“SERBIAN GOLGOTHA” IN THE EYES OF G.N. TRUBETSKOY AND V. A. ARTAMONOV

ABSTRACT: This article is based on the diaries and memoirs of Russian subjects in Serbia – military agent V.A. Artamonov and diplomatic representative G.N. Trubetskoy – and delves into the tragic march of the Serbian army through the mountains in Albania and Montenegro in autumn and winter of 1915 which later was called “the Serbian golgotha”.

Keywords: Serbia, Army, Russia, Golgotha, Albania, withdrawal, WWI.

The 100th anniversary of the outbreak of World War One sparked a widespread public, political and academic interest in these tragic events. Academic and cultural life in Europe and across the world in 2014 was marked by numerous exhibitions, documentaries, feature films, other social and political events and conferences, publications of scientific and publicistic articles, monographs and collections of documents.

Naturally, the Balkan problem in WW1 is in the limelight of historians who specialize in Serbia and who focus on the reasons of the July 1914 crisis and the debunking of the revisionist myth according to which Serbian government is responsible for the shooting in Sarajevo and triggering the world massacre.1 However, besides this undoubtedly important issue for studying the preconditions of the world conflict, the very course of the warfare at the Serbian front is of particular interest for the historians.

Despite the defeat of the Austrians at the Serbian front at the end of 1914, within a year, on October 5th-7th 1915 the Austrian and German armies under the command of Mackensen launched a new offensive against Serbia, 10 days after Bulgaria entered the war. Military historians estimate that up to 450,000 Austro-German, 150,000 Bulgarian and

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1 See also: Belayets: Who needs the revision of history? Old and new debate about the causes of World War One. Moscow, Algorythm, 2015 // Белаяц М. Кому нужна ревизия истории? Старые и новые споры о причинах Первой мировой войны. Москва, Алгоритм, 2015
100,000 Turkish soldiers took part in the offensive. On the night of October 8th, Belgrade was abandoned. The situation in Serbia became critical. On October 16th, England and France received an official request from Alexander and on October 17th from Pašić to send troops to defend Niš and Bitola-Thessaloniki railroad. Only on October 31st, England and France reached an agreement to enlarge Expeditionary Forces of General Maurice Sarrail up to 150,000 people. But it was too late. Bulgarian forces had already blocked the Thessaloniki railroad on October 19th, thus preventing Serbian army from joining the allied troops. English and French units were deployed too late from Gallipoli to Thessaloniki to help Serbian army and were thrown back by the Bulgarians. Despite the fact that Russia on October 5th (18th) 1915 declared war on Bulgaria, it did not manage to provide assistance to Serbia by debarking its troops on the Black Sea coast. Russia’s fleet only bombarded Varna on October 27th, 1915. The country was on the brink of disaster. Yet that was the very moment when the struggle of the Kingdom of Serbia entered into a new phase. Serbian participation in World War One is interesting not only from the perspective of military history, when an army of a small country successfully withstood for almost 18 months the attacks of Austria-Hungary and managed to dislodge completely its army from the territory in December 1914. The peculiarity of the Serbian case consists in it being the exceptional example in modern history of Europe, when the defeated army, the government and a large part of the country’s population did not accept and did not sign the surrender document and voluntarily exiled themselves to begin a new chapter in their history from abroad. A chapter dedicated not only to the liberation from foreign invaders, but also to the creation of a new country – the future Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

These tragic events which cost Serbia dozens thousands of lives were later called “the Serbian Golgotha”. It is not by chance that in the memoirs that will be studied in this article G.N. Trubetskoy noted when summing up the results of this march: “And here we grasped the singularity of our journey. We were abandoning the coasts of Albania,
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leaving Serbia far behind. Among us there were ministers, generals leading the armies, the representatives of countries. It was the beginning of the exodus of the whole nation which did not cease to believe in their lucky star that will guide them back to the Promised Land. I felt I was witnessing a great historic drama, one of its most tragic episodes”. 4

The decision to retreat the rest of the Serbian army through Montenegro and Albania to the Adriatic Sea for its evacuation on the Greek Island of Corfu and then to send them on the Thessaloniki Front was taken by N. Pašić and Prince Regent Alexander on October 29th 1915 at the government extraordinary meeting in Kruševac. “All the Serbian army – tormented, tired, stripped of hope, knee-deep in mud - was slipping down on washed-out roads to the south-west, approaching the sea. High mountains blocked the way ahead. All the units split up into smaller groups. Soldiers, together with refugees, captives, carts, guns were carried away by the mud stream. Everybody had to look for provisions for themselves, and this became the dominating concern”, mentioned a well-known Bolshevik leader L.D. Trotsky, who travelled to Serbia as a Russian correspondent and left very interesting notes about his trip. 5 At the end of November 1915 Serbian establishment met in Shkodër where the top military leaders were displaced. Field Marshal Putnik resigned his commission to his assistant Colonel Pavlović. Shkodër also hosted the famous parade of the Serbian army which one shocked French journalist A. Barbi called “a parade of the living dead”.

In view of the dislocation of the Serbian army to Albania, on December 8th 1915 Russian Emperor Nicholas II sent to Alexander, the successor to the throne, the following telegram: “With a deep sense of anxiety I followed the heroic march of the Serbian Army to Albania and Montenegro. I express to Your Royal Highness my sincere admiration of your adroitness which guided the army through all the difficulties of the way and helped to repulse attacks by the numerically superior enemies. According to my orders, Minister for Foreign Affairs repeatedly urged the allies to take measure to secure maritime traffic in the Adriatic Sea. He will resume these calls, and I hope that the noble warriors of Your Royal Highness will be given a chance to leave San Giovanni di Medua. I firmly believe that they will soon recover from the hardships and deprivations they suffered and will recommence fighting against our common enemy. The victory over him and the revival of the great Serbia

will serve you and our sister Serbian nation as a consolation for all that you have gone through". According to the Russian General Staff by early February 1916, 88,000 people were already on Corfu, 8,000 people were on their way there and 12 mountain guns and all the machine-guns were carried over. By that time there were 7,000 people in Durrës and 30,000 people more near Valona.

Military and diplomatic representatives of the Allied Powers went through this hard way along with the Serbian army, including G. N. Trubetskoy and V.A. Artamonov, heads of Russian diplomatic and military missions. Their memoirs and diaries are a valuable source which allows shedding light on numerous nuances of this tragic and at the same time momentous event in Serbian history of the XX century. At the same time let us note that Trubetskoy’s memoirs book is quite well-known among a wide range of researchers while the personal diary of Russian military agent has not yet become an object of experts’ close attention.

Russian and Serbian historiographers debate on how and why the Austro-German offensive turned out to be a surprise for the Serbian command as well as for the Entente. It’s worth noting that the military operations at the Austro-Serbian front in 1914-1915 were not coordinated with the allies. Despite the Russian command’s urging, Serbian army did not go onto the offensive preliminarily planned for June 10\textsuperscript{th} (23rd) 1915. Moreover, as V.A. Artamonov mentions, “Serbian offensive was postponed deliberately, partly due to political reasons, till the clarification of Bulgaria’s and Romania’s intentions, partly due to our previous failures”. According to the Russian military agent, N. Pašić “repeatedly said that the Serbian offensive will be timely and safe when Russian army descends from the Carpathians to the Hungarian valley”. Russian general and military historian Y.N. Danilov noted: “It will be appropriate to mention here - with regret, of course – that the Serbian army strengthened by the Montenegrin contingents, formed a third quite independent front of the Allied Powers. Between Russia and France, despite the lack of the general war plan, there was still a preliminary

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\textsuperscript{6} Russian state military and history archive (below referred to as RSMHA) F.2003, op., 1, doc. 1870, l. 582-583
\textsuperscript{7} RSMHA. F. 2003, op. 1., doc. 1167, l. 1.
\textsuperscript{8} On June 16\textsuperscript{th} (29\textsuperscript{th}) 1915 the Supreme command sent to Alexander Karageorgievich the following telegram: “Taking into consideration the renewed offensive of the Italian army in a more aggressive form, the information about the transition of 16\textsuperscript{th} and partly 15\textsuperscript{th} Austro-Hungarian corps from the Serbian to the Italian front as well as the return to our front of a part of German forces sent to the Serbian frontier, from a general point of view it seems desirably for the Serbian army to carry out as soon as possible the attack that was preliminarily planned for June 10\textsuperscript{th}”. // RSMHA F.2003, op., 1, doc. 1870, l. 630.
\textsuperscript{9} RSMHA F.2003, op., 1, doc. 1870, l. 629.
agreement on the beginning of the military operations. As far as Serbia is concerned, even this small step towards the unity of actions was not made”.10

In that respect, as it appears from the diary, the looming disaster was obvious for V.A. Artamonov already by September. For instance, he writes in perplexity on September 21st 1915: “The High Command demands to resume bread supplies from Russia. If the Bulgarians capture it, the Serbs will not be upset. Or have they already concluded that there would be no war with Bulgaria? Isn't it clear!”11 Interestingly, in mid-October 1915 Russian military agent, judging by the conversation between German prisoners of war, makes the following remark in his diary: “compared to the Russian fronts, the operations on the Serbian are like a military promenade”.12 In his diary he registers every day quite in detail progressively deteriorating situation at the front, describing it on many pages of his diary. On October 10th 1915 Artamonov writes: “Colonel Fournier (French military agent – Y.V.) met with Field Marshal Putnik (5 p.m.) whom he tried in vain to persuade to fight his way through to Vranje and Skopje and to render the task simpler for the French.13 On October 29th 1915 he mentioned: “Rumour has it that near Krushevets the whole 12th regiment (Krushevsky) surrendered (or deserted).14 The inevitability of the disaster became obvious. And on November 5th 1915 the military agent bitterly writes: “The Serbs say that the Russians will come only to the Serbs’ wake”.15

By December 1915 the state of the Serbian army became depressive. On December 2nd 1915 the Russian military agent writes in his diary: “Speaking before the envoys, Pašić insists on transporting the army by sea. The General Staff opinion: 21 days of silence – impossible. It is either transportation or capitulation”.16 On the next day, December 4th he notes: “There are two ways to help the Serbs in this critical condition: 1) the safest, the fastest and the best option is to transport the allied army by fleet to the destination (presumably, closer to Thessaloniki). 2) To make the Italian army take as soon as possible the Serbian defensive line against the enemy, who attacks from the East and,

11 RSMHA. F. 16351. Op.1. doc.2. L. 8. In August 1914 a special expedition led by 1st rank captain M.M. Vesyolkin was undertaken to deliver ammunition from Russia to Serbia by the Danube.
13 Ibid. L. 41.
14 Ibid. L. 66.
15 Ibid. L. 75.
16 Ibid. L. 94 (ob).
thus, give the Serbian army a chance to retreat in order through Durrës and Valon”.17 This dull entry in the Artamonov’s diary is supplemented by the G.N.Trubetskoy memoirs: “At that time (the beginning of December) Pašić himself seemed completely depressed by the situation. In a confidential conversation on December 2nd he clearly told me: either at least 40 000 soldiers will be transported by sea in South Albania, or another place designated by the Allies, or we will have to capitulate”. However, the Russian diplomat notes that by saying this Serbian premier “sought primarily to put pressure on the Allies who continuously abandoned themselves to politic palaver instead of organizing the rescue of the poor Serbian army”.18 Describing Serbian prime-minister G.N. Trubetskoy particularly underlined that “the distinguishing features of his character were calm steadiness and self-control. I saw him in the most difficult situation for Serbia. He remained even-tempered and quiet, and only his walk could betray his state of soul”.19 In his turn, Artamonov, observing the behavior of the head of government in these critical times for Serbia, did not fail to mention that “Pašić decides everything with his habitual diplomatic tricks and slowness”.20

In this regard let us stress that Russian military and diplomatic agents’ notes clearly illustrate the peculiarities of the Serbian state and management system in the early XX century. The Serbian independence, gained in 1878, accelerated the shaping of different public and social groups: stratified categories of officials, experts, top military command. However, the essential element of the country’s political evolution in the second part of the XIX century was the fact that almost all the top strata of functionary and military elite were peasants by origin. They ensured not only and not so much the resolution of concrete managerial state tasks, as quite important and stable connection between the center and the provinces, which added to the politics its particular, archaic and often “family” motivation. At the very beginning of XX century Russian military historian E. I. Martynov said: “Serbia is a democratic country in the true sense of this word. There are no classes, no great landowners, and no big capitalists. The whole population, in essence, consists of equal in rights and wealthy villagers. One brother serves as a minister or commands a division; meanwhile the other brothers stay in the village cultivating their ancestral piece of land”.21

17 Ibid. L. 99.
19 Ibid. p. 88.
By the outbreak of World War One, despite the Europeanization reforms of Milan Obrenović implemented at the end of the XIX century, such condition of government and military agencies did not significantly change. At the same time such state of affairs influenced the overall state system which also did not escape the attention of G.N. Trubetskoy’s keen eye. When describing the work of Serbian ministerial cabinet in Niš he noted with surprise: “In Serbia everybody has a nickname, and they are much better-known by these nicknames than by real names. Lyuba Jovanović was called “patak”, which means “webbed goose”, because of his waddle. Minister of Prosvet (public education) Davidović was known as “mrav” (ant). All of them were nice and easygoing Serbs”. It was also true for the personal qualities of senior officials of the government. For example, describing M. Drashković – one of the leaders of Serbian young radicals whom he called “the most prominent member of the Cabinet”, G.N. Trubetskoy noted pointedly in his memoirs: “He was young, extremely attractive by his sincerity and a passionately devoted patriot. At the same time he had a rare business-like character in Serbia; you could rely on his words more than on the words of others. And it meant a lot in Serbia where the Slavic negligence was apparent”. Describing Vojislav Marinković, Minister of Agriculture and Commerce in Pašić’s cabinet, as “a European”, a former member of “the Progressives” – the party that was for a long time Austria-oriented, Trubetskoy stressed that “it did not prevent him from being a chauvinist” and wrote with a touch of irony that he, “as an intelligent person, adapted to the circumstances and became a Russophile just in time”.

Even more noteworthy description Trubetskoy gives of the Serbian prime-minister N. Pašić’s management techniques, which were quite appropriate and that is why relevant to the character and spirit of the Serbian society of the beginning of the XX century: “He ruled Serbia almost like a headman in a poorly developed village. Knowing all and everyone he smartly managed to eliminate any political rivalry. If an ambitious and disturbing person appeared, Pašić either made him interested in some undertaking to keep him later in check, or designated him to a position with the same aim in mind. He reminded me of a

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23 Ibid. p. 90.
24 The Progressives party (партия «напередніків» in Serbian, from «наперед» (forward)) advocated for the strong royal power and the accelerated modernization of the country with a Dual monarchy in prospect. It backed Serbian prince (king) Milan Obrenović during the reforms in 1880s. In the beginning of XX century one of its leaders was S. Novacovic.
25 Ibid. p. 91.
headman even more in his relations with a wealthy land-owning lady – with Russia. He knew that this lady could be tough, get angry and bawl him out, and in his turn he would rub his beard and procure some money and wood for the village".26 Speaking about the Serbian premier’s charisma, the Russian envoy particularly stressed that “imposing nature of Pašić impeded the evolvement of other great statesmen. His Serbia was personified in him as no other country in Europe was personified in any other statesman”.27

Such shape of Serbian authorities in the beginning of the XX century was the cause of numerous political crises which were accompanied by frequent changes of government. There were 18 Cabinets of Ministers between 1903 and 1914, i.e. each of them had operated for 7.3 months on average.28 It is not by chance that back in 1864 a remarkable Russian historian and Slavicist V.I. Lamansky in his book *Serbia and South Slavic Lands*, written in the wake of his journey to Serbia, keenly noted: "Common smart Serbs pertinently reflect that Serbian social disease by saying ‘Our problem is that each Serb wants to be a minister, and each minister wants to be a prince’".29 The time brought little change to how these matters stood. G.N. Trubetskoy wrote: "Distrust of power permeated through the whole legislation. That was the cause of great tardiness in the conduct of affairs. Each and every trifle was directed to a special committee. And convening that committee was a matter of some difficulty. I was taken aback when I arrived in Serbia and found the complete opposition to our Russian ways, as our leadership has too much authority. As a result, little Serbia was similarly chaotic to our country".30

The state of affairs was not changed even by the incipient war which seemingly required rapid and efficient decisions, and consolidated efforts of all branches of the country’s power structures more than ever before. The initiated enemy offensive further aggravated the turmoil when, according to Trubetskoy, the question of how to and where to evacuate from Niš was considered at "perpetual and underproductive sessions of the Cabinet of Ministers".31 In the meantime Bulgarians cut off the railway service and that caused even greater panic in the

29 Lamansky V. I. Serbia and South Slavic provinces in Austria // The Russians about Serbia and the Serbs, p. 29 // Ламанский В.И. Сербия и южно-славянские провинции Австрии // Русские о Сербии и сербах. С. 29.
government establishment. Each member of the Cabinet of Ministers, however, as noted by the Russian envoy, "had a wonderful automobile at his disposal, a batch of them having been recently brought from America". They said they could leave Niš a couple of hours before the Bulgarians come. Private and officer ranks of the Serbian army were deprived of such privilege and it was at that very moment, again noted by Trubetskoy, when "the last signs of order and organization have left Serbians. People were left to save themselves with no help at all".

In this sense the keen eyes of the Russian envoy noticed the conflict and rivalry between the military leadership and Pašić’s government which were so inherent in the Serbian politics of the early XX century but so inadmissible in the course of hostilities. When stressing that "relations between the High Command and the government had never been good and concordant enough", the Russian envoy particularly emphasized that "shortcomings in organization and planning, mistakes, blunders, and crashed illusions were the reason for mutual accusations. Each party sought to shift the responsibility for what was happening onto the other. Accordingly, when an immediate decision was to be made, neither of them wanted to make it on their own peril". In early November 1915, during the most critical period for Serbia, V.A. Artamonov also makes quite specific notes in his diary: "Ministers assemble daily for a council (to disclaim the responsibility). Interminable debates. Poor management".

G.N. Trubetskoy, when describing the Serbian army catastrophe in the autumn of 1915, underlined that "the relations between the High Command and the government became particularly strained in the last period before the military hostilities broke out in September 1915. The military could not forgive Pašić for having prevented them, according to the demand of the allies, from attacking Hungary while it was unprepared. He was blamed for all the failures in the negotiations with the allies and Greece". And the major irritation of the Serbian High Command arouse from Pašić’s direct intervention in the direction of

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32 Ibid. p.178.
34 Ibid. p. 174
36 Trubetskoy Gr. N. The above-mentioned Op. p.175. Describing the Serbian top military leadership - General R.Putnik and his assistant G. Pavlovic - Trubetskoy mentioned that Chief of Staff Putnik is “a decrepit, sick general” stayed in power “only thanks to the legend that was associated with his name and that helped him to become popular among the soldiers”. Givcovic, in his turn, was “not devoided of talent”, Russian diplomat believed, but he didn’t enjoy “the necessary authority neither in the eyes of old generals who led the armies, nor in his relations with the old Pasic”. // Ibid. p. 175.
military operations. It is noteworthy that one of the most immediate consequences of that confrontation was the Salonika Trial in the summer of 1917 of members of the military organization Unification or Death (Black Hand), who played significant part in the military leadership of the country at that time.\[^{37}\]

Naturally, that state of affairs not only impacted on the overall combat capacity of the army profoundly affecting the general course and specifics of the hostilities conduct at the Serbian-Austrian front, but also told upon the whole mentality of the Serbian soldier. Trubetskoy also noted: "It was an army of first-rate combat characteristics which it has demonstrated more than once, but at the same time the Serbian army was similar to militia in its constitution. A Serbian villager could fight exceptionally well when defending his native village, his homeland. For the sake of this heritage he would selflessly sacrifice his life, but the idea that native places can be abandoned even for a short time without any attempts to defend them had never rooted in his mind. And for the people's imagination it was even harder to put up with that notion."\[^{38}\]

But the value of these sources for a historian does not lay solely in the fact that they allow reconstructing the details related to the general processes of Serbian political development in the beginning of the XX century, as well as to the events which took place on the Balkan theatre of the First World War. Of equal interest for a scholar are stories that reflect everyday life peculiarities of that heroic march. For example, the members of the Serbian government had at their disposal finest automobiles at the beginning of the route, and Trubetskoy with other members of the European diplomatic corps also began his journey in quite comfortable conditions. On October 7th he left Niš for Kraljevo in a cozy coach of a special train. There the Russian envoy prepared as much as he could for the hardships of a difficult passage that lay ahead. From Kraljevo he headed to Raška, then went to Mitrovica, and managed to leave the town when the enemy was only 25 kilometers away from it. That part of the journey Trubetskoy and other diplomats also covered in

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\[^{37}\] This officer organization was established in 1911 and had a considerable influence on the Kingdom of Serbia's policy. Founders and leaders of this organization were sentenced at the Thessaloniki process in spring 1917 and three of its leaders - D. Dmitrijevic, L. Vulovich and R. Malobabic were executed by shooting following the given sentence. // See also: Vishnyakov Y.V. Military factor and state evolution in Serbia at the beginning of XX century. Moscow, MGIMO 2012. // Вишняков Я.В. Военный фактор и государственное развитие Сербии начала XX века. М., МГИМО 2012. // The same author. "Black hand" in Serbian politics at the beginning of XX century // Military and history magazine - 2014. № 10. - pp.8-13 // Он же. «Черная рука» в сербской политике начала XX века // Военно-исторический журнал - 2014. № 10. - с.8-13.

fairly good conditions. "Diplomats were given two four-seated automobiles and three trucks. We barely managed to fit in as there were more than 20 of us. Secretaries had to go in the trucks sitting on chests", noted Trubetskoj. Before long he and other diplomats arrived safely at Mitrovica, except for a little accident with one of the trucks where a Greek chargé d'affaires was. It overturned on a mountain road, but, fortunately, no one was severely injured but for a valet of an Italian envoy, who broke his leg. However, as it was written by Trubetskoj, "the Greek chargé d'affaires, who fell out of the truck, was stung to the innermost of his heart as a diplomat conscious of his significance being the representative of Greece. He, in fact, made a scene to poor Čolak-Antić because he had to go in a truck with servants".

It should be noted that it was not his first visit to that town. Before, the Russian envoy was there in 1908. At the same time, his comparative description of the town is another telling illustration of methods for appeasement and governance of that challenging region which entered the Kingdom of Serbia in the wake of the Balkan wars of 1912-1913. When comparing his impressions of the "capital of the Bandit Kingdom", the Russian diplomat mentioned that in 1908 "in the whole Mitrovica only two men wore European hats – the Russian and Austrian consuls". He wrote: "I felt a puff of some distant times, as if I was in the Zaporozhian Sich. And, of course, Albania was all land of brigands, and Mitrovica was a kind of bandits' nest". In the autumn of 1915 the Russian diplomat understood much to his surprise that "the former times have given place to the new ones. I could not recognize the proud Arvanites. Where have gone those fine young men who had been sporting their daggers, pistols, and rifles? Dimmed were their eyes which used to glitter with sombre fire, low were their spirits! <...> All these changes took place not only because this region was seized from Turks, but also due to the merciless suppression of the Albanian uprising after the war, when whole villages were completely wiped off the face of the earth and even children sometimes were given no quarter. It was strange to see Arvanites at that time, repairing a road under the observation of a Serbian inspector who would shout at them every now and then". However, it was clear that the military defeat of Serbia had

40 Before Bulgarians entered the war Čolak-Antić was a Serbian envoy in Sophia.
42 Ibid. p. 190.
43 Ibid. p. 191. In September 1913 Albanian guerillas with more than 10,000 people under the command of Isa Boljetini and other leaders of Albanian resistance attacked the recently acquired lands by Serbia in western Macedonia. A new war, this time
intensified that old-standing mutual hatred. Trubetskoy noted that "little by little Albanians started to rear their heads, understanding that in front of them those were not the subjugators of the past, but people who were running away from the pursuing enemy". In this sense a telling episode from his memoirs can serve as a good illustration: "Back in Mitrovica,' wrote the envoy, 'a Montenegrian envoy once came to me on business and saw a man with whom I was bargaining over a horse. Mijushkovich asked him who he was, - "I have been a Serb so far", was the answer. It was clear that this lot was not going to be a Serb for long".

But the Russian agent personally experienced the true hardships of that march related to the extensive larceny and robbery of exhausted soldiers by Albanians. On November 16th 1915, Artamonov wrote in his diary: "This morning I have sent a man with three gendarmes to find the horse and paraphernalia. Did nothing. Went there myself and found a miraculously alive horse (died on November 22nd) with bags slightly emptied, saved a couple of things: a sabre, dried crusts, a sailor’s bag, and some other small articles. The rest was pilfered by Arvanites."

Members of the diplomatic corps also did not stay for long in Mitrovica. "In a day or two, when the Serbian government arrived in Mitrovica, our military agent Artamonov came to me late in the evening and informed me that Bulgarians had captured Gilyan and can go round Kochanik."Tomorrow, at first light, we need to leave for Prizren", recalled Trubetskoy. By the end of the next day European diplomats, despite the proximity of the enemy, had safely arrived in Prizren, where the Russian envoy comfortably accommodated himself in the house of the former consul N.A. Emelyanov and whiled away the time reading the book *Thousand and One Nights* which he found in the library. Both Artamonov and French military agent Fournier took up their residence in the house together with him.

undeclared, started in the Balkans. Bulgarian guerillas also participated actively in this intervention. This attack was repulsed by the Serbian army but not without difficulty, and Albanian population became subject to hard repressions from the Serbian military authorities. (See also. TrbicV. Memoari. Beograd, 1996. p. 32-40); P.A. Iskenderov (see also: Iskenderov P.A. Serbia, Montenegro and Albanian question. Spb.: Aleteja, 2013. Pp. 132-158 // Искендеров П.А. Сербия, Черногория и албанский вопрос. СПб.: Алетейа, 2013. С.132-158), mentions the horrible reprisals by the Albanians as well as by the Serbs and quoted in this regard the “Official report to the Great Powers” - a document published in the newspaper “Corriere delle Pulie” where there was a sum up of the Albanian slaughters by the Serbs in Lume and Debare.

On November 7, 1915 Trubetskov left Prizren and crossed the Serbian-Montenegrin border and already on November 18 set off from Podgorica to Shkodër. However, all the subsequent nights, especially during the crossing of the Albanian mountains, were less comfortable for the Russian diplomat. He wrote: "We would stop at some hana. Hanas were planked constructions which could not be heated. Meanwhile the mountains were covered in snow and there was true winter weather. It required a lot of effort and money to get hay for the horses. The road in some places was in terrible condition, sometimes there was no road at all, we had to follow stream beds and climb frozen paths, leading our horses by bridles. Feeling weary and exhausted, we would arrive towards evening to a hana which was often so crowded one could not draw an easy breath. The march itself involved many everyday hardships of quite a sensitive nature to which delicate members of the diplomatic corps had to accustom themselves in particular. Trubetskov found it worthy to note in his memoirs that "The journey in unusual conditions instilled simple morals and simple manners. Mrs Jovanović asked her husband without any scruples to give her some paper. When leaving the room she asked Des Gras if she could hope to find a latrine. Des Gras could not raise her hopes. We all had to go to the road".

The journey of the Russian military agent was similarly difficult, and his notes of those times also give us valuable information which allows us to specify many peculiarities of the crossing of the Albanian mountains by the Serbian army and the conduct of its upper echelon. On November 14, 1915 Artamonov, while staying in a small village called Mamska Kula, made a note in his diary on the waiting for the arrival of Alexander Karageorovich, successor to the throne: "The prince is expected to arrive by the evening, he left Prizren at 12 in the afternoon in an automobile despite a broad belief that the road was too encumbered". Later the Russian agent writes: "The room next to mine is being prepared for him; they move out wife and mother of some officer. (italics - Y.V.) Court officers arrived by the evening, but the prince got stuck somewhere on the way because of the accumulated carts. He will have to spend a night in his automobile". Meanwhile Artamonov sent a guardsman with a lantern to the Mamska Bridge to meet the prince. It is written in the diary that he never saw that lantern again, "though badly needed it".

In the same Mamska Kulya Artamonov and a Serbian officer Jovanović, who was attached for his disposal, got new horses. The

49 Ibid. p. 204.
Russian agent noted: "I have three horses of my own, Jovanović gets three horses (and has his own, a saddled one). I suppose he gets those horses under the pretext of the military agents' needs".\(^{51}\) In this connection the following information from V.A. Artamonov of November 14, 1915 can be of some interest: "In the evening officers are given suva hrana, and that was a piece of Swiss cheese, 1/2 kg of kaimak each, a bottle of a 46-year old rakia, and two bottles of champagne. We have to finish our supplies." Later the Russian agent wrote that they were given one more bottle of vermouth in the High Command.\(^{52}\)

Traditional Serbian drink helped to elate the spirits of the Russian diplomat too. On reaching the top of the Cakor Mountain, which separated the new domains of Montenegro from the old ones, the diplomats decided to fight off the weariness that overwhelmed them. "The top of Cakor was the culmination point of our journey. We settled down for a breakfast after we reached it. In store we had a bottle of slivovitz from the Dechanskiy monastery, and it is well-known that monks are true experts in alcohol drinks. I had never drunk vodka with such a pleasure", recalled Trubetskoy.\(^{53}\)

But the hardships experienced by the Russian diplomatic and military agents were just a small portion of what private soldiers and common refugees had to come though during that hard crossing. Trubetskoy wrote in his memoirs: "We have seen so many people who could barely drag their feet and had to lay along the road for rest. Have they all managed it to the sea? They had no one to ask for help, everyone was in the same situation. At every step one could see dying horses left behind. They were also so weak that could not make even a smallest effort. If there was any unevenness of the ground, or if they had to drag a cart over a ditch, horses would fall right there drawing their last breath. In some places we had to cross ditches stepping on the horses' corpses already stuck in the ground. Astride the road there were recently dug graves with crosses. These were graves of the people who must have been lying there dead for a long time and were buried only the day before, when it got about that the Successor and diplomats would take that road. The path from Shkodër to Medua could indeed be called *Via Dolorosa* of the Serbian people".\(^{54}\)


\(^{52}\) *Ibid.* L.82-82 (ob).
