfi's romantic-nationalist poetry inspired nineteenth-century Hungarian Serb poet and painter Djura Jakšić, who as a 16-year-old fought in the 1848 revolution, and Jovan Jovanović Zmaj, a hugely popular poet, born into a Serbianized Vlach family in Novi Sad. B. Aleksov, 'Jovan Jovanović Zmaj and the Serbian Identity between Poetry and History', in D. Mishkova (ed.), *We, the People: Politics of National Peculiarity in Southeastern Europe*, Budapest, 2009, 273–305.

fled in the opposite direction. The fear of losing home, however, was real and it must have triggered cross-generational traumas of these descendants of migrants. When a fellow refugee from Novi Sad told Savka's mother in a crying voice that 'we will all become homeless and beggars as not even a stone has been left intact in our town [Novi Sad]', everyone sat in silence for a while.¹⁰²

In the meantime, Garašanin instructed Serbia's envoy in Constantinople to draft a plan for the creation of a Serbian vice-kingdom within the Ottoman Empire. According to the proposal, the Porte would extend the Serbian *hattı şerifs* of 1829–33 to Bosnia, Herzegovina, Albania, 'Old Serbia' (Raška and Kosovo), Macedonia and Bulgaria, creating a large, self-governing Balkan kingdom under the sultan's suzerainty. The Porte rejected the proposal, but Garašanin's agents across the Balkans, and especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina, continued to propagate closer ties of these regions with Serbia. At the same time, Serbia's nationalist youth called for the liberation of the Serbs living under 'foreign rule' and for an internal liberation from Serbia's authoritarian regime; František Zach travelled to Cetinje where he was received warmly by Prince-Bishop Njegoš; there was a talk of a Serb–Bulgarian union. The Habsburg Serbs' hopes of territorial autonomy received a boost when in late 1848 the Habsburg Monarchy turned against Hungary. A joint Croat–Serb army commanded by Jelačić marched on Pest, and Vienna recognized the self-proclaimed 'Duchy of Serbia' and its Patriarch.

For a brief period, two 'Serbias' existed on the Habsburg–Ottoman border: a highly autonomous Principality of Serbia to the south and the revolutionary, self-proclaimed Duchy of Serbia to the north of the border. Hungary's defeat ended, for the time being at least, its quest for independence. At the same time, the Hungarian Serb position was weakened, partly due to

¹⁰² Subotić, *Uspomene*, 45–46.

internal divisions between the military, the political leaders and the church, but mainly because the Habsburgs had no intention of supporting Serb autonomy now that the Hungarians were defeated. In November 1849, Vienna proclaimed the 'Duchy (*Vojvodstvo*) of Serbia and the Banat of Temesvár (Temišvar)' as a new crownland. It had a mixed Serb–Romanian–Hungarian–German population, its autonomy was little more than symbolic and it was abolished anyway in 1860.¹⁰³

The St Andrew's Assembly

Serbia remained out of but was not unaffected by the Crimean War, fought in 1853–56 by the Ottoman Empire, France and Britain against Russia. The 1856 Paris Peace Treaty, which ended the war, provided for a collective guarantee of Serbia's autonomy by Russia, Austria, Britain, France, Prussia and Sardinia (later Germany and Italy, respectively). The Treaty also granted Serbia free Danube navigation rights, which helped the principality's nascent industrialization.¹⁰⁴ Internally, Prince Aleksandar hoped to marginalize the Council and establish a personal regime, but could not achieve this without Garašanin and Vučić Perišić, two oligarchs who enjoyed popular support. The trouble was that the prince deeply disliked both politicians. The feeling was mutual, and Francophile Garašanin and Russophile Vučić Perišić also mistrusted each other. Then in late September 1857, news broke out of a plot to assassinate Prince Aleksandar. It was masterminded by Stefan Stefanović Tenka, president of the Council, and Cvetko Rajović, president of the Supreme Court. It transpired that Prince Miloš funded the conspiracy, but unbeknown

¹⁰³ *ISN*, V-1, 274–77.

¹⁰⁴ Ćirković, *The Serbs*, 211; Jovanović, *Ustavobranitelji*, 280; cf. Č. Antić, *Neutrality as Independence: Great Britain, Serbia and the Crimean War*, Belgrade, 2007.

to the exiled Obrenović prince, the conspirators planned to ask the Powers to install a foreign monarch in Serbia following the removal of Aleksandar Karadjordjević. Death sentences for the conspirators were overturned due to an intervention by the Porte, which sent a high official to investigate the crisis on behalf of the guaranteeing Powers. The Ottoman envoy concluded that the public opinion had turned against the Karadjordjević prince after the elderly conspirators were publicly humiliated and tortured, and that it would be therefore best if they received life sentences instead. The conspirators would be pardoned after the fall of Prince Aleksandar and the Constitutionalist regime in 1858, and Rajović would even briefly serve as prime minister.

Personally not involved in the plot, Garašanin and Vučić Perišić had sought to remove Aleksandar by other means. In Garašanin's mind that could be only achieved through a people's assembly, and in this he was supported by the nationalist youth on whom the 1848 revolutionary ideas had made a strong impact. Unlike the earlier Serbian state scholars, who were above all interested in studies, the '48 generation was all about action. The leading representatives of the revolutionary generation were liberals Jevrem Grujić (1827–95), Vladimir Jovanović (1833–1922) and Jovan Ristić (1831–99), who would play a major part in the Serbian politics during the subsequent period. Educated in newly established Serbian schools, where they studied Vuk Karadžić's ethnographic-historical work, and at French and German universities, where they were introduced to liberal ideas of that era, these young men believed in the historical greatness of the Serbian nation. They wanted to end both the Ottoman sovereignty over Serbia and what they perceived as similarly oppressive regime of Prince Aleksandar and the Constitutionalist oligarchs. Encouraged by Garašanin, the young liberals began a campaign for elections for a people's assembly.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ Jovanović, *Ustavobranitelji*, 316, 358–63.

The elections were called for 15 November (O.S.) 1858, after Garašanin received reports from district chiefs that there was a popular mood for change. Candidates opposed to Prince Aleksandar, not all of whom were necessarily pro-Obrenović, won in the majority of electoral districts. The new assembly, set on removing the prince, convened on 30 November in a Belgrade brewery (because there was no permanent parliament building), on St Andrew the First Called – ironically, the Karadjordjević family *slava* (patron saint). Dramatic arrival of people's deputies from across the country contributed to a revolutionary atmosphere. Accompanied by priests and peasants, tall, warrior-like men riding white horses descended on the city; dressed in colourful folk costumes and carrying guns and sabres, they resembled South Slav folk heroes rather than Serbia's first parliamentarians. Vučić Perišić was dressed like one of Karadjordje's early nineteenth-century insurgents, in contrast to Garašanin's west European appearance.¹⁰⁶

The Porte welcomed the elections outcome and sent its representative to the assembly – who turned out to be a friend of, or may have been bribed by Miša Anastasijević, the assembly chairman. This wealthy businessman lobbied for his son-in-law Djordje Karadjordjević (the son of Karadjordje's first-born son Aleksije) to succeed the throne.¹⁰⁷ Meanwhile, Garašanin might have fancied himself as Serbia's Napoleon III, whom he had met and greatly admired. A tense two-month period followed, during which the prospects of the princely palace being stormed and rumours of a military coup forced both the embattled prince and the deputies who called for his abdication to seek safety in the city's Ottoman garrison. The prince then abdicated in late December, but the crisis was not over yet. Masses gathered to defend the assembly –

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 378–85; A. Radenić, *Svetoandrejska skupština*, Belgrade, 1964.

¹⁰⁷ Djordje's younger son was Paris-based artist Božidar Karadjordjević (1862–1908), known among friends as 'Bijou d'art'. See Pavlowitch, *Božidart*.

from ‘defenders of the Constitution’ – but were kept under control by the police, commanded by previously mentioned Stevča Mihailović. Meanwhile, Garašanin controlled the army, but nobody seemed to control another armed group of around 600 *momci* (lads) who roamed freely the streets of Belgrade, answering only to *gazda* (boss) Filip Stanković. A merchant, debt collector, gambler and womanizer, Stanković behaved like a hajduk chief. It emerged he was in Miloš Obrenović’s pay, but was tolerated by the liberals, who ultimately gained upper hand over the Constitutionalists.¹⁰⁸

The ‘people’s revolution against the bureaucrats and loan sharks’, as Slobodan Jovanović described the events of late 1858, may be seen as the fourth and final phase of the Serbian revolution. It had begun in 1804 with Karadjordje’s uprising, was followed by Miloš-led ‘second uprising’ and agrarian revolution, before the Constitutionalists deposed the prince at the beginning of their ‘bureaucratic revolution’ and continued the transformation of the society of the former Smederevo sanjak. It is therefore ironic that the ‘anti-bureaucratic revolution’ resulted in a reactionary outcome – not unlike the 1848 revolution in neighbouring Hungary, incidentally (and, not unlike Slobodan Milošević’s ‘anti-bureaucratic revolution’ of the late 1980s, discussed in Chapter 7). Despite all the liberalism of the politicians who brought down the Constitutionalists, and despite the presence of republican ideas among those seeking changes, the Assembly asked aged Prince Miloš to return and within days the Porte approved him as Serbia’s new-old prince. As another historian put it, ‘[i]n a small-scale analogy to the French National Assembly of 1789, the St. Andrews’ *skupština* set both Prince Alexander and Ilija Garašanin packing. But instead of establishing a republic, the Liberal leaders and assembly could think of nothing better to do

¹⁰⁸ S. Jovanović, *Druga vlada Miloša i Mibaila (1858–1868)*, Belgrade, 1923, 5.

than recall old Prince Miloš to the throne.¹⁰⁹ The establishment of a republic, however, may not have been realistic at the time and not only because, strictly speaking, Serbia remained part of an empire. After the end of the short-lived French Second Republic in the early 1850s, the only European republic at the time of the St Andrew's Assembly was Switzerland, a federal republic only since 1848.

In any case, Miloš's second reign would be short lived. He died in September 1860, aged around 80. Serbia's prince once again became Mihailo – now 37, married to a Hungarian countess and set on leaving his mark on the history of Serbia and the Balkans.

¹⁰⁹ G. Stokes, *Politics as Development: The Emergence of Political Parties in Nineteenth-century Serbia*, Durham, NC, 1990, 8.