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# ЗБОРНИК ЗА ИСТОРИЈУ БОСНЕ И ХЕРЦЕГОВИНЕ

7

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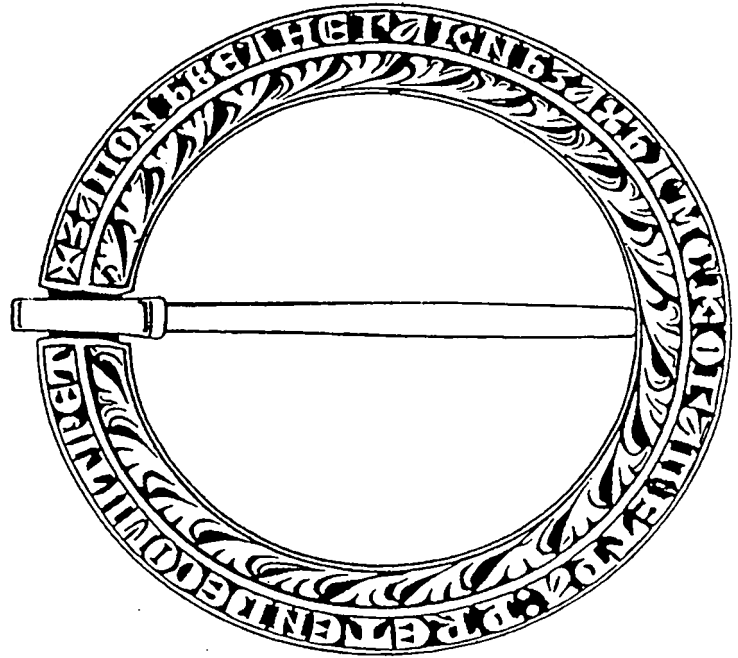
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<i>Ђуро Тошић</i>	Прилог познавању <i>монашења</i> становништва из средњовјековне Босне .....	1
<i>Djuro Tošić</i>	Contribution to the Knowledge of the Ordainment in Mediaeval Bosnia .....	28
<i>Аранђел Смиљанић</i>	Хумски жупан Познан Пурчић .....	29
<i>Arandjel Smiljanić</i>	District Prefect of Hum – Poznan Purčić .....	35
<i>Борис Бабић</i>	Византијски извори о становништву и црквеним приликама у средњовјековној Босни .....	37
<i>Boris Babić</i>	Bizantine Sources on Population and Church in Mediaeval Bosnia .....	48
<i>Срђан Рудић</i>	Петар Павловић – Војвода Хумски и Крајине .....	49
<i>Srdjan Rudić</i>	Petar Pavlović – Duke of Hum and Krajina .....	60
<i>Видан Николић</i>	Трагови средњовековног занимања <i>Крамар</i> у топонимији Босне и Херцеговине .....	61
<i>Видан Николич</i>	Следе средневековой профессии „крамар“ в топонимии Боснии и Герцеговины .....	74
<i>Миленко Јахура</i>	Пребиловци – насеље и породице .....	75
<i>Milenko Jahura</i>	Prebilovci – Settlements and Families .....	109
<i>Недељко В. Радосављевић</i>	Повеља сарајевског (дабробосанског) митрополита Пајсија о праву на сакупљање милостиње за манастир Хиландар .....	111
<i>Dušica M. Stojković</i>	The Charter of the Metropolitan of Sarajevo (Dabrobosanski) Pajsije on the Right to Gather Charity for the Monastery Hilandar .....	119
<i>Недељко В. Радосављевић</i>	Препис царског берата о правима чувара барутане тврђаве Јајце из 1709. године .....	121
<i>Mirjana O. Marinković</i>	Transcription of the Imperial <i>Berat</i> on the Rights of the Keepers of the Powder-Magazine in Jajce from 1709 .....	133
<i>Брајислав Теиновић</i>	Европска историја на позорници устанака у Босни и Херцеговини 1804–1882. ....	135
<i>Bratislav Teinović</i>	European Powers Towards the Uprisings in Bosnia and Herzegovina 1804–1882 .....	150

<i>Jelena Milojković-Djurić</i>	Gleb Ivanovich Uspenskii: Pis'ma iz Serbii, Letters from Serbia 1876–1877 .....	151
<i>Јелена Милојковић-Ђурић</i>	Глеб Иванович Успенски: Писма из Србије .....	161
<i>Jelena Milojković-Djurić</i>	Српско-хрватско путујуће позориште Фотија Ж. Иличића .....	163
<i>Јелена Милојковић-Ђурић</i>	Serbo-Croatian Travelling Theater Company of Fotije Ž. Iličić .....	172
<i>Jelena Milojković-Djurić</i>	Three Imperial Memoranda: Cultural Policies in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the aftermath of the Berlin Peace Treaty .....	173
<i>Јелена Милојковић-Ђурић</i>	Три царска меморандума: Просветна и верска политика у Босни и Херцеговини после Берлинског мировног уговора ....	189
<i>Ненад Урић</i>	Прилог за повест породице Глигорија Јефтановића у турско доба .....	191
<i>Nenad Urić</i>	Contribution to the History of the Family of Gligorije Jeftanović in Turkish Period .....	237
<i>Боривоје Милошевић</i>	Свештенство Босанске Крајине у устанку 1875–1878. године .....	239
<i>Borivoje Milošević</i>	Clergy of Bosanska Krajina in the Uprising of 1875–1878 .....	255
<i>Александар Растовић</i>	Један опис Босне и Херцеговине Вилијема Милера из 1898. године .....	257
<i>Aleksandar Rastović</i>	Description of Bosnia and Herzegovina Published in 1898 by William Miller .....	265
<i>Драга Масиловић</i>	Др Никола Стојановић између српства и југословенства .....	267
<i>Draga Mastilović</i>	Dr Nikola Stojanović between Serbia and Yugoslavia .....	299
<i>Ђорђе Микић</i>	Босански Устав – „Штатут“ из 1910. ....	301
<i>Djordje Mikić</i>	Bosnian Constitution – “Statut” of 1910 (First Politics) .....	319
<i>Горан Латиновић</i>	Територијална организација Српске православне цркве у Босанској Крајини (1900–2010) .....	321
<i>Goran Latinović</i>	Territorial Organization of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Bosanska Krajina (1900–2010) .....	333
<i>Драган Шућур</i>	Бањалучка епархија од 1953. до 1961. године .....	335
<i>Dragan Šućur</i>	The Diocese of Banjaluka (1953–1961) .....	382
<i>Миле Станић</i>	Списак Хрвата и муслимана који су учествовали у одвођењу и убијању Срба у Мостару и околини .....	383
<i>Mile Stanić</i>	The List of the Croats and Muslims who Participated in Taking Away and Killing of the Serbs in Mostar and the Surroundings .....	399
<i>В. А. Артамонов</i>	Србы и Турецко-Русская война 1710–1713 г. (К 300-летию русско-сербского боевого содружества) .....	401
<i>В. А. Артамонов</i>	Срби и турско-руски рат 1710–1713. године (Поводом 300-годишњице руско-српског војног савезништва) ....	417



# GLEB IVANOVICH USPENSKII: PIS'MA IZ SERBII, LETTERS FROM SERBIA 1876–1877

JELENA MILOJKOVIĆ-DJURIĆ

In July and August of 1875 the uprising in Herzegovina quickly spread throughout the neighboring region of Bosnia encompassing in time Montenegro and Bulgaria. There was a growing discontent of the Southern Slav peasantry who worked the lands of Muslim landholders. The issues were primarily economic and social; the insurgents called for the protection of their civil, economic and proprietary rights against the misrule of local Muslim authorities.

The difficult life of the Southern Slavs under Turkish occupation became known to the whole of Europe. An *International Relief Committee* was formed in Paris in August of 1875, headed by the Serbian Metropolitan Mihail Jovanović. The *Committee* aimed to alleviate the hardship of refugees from the embattled regions and was assisted by many charitable organizations. Thus, the *Committee* was generously supported by the *Slavic Benevolent Society* in Moscow with its outstanding members Ivan Aksakov and countess Antonina Bliudova.<sup>1</sup> At the special meeting of the Slavic Benevolent Society on January 17, 1876, Ivan Sergeevich Aksakov urged the members to support the efforts of the *International Relief Committee* and offer help to the beleaguered population of Bosnia–Herzegovina. He praised the valiant efforts of Metropolitan Mihail in helping the refugees.

As the distress and suffering of the population in Bosnia–Herzegovina increased, Serbia and Montenegro went to war against Turkey on 18 June 1876 in support of the uprising. The announcement of the war reverberated soon enough in Russia as well. On June 28, 1876, in presence of a huge crowd, a solemn *Te Deum* at the Church of the Serbian Hospice in Moscow was held for the soldiers of the Serbian and Montenegrin armies. Moreover, in St. Petersburg, the newspapers started publishing letters from the public accompanied by donations; obviously the solidarity movement with the insurgents was growing and expanding.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Jugosloveni i Rusija, Dokumenti iz arhiva M. F. Rajeuskog 40–80. godine XIX veka*, Belgrade, Istorijski institut i Akademiia Nauk SSSR, 1989, p. 150.

<sup>2</sup> F. M. Dostoevsky, *A Writer's Diary*, Evanston, Northwestern University, 1993, p. 476.

The *Slavic Benevolent Society* exerted a considerable influence upon the Russian society at large during the Eastern Crisis arranging numerous charitable efforts on behalf of the insurgent Southern Slavs. The prominence of the *Slavic Benevolent Society* in Russia rose to an all time high. These concerted actions resulted in the sending to Serbia of about three thousand volunteers headed by general Mikhail Grigor'evich Cherniaev, a well known hero of the Asian conquest. Cherniaev was also renowned as a man of letters and former editor of *Russkii mir*. As a proponent of Slavic solidarity, Cherniaev went to Serbia without the official permission of the Russian government. Moreover, the Serbian authorities had not extended an official invitation for his participation.<sup>3</sup>

The Western press was puzzled by the unauthorized Russian military help. Thus, *Manchester Guardian*, on August 30. 1876, reported that 500 Russian officers arrived in Serbia to join the fight against the Turks. The Serbian government did not request their help, and therefore the following question was entertained: Who was sending these professional soldiers? Moreover, the report stated that no *Foreign Enlistment Act* has been passed in Russia.

In the summer of 1876, the pro-Slav movement in Russia had reached its peak and made a way into all layers of the society. The journal *Golos* noted that even the children were playing a game called "The Eastern Question". All of them wished "to be general Cherniaev fighting the Turks".<sup>4</sup>

A number of writers and journalists devoted much attention to the growing Eastern Crisis. In their writings they often testified to a grass-root feeling of solidarity for the suffering South Slavs. Thus, the noted journalist and frequent contributor to *Otchestvennyie zapiski*, N. K. Mikhailovskii, wrote:

*The Cossack from Don, the muzhik from Samara, the orderly at the Andreevski green market who enlisted as a volunteer...the old woman...the young girl who took the shirt off her back for the Slavs – all these unknown people did not operate with the concept of the 'greatness' of their nation or with the 'interests of their nation'.*<sup>5</sup>

Even some Russian political emigrants felt compassion with the insurgents in Bosnia–Herzegovina. In the summer of 1875, the revolutionary Sergei Mikhailovich Kravchinskii was in France as a fugitive from the tsarist regime. He learned that the Orthodox populace had risen against the Turkish overlords in Bosnia–Herzegovina. He decided quickly to take the side of the insurgents and together with Mikhail P. Sazhin, another Russian refugee, left Paris. Kravchinskii thought that the participation of Russian revolutionaries in a Slavic struggle for independence would help not only the Balkan people, but

3 V. A. Diakov, *Slavianskii vopros*, Moscow, Nauka, 1993, p. 129.

4 *Golos*, July 11/23 1876, No.109. Quoted after David Mackenzie, *The Serbs and Russian Pan-Slavism*, New York, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1967, p. 115.

5 N. K. Mikhailovskii, *Zapiski Profana*, 1897; cited after A. Pisarev, *Traditsii družhbi narodov kak iavlenie kul'tury: Osvoboditel'naia bor'ba balkanskikh narodov protiv osmanskogo iga i rossiiskaia intelligentsiia*, Sovetskaia Kul'tura, 70 let Razvitiia, Moscow, Akademiia Nauk, 1987, p. 259.

the Russians themselves. They would get the experience of an armed uprising for their future struggle with the monarchic regime.

Upon his arrival in Herzegovina, Kravchinskii became acquainted with the Italian followers of Garibaldi who came as volunteers to help the insurgents. He became particularly close to the well-known Italian revolutionary Enrico Malatesta. Kravchinskii realized that the uprising had no revolutionary goals since it was mostly caused by the near starvation of the population due to the mismanagement of the Turkish overlords and the resulting dire economic situation in the country:

*The uprising is purely popular, peasant in origin. There are no obvious social goals in it, but there is no deceit either ... The uprising is not only growing, but becoming more organized. Sympathy is all-encompassing...*<sup>6</sup>

As the suffering of the population in Bosnia–Herzegovina increased, Serbia and Montenegro went to war against Turkey by the end of June 1876. Serbia was counting on support and help from enlightened European countries and in particular from Russia. Moreover, on June 28, 1876, in presence of a huge crowd, a solemn *Te Deum* at the Church of the Serbian Hospice in Moscow was held for the soldiers of the Serbian and Montenegrin armies. In St. Petersburg, the newspapers started publishing letters from the public accompanied by donations; obviously the solidarity movement was growing and expanding.<sup>7</sup>

In reality, the appearance of Serbia and Montenegro on the battlefield, aided by the Russian volunteers and their generals, seemed to endanger the established political order in Europe. The fear of the spreading of the ideology of Pan Slavism was on the minds of many European politicians, so too was the possibility of Slavic expansion at the expense of others. Such a change was against the interests of some countries in Europe, while the presence of Turkey was an accepted fact. The Russian imperialistic policies in Asia brought an added danger to the existing balance of powers.

The young Russian writer Gleb Ivanovich Uspenskii travelled to Serbia as a reporter and left a poignant eye-witness account of the Serbian-Turkish war of 1876 and the subsequent uprising in Bosnia–Herzegovina.<sup>8</sup> Uspenskii was clearly moved by the events in the Balkans and felt compelled to travel himself to the embattled territory. His testimonies about the unfolding of historic events were factual and descriptive, with many characteristic and well-chosen details. These writings, in the form of letters, were in essence realistic sketches depicting Russian volunteers at the moment of their arrival in Serbia. His letters also described his views of the daily life and the cultural situation in Serbia and its population. The direct recounting of daily events preserved the immediacy of his observations.

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6 N. Pirumova, B. Itenberg, V. Antonov, Eds., *Russia and the West: 19th Century*, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1990, p. 254.

7 Dostoevsky, *A Writer's Diary*, p. 476.

8 Uspenskii was born in Tula in 1843 where his father was a government official. He attended the University in St. Petersburg and the Moscow University. His first works were published in 1862 in Lev Tolstoy's journal *Iasnaiia Poljana*. He achieved a considerable literary prominence during his lifetime. He died in St. Petersburg in 1902.

Uspenskii described the majority of Russian volunteers as well intentioned and obviously impoverished individuals who came to help a small Slavic nation. In tribute, he noted the presence of worthy individuals and sincere believers of the Slav cause. Yet, Uspenskii posited that the majority of volunteers did not come to help motivated by the postulates of the Panslav ideology. Many Russian volunteers did not know much about the Serbs or their history. The notions of Panslavism or advancement of interests of their own nation were equally distant in their minds.

Uspenskii described the demeanor of Russian volunteers who “came to fight the Turk”, and to help a small, brotherly Slavic nation. Uspenskii presented well-chosen human stories of a number of well meaning yet obviously impoverished Russians who intended to fight in the Serbian uprising against the Turkish forces. With a keen eye of an observant reporter, he described in his book, *Letters from Serbia*, the faces and voices lost in the crowd of this improvised “party of volunteers”.<sup>9</sup>

*The Russian volunteer cuts a strange figure and a homely sight with his attire (chudak dobrovolets) ... his appearance, his face and figure, sets him apart in the foreign country – everybody else dresses better ... but all this does not matter, all this fades away in view of his honest desire to help the victims. After all, there is dire poverty in our midst in Russia!*<sup>10</sup>

Uspenskii compared the general appearance and attitudes of the majority of volunteers consisting of many well meaning yet obviously impoverished and footloose Russians. These volunteers had a vague notion about the reasons for their mission. They most often stated that they “came to fight the Turk”, and help a small brotherly Slavic nation.<sup>11</sup>

Uspenskii discerned several types among the volunteers. In tribute, he acknowledged the presence of sincere believers and fighters for a just cause. Yet, in addition to these worthy individuals, there were also perennial amateur soldiers, “specialists of brawls”. Uspenskii was often surprised about the lack of any meaningful knowledge about the Serbian country, or about the Panslav aspirations among many Russian volunteers. Almost nobody knew the historic circumstances or the cause of the war. Most often, the volunteers explained that they came simply because they disagreed with the oppression of a small Christian people. They were ready to sacrifice their lives, as an absolution for their own wrongdoing, in addition to helping the subjugated Slavs.<sup>12</sup>

Uspenskii compared the general appearance of the Russian fighters to a motley crowd of people predominantly without clear objectives and direction. Some among them were drunkards or vagrants from St. Petersburg or Moscow. It was not unusual for some of them to spend quickly all the allotted allowance of some 15 rubles for their journey

9 G. I. Uspenskii, *Pis'ma iz Serbii, Novye vremena, novye zaboty*, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii, Vol. 4, Moscow, Akademiia Nauk SSSR, 1949, p. 367. Compare, Jelena Milojković-Djurić, *Panslavism and National Identity in Russia and in the Balkans*, East European Monographs, 1994, pp. 105–111.

10 Uspenskii, *Pis'ma iz Serbii*, p. 367.

11 Uspenskii, *Pis'ma iz Serbii*, p. 367.

12 Uspenskii, *Pis'ma iz Serbii*, p. 368.

from Pest to Belgrade; very often the monies were spent only on alcoholic drinks. The money was gone too quickly – often in less than one day and a half. Yet, Uspenskii noted that the volunteers were ready to fight and often in their conversations they simply stated that, “*it was necessary to strike the villains – the Turks*”. However, without some kind of a material incentive they would not have come to Serbia. They lived under hard conditions at home and reasoned: “*I will go to Serbia, if I stay alive, fine, and if I die – all the same devil*”.<sup>13</sup>

Uspenskii travelled with the volunteers on a steamship from Buda along the river Danube to Belgrade. He listened often to the singing of Russian folk songs, and most of all to the melody and the words of the famous *Vniz po matushke po Volge*. This song had a special appeal to him. He noted that the words and the melody of the song were not known to many people in the crowd, and he commented with sadness that such songs were mostly interpreted by performers for money.<sup>14</sup>

Looking at the faces in the crowd, Uspenskii's attention was drawn to an older volunteer. Uspenskii was soon informed that this usually solitary man was a former *raskol'nik*. This unnamed man seemed to be in his fifties, reclusive, of a gloomy and somber mood. When asked about his decision to join the fighting in Serbia, he stressed the necessity to help the embattled Christians. He pointed to the disproportion in size between the oppressor, the mighty Ottoman Empire, and the subjugated small Slavic nation. In his explanation he used a metaphor to compare Serbia to a little river that was dammed, unable to break through and flow freely. He compared the powerful Russia, on the other hand, to a mighty river that could not be dammed or stopped forcefully.

Uspenskii also noted, against the backdrop of alienation and general disillusionment among the Russians, a very different attitude among the Serbs. The Russian volunteers were concerned about the Serbs and their centuries-long slavery under the Turkish yoke. They perceived Serbs as victims outnumbered by a mighty aggressor. The volunteers were ready to help a small nation providing support as representatives of the powerful and brotherly Russian country.

Moreover, Uspenskii noted that although Russians felt that the Serbs were in a difficult position, the reality of life in Serbia projected a different picture and offered a sense of well-being. The Serbs seemed to be well off, content with an air of quiet self assurance. There was plenitude and beauty everywhere. The lovely countryside was dotted with dark green woods and orchards. The lush gardens and white houses were positioned at a distance from each other. Uspenskii concluded that the beauty of Serbia and its friendly population was already well known. Therefore, he would not indulge to write about it in great length. Yet, even his brief remarks and comparisons left a vivid description of the countryside and Serbian men who in their gentle ways differed from the robust looks and demeanor of Russian fighters:

*“The Serbian countryside and the views of its cities and villages were already described many times, and I will not write about my delight with people,*

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13 Uspenskii, *Pis'ma iz Serbii*, p. 321.

14 Uspenskii, *Pis'ma iz Serbii*, p. 402.

*nature and housing.... Contentment is noticeable everywhere. Nowhere in Russia or anywhere abroad did I see such prosperity, spaciousness and comfort. Everywhere the sprawling wayward positioned white stone homes, built spaciouly, cheerfully looking in the greenery of its gardens; everywhere large storage sheds.... Seems that the Serbs are very rich, too fleshy and well fed, and it would not hurt them to lose weight.... therefore, Serbs appear tender, almost soft and effeminate, nervous and capricious.”*<sup>15</sup>

Uspenskii noticed that surprisingly the Serbs retained a stable family life of quiet dignity in spite of hardships imposed by the Turkish occupation. The prolonged oppression of Serbs produced a different lifestyle than the Russians expected would unfold under such difficult conditions. There was a strong feeling of self worth and belonging to a secure place within one's own family and home. For the Serbs the allegiance to his *kuća* (homestead) was of central importance, an all encompassing world in itself.

The lives of the Serbian population seemed to center about the business of living by taking care of their families, and responsibilities in their communities. Therefore, Uspenskii concluded that it was not hard to imagine what impression the newly discovered Russian brethren made in the Serbian public life. The Serbs, with their great concern about the family and domestic life, were very different from the Russians who “could not care less”, and for whom everything was the same – *vse odin chort*.<sup>16</sup>

The differences in the attitudes and lifestyles between the Serbian population and the many *ad hoc* recruited Russian troops often caused unfavorable impressions and unpleasant confrontations. Uspenskii noted several unfortunate incidents, caused by the Russian soldiers in Belgrade. He recalled that in October of 1876 the Serbian minister of war arranged for a meeting with the Russian volunteers. He asked them not to stay beyond their time in Belgrade but to proceed to their army posts. This demand resulted from the annoyance of the inhabitants with the noisy disturbances of the Russian volunteers under the influence of large consumptions of alcoholic drinks in the local restaurants. They were carrying on and disrupting the established life style of the usually quiet neighborhoods.

On the other hand, Uspenskii, as a well informed eye-witness, could not help but to sympathize with the impoverished Russian volunteers. He compared their fate to the characters in the Russian folk story used in the creation of the ballet *Konek-Gorbunok (The Humpback Horse)*.<sup>17</sup> In this ballet, the magic stick beats the ingenuous innocent personages

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15 Uspenskii, *Pis'ma iz Serbii*, p. 383.

16 Uspenskii, *Pis'ma iz Serbii*, p. 372.

17 The tale *Konek-Gorbunok* was in reality written by Peter Ershov in 1834, and it became soon immensely popular. Therefore, many thought to be a folk tale from olden times. Pushkin praised Ershov for his excellent command of vernacular lore, and decided to edit the tale himself and supply his own introductory four verses for it. In 1864 Cesare Pugni composed the music for the ballet adaptation of this tale. The Ballet *Konek-Gorbunok* was introduced by the *Imperial Ballet* in St. Petersburg. Some hundred years later, Rodion Shchedrin composed a new music score for the still popular Ershov's tale. This new version was performed by the Ballet ensemble of the famed Kirov Theatre in 1960.

GLEB IVANOVICH  
USPENSII:  
PIS'MA IZ SERBII,  
LETTERS FROM SERBIA  
1876–1877



PORTRAIT OF GLEB I. USPENSII BY NIKOLAI YAROSHENKO, 1884.

throughout the five acts, in accordance with the plot of the tale. Uspenskii thought that a similar fate caused many volunteers to fight in Serbia since they were mistreated at home: "... *the magic stick ... was substitute by the rifle butt and threats.*"<sup>18</sup>

Uspenskii was indirectly pleading for a betterment of the social and economic realities in Russia, aiming to stir a sympathetic chord for the blatant plight of a neglected and poorly educated segment of its population. Uspenskii juxtaposed his views on the liberation of the Serbs with the general state of affairs in Russia that produced a class of paupers. Many Russians were left out from the main stream of life, without an adequate education and purpose in life. On the other hand, Serbia projected, in his view, a very different picture. In spite of the ongoing war, the everyday life of its population seemed to be filled with quiet contentment and personal well being.

On October 17, 1876, the news of the fall of Djunis into the Turkish hands caused great concern among the Serbian authorities and population at large. Uspenskii noted that the Serbs were surprised and stunned by this unfavorable impact of events as if "they were hit by a thunder". The city's constables were dispatched to the streets of Belgrade to notify the citizens about the urgent mobilization of the troops.

The Russian government ultimately helped to save Serbia from further destruction. Within hours of receiving dispatches about the overwhelming Turkish assault of the Sveti Nestor Hill, the key to Djunis, the Russian leaders hastily conferred. On October 18, 1876, Alexander II issued an ultimatum to the Porte to halt the military operations. The Turks promptly accepted a two month armistice.<sup>19</sup>

Shortly after, Uspenskii concluded his reporting of daily events in Serbia and returned to Russia.

Most of the Russian volunteers returned to their homeland on January 9, 1877. About one hundred volunteers stayed in the Russian-Bulgarian brigade under the command of colonel Miloradovich. On February 16, 1877, when the peace treaty between Serbia and Turkey was signed, the Russian brigade went to Ploesti and was handed over to the Great Prince Nikolai Nikolaevich, brother of the Emperor.<sup>20</sup>

Intermittently, the political circles headed by Minister Gorchakov, with the support of Alexander II, tried repeatedly to promote negotiations and avoid any military intervention in the Balkans. In foreign affairs, the tsar aspired to safeguard previous treaties such as the *Three Emperor's Alliance* aiming to preserve the balance of Great Powers in Europe. Alexander II decided to direct his principal attention towards long overdue domestic reforms in accordance with the established state policy of *recueillement*. In particular, from the fall of 1876 to the spring of 1877, the Russian officials attempted to negotiate the conclusion of

<sup>18</sup> Uspenskii, *Pis'ma iz Serbii*, p. 396.

<sup>19</sup> David MacKenzie, *The Lion of Tashkent*, Athens, The University of Georgia Press, 1974, pp. 165–166.

<sup>20</sup> Ljudmila I. Rovniakova, *Bor'ba Iuznikh slavian za svobodu i ruskaia periodicheskaia pechat', 50-70 gody XIX veka*. Leningrad, Akademia nauk SSSR 1986, p. 227 and p. 95.



peace treaties for Serbia and Montenegro and the enactment of reforms in Bosnia–Herzegovina, and Bulgaria. Despite the formal end of the protectorate of the Treaty of Paris, Russian statesmen felt the obligation to stand by their former associations. At the beginning of the fourth Russo-Turkish War of the century, the Tsar issued a proclamation:

*“Our faithful and beloved subjects know the lively interest which we have always devoted to the destinies of the oppressed Christian population of Turkey. Our desire to ameliorate and guarantee their condition has been shared by the whole of the Russian nation, which shows itself ready to-day to make fresh sacrifices to relieve the condition of the Christians in the Balkan Peninsula.... During two years we have made incessant efforts to induce the Porte to adopt such reforms that would protect the Christians of Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Bulgaria from the arbitrary rule of the local authorities. The execution of these reforms followed, as a direct obligation, from the anterior engagements solemnly contracted by the Porte in the sight of all Europe. Our efforts, although supported by the joint diplomatic representations of the other Governments, have not attained the desired end.”*<sup>21</sup>

Since the Porte remained immovable in its refusal of every serious guarantee for the security of its Christian subjects in the Balkans, on April 24, 1877, the Russian government declared war on Turkey.

The declaration produced an overwhelming impression on the Russian society at large. Fedor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky promptly acknowledged the beginning of the Russian war against Turkey and declared it as *a great feat*. Dostoevsky followed all along the events of the Serbian and Bulgarian uprising and the subsequent Russo-Turkish war in a number of articles published during 1876 and 1877 in his own *A Writer's Diary*. Dostoevsky described the repercussion of these events on the Russian society as a whole. He also analyzed the responses of the Western Powers in regard to the uprisings in the Balkans.

Just like Uspenskii, Dostoevsky felt that all of Russia experienced a strong commitment to the cause of the Southern Slavs. From the outset of the uprisings in the Balkans, the news of this event reverberated in the consciousness of the Russian society at large. People in all walks of life were ready to offer their assistance in many ways. At the outset of the Russo-Turkish war, Dostoevsky wrote:<sup>22</sup>

*The fact is, in the spring our great war was launched for a great feat which, sooner or later, despite all the temporary setbacks that delay settlement of the issue, will nonetheless be brought to its conclusion, even though its complete and desired conclusion may not be reached in the present war. This feat is so great and the aim of the war so improbable from Europe's point of view that Europe is bound to be indignant over our cunning ... Believe me, Europe is not frightened so much by the supposed growth of Russia's power as by the very fact of Russia's capacity to undertake such tasks and have such aims. Note that particularly. Undertaking something not for one's own direct*

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<sup>21</sup> Edward Hertslet, *Map of Europe by Treaty*, IV, London, Butterworth's 1875–91, pp. 2298–2299. Quoted after Barbara Jelavich, *Russia's Balkan Entanglements 1806–1891*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 172.

<sup>22</sup> F. M. Dostoevsky, *A Writer's Diary*, Evanston, Northwestern University, 1993, pp. 607–609.

*benefit seems so bizarre to Europe, so at odds with international practice, that Europe takes Russia's action ... as something immoral, dangerous to her, and supposedly a threat to her great civilization.*<sup>23</sup>

In his *A Writer's Diary*, Dostoevsky continued to emphasize the importance of Russia's humanitarian help devoid of any imperialistic notions. The Russian volunteers who came to fight the Turks did not come in support of expansionist policies. Similar to the assertions expressed by Uspenskii in his *Pis'ma iz Srbije*, Dostoevsky concurred by stating that the volunteers did not fight for the crown heads or for a Panslav political unification.

Nevertheless, Dostoevsky thought that Russian foreign policy was at times misplaced and unjustified. Dostoevsky feared that in Europe no one would believe in Russian genuine wish to help. Each time the Eastern Question arose, Europe's ignorance and misunderstanding of Russia reoccurred and nothing was solved. It seemed that Europe was inclined to believe in Russia's avidity to bring the Slavs under her rule as soon as possible. Apparently the Europeans were questioning themselves about the Russians and their resolve to save the Southern Slavs. Dostoevsky discussed the sometimes conflicting reports published abroad in regard to the Russian involvement in the Balkan affairs. Even in parts of the Slavic intelligentsia, and their highest leaders, there existed at times a certain mistrust of Russian motives.<sup>24</sup>

Dostoevsky believed that the most complete turnaround in Russia's political life would come only when Europe would acknowledge that Russia had no desire to bring anything under her realm.

*Russia's aim should be to live by superior and selfless ideas in order to serve humanity and not to serve her own interests. Then a new era would begin, both for Russia and for Europe. The conviction of Russia's disinterest, should it come, will help change the whole situation in Europe.*<sup>25</sup>

Dostoevsky trusted that the comprehension of a new world order would ultimately result in a universal alliance of all nations around the world. It is not by suppressing the national personalities of other nations that Russia should strive to achieve prosperity. On the contrary, the well-being should be achieved only in the freest and most independent development of all other nations, and in fraternal unity with them, enhancing the other, learning from them and teaching them. Only such a communion of nations of the world could provide the foundation for a lasting peace in a global context. Dostoevsky wanted to explain to the intelligentsia at large, as well as to the political decision makers, that Russia would be served best by acting selflessly in pursuit of the well-being of all of the humankind.

Dostoevsky believed strongly in the importance of diligent pursuit of peaceful subsistence around the world. At the beginning of a new century, in midst of unresolved global confrontations, Dostoevsky's astute pronouncement had retained its lasting value.

<sup>23</sup> Dostoevsky, *A Writer's Diary*, pp. 1194–1195.

<sup>24</sup> Dostoevsky, *A Writer's Diary*, p. 615 and p. 663.

<sup>25</sup> Dostoevsky, *A Writers' Diary*, p. 1204.

Убрзо по избијању устанка у Херцеговини, Босни и Бугарској, млади и већ запажени писац Глеб Иванович Успенски је кренуо у зараћене крајеве да својим сведочењем у дописима обавештава руску јавност.

Већ је постојала велика забринутост за становништво и бројне избеглице из ових крајева како у Русији тако и широм Европе. Основан је био Међународни комитет за хуманитарну помоћ у Паризу предвођен српским митрополитом Михаилом Јовановићем уз знатну помоћ Словенског добротворног друштва у Москви.

Успенски је касније сабрао своје дописе у књигу под насловом *Писма из Србије* која пружају увид и у свакидашњи живот становништва као и ангажованост међународне културне јавности за ова историјска збивања.