

THE ASPIRATIONS OF BULGARIA

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649106165

The aspirations of Bulgaria by Balkanicus

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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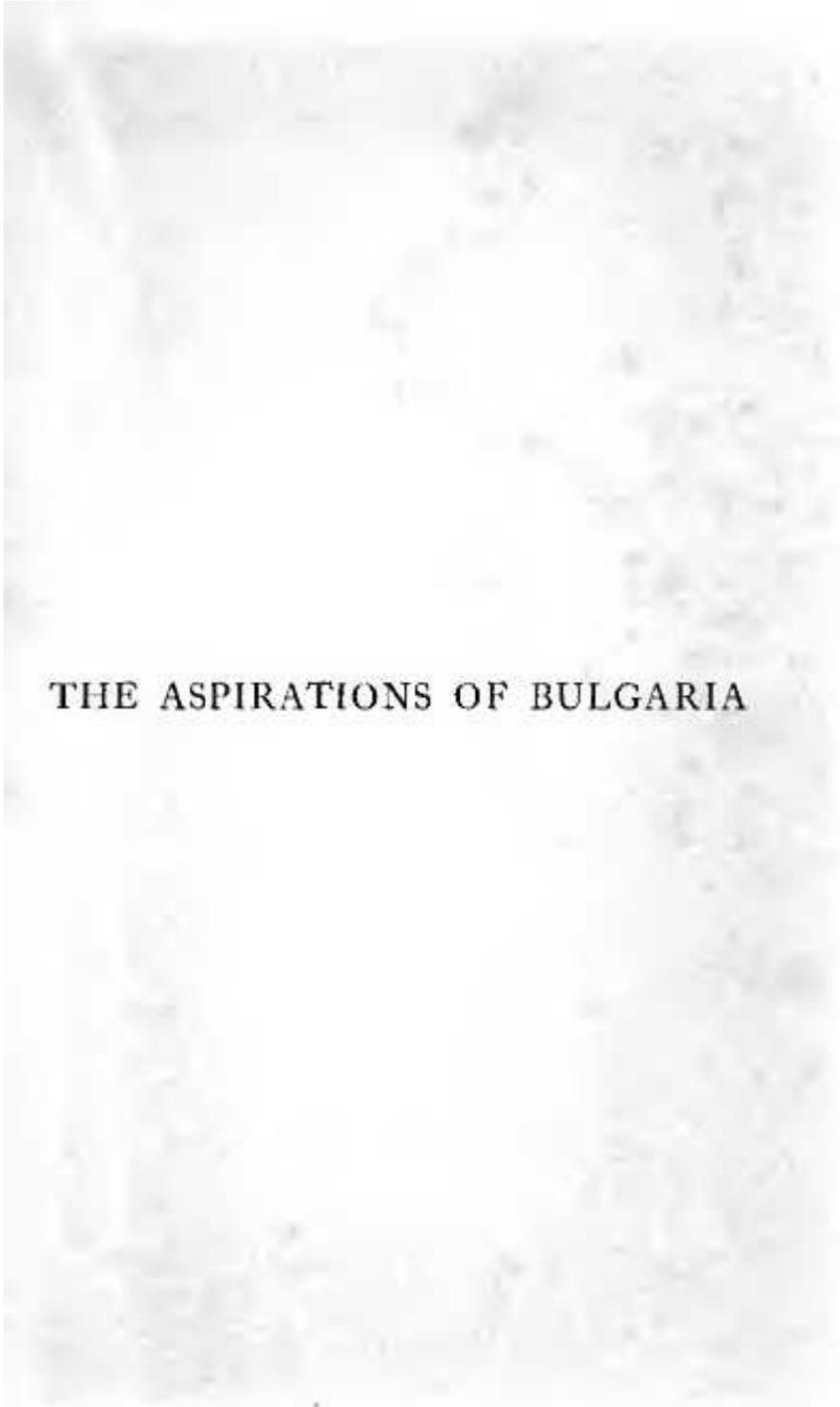
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BALKANICUS

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BY
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TRANSLATED FROM THE SERBIAN OF
BALKANICUS

"The Bulgarian nation has need of three seas."

DR. CHOMAKOV

LONDON: SIMPKIN, MARSHALL,
HAMILTON, KENT & CO., LTD.
4 STATIONERS' HALL COURT, E.C.

PREFACE

IN the early days of April 1913 it became evident to Russian statesmen that the existence of the Balkan Alliance was being seriously endangered by the attitude of Bulgaria. No atmosphere of secrecy surrounded the fact that Austria had strengthened her influence through King Ferdinand, who was now seen to be elaborating a new scheme whereby to establish Bulgarian hegemony in the Balkans with the assistance of Austro-Hungarian policy, as a sequel to the *coup d'état* of 1908, when King Ferdinand coupled his own advancement from the position of a vassal prince to the dignity of Tsar of Bulgaria with a proclamation of Bulgarian independence. Incidentally, it may be remarked that the diplomacy of King Ferdinand has always manifested a striking association with Austrian ambitions in the direction of the Morava and Vardar valleys.

King Ferdinand imposed his personality in almost equal degree on Bulgarian home and foreign policy. His Cabinets either blindly followed his lead, or he would create conditions which forced them to take decisions in accordance with his own secret wishes. In either event the Royal policy prevailed.¹

¹ In his pamphlet "Is the Tsar responsible for the Disaster?" Mr. Sofroniyé Nikov defends King Ferdinand from the accusations which have been made against him. A perusal of this pamphlet is of considerable value in assisting us to appreciate

It is in this fact that the explanation must be sought of that change in Bulgarian policy which ultimately led Bulgaria to make war upon her Allies, and which, although it had previously been under consideration for some time, was actually manifested after the signature in London of the protocol of peace between the Balkan States and Turkey. From it issued that

in a correct degree the political circumstances existing in Bulgaria and the strength of the different political factors. At the same time it helps us to set a correct value on the extent to which each of them was responsible for the policy adopted by Bulgaria.

On page 22 of his publication, Mr. Nikov writes as follows :

" From the fall of Stambulov in 1894 up to the present time, the Tsar (Ferdinand) has been obliged to lead the country along the one pathway which the Constitution opened up to him : namely, to entrust this or that statesman with the formation of a Cabinet, and to allow the Government forthwith to endeavour to obtain the support necessary to it in the country. No other course was possible, and it is not the Tsar who is responsible for the fact that he was unable to adopt the alternative constitutional method of drawing his Ministers from a majority in the Parliament. *It is owing to a deficiency in the political consciousness of the people that during all these thirty-five years the party which held the reins of power has always obtained a majority at the elections.**

" We have not yet advanced to the political conditions existing in England.† It was therefore natural (I) to presume that a Cabinet would never fall unless the Tsar made use of his right to remove it from office and place the ministerial authority in the hands of others whom he considered more fitted to exercise it. And should we even then have an expression of the will of the nation ? In consequence of such a

* The italics are ours.

† In Serbia, the Radical Opposition, which possessed no administrative authority, and was obliged to fight against the very great pressure which was exercised by the existing administration, triumphed at the elections held in the autumn of 1882. This was repeated again in the year 1892, when even a *coup d'état* failed to provide the Government with a majority.

duality in Bulgarian foreign policy which wrecked the Balkan Alliance. On the one hand Russian diplomacy endeavoured to preserve the alliance intact (always, however, on the basis of a satisfactory distribution of the balance of power in the peninsula), but, on the other hand, Austria seconded Bulgarian aspirations with the sole object of securing for herself an hegemony in the Balkans, the realisation of which would necessarily involve a dissolution of the Balkan Alliance.

situation would not the Tsar be acting in opposition to his obligations if he did not make use of his right to place the power in the hands of any of the parties of which we possess so many? . . . Notwithstanding the fact that the Democrats severely criticised the personal régime, they did not hesitate to accept office when it was offered to them in 1908, although at that time they boasted of only seven members in the Narodno Sobranjé, and they did not hesitate to employ all their moral (*sic*) influence to introduce into the Sobranjé 140 of their followers! In 1898 the Nationalists possessed a decisive majority, and if no other factor had existed but the voice of the electorate, that Government might have remained in power till the end of time. But the other parties were attacking the Government, and meetings were being held up and down the country. Now, should the 'hated' Tsar have allowed the Nationalists to organise the elections merely because they held a majority in the Sobranjé? Would they not (notwithstanding all the protests) have again triumphed at the elections?

"In the year 1901, Ratcho Petrov was 'induced' to hold 'free' instead of 'party' elections, and with what result? A coalition was to be formed, but precedent did not permit it. A Cabinet of Zankovists and Karavelovists was then formed, in which the first party endeavoured to cheat the second, and the experiment of forming a truly national administration—in which the people themselves took their destinies into their own hands—was side-tracked until 1908, when Alexander Malinov destroyed the 'block' in order to usurp the power for himself. . . ."

In the course of his defence (based upon an assertion that he was kept in ignorance of the dispatch of the fatal order for the attack on Greece and Serbia on June 16th/29th—at the time when he was Prime Minister) Dr. Danev stated: "The 16th/29th of June was a product of that duality of Government which has existed in our home and foreign policy and which has long enough poisoned the national life of Bulgaria." How important was the influence exercised by that duality of Government upon Bulgarian foreign policy? That it consisted more in its method than in its actual effect is clearly demonstrated by the communications which passed between the Bulgarian Foreign Office and the General Staff, and which are published in the succeeding pages.

It is impossible for Dr. Danev to suggest that he was in ignorance of the course which events were taking, for it was evident to every one that they were clearly leading up to the attack on Serbia and Greece. We shall see, moreover, that he actually played a part himself in their preparation. It is also obvious that Mr. Gheshev, Dr. Danev's predecessor, was likewise fully conscious of the fact that developments were moving towards the destruction of the Balkan Alliance. He was wise enough to stand aside when he found himself unable to divert the current, but even *his* abstention was not complete, for though he personally retired, he handed the influence exercised by his party over to the King for the furtherance of the royal schemes.

Mr. Alexander Malinov, the chief of the Democratic party, has more correctly exposed the causes of the War of the Allies. In the "Zaria" of June 16th/29th, 1914, he accuses, but does not discriminate