The Bosnian Crisis on the Pages of the Czech Press[1]

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Introduction

This article has been written on the basis of a study of articles in Czech newspapers, which described and assessed the development in the Ottoman Empire over the period from October 1908 until April 1909. In my study, I have mainly used three Czech newspapers, which are kept in the state Education and Research Library in Plzeň. These are the national newspaper, *Národní listy*, and regional newspapers *Nová doba* and *Plzeňské listy*. Over the period studied, the greatest space is given over to happenings in the Ottoman Empire and issues relating to them by *Národní listy*, which is the paper I used the most because it provided the most information. Although the regional newspapers *Nová doba* and *Plzeňské listy* do not dedicate so much space to the issue, they do provide information on the most important events, which occurred.

The Situation in the Ottoman Empire before October 1908

Sultan Abdul Hamid II

It would be a good idea to begin by briefly describing what happened in the Ottoman Empire before the period from October 1908 to April 1909. During the period studied, Sultan Abdul Hamid II was its ruler, having been born in 1842 and gaining power on 31 August 1876 following his brother, Murad V, who was deposed because of early symptoms of mental illness. His education involved the study of languages such as Arabic, Persian and French, as well as religious teachings, Ottoman history, classical Ottoman and Western music. During his reign, Midhat Pasha was named Grand Vizier, having prepared a constitution,

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which labelled the Sultan a caliph, guardian of the Islamic faith and sovereign of all Muslim subjects in 1876. All subjects, regardless of faith or belief were named Ottomans (*Osmanlı*). Amongst other things, the constitution provided equality before the law for subjects regardless of religion, Christians were able to work for state authorities, security of property was assured, sanctity of life was ensured, vassals were banned, and a free press was implemented, as were reforms of a social, cultural and administrative nature. Other changes involved the formation of a senate whose members were to be named by the Sultan, and a Chamber of Deputies whose members would be elected for a 4-year period.[2]

A plot was hatched, however, and Midhat Pasha was deposed, arrested and exiled in 1877. Subsequently, the Sultan began to sympathise with the Old Turks, under whose influence the parliament was dissolved in 1878. The Sultan's actions in subsequent years were affected by his fears for his life, and it was for this reason that he moved his residence to Yildiz and cancelled a number of planned trips to the provinces. His fears for his life proved justified when in 1908 28 people were killed in front of Yildiz mosque,[3] with the Sultan escaping injury only by chance. His acts were also affected by his fear of a coup, which might bring the deposed Murad back to power.[4]

Around 10 000 public schools were formed under the reign of Abdul Hamid II,[5] which in most cases, however, were divided into schools for Muslims and non-Muslims. Primary schools in the main provinces were mainly financed from local sources, but schools in periphery regions and secondary schools had state support, and there was a slight increase in agricultural taxes in 1884 to ensure these institutions could be funded. In addition to the dissolving of parliament, censorship was implemented, and a ban on public telephone connections was implemented in 1886, which remained in place until 1908 despite protests from abroad. Under the reign of Abdul Hamid, the

[2] *Převrat na trůně v říši osmanské*, *Národní listy*, 49, no. 117, April 28, 1909, p. 1.
[3] K. KREISER, *Dějiny Turecka*, Praha 2010, p. 165.
[4] Ibidem.
[5] Ibidem, p. 164.

Empire faced great economic problems. The Sultan also wanted all affairs of the Empire under his control, and as such all information was given to him, and he would subsequently make decisions with his personal secretary. He ensured that any political opposition was exiled, removed of influence or bought off.[6]

Young Turk Revolution

The opposition first established a secret society in 1889 under the name the Committee of Ottoman Union, which was mainly represented by students. The Young Turks name was used to designate various groups and schools of thought, which fought against Hamid's regime. They established contact with Ahmed Riza, who was living in Paris and was the most influential exiled politician until the time Abdul Hamid II was removed from power. The grouping changed its name in 1894 to the Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress. As well as Paris, political exiles were also centred in Geneva, Brussels, London and Cairo. This fact, however, also demonstrated the disunity of the Young Turk movement. Nevertheless, at the second Young Turk Congress, an agreement was forged on their requirements, which involved the removal of the Sultan, a renewal of the constitution and the opening of both houses of parliament.[7]

Events accelerated in 1908 when there was a meeting between Tsar Nicholas and the English King Edward VII in Reval, which boosted fears of possible plans that the European powers would divide up the Ottoman Empire. Shortly after this meeting, there was an uprising in Macedonia and the Turkish military units gradually aligned themselves on the side of the Young Turks, to which the Albanian soldiers also aligned, having been the regime's main supporters. In July 1908, the Young Turk military units and their allies forced Sultan Abdul Hamid II to restore the constitution of 1876 and parliament. If he hadn't acceded to their requests, there would have been a march on Istanbul.[8]

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[6] Ibidem, pp. 164–167.

[7] Ibidem, pp. 167–170.

[8] Z. VESELÁ, *Novověké dějiny Turecka 1. díl – Dějiny osmanské říše od reforem Nizami*

After the Young Turk Revolution, a new government was set up in which Ahmed Riza became president of the parliament. The Young Turks had 165 seats in parliament, and the opposition was represented by the Liberal Union with 45 seats and an independent party with 55 seats.[9] The Young Turks began to build up a united state governed in a Western style from the ruins of absolutism. The Young Turk leaders had spent a long time living abroad, which on the one hand allowed them to become familiar with the features of Western powers, but on the other hand meant they had lost a sense of the feelings and opinions of their voters who lived in Turkey. During the early stages of the reforms, there was no significant opposition to them, but over time the Old Turks and conservatives focused their fire on the failures of the new regime, and made plans to take a radical step. Austria-Hungary took advantage of the complicated situation in Constantinople to annex Bosnia and Herzegovina and Bulgaria, which declared its independence.[10]

Events from October 1908 until April 1909

Turkey and Bulgaria

Points in the Treaty of Berlin relating to Bulgaria and events before October 1908

It is important to mention one of the results of the Congress of Berlin, which took place in June and July of 1878, specifically the Treaty of Berlin. Amongst other things, the treaty stated that north Bulgaria would become an independent principality under the sovereignty of the Sultan, and that the southern part of Bulgaria would have a Christian ruler with a statute subject to inspection by an international commission.[11]

Cedidu do rozkladu imperia 1918, Praha 1966, p. 61.

[9] *Před novým převratem v Turecku*, *Národní listy*, 49, no. 103, April 14, 1909, p. 1.

[10] *Národní listy*, 49, no. 103, 104 late issue, April 14–15, 1909.

[11] VESELÁ, p. 53.

There had been much unrest in Bulgaria, of which we should mention the events of 1885, when there was an uprising, which ousted the Governor-General and led to the declaration of the unification of both parts of Bulgaria. The Porte in Turkey acted reasonably and recognised Prince Alexander as the ruler of Northern Bulgaria and Governor-General of Southern Bulgaria. By so doing, Bulgaria was united through its single ruler, and the Ottoman Empire received two Sanjaks in the Rhodopes for its conciliatory step.[12]

The Eastern Railway, the Declaration of Bulgarian Independence and the Press Response to these Events

Strains began to show in the friendly relations between the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria in early October 1908 when it was discovered that attempts were being made in regions occupied by Muslims to send a deputation to Constantinople, on the basis of which the status between the Ottoman Empire and its provinces was to be determined. However, a much greater reason for the deterioration of relations was the issue of the Eastern (Rumelian Southern Bulgaria) Railway, with Bulgaria requesting the purchase of the section of the railway running through its territory, and the Ottoman Empire refusing to do so, and looking to international law regarding its inseparability. Bulgaria's cabinet decided to occupy the Eastern Railway, determining that it didn't need the permission of the Porte to purchase it. Reports appeared in newspapers in the European powers that Austria-Hungary might take advantage of these conflicts by annexing Bosnia and Herzegovina, and that Austro-Hungarian army units might move in to the Sanjak of Novi Pazar.[13]

Ottoman Empire newspapers didn't express much trust in reports on the threat of annexation, also because of reports from Austrian and British representatives who expressed sympathy with the attempts of the Young Turks and their renewed constitution. Newspapers noted that the change of regime in the Ottoman Empire was not supported by Bulgaria, with the occupation of

[12] Ibidem.

[13] *Národní listy*, 48, no. 270–273, October 1–4, 1908.

the Eastern Railway evidence for this. It was expected that the situation would be dealt with at the meeting of the cabinet in favour of the Ottoman Empire, and as such reports that Bulgaria's Prince Ferdinand was to declare Bulgaria's independence and take the title of King of Bulgaria appeared fanciful.[14]

So the events of the following days were all the more surprising when Prince Ferdinand declared Bulgaria's independence in contravention of a number of points of the Treaty of Berlin on 5 October 1908. Bulgaria had been joined to the Ottoman Empire more through formal statute, which Bulgaria had considered a mere formality, and assumed the Porte would not have any major difficulties with recognising its independence. The situation did not develop as Bulgaria had expected, and events over subsequent months created an atmosphere of tension in the Balkans, which threatened to grow into a military conflict. Both countries decided to send their soldiers to their borders.[15]

While the foreign press believed in the possibility of a military conflict, the Czech press didn't consider this a realistic threat. The regional *Plzeňské listy* described a possible military conflict as unnecessary bloodshed and was convinced that the Young Turks were not disposed to war and would want to avoid it, being aware of their weakening after the events of recent months in the Ottoman Empire. The national *Národní listy* said that Turkey was reconciled to a loss of power in Bulgaria as long as Prince Ferdinand gave up his claim to Macedonia, to where the Ottoman Empire was planning to focus its attention.

It might be said that the events in Bulgaria were not particularly surprising, as attempts had been made in the past to gain independence a number of times unsuccessfully, something 1908 changed. Bulgaria took advantage of the weakened Ottoman Empire after the Young Turk Revolution when Turkish society was divided into old conservatives who did not want

[14] *Národní listy*, 48, no. 273–274, October 4–5, 1908.

[15] *Bulharsko neodvislým královstvím*, *Plzeňské listy*, 44, no. 227, October 6, 1908, p. 1. Compare with A. SKŘIVAN, *Císařská politika. Rakousko-Uhersko a Německo v evropské politice v letech 1906–1914*, Praha 1996, p. 63.

changes implemented along a European line, and Young Turks, who brought elements from European countries to Turkish society. The tense atmosphere in the Ottoman Empire threatened to grow into open conflict between these two groups, but luckily this did not occur. Tensions eased when the Sultan gave his support to the Young Turk reforms. The Young Turks were unable to consolidate their position, as they were unable to gain support from Christian nations, which were unhappy of the idea of a new Ottoman nation for all citizens of Turkey. This was an idea which meant Greeks, Albanians, Bulgarians, Serbians, Turks and others would no longer be called by the names of their nationalities, but rather simply as Ottomans.[16]

Response of the Powers to Bulgaria's Declaration of Independence

Austria-Hungary did not oppose Bulgaria's act, instead taking advantage of the step to annex Bosnia and Herzegovina. Politicians in Britain were not dramatic in their response, but the British papers condemned the declaration of independence and annexation and called for a congress of the signatories of the Treaty of Berlin. Germany had no plans to get involved in the matter, instead preferring to concentrate on issues of trade. Russia responded by sending a missive, but refused to oppose Bulgaria. The only power opposing Bulgarian independence was the Ottoman Empire, which had two options for responding to the situation, which had arisen. They could either go to war against Bulgaria or reconcile themselves to the new situation. The Young Turks feared that they could be blamed by the Old Turks for the declaration of independence, who would accuse them contributing to the event through their revolution.[17]

Response of the Ottoman Empire to the Seizure of the Railway

Turkey requested the return of sections of the Eastern railways seized by Bulgaria, giving them a three-day ultimatum for its return; should Bulgaria

[16] *Motivy proklamace Bulharska královstvím*, *Národní listy*, 48, no. 275, October 6, 1908, p. 1.

[17] Ibidem, pp. 1 and 4.

not fulfil the ultimatum, the Eastern Railways company would demand the Bulgarian government pay a fine of 15,000 francs.[18] Turkish newspapers were divided; some agreed with the problem being dealt with by the signatory power of the Treaty of Berlin, while a second group didn't agree. Of the powers, Germany and Austria-Hungary responded negatively to the occupation of the railway, condemning the step and asking for its return, after which further discussions could begin.[19]

Situation after the Declaration of Independence and Seizure of the Eastern Railway

Bulgaria defended its declaration of independence as an attempt to develop and become a civilised state so that it could not be prevented from cultural and economic development as it had allegedly been in recent years. Bulgaria tried to ease its tense relations with the Ottoman Empire by expressing sympathy towards the Young Turk regime, and its wish to continue to maintain friendly relations with the empire. One of the versions of the telegram King Ferdinand sent to the Porte in Turkey and published in Turkish newspapers on 6 October went like this: *"Since the Bulgarian people have unanimously asked that Bulgaria be declared a Kingdom, we have been forced to issue this declaration, and I assure you that I will continue to maintain good relations with the Ottoman government. I hope that our proclamation of a Kingdom will be confirmed."*[20]

In response to events in Bulgaria, Turkey sent a letter of protest, saying that the signatories of the Treaty of Berlin were also concerned about the problem and would have to make a statement about the situation that had arisen at a planned conference. The Ottoman Empire did not want to go to war and wanted to keep the peace, but was on the other hand ready to defend

[18] *Turecká lhůta ke vrácení dráhy*, *Plzeňské listy*, 44, no. 227, October 6, 1908, p. 1.

[19] *Turecká lhůta ke vrácení dráhy*, *Národní listy*, 48, no. 275, October 6, 1908, p. 2.

[20] *Telegram krále Ferdinanda sultánovi a odpověď Porty*, *Národní listy*, 48, no 276, October 6, 1908, p. 2.

its interests, and if necessary use weapons to do so. Questions were raised in Turkish society as to whether King Ferdinand had really responded to public opinion, as the telegram suggested, since the declaration of independence had preceded the seizure of the Eastern Railway, which was a good method for transporting soldiers to the border.[21]

Ottoman Empire Negotiations with Bulgaria

Tensions between the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria, aroused by the seizure of the Eastern Railway and declaration of independence were further strained by the mobilisation and threat of war in the Balkans, but this changed in the second half of October 1908, when the mobilisation was suspended and a protocol was produced requesting war be prevented. The protocol was accepted by both Turkey and Bulgaria. The situation was complicated by the fact that the Porte refused to enter into a direct agreement with Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria, and insisted that a conference take place, delaying the opportunity to reach an agreement with either Bulgaria or Austria-Hungary.[22]

Despite this, efforts at reaching agreement with Bulgaria continued, and at the end of October the Bulgarian Trade Minister, Andrey Lyapchev, who was charged with negotiations with the Ottoman Empire, was sent to Constantinople. A problem which came up during negotiations was that Bulgaria was refusing to pay the Ottoman Empire unless it recognised its new status. Another obstacle was that the Ottoman Empire asked that Bulgaria first pay its debts if it wanted an agreement with Turkey, but Bulgaria fundamentally rejected any form of payment. It was Bulgaria making payments to the Ottoman Empire that proved to be one of the most problematic issues.[23]

A breakthrough in negotiations occurred on 21 November 1908, when Bulgaria expressed its willingness to make a payment of 60 million francs.[24] It

[21] Ibidem, pp. 2–3.

[22] *Dohoda turecko-bulharská*, *Nová doba*, 3, no. 126, October 21, 1908, p. 2.

[23] *Národní listy*, 48, no. 293, 294, 300, 302, 308, October and November 1908.

[24] *Optimistická nálada v Bulharsku*, *Národní listy*, 48, no. 325, November 25, 1908, p. 2.

was the Grand Vizier, Kamil Pasha, who can be credited for the agreement. The Ottoman Empire concluded an agreement with Bulgaria on how it was going to act to deal with the issue. The Porte also had to consent to the agreement. At the same time, the end of November, negotiations began with Montenegro, with an agreement being achieved in early December 1908. This agreement dealt with issues of contention between the two states, and it also had to be submitted to the parliaments of Turkey and Montenegro.[25]

Despite signing the interim agreement, Bulgaria refused to pay for its independence, but it was however willing to pay recompense for damage, and this created the space for coming to an agreement. The agreement for solving the crisis between the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria was not at that time concluded and negotiations had been postponed because the Ottoman Empire had other problems to deal with. Negotiations resumed in early January 1909 when Constantinople sent Bulgaria a message that it was willing to renew negotiations. The Bulgarian government once again sent Lyapchev as its negotiation delegate to Constantinople. In order that Bulgaria acquire the finances for purchasing the Eastern Railway line which crossed its territory, it sent its Minister for Foreign Affairs, Takiev, to Paris, to ask for a government loan. Bulgaria resolved to take this step in order that an agreement with the Ottoman Empire could be concluded.[26]

One of Bulgaria's first proposals was to pay the Ottoman Empire 82 million francs to purchase the East Rumelia line, but Turkey was expecting a sum of 572 million francs.[27] It appeared that an agreement would not be reached when the parties had such differing proposals, but the Ottoman Empire was willing to climb down from its request and ask for 'just' 150 million francs.[28] On the announcement of this compromise, Bulgarian minister

[25] *Národní listy*, 48, no. 331, 335, December 1908.
[26] *Národní listy*, 48, no. 341 late issue, December 6, 1908; *Národní listy*, 49, no. 5, 16 late issue, January 1909.
[27] *Temný bod na obzoru*, *Národní listy*, 49, no. 18 late issue, January 18, 1909, p. 1.
[28] Ibidem.

Lyapchev offered 120 million plus a strip of South Bulgarian land which was mainly resident to Muslims.[29]

Negotiations with Bulgaria were put on hold for a short time, and renewed after signature of the agreement with Austria-Hungary. By the end of February/beginning of March, agreement was reached that Bulgaria would pay Turkey 125 million francs. As for the agreement with Austria-Hungary, first of all a protocol on the agreement was signed, and the lower parliament had to discuss it first. The agreement confirmed Russia as the mediator for the financial settlement, that Turkey would receive 125 million to be used mainly as compensation to the Eastern Railway for seizure of the East Rumelian line, and that Russia would cancel as many annual Turkish war debt payments as would be necessary for the amount to reach a capitalisation of 5 % at a level of 125 million. In return for these steps, the Ottoman Empire would agree that it would not have a problem with recognising the independence of Bulgaria. The protocol was finally signed on 19 April 1909, when the Ottoman Empire recognised Bulgaria's new political status.[30]

Turkey and Austria-Hungary

Besides Bulgaria's seizure of the Eastern Railways and declaration of independence, another breach of the Treaty of Berlin was the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary. The Treaty of Berlin had given Austria-Hungary the right to administer Bosnia and Herzegovina, but it was to continue under the sovereignty of the Sultan.[31]

Response to the Annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Austria-Hungary wanted to begin negotiations with the Ottoman Empire on the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and was willing to relinquish its right to occupy the Sanjak of Novi Pazar if Turkey recognised the annexation.

[29] Ibidem.

[30] *Národní listy*, 49, no. 50 late issue, 75, 76, 79 late issue, February and March 1909.

[31] VESELÁ, p. 53.

In this way, Austria-Hungary wanted to give the impression that it no longer considered it necessary to undertake its mandate to maintain peace on the territory. Hungary was not against the annexation, but wanted Bosnia and Herzegovina to be joined to the Holy Crown of Hungary.[32]

The British press expressed their disapproval of the annexation, condemning the act and characterising it as a breach of the newly established regime in the Ottoman Empire. They also accused Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria of violating the Treaty of Berlin. The Ottoman Empire was naturally also against the annexation, condemning the act more strongly than it did the steps taken by Bulgaria. The Ottoman Empire decided to respond to the issue with a customs war with Bulgaria, and a general boycott of Austrian goods. Another country which opposed Austria-Hungary's decision was Serbia, where a powerful movement was formed against Austria-Hungary, which grew into demonstrations in which crowds of people gathered in front of Russian, British, French, Italian and Turkish embassies to express their sympathy, while protests were held in front of the Austrian embassy. In the end, the crowd met by the Prince Michael memorial, where some of the speakers demanded that war be declared on Austria-Hungary in response to the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.[33]

On 6 October 1908, Franz Joseph I asked for a strengthening of powers regarding the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and withdrawal of military units from the Sanjak of Novi Pazar. Austria-Hungary decided to vacate the Sanjak in order to ease relations with the Ottoman Empire, and to show that it was not a belligerent policy they were pursuing. At the time, Austria-Hungary was not sympathetic to the idea of a European conference taking place in order to deal with breaches of the Treaty of Berlin. Austro-Hungarian diplomats also gave assurances that the situation in no way threatened European or Balkan peace.[34]

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[32] *Připojení Bosny a Hercegoviny*, *Národní listy*, 48, no. 275, October 6, 1908, p. 2.

[33] *Plzeňské listy*, 44, no. 228, October 7, 1908, p. 2.

[34] *Annexe Bosny a Hercegoviny prohlášena!*, *Národní listy*, 48, no. 276, October 7, 1908, p. 1.

Situation after the Annexation

Boycott of Austro-Hungarian Goods

The Ottoman Empire sent a letter of protest to Austria-Hungary, in which it said that the regime in Bosnia and Herzegovina arose from the treaty of 1879, with Austria-Hungary administering the territory, but the Ottoman Empire having official sovereignty, and that as such it was impossible to make changes which Constantinople would be unaware of, and which the other contractual powers had not approved of. In the meantime, tension had been growing between the Young Turks and Old Turks, and there was also a threat of the Sultan being deposed, which would be followed by unrest in which followers of the two groups would come into conflict. The Ottoman Committee pressed for a calming of reactionaries, while radicals incited Turkish citizens against foreigners.[35]

Opposition to Austria-Hungary's steps expressed itself in a boycott of Austro-Hungarian products declared on 13 October 1908. The boycott also affected Austrian Lloyd, which asked for government intervention and requested full compensation for damages from the Turkish authorities. The boycott was strongly supported through the issuance of leaflets and pleas against the purchase and unloading of Austrian goods and the disembarkation of passengers on Austrian ships. During the month of December, the boycott was expanded to include Italian and German boats, which were suspected of carrying Austro-Hungarian goods. The suspension of Austro-Hungarian imports contributed to a boosting of Russian imports to the Ottoman Empire and Balkan states.[36]

The Austro-Hungarian ambassador appeared before the Grand Vizier and Ministry of Interior to protest against the boycott of its goods. The declared boycott furthermore complicated attempts at calling a conference and achieving agreement, since Austria-Hungary first of all required the boycott to end, and only then would be prepared to negotiate. The Ottoman Empire's

[35] *Národní listy*, 48, no. 279 and 280, October 10 and 11, 1908.

[36] *Nová doba*, 13, no. 123 and 146, October 14 and December 7, 1908.

stance also complicated any eventual conference, because on 12 December 1908, Ali Riza Bey, leader of the Young Turks, spoke on the motive for the boycott, the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, saying it would not end until it was removed.[37]

The first steps towards the withdrawal of the boycott were taken following conclusion of a protocol on an agreement between the Ottoman Empire and Austria-Hungary. The first signs the boycott was being dismantled were seen in the early days of February 1909 in Inepoli, but it was only fully called off on 20 February 1909. The Ottoman Empire was forced into this step, amongst other reasons, because of a lack of finances. The withdrawal of the boycott occurred against the will of the nation and its own party, since the Austro-Hungarian government required the withdrawal before paying the agreed sum for the provinces in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The boycott was not withdrawn all at once, and even after it was officially regulated for, there were regions, which kept it in place until 27 February, when the boycott was definitively withdrawn.[38]

The Issue of the Sanjak of Novi Pazar

Austria-Hungary withdrew from the Sanjak of Novi Pazar on 29 October 1908, but the Ottoman Empire didn't immediately come and occupy it. As such, the Ottoman Empire was warned that it couldn't leave it without protection, because Montenegro and Serbia had expressed interest and were expecting that their planned conference would divide it amongst them. Austria-Hungary feared that if the Ottoman Empire didn't occupy the region soon, then the southern Slavs would take advantage of the situation, and Austria-Hungary was ready to reoccupy it should this happen. In the end, the Ottoman Empire decided to act and sent a number of units to the region, as it also feared its occupation by Serbs and Montenegrins, who had sent their units to the border with the Sanjak, reaching it in mid-November 1908.[39]

[37] *Nová doba*, 13, no. 125 and 141, October 19 and November 25, 1908.
[38] *Národní listy*, 49, no. 15 late issue, 37 late issue, 56, 58, February 1909.
[39] *Nová doba*, 13, no. 130 and 135, October 30 and November 11, 1908.

The threat of war in the Novi Pazar region was also increased by Vienna's attempts at giving the impression that Montenegro and Serbia wanted to initiate an uprising there. Furthermore, Serbia and Montenegro had expressed interest in purchasing the area. The Muslims were upset by this information, but the situation was eased when Grand Vizier Kamil Pasha assured Muslims that there was no immediate danger and the interests of Serbia and Montenegro were the same as those of the Ottoman Empire. His declaration was made in late March 1909 by concluding a written agreement with the Serbs in which they were bound to stand up to enemies together in the event of war, and Austria-Hungary was bound to invade Serbia should it make an attack on Novi Pazar.[40]

Over the period Austro-Hungarian soldiers were present in Novi Pazar, it was plagued by conflicts between Muslims, Orthodox Serbs and Bosnian Turks (former Serbs who had converted to Islam). The greatest intolerance was seen mainly in the southern parts of the Sanjak, while the calmest situation was observed in the region of Plevlje where the Austro-Hungarian army had been operating for many years. The situation changed, however, following the annexation, as the former enemies united and focused their resistance on Austria-Hungary. After the Young Turk Revolution, the situation in the Ottoman Empire stabilised but there were still areas, including in the Sanjak, where violence, theft, murder and other crimes occurred. Even after the departure of the Austro-Hungarian army, Plevlje remained a relatively peaceful area.[41]

The Ottoman Empire's Negotiations with Austria-Hungary

Negotiations between the Ottoman Empire and Austria-Hungary regarding compensation for the annexation began in December 1908. Constantinople

[40] *Národní listy*, 48, no. 324, November 24, 1908 and *Národní listy*, 49, no. 30 late issue, January 30, 1909.

[41] *Mladoturecký režim ve Starém Srbsku a v sandžaku novopazarském*, *Národní listy*, 48, no. 359, December 30, 1908, p. 4.

demanded that Austria-Hungary take over 120 million crowns[42] of the Ottoman Empire's debt, cancel its post offices on Ottoman territory, and relinquish its consular judiciary system. Austria-Hungary was willing to agree to the last two points but was only willing to pay 50 million crowns towards the debt.[43] A committee was held in the second half of December which was chaired by the Grand Vizier and attended by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade minister, and which jointly prepared a report on negotiating with Austria-Hungary. This document contained, amongst other things, Constantinople's requirements. The Ottoman Empire informed Reshid Pasha, its envoy at the Viennese court that it would continue to insist on its stipulation that Austria-Hungary provide the Ottoman Empire with compensation. Austria-Hungary continued to resist giving in to Turkey's demands, and instead offered to be guarantor for Turkey's loan. The Ottoman Empire was willing to accept this proposal only if Austria-Hungary as guarantor also paid back the loan.[44]

In this initial phase, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire were unable to come to an agreement, leading to negotiations being called off. Negotiations began again around mid-January 1909. Pallavicini, the Austro-Hungarian ambassador suggested to Kamil Pasha that Austria-Hungary was willing to conclude a trade agreement in which it would give consent to an increase in Turkish customs duty from 11 % to 15 %, implementation of certain monopolies and provision of financial compensation for property in Bosnia and Herzegovina at a level of two and a half million Turkish lira.[45] This proposal was positively received by the Turkish cabinet, and a protocol was signed at the meeting between Pallavicini and Kamil Pasha on the agreement and compensation for the Ottoman Empire. All that remained was for the protocol to be approved by parliament.[46]

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[42] *Události na Balkáně, Nová doba*, 13, no. 147, December 9, 1908, p. 2.
[43] Ibidem.
[44] *Národní listy*, 48, no. 353 late issue, 357 late issue, December 1908.
[45] *Rakousko-Uherská návrhy Turecku*, *Národní listy*, 49, no. 10, January 10, 1909, p. 1.
[46] *Národní listy*, 49, no. 10, 12 late issue, January 1909.

The success of the negotiations contributed to a lessening of the threat of war, and the Balkan question was reduced to the question of whether Austria-Hungary would be willing to provide some sort of compensation to Serbia and Montenegro. There were voices which did not agree to the protocol which had been signed, but in general agreement to signing the protocol was expressed. Powers such as France, Great Britain, Germany and Russia received the document positively, but noted that the issue of Serbia and Montenegro still had to be dealt with. The protocol on agreement between Austria and Turkey was signed and approved by parliament on 26 February 1909.[47]

Internal Situation in the Ottoman Empire

Tense Situation in the Ottoman Empire

After the Young Turks came to power in mid-December 1909, there was a session of the Turkish parliament attended by 10 Young Turks, 5 Turks, 2 Greeks, 2 Armenians and one Jew.[48] The Sultan also took part in the parliamentary session, giving a speech in which he defended the steps he had taken in recent years, and in particular trying to explain the reasons he had suspended the constitution and dissolved parliament. His justification was that they were temporary measures because the Ottoman Empire had been plagued by many problems, and they were to have been restored once the situation in the Empire had calmed down and necessary progress had been made, which was conditional on general education. Increasing levels of general education began to occur with the rise to power of the Young Turks, with the Young Turks building an extensive network of schools. Furthermore, along with their rise to power, the constitution was restored in July 1908 and parliament was recalled despite voices of resistance to this step. The Senate ultimately swore to the constitution, and Said Pasha was named its leader. The Young Turks ordered a new election, created a new state system, declared the equality of

[47] *Národní listy*, 49, no. 12 late issue, 14, January and February 1909.

[48] *Parlamentní volby v Cařihradě*, *Národní listy*, 48, no. 342 late issue, December 12, 1908, p. 2.

Christian and Muslim citizens, and Kamil Pasha acquired the post of Grand Vizier. While the cabinet headed by Kamil were deliberating on how to organise the new constitutional regime, Bulgaria declared independence, and Austria-Hungary annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina. As a consequence of these events, the cabinet were forced to take necessary measures to protect the rights of the Ottoman Empire, and they expected the support of the great powers. Despite the problems the Ottoman Empire had to overcome, the Young Turks built schools in all parts of the Empire. Their objective was to achieve an overall increase in the educational attainment of the Ottoman citizens. Another objective was to improve the army and navy and review laws so they could be put before the Senate.[49]

Protests were held in all the cities of the Ottoman Empire against the seizure of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and it was demanded that the powers intervene against this breach of an international treaty. Reactionary movements took advantage of the situation, which had arisen, sticking up posters calling for the Ottoman Empire to once again become a powerful state, and calling on the faithful to keep to the Koran, and some posters called for violent action. Muslims began arming themselves, further increasing tensions as a result of fears of conflict between the Old Turks and Young Turks.[50]

In late October 1908, there was a meeting between the Sultan and the Grand Vizier. It was decided at the meeting that the Young Turks' Central Committee would gain direct influence in cabinet. The aim of this decision was to involve the forces of reform in the government so that reforms could be made. Newspaper criticism of the Grand Vizier also increased in October, attacking him mainly because he dealt with important matters alone, not trusting his colleagues.[51]

Tensions in Turkey increased after the events of the end of October 1908 when there was a military revolt in Pera. The revolt occurred following

[49] *Národní listy*, 48, no. 331, 348, 356, December 1908.
[50] *Nová doba*, 13, no. 127, October 23, 1908.
[51] *Mladoturecké ministerstvo!*, *Nová doba*, 13, no. 126, October 21, 1908.

receipt of an order that some of the units should move from Pera to Jeddah. The soldiers refused to carry out this order because they wanted to return home. An order was issued to put the rebels under siege. This led to a shooting which ended with 9 dead[52] and 7 injured.[53] The rebel soldiers had no choice but to surrender. The soldiers' revolt in Pera led the Muslim population in Istanbul to respond, and triggered a number of other revolts in various battalions. The rebels were to be tried before a military court which was to decide on their punishment.[54]

Reports on the ministerial crisis in Turkish newspapers in late November 1908 also contributed to increasing tensions. These reports stated that there were to be personnel changes for all ministerial posts, with reports saying the only figure who was to remain in place was to be Kamil Pasha, whose cabinet was perceived as temporary, and against whom criticisms mounted at this period. He was criticised most for not meeting the hopes which had been placed in him.[55]

Around mid-February 1909, there were fears of a possible plot against the Sultan to remove him from the throne and put Prince Yusuf Izzettin there in his place. A former member of the Young Turks' Committee was suspected of being behind the plot. The Young Turks' Committee rejected the rumours it was trying to depose the Sultan, and that because of that ministers of the military and navy were to be unseated. The internal crisis further deepened when reports turned up that changes in the Grand Vizierate were to be made. When these ministries were later taken on by Young Turks, the reports were proven to be true. This step aroused fears that there could be a fusion of power of the governing and Young Turks' Committee. A lack of confidence in Kamil Pasha was expressed, and he was removed from the post of Grand Vizier, the position now being taken by Hilmi Pasha. The Young Turks managed to gain

[52] *Národní listy*, 48, no. 326, November 26, 1908, pp. 1, 5.
[53] Ibidem.
[54] Ibidem.
[55] *Národní listy*, 48, no. 326 and 339 late issue, November 26 and December 9, 1908.

support from the army and also the Sultan for the naming of Hilmi Pasha. With the change of Grand Vizier, there were fears that the foreign policy course of Kamil Pasha might not be maintained. Kamil Pasha was removed because he had made changes at the Army and Naval Ministry which the Young Turks didn't agree with. The Turkish parliament, and the Young Turk majority in particular, plus the Young Turk army corps forced the Sultan to replace the Grand Vizier. Hilmi Pasha was an experienced man who had held a position in the vilayets of Asia in 1885, where his duty had been to maintain order between the Bedouin tribes, and then served as General in Yemen for 5 years, had been Inspectorate-General in the Macedonian vilayets from 1902, and had also taken on the post of Interior Minister for some period. His main objective as Grand Vizier was to preserve the Ottoman Empire for the Ottomans.[56]

At the end of February 1909, Turkish newspapers expressed criticism of the Ottoman Empire. They particularly criticised the fact that the regime had not succeeded in achieving significant changes and improvements, as well as also condemning the Young Turks' Committee for interference in state affairs, getting rid of individuals they didn't trust and for a lack of discipline in the army and navy. They thought the regime was taking the Ottoman Empire into the abyss. While Europe was sympathising with the Turkish regeneration, the problem was that no results could be seen anywhere. Over time, the criticisms didn't just come just from the Turkish press, but also from other fields. The Minister of War, for example, warned of indiscipline in the army in early March 1909. The new constitution meant that they could be punished, and the minister wanted to punish those individuals who had abused their powers. He decided to ban soldiers from being members of associations, publishing articles on service affairs and acting against discipline, and he banned military school students from visiting concerts and theatres. As well as criticisms, opposition to the Young Turk regime was also expressed. An example of this is the officers of the 3rd army corps in Macedonia, who founded the so-called

[56] *Národní listy*, 49, no. 42, 44 late issue, 46 late issue, 47, 48, February 1909.

Committee of Mohammed in early April 1909 whose objective was to renew the old Turkish government system. The so-called softa movement (students) also opposed the government, accusing it of being unfit and not acting in parliament. Another expression of opposition was a revolt in a garrison in Yildiz. The situation was dealt with by personnel changes, with opponents being replaced by people loyal to the constitution.[57]

Prelude to the Countercoup

6 April 1909 was a prelude to a countercoup, when editor-in-chief of the newspaper, *Serbest*, Hassan Fehmi was murdered. The newspaper was a supporter of the Liberal Union and was opposed to the Young Turks' Committee and army. Public opinion blamed the Young Turks' Committee for the murder, but they vehemently denied it. Over 1,000 university students[58] protested in front of the Porte, and there were further protests in front of the police ministry and parliament. The protesters demanded the murderer be caught and punished, and the Grand Vizier promised to do so. Opponents of the Young Turks' Committee, the Liberal Union and their supporters were prepared to arrange another protest during the editor's funeral, and use his murder as much as possible to act against the Young Turks' Committee. Fearing conflict between the Liberals and Young Turks, the Sultan determined to ease the tense situation at least through a small gesture of goodwill, having the murdered editor-in-chief buried at Mahmud's tomb, which served as the burial ground for ruling families and ambassadors.[59]

The Issue of a Conference

The tense situation which had arisen after Bulgaria's declaration of independence and Austria-Hungary's annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina

[57] *Národní listy*, 49, no. 55 late issue, no. 60 late issue, no. 92 late issue, February 24, March 1, April 2, 1909.

[58] *Politická vražda v Cařihradě*, *Národní listy*, 49, no. 98, April 8, 1909, p. 1.

[59] *Národní listy*, 49, no. 98 and 98 late issue, April 8, 1909.

threatened to grow into a war, and for this reason a number of powers wanted a meeting to take place of some of the signatory powers of the Treaty of Berlin and states with interests in the Balkans. Izvolsky, the Russian Foreign Minister, said of the situation: *"As for Bulgaria, we were strongly dissuading the Bulgarian right up to the last minute from the coup which has just taken place. Europe cannot allow this double breach of the Treaty of Berlin. In a few days, a proposal will be lodged that a conference be called which can deliberate on the current situation."*[60]

The first to call on the signatory powers to the Treaty of Berlin to hold a conference to deal with the problems, which had arisen, was Russia. Britain tried to ease the tensions in the Ottoman Empire, assuring it that no international agreement can be changed without the consent of the other parties to the agreement. Furthermore, Britain did not want to undermine the newly established Young Turk regime, something that might happen in the event of war, disrupting attempts at reform. As well as Russia and England, France also supported the idea of a conference.[61] The Ottoman Empire sent all signatory powers a letter of protest in which it said that all signatories of the Treaty of Berlin were requesting a conference to deal with the problems which had arisen. Were that request not to be granted, Europe would have to accept all responsibility for the subsequent events, which might occur in the Balkans.[62]

Izvolsky, Russian Foreign Minister, met a British agent of the state on 13 October 1908, and they agreed that it was vital to satisfy the interests of Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro and the Ottoman Empire in particular. The subsequent discussions on holding a conference were complicated by, e.g. events in Greece where there were suggestions this problem should be dealt with outside the conference since it didn't relate to any breach of the Treaty of Berlin. A number of proposals were prepared for the conference programme. One of these proposed that Russia, Britain, France

[60] *Rozhovor s Izvolským o annexi*, *Národní listy*, 48, no. 278, October 9, 1908, p. 4.
[61] *Národní listy*, 48, no. 278, 279, October 9 and 10, 1908.
[62] *Turecko proti Bulharsku*, *Nová doba*, 13, no. 121, October 9, 1908, p. 2.

and Italy would call on Constantinople to recognise Bulgaria's independence and the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In return, Bulgaria would be bound to pay an annual fee to the Ottoman Empire for Rumelia, and Austria-Hungary would give up its Sanjak. The conference's main objective was Turkish compensation, strengthening the Turkish regime and satisfying the demands of the small Balkan states.[63]

Turkey feared the last mentioned point of this proposal. It particularly feared that it could weaken its possibilities for compensation. At the end of October 1908, the Porte prepared a response to the proposal and sent its own proposal to the conference programme, which had been approved by Britain, France and Russia. The programme contained these points: a) the constitutional status of East Rumelia, b) the constitutional status of Bulgaria, the issue of a tribute for Rumelia and Bulgaria and its proportion of the Turkish state debt, c) the constitutional status of Bosnia and Herzegovina, d) no compensation for Serbia and Montenegro, there can be no financial or territorial loss for Turkey, e) the cancellation of articles 23 and 61 of the Treaty of Berlin don't need to be negotiated, f) an increase in import duties.[64]

The threat of the conference not taking place brought a change in Russia's position, which in November 1908 refused to recognise the annexation. Furthermore, it also refused to take part in the conference after one of its proposals was rejected. The conference was also put under threat through disagreement with the conference programme, in particular in regard to the point on the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with Austria-Hungary not wishing to discuss this issue because it considered it an event which was over and rejected any sort of territorial compensation. Serbia did not agree with Austria-Hungary's position, and was only prepared to recognise the annexation if territorial compensation was provided.[65]

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[63] *Návrh evropských mocností*, *Nová doba*, 13, no. 124, October 16, 1908, p. 2.

[64] *Turecký konferenční program*, *Nová doba*, 13, no. 139, November 20, 1908, p. 1.

[65] *Národní listy*, 48, no. 291, 303, 312, 319, October–November 1908.

A number of discussions took place in mid-November 1908, one of which took place in Vienna and dealt with the issue of relations between the Ottoman Empire and Austria-Hungary. Another meeting took place between France, Britain and Russia on one side and the Ottoman Empire on the other side. At this meeting, the European powers tried to persuade Constantinople to sign an agreement between the Ottoman Empire, Serbia and Bulgaria regarding the sanctity of Ottoman territory. The attempt only half-succeeded, when an agreement with Serbia was signed in early November 1908. Turkey spent a long time negotiating with Bulgaria too, and in the end agreement was reached with it too.[66]

A significant change occurred in late December 1908, when Russia changed its position on the conference and came to the conclusion that it would be possible to reach an agreement on the basis of discussions between cabinets. Austria-Hungary suggested this proposal, having refused for some time to discuss the issue of the annexation at the conference, and then consented to the issue being included in the programme, but only on the condition that the issue would not be discussed in reality. In the mean time, Austria-Hungary began negotiations with the Ottoman Empire with any agreement being taken into account when the conference was held. Russia did not agree with this idea, since the agreement could help but should not determine sanctions in advance. In the end, Austria-Hungary agreed with the annexation being taken out of the discussion amongst the powers, and instead being dealt with on the basis of negotiations between cabinets.[67]

Once the annexation had been recognised and the protocol on agreement was signed between the Ottoman Empire and Austria-Hungary, the issue of a conference was put on the back-burner. Tensions in the Balkans subsided after agreement was reached regarding the conflict between Austria-Hungary and Serbia, which also recognised the annexation in the end. The

[66] *Balkán středem zájmů velmocí*, *Národní listy*, 48, no. 313, November 13, 1908, p. 4.
[67] *Rusko neuzná annexi Bosny a Hercegoviny*, *Národní listy*, 48, no. 354, December 24, 1908, p. 1.

conference did not take place, and the situation was dealt with using letters. Serbia accepted all conditions, the powers recognised the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Ottoman Empire signed agreements with Bulgaria and Austria-Hungary.[68]

Countercoup in the Ottoman Empire[69]

Deposing the Young Turk Regime

The Ottoman parliament and senate's recognition of the annexation had an impact on the internal development of the Ottoman Empire. The decision resulted in the breaching of paragraph 115 and 116 of the Turkish constitution which forbade the sale of state property to another country. As well as the annexation, the murder of the editor-in-chief Hasan Fehmi contributed to increasing tensions and opposition to the Young Turks. The main backers of the opposition were softas and higher clergy. The protests also came to be supported by the opposition which was emerging within the army, and which decided to withdraw to Istanbul.[70]

On 13 April, the soldiers in Constantinople divided into two opposing camps. The Anatolian battalion was to arouse revolt in the army, having withdrawn from the Constantinople barracks under the leadership of the softas demanding that sharia law be reintroduced or the government resign. The government decided to summon the whole battalion to protect the parliament and Porte. There were a number of clashes which resulted in a number of deaths. They had no choice but to close off Istanbul. The rebels succeeded in gaining support from armed citizens, and with their support they finally managed to occupy the parliament. As well as support from armed citizens,

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[68] *Mír!*, *Nová doba*, 14, no. 38, March 29, 1909, p. 1.

[69] To this question see R. KODET, *Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Counterrevolution of April 1909*, in: Prague Papers on the History of International Relations, No. 1, 2012, pp. 58–64.

[70] *Vojenská vzpoura v Turecku*, *Nová doba*, 14, no. 45, April 14, 1909, pp. 1ff.

the rebels also received support from almost all Constantinople garrisons, so that the army ministry had only a few battalions left to protect the Young Turk regime. The government was left with no choice but to begin negotiations with the rebels through the highest spiritual figure, the Shaykh al-Islam. Amongst other demands, the rebels asked for partial changes in the cabinet, impunity for those who had participated in the revolt, a recognition they had acted patriotically, and implementation of sharia law. It was probably the Liberal Union or the Mohammedan Union which were behind the revolt.[71]

Resistance to the Young Turk Regime

The events of April 1909 were not as surprising as they may at first appear, because expressions of resistance to the Young Turk regime had begun to be seen during February of that year. The army minister had warned of the actions of officers who had been affected by the restoration of the constitution, and who undermined discipline and order in the army. These problems were strongly affected by foreign policies, but the Young Turk reforms also played their part, not only being forced on the Sultan, but also arousing unrest amongst the Old Turks. Other Young Turk reforms were aimed at implementing conscription in accordance with the European model, which students of religion, known as softas, in particular did not agree with, refusing to perform military duty. A number of protests were held against the decision, and they handed in a protest letter against the decision to parliament. There was strong opposition to the Young Turks in the Asian parts of Turkey and Albania.[72]

In February 1909, however, these internal expressions of dissatisfaction and resistance could not be expressed, because Turkey was mainly focused on dealing with foreign policy issues, and only once these issues had been dealt with could the internal problems and contradictions bubble over. The Old Turks had been pushed into the background by the Young Turk Revolution, and they refused to rest on their laurels. The counter-coup which the old Turks

[71] Ibidem.

[72] *Národní listy*, 49, no. 103 and 103 late issue, April 14, 1909.

began was led by the military, and this fact surprised Europe because it had been convinced that the army was supportive of the new regime, but their supposition proved to be wrong and the Old Turk influence in the army was shown still to be present.[73]

The Ottoman Empire after the Countercoup

The Sultan decided to oblige the demands of the rebels and had an Irade read in which the victory of the countercoup was recognised. The Irade also provided information on the naming of a new Turkish government, declared the Ottoman Empire a Muslim empire, and implemented sharia law and impunity for countercoup participants. Following the countercoup, there were also personnel changes in the government, which had resigned after the countercoup along with the Grand Vizier. Rear-Admiral Emin, for example, was named the new naval minister, and Nuri was named the new finance minister. Tevfik Pasha was named the new Grand Vizier,[74] having at first rejected the rebels, but finally agreeing with their naming. Tevfik Pasha was a powerful ally of the Sultan, who regained the influence and power he had once had after the countercoup. The situation remained tense, however, with the greatest dangers seen as being a strengthening of the religious movement, and the Muslim clergy, softas and a wide range of citizens calling for revolt.[75]

The Young Turks abandoned Constantinople, and some of them escaped abroad, such as Ahmed Riza who found refuge under the protection of the French embassy. It was expected that the Young Turks would not just let the situation lie, and that unrest would continue over the coming days. The Young Turks continued to receive support mainly from villages and garrisons at smaller towns. As well as the threat of Young Turk resistance, another danger was the volatility of the Sultan, who feared for his life and his throne. His fears were boosted by reports that there were voices calling for his replacement on

[73] *Vojenská vzpoura v Cařihradě*, *Národní listy*, 49, no. 103 late issue, April 14, 1909, p. 1.
[74] KODET, p. 59.
[75] *K událostem v Turecku*, *Plzeňské listy*, 45, no. 85, April 15, 1909, p. 1.

the throne. Amongst his possible successors, the largest support was enjoyed by two candidates, Reshid and Izedin. Rural citizens also represented another danger, threatening that they wouldn't hesitate to march for Istanbul if the viability of the constitution was in danger. The parliament assured them that the constitution was in no way in danger. After this declaration, the government sent regional governors a circular letter stating that sharia law must be upheld, but in such a way as to be in accordance with the constitution so as not to disturb the public peace.[76]

The expectation that the Young Turks would not leave the situation without responding were proved right. The Young Turks' main centres of resistance were Salonica, Monastir and Janina. The Young Turks called for the newly established government to dissolve the current cabinet and name the previous cabinet, and said should this request be rejected they were ready to march on Istanbul. Besides naming the previous cabinet, the Young Turks also demanded that the Sultan be replaced, with Rashid Effendi taking his place, whom they considered his rightful successor. By naming Effendi as successor, the Young Turks secured support from Macedonia, which was strongly opposed to Abdul Hamid, the current Sultan.[77] The Young Turks' Committee didn't hesitate to take advantage of the situation, and decided to conclude an agreement with the Macedonian Bulgarians, Serbs and Greeks. This agreement between representatives of the Slavic and Young Turk nations bound the Slavs to support the Young Turk in their struggle, not to recognise the rebel government, and to act in accordance with the Young Turks. In return, the Young Turks promised that as soon as they got into power, they would submit a bill, which would grant autonomy to all non-Turkish nations in Macedonia, Old Serbia and Adrianople.[78]

[76] *Národní listy*, 49, no. 104 late issue and 105, April 15 and 16, 1909.
[77] KODET, pp. 60ff.
[78] *K událostem v Turecku*, *Plzeňské listy*, 45, no. 89, April 20, 1909, p. 6.

Return of the Young Turks

The situation didn't develop smoothly for the Old Turks, with a number of government members wanting to resign their posts, and the population in Constantinople disturbed by the growing tensions and in fear of how events would pan out. The population's fears were deepened when the Young Turks began a march on Istanbul in the first days of the second half of April, during which they succeeded in occupying military forts. The population gradually came to oppose the Sultan, with the greatest opposition a result of numerous murders of Young Turk officers. The opposition of the population, the willingness of some government members to resign and the Young Turks' campaign on Istanbul led to a complete change in outlook in Istanbul to the Young Turks' advantage. The Young Turks presented their requirements for peace, including a demand that the prior status quo be restored, the Khawajas and members of the Liberal Party be punished, the return of officers who were deposed, and the surrender of petty officers and officers who had taken part in the revolt.[79]

The Young Turks advanced, and their units under the leadership of Hussein Husni finally arrived at the gates of Constantinople, and surrounded it a few days later on 20 April 1909. Hussein Husni issued an announcement in which he said that no power could be above the constitution, demanded that the initiators of the countercoup of 13 April be punished, internal peace be maintained. The Young Turks' main objective was to deal with the problem without bloodshed, as were that to happen the great powers would have to get involved.[80]

Peace negotiations began on 20 April, and it was expected that the Sultan would resign. The Young Turks' Committee proposed that the Sultan be declared insane, which would explain his conflicting policies. The cabinet rejected this, but was willing to discuss other forms of giving up the Sultan. The Young Turks' discussions with the cabinet were moved to Yildiz where

[79] *Národní listy*, 49, no. 108 and 109, April 19 and 20, 1909.

[80] *Pád tureckého absolutismu*, *Nová doba*, 14, no. 48, April 21, 1909, pp. 1ff.

the Sultan was based, and he accepted these conditions: a) the declaration of a state of siege in Constantinople, b) the punishment of individuals who had taken part in the reactionary revolts in front of a war court, c) the dismissal of soldiers who had compromised themselves during the recent unrest, d) the occupancy of Yildiz with a military committee, e) the naming of a new war minister.[81]

The Young Turk units entered Constantinople on 24 April 1909, during which although there were a number of bloody encounters, the Young Turks were required to exercise restraint.[82] If they had not exercised restraint, there would have been the danger that opposition would form in the Albanian movement, which would force them to focus on two fronts. A further reason was that should violence occur, then the great powers would have to intervene. The Young Turks managed to occupy almost all the barracks in Constantinople. They also succeeded in occupying Yildiz, where no conflict occurred because the Sultan had let a white flag fly and was willing to surrender voluntarily, while forbidding the Yildiz military forces from fighting.[83]

The Sultan was deposed on 27 April 1909, and he was succeeded by his brother Reshad, who took the name Mehmed V. The new cabinet was assembled by Ahmed Riza. Hilmi Pasha was named Minister of the Interior, Hussein Djahid became Minister of Education, Djahid was named Minister of Finance, Raffat Pasha Foreign Minister, Vitalis Naval Minister, and Noradunkyan Minister for Construction. On 28 April, the former Sultan Abdul Hamid II was sent to Salonica where a special tribunal was to take place which was to hold him responsible, but it the end he was held in isolation so his life could be spared. A military court was held which executed 200 officers, 200 petty officers, 50 soldiers, 70 khawajas and 40 spies.[84] The key architects of the countercoup of 13 April and resistance of 27 April were punished as

[81] *Národní listy*, 49, no. 113 and 114, April 24 and 25, 1909.
[82] KODET, p. 61.
[83] Ibidem.
[84] *Nová vláda v Turecku*, *Nová doba*, 14, no. 52, April 30, 1909, p. 8.

a warning. In addition to the changes in government, some changes were made along a Western model. These were a change in succession to the throne, with the successor becoming the first-born son, the abolition of the institution of eunuchs, the minting of coins from silver and gold with the figure of the Sultan, and the implementation of a general military service.[85]

Abstract

The Bosnian Annexation Crisis was a major diplomatic event of the years 1908 and 1909. The decision of Austria-Hungary to annect the occupied provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina changed a status quo in the Eastern Question. While the crisis threatened the peace in Europe, the press and the European public opinion considerably followed it. The Czech lands were no exeptions – on the contrary the main periodicals brought regular news about the development in this question. They also commented the policy of Vienna government and of the other Great Powers and the Balkan states.

Keywords

Austria-Hungary, Ottoman Empire, Russia, Bulgaria, Diplomacy, Press, Public Opinion

[85] *Národní listy*, 49, no. 118 late issue and 119 late issue, April 29 and 30, 1909.