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SERIES HISTORICA LXXIV.

A Debreceni Egyetem Történelmi Intézete Kiadványai

Főszerkesztő:
BARTA RÓBERT

ACTA UNIVERSITATIS
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XXX.

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Történelmi Intézetének kiadványa

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Tartalom

TAYLER NICHOLAS PAUL: Lotaringia és Liège hatása az Árpád-kori Magyarországra, különös tekintettel az Eger-völgyre.....	6
CZÖVEK ZOLTÁN: Egervári István, egy fiatal főúr levelezése a 16. század elejéről (1508–1511).....	20
DÁNIEL TAMÁS ANDRÉKÓ: The Role of Gustav Kálnoky in the Final Extension of the League of the Three Emperors (1883–1884).....	94
SZERENCSÉS ANNA RÉKA: Az angol külpolitika és a magyar emigráció lehetőségei a krími háború időszaka alatt Kossuth Lajos sajtómegjelenései tükrében	120
ANNA RÉKA SZERENCSÉS: The Palmerston-portrait of Lajos Kossuth in the light of his press appearances published during the Crimean War	143
VARGA RÓBERT: Berzeviczy István rendőrkapitányi pályafutása 1895–1916 között	154
PINTÉR ZOLTÁN ÁRPÁD: Aszály, ellátási gondok, hatósági kényszerintézkedések és „háborús infláció” az I. világháborús Karcagon	190
ZAKKAR ANTÓNIA: Albrecht főherceg első házasságának közéleti visszhangja a Horthy-korszakban	203
BARTA RÓBERT: A balkáni viszonyok 1931-ben Carlile Aylmer Macartney előadásának tükrében.....	224
PUSZTAI GÁBOR: „... fogadtatásuk szívélyes volt...” Holland hadifoglyok Magyarországon a második világháborúban	244
RUMBOLD-MOLNÁR ESZTER: Életút interjú a Brüsszelben élő Kun Miklóssal.....	282
E számunk szerzői.....	295
Szerkesztői útmutató a „Történeti tanulmányok” jegyzeteléséhez	296

Dániel Tamás Andrékó

The Role of Gustav Kálnoky in the Final Extension of the League of the Three Emperors (1883–1884)*

„(...) *As regards Eastern affairs, (...) we must secure peace for the Monarchy for at least a few more years, (...) the war could bring political and social upheaval beyond all predictions.*”¹ With this sentence, Count Gustav Kálnoky, the joint Foreign Minister of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, in his instruction to the Austro-Hungarian ambassador in St. Petersburg, Anton Wolkenstein-Trostburg, expressed the need to establish an Austro-Hungarian–Russian partnership and the League of the Three Emperors, which would set the framework for this partnership. The success of the cooperation depended on the ability of the governments in Vienna and St. Petersburg to effectively settle their conflicts of interest over the Balkans.

The principal objective of the League of the Three Emperors, ratified in 1881, was to isolate France and secure peace in Europe. Maintaining this framework of cooperation was a major difficulty for the German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck,² as the geopolitical ambitions of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the Russian Empire in the Balkan Peninsula were a point of conflict between the two states. The basic foreign political goal of the Russian Empire was the occupation of Constantinople and the Straits.³

* Supported by the ÚNKP-21-2-I-DE-310 New National Excellence Program of the Ministry for Culture and Innovation from the Source of the National Research, Development and Innovation Fund.

¹ Weisung Kálnokys an Wolkenstein-Trostburg. Privatbrief. Wien, 22. Februar 1884. In: Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv. Diplomatie und Außenpolitik 1848–1918. Ministerium des Äußern (1784–1924)/Politisches Archiv (1848–1918)/Allgemeines und Österreich-Ungarn (1848–1918)/Akten (1839–1918)/Geheime Akten. (Hereinafter: HHStA PA/I.). Kt. 460. Geheime Liassen XII und XIII: Drei-Kaiser-Bündnis 1884; Verhandlungen mit Rumänien. (Hereinafter: HHStA PA/I. Kt. 460.)

² On the German and Bismarckian foreign policy of the period, see: Hildebrand, Klaus, *Das Vergangene Reich*. Deutsche Außenpolitik von Bismarck bis Hitler. 1871–1945. Stuttgart, 1996. 70–74. (Hereinafter: Hildebrand, 1996); Kumpf-Korfes, Sigrid, *Bismarcks «Draht nach Russland»*. Berlin, 1968. (Hereinafter: Kumpf-Korfes, 1968.)

³ On the Russian foreign policy of the period, see: *Восточный вопрос во внешней политике России. Конец XVIII – начало XX. в.* ред.: Георгиев, В. А.–Киняпина Н. С.–Панченкова, М. Т.–Шеремет В. И., Москва, 1974. 243–250. (Hereinafter: Георгиев et al., 1974.); Сказкин, Сергей Данилович, *Конец австро–руско–германского союза*. Москва, 1977. (Hereinafter: Сказкин, 1977.) 240–263.; Киняпина, Н. С., *Внешняя*

The foreign policy of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy⁴ was centred on the “*Drang nach Salonika*” programme, and consequently the Western Balkans, and above all the Otranto Strait and the Vardar River valley were of particular importance, which led to Thessaloniki.⁵ With the treaties signed between 1880 and 1881, Serbia came under the influence of the Monarchy both politically and economically, and at the same time Vienna successfully built up its economic interests in Bulgaria.⁶ However, the Russian influence was not so successful, and the political influence of St. Petersburg in Bulgaria declined steadily. The main question was therefore how the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the Russian Empire could diffuse the distrust and war rhetoric that arose from the Balkan rivalry and assert their interests in the negotiations on the extension of the League of the Three Emperors. Bismarck played an important role in building up the consensus, but in order to prolong the alliance it was important for him to give room to the ideas of Kálnoky and the Russian Foreign Minister Nikolay Karlovich Giers, but only to the extent that would not lead to the collapse of the alliance. The aim of this study is to present the role and work of the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister in the final extension of the League of the Three Emperors.

политика России второй половине XIX века. Москва, 1974. 220–258. (Hereinafter: Киняпина, 1974.)

⁴ For the Austro-Hungarian foreign and Balkan policy of the period, see: Palotás, Emil, *Machtpolitik und Wirtschaftsinteressen. Der Balkan und Rußland in der österreichisch-ungarischen Außenpolitik 1878–1895*. Bp., 1995. 225–235. (Hereinafter: Palotás, 1995.); Bridge, F. R., *From Sadowa to Sarajevo. The Foreign Policy of Austria-Hungary, 1866–1914*. London–Boston, 1972. 257–274. (Hereinafter: Bridge, 1972.); Bridge, F. R., “Österreich(-Ungarn) unter den Grossmächten”, In: Wandruszka, Adam–Urbanitsch, Peter (Hrsg.): *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848–1918. Die Habsburgermonarchie in System der Internationalen Beziehungen. 1. Teilband*. Wien, 1989. 257–274. (Hereinafter: Bridge, 1989.); Diószegi, István, *Az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchia külpolitikája 1867–1918*. [The foreign policy of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy] Bp., 2001. 75–84. (Hereinafter: Diószegi, 2001.).

⁵ Demeter, Gábor, “Geopolitical Aspects of Alliance Politics in the Balkans 1878–1913”, In: Demeter, Gábor (ed.), *Diplomatic Struggle for Supremacy over the Balkan Peninsula. (1878–1914)*. Sofia–Budapest, 2017. 46. (Hereinafter: Demeter, 2017.)

⁶ Schrek, Katalin, “Oroszország és az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchia balkáni partnerségének nemzetközi aspektusai” [“International aspects of the partnership between Russia and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in the Balkans”], 39–41. In: Barta, Róbert–Csiszár, Imre (szerk.), *Volt egyszer egy Monarchia. Város és vidék*. Hajdúnánás, 2019. 37–58.; Samardžić, Momir, *Serbian Politics and the Railway Issue, 1878–1881*. Pisa, 2010. 37–76.

Although the question of the League of the Three Emperors has been much discussed in domestic and international diplomatic history, the passages on the renewal of the alliance and the role and advocacy of Kálnoky have not yet been the subject of an in-depth research. What impact did the extension of the dual alliance have on the thinking of Kálnoky? How and in what way was he able to assert the interests of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy? What concepts did he formulate regarding the amendment of the treaty and what were the driving forces behind these? What were the points of disagreement with his negotiating partners?

The sources relevant to answering the questions can be divided into two groups: published and unpublished sources. I conducted my research at the *Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv* in Vienna. The most important group of fonds was the documentation relating to the extension of the League of the Three Emperors.⁷ The second important units were the reports and instructions on the dual alliance.⁸ I also deemed it important to examine the circulars written by Kálnoky to the diplomats of the Monarchy.⁹ They contained little meaningful information regarding the present topic, but it is important to mention the documents of the archives of the Austro-Hungarian Embassy in St. Petersburg,¹⁰ the unpublished memoirs of Alois Lexa von Aehrenthal on Austro-Hungarian–Russian relations,¹¹ and the notes of Kálnoky on the problems concerning the establishment of the *Quadruple Alliance*.¹²

⁷ HHStA PA/I. Kt. 460.

⁸ HHStA PA/I. Kt. 454. Geheime Liassen II, III, XI: Verhandlungen mit Deutschland (Zweibund und dessen Verlängerung, Treffen Haymerles mit Bismarck) (Hereinafter: HHStA PA/I. Kt. 454.)

⁹ Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv. Diplomatie und Außenpolitik 1848–1918. Ministerium des Äußern (1784–1924)/Politisches Archiv (1848–1918)/Allgemeines und Österreich-Ungarn (1848–1918)/Akten (1839–1918)/PA/I. 1093–1111. Zirkularien/Zirkulare (1848–1918). Kt. 1108. Zirkulare 1879–1886. (Hereinafter: HHStA PA I. Kt. 1108.)

¹⁰ Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv. Diplomatie und Außenpolitik 1848–1918. Ministerium des Äußern (1784–1924)/Gesandtschafts- und Konsulatsarchive (1617–1920)/Gesandtschafts- und Konsulatsarchive P./St. Petersburg, Gesandtschaftsarchiv (1805–1914). Kt. 117. Gesandtschaftsarchiv St. Petersburg, Geheimakten 1879–1908, 1897–1901. (Hereinafter: HHStA GKA GesA St. Petersburg Kt. 117.)

¹¹ HHStA PA/I. Kt. 469–2–XXIIIb–4. Denkschrift des Freiherren von Aehrenthal über die Beziehungen Österreich-Ungarns zu Russland 1872–1894. (Hereinafter: HHStA PA/I. Kt. 469–2–XXIIIb–4.)

¹² HHStA PA/I. Kt. 69-2-XXIIIa-2. Notizen über eine Unterredung mit dem deutschen Gesandten Prinz Reuss betreffend eine Convention à quatre (Österreich-Ungarn,

Another important part of the sources are the published sources, among which I have processed the diaries of the German Foreign Ministry¹³ and the German ambassador Hans-Lothar von Schweinitz¹⁴ who served in St. Petersburg during the period.

Count Gustav Kálnoky¹⁵ (1832–1898) was a statesman of Hungarian origin brought up in Letovice, Moravia. He entered the military in the autumn of 1849 and served in the Hussar regiments of the Habsburg Empire until his diplomatic graduation in 1854. He began his diplomatic career as an embassy secretary in Munich (1854–1856), Berlin (1856–1859) and London (1859–1866). In 1866, he was promoted to the post of embassy counsellor in the British capital, which he held until 1871. He was subsequently delegated to the Vatican (1871–1874) and to Copenhagen (1874–1879) as ambassador extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary, and was appointed ambassador to St. Petersburg (1879–1881). As a result, Kálnoky had an excellent knowledge of European affairs and built up a wide network of contacts. Taking all this into account, it is perhaps not surprising that Franz Joseph I appointed Kálnoky in 1881 as the successor to the late Baron Heinrich von Haymerle. According to Lajos Thallóczy: “(...) it was him [*Benjámín Kállay* – the author] who recommended Count Gustav Kálnoky, then ambassador to St. Petersburg, whose cleverly written reports and whimsical tone he enjoyed very much.”¹⁶ We do not know to what extent the intercession of Kállay played a role in the appointment of Kálnoky as foreign minister, but in any case, the emperor sympathised with him. According to the typology of Zoltán Tefner, Kálnoky belonged to the so-called *Dienstadel*, the “servant nobility”, who were characterised

Deutschland, Italien, Russland). (Hereinafter: HHStA PA/I. Kt. 69-2-XXIIIa-2).

¹³ *Die Große Politik der Europäischen Kabinette 1871–1914*. Sammlung der Diplomatischen Akten des Auswärtigen Amtes. Band 3. Das Bismarkische Bündnissystem. Hrsg. Lepsius, Johannes–Bartholdy, Albrecht Mendelssohn–Thimme, Friedrich, Berlin, 1922. 283–335. (Hereinafter: *Die Große Politik*, 1922.)

¹⁴ Schweinitz, Hans Lothar, *Denkwürdigkeiten des Botschafters General von Schweinitz*. Berlin, 1929. (Hereinafter: Schweinitz, 1929.)

¹⁵ _On the personality and foreign policy of Kálnoky, see: Rauscher, Walter, *Zwischen Berlin und St. Petersburg*. Wien–Köln–Weimar. 1993. (Hereinafter: Rauscher, 1993.); Rutkowski, Ernst R. “Gustav Graf Kálnoky. Eine biographische Skizze”, *Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Staatsarchivs* 14, 1961 - Festschrift für Gebhard Rath zum 60. Geburtstag. 330–343.

¹⁶ Thallóczy Lajos naplója. Országos Széchényi Könyvtár Kézirattára. [The diary of Lajos Thallóczy. Manuscript Archives of the National Széchényi Library] Quart. Hung. 2459/1. Thallóczy Lajos naplója 1. 1887–1900. Excursiok. 58.

by loyalty to the dynasty rather than to the nation.¹⁷ Indeed, those who ended up at the *Ballhausplatz* began serving not a nation but the empire.¹⁸ By the opinion of Emil Palotás Franz Joseph chose Kálnoky because he was neither biased nor prejudiced and always put the interests of the dual monarchy first.¹⁹ This is further supported by the research of Francis Roy Bridge, according to whom Kálnoky considered himself unfit to be joint foreign minister, to the extent that he even rejected the appointment of the monarch twice and accepted it only for the third time.²⁰

Informal negotiations to extend the League of the Three Emperors had already begun in January 1883, when Giers arrived in Vienna to meet with Kálnoky. At the consultation, Kálnoky pointed out that if Russia facilitated the end of the rule of the Obrenović dynasty in Serbia, it would lead to anarchic conditions, which could spread to the southern Slav population along the border of the Monarchy, and therefore he also mentioned the possibility of armed intervention.²¹ The leader of the *Ballhausplatz* was so open with Giers that he even talked about his foreign policy programme: he did not want to intervene in Balkan affairs, but reserved the possibility of intervention in countries within the sphere of interest of the Monarchy, such as Serbia and Montenegro. Continuing his argumentation, Kálnoky added that the League of the Three Emperors had a vital interest in supporting the ruling minor dynasties of the Balkans, since the decline of monarchical forms of government would be dangerous for both Austria-Hungary and Russia as well.²²

Russian diplomacy interpreted what was said at the meeting in the *Ballhausplatz* as a threat, thus, Giers decided as early as January 1883 to initiate preliminary negotiations to extend the League of the Three

¹⁷ Tefner, Zoltán, “A szövetségi rendszerek megerősítése és bomlása. A Kálnoky-korszak külpolitikájának néhány elméleti kérdéséhez” [“The strengthening and disintegration of federal systems. Some theoretical issues relating to the foreign policy of the Kálnoky era”], *Grotius: A Budapesti Corvinus Egyetem Egyetem Nemzetközi Tanulmányok Intézetének Tudományos Folyóirata*, 2013. 6. Online: Grotius, http://www.grotius.hu/doc/pub/FEMGIB/2013-04-04_tefner_zoltan_a-kalnoky-korszak.pdf – 12 March 2020. 1–28. (Hereinafter: Tefner, 2013.)

¹⁸ Somogyi, Éva, *Hagyomány és átalakulás. Állam és bürokrácia a dualista Habsburg Monarchiában*. [Tradition and Transformation. State and Bureaucracy in the Dualist Habsburg Monarchy] Bp., 2006. 91. (Hereinafter: Somogyi, 2006.)

¹⁹ Palotás, 1995. 137.

²⁰ Bridge, 1989. 263.

²¹ Bridge, 1972. 141–142.

²² Ibid. 141.

Emperors.²³ Pyotr Alexandrovich Saburov, Russian ambassador to Berlin, initiated talks between the German Empire and the Russian Empire regarding the draft of a new Balkan system.²⁴ In shaping international relations, Saburov sought to turn to Russia's advantage the fact that the United Kingdom was kept away from the Balkan affairs by the Irish and Egyptian question, while France was kept away by the conflict between the monarchical and republican parties.²⁵ This explains why the Russian ambassador to Berlin formulated his negotiating position²⁶ on the basis of the 1876 Reichstadt Agreement.²⁷ Kálnoky received official notification about Saburov's proposal from Prince Heinrich Reuß, German ambassador to Vienna, on 12 February 1883.²⁸ This can certainly be explained by the fact that the cabinet in St. Petersburg wanted to reach a consensus with Berlin first on the substantive issues during the formal negotiations, as in the 1880–1881 negotiations,²⁹ and then force the Vienna government to make concessions.

To examine the role of Kálnoky, it is important to look at the way Giers thought about foreign policy. On his visit to Varzin in 1882, the Russian Foreign Minister emphasized that “(...) *the internal conditions in Russia*³⁰ *do not permit anything other than a policy of peace – of whi-*

²³ Ibid. 141–142.

²⁴ Nr. 599. Der Staatssekretär des Auswärtigen Amtes Graf von Hatzfeldt an den Botschafter in Petersburg von Schweinitz. Berlin, den 6. Februar 1883. In: *Die Große Politik*, 1922. 285–286.

²⁵ Сказкин, 1977. 240–241.

²⁶ Nr. 605. Aufzeichnungen des Unterstaatssekretärs im Auswärtigen Amt Busch. Berlin, 25. August 1883. In: *Die Große Politik*, 1922. 293.; Сказкин, 1977. 240–241.

²⁷ The Reichstadt Agreement of 1876 was a treaty between the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Russian Empire, in which it was stipulated that if the Ottoman Empire won the Serbian–Montenegrin–Turkish war (1876), the status quo in the Balkans would not change, but if Serbia and Montenegro won, the plan to partition the Ottoman Empire without the creation of a strong southern Slavic state was put on the agenda as a perspective. For more on this, see: Schrek, Katalin, “A bécsi kongresszus és az európai rend fenntartása 1914-ig” [“The Congress of Vienna and the maintenance of European order until 1914”], 206–207. In: Bárány, Attila–Barta, Róbert–Györkös, Attila–Pósán, László [et al.] (ed.), *A nemzetközi kapcsolatok története*. Debrecen, 2020. 182–223. (Hereinafter: Schrek, 2020.)

²⁸ Aufzeichnungen über eine Unterredung des Grafen Kálnoky mit Pr[in]z[en] Reuß. Wien, 12. Februar 1883. In: HHStA PA/I. Kt. 460.

²⁹ For the process of the 1881 negotiations, see: Palotás, 1995. 127–131.

³⁰ After the accession of Alexander III (1881–1894) to the throne, he broke with the Russian reformist policy, mainly as a result of the assassination of his father, Tsar Alexander II (1855–1894), and almost the entire period of his reign was characterised

ch Tsar Alexander, Tolstoy and myself are absolutely convinced.”³¹ This foreign political direction was confirmed by a consultation between Giers and the German ambassador to St. Petersburg, Hans Lothar von Schweinitz, dated 9 March 1883.³² The basic situation of the conversation was that, due to the internal political crisis in Russia, Giers wanted to extend the contract with unchanged conditions and timeframe. At the same time it is apparent that Giers’ political thinking and habit were determined by domestic circumstances, because – contrary to the clauses of the 1881 treaty – he considered the possible annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina a worrying step as long as the union of the Bulgarian Principality and Eastern Rumelia could not be achieved.³³ Therefore, the claim that Giers’s policy of “*détente*” would have been replaced by an effort to amend the treaty only after the consolidation of domestic politics and the realisation of the Bulgarian union, is well-founded. In guaranteeing moderate and peaceful relations, the foreign policy line of Kálmoky and Giers reached a common point of reference, nevertheless, in the view of Kálmoky, the alliance could only offer a *relative guarantee* due to the Russian domestic crisis.³⁴

Before proceeding to analyse the unfolding of the Austro-Hungarian–Russian negotiations, it is important to contextualise the circumstances of the extension of the *Dual Alliance*. The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the German Empire had entered into a contract in 1879 for five plus three years, which is why Reuß did not understand the efforts of Bismarck to initiate negotiations with Kálmoky as early as February 1883. The pre-conception of Bismarck was that he wanted to reach an agreement first with regard to the League of the Three Emperors and then with regard to the dual alliance, but in reality, this order was switched.³⁵ One reason for this is that the negotiations on the League of the Three Emperors were protracted. At the same time, and what is perhaps even more important, they wanted

by the strengthening of his autocratic power, which required orderly foreign political relations. On the domestic political process, see: Heller, Mihail, *Az Orosz Birodalom története*. [History of the Russian Empire] Bp., 2003. 615–636.

³¹ Aufzeichnungen über eine Unterredung des Grafen Kálmoky mit Pr[in]z[en] Reuß. Wien, 12. Februar 1883. In: HHStA PA/I. Kt. 460.

³² Schweinitz, 1922. 225–226.; Nr. 602. Der Botschafter in Petersburg von Schweinitz an den Reichskanzler Fürsten von Bismarck. St. Petersburg, 30. März 1883. In: *Die Große Politik*, 1922. 288.

³³ Nr. 601. Der Botschafter in Petersburg von Schweinitz an den Reichskanzler Fürsten von Bismarck. St. Petersburg, 9. März 1883. In: *Die Große Politik*, 1922. 287–288.

³⁴ Aufzeichnungen über eine Unterredung des Grafen Kálmoky mit Pr[in]z[en] Reuß. Wien, 12. Februar 1883. In: HHStA PA/I. Kt. 460.

³⁵ Ibid.

to achieve a more favourable negotiating position between the Austro-Hungarian and Russian sides by having the German Foreign Ministry give way to Kálnoky's proposals regarding the dual alliance and, as a symbolic gesture, extending it first as William I had instructed.³⁶

The negotiations on the dual alliance were completed in just one month. The discussions between Kálnoky and Reuß took place in Vienna. Franz Joseph and Kálnoky shared the idea of renewing the treaty, invoking the "mutual interdependence"³⁷ and the good relations between the two empires. Kálnoky did not comprehend the purpose of the Bismarckian policy, because, referring to the abovementioned extra three-year term, Kálnoky was caught unawares by the initiative of the Berlin cabinet and did not formulate any corrections.³⁸ The themes of the consultations and amendments were determined by the German Foreign Ministry. The first element of the proposals made by Bismarck was that the dual alliance should be concluded by the parliaments of the two empires, that it should be elevated to the level of public law (*publici iuris*). However, this initiative failed for two reasons: on the one hand, Bismarck, having reconsidered the situation, concluded that it would have widened the disputes between William I and the Reichstag,³⁹ and on the other hand, referring to the political structure of the dual state, Kálnoky rejected it. In relation to the latter, Kálnoky considered the decision-making mechanism of the Reichsrat and the Hungarian Parliament to be too lengthy, and, since there was no common imperial government in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, he saw the decision of the two Parliaments on foreign policy treaties as a weakening of the joint ministries.⁴⁰

³⁶ Nr. 574. Der Staatssekretär des Auswärtigen Amtes Graf von Hatzfeldt an den Botschafter Wien Prinzen Heinrich VII Reuß. Berlin, 10. Februar 1883. In: *Die Große Politik*, 1922. 251–252.

³⁷ At this point it is worth noting that Kálnoky may have been referring to the Russian threat. In parallel with these events, Russian military mobilizations began in Russian Poland along the border with the German Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and Austro-Hungarian units took up defensive positions in Galicia. See: Алпеев, Олег Евгеньевич, *Документы стратегических военных игр генерального русского армии 1906–1914. гг. Источниковедческое исследование*. Диссертация на соискание ученой степени кандидата исторических наук. Москва, 2014. 4–78. [I am most grateful to the author for providing me the manuscript of the dissertation.]

³⁸ Aufzeichnung über eine Unterredung Kálnoky mit Pr[in]z[en] Reuß. Wien, 12. Februar 1883. In: HHStA PA/I. Kt. 454.

³⁹ Nr. 578. Der Reichskanzler Fürst von Bismarck an den Botschafter in Wien Prinzen Heinrich VII. Reuß. Berlin, 21. Februar 1883. In: *Die Große Politik*, 1922. 254–255.

⁴⁰ Aufzeichnung über eine Mitteilung mit Pr[in]z[en] Reuß. Wien, 25. Februar 1883. In: HHStA PA/I. Kt. 454.

Kálnoky also added that in time, when the public actors in Austria and Hungary begin to realise the benefits of the German alliance, it will be easier to get it through the parliaments.⁴¹ Emperor William I – as in 1879 – put on the agenda the extension of the *casus foederis* to the aggression of any country, as according to the original pact this was only applicable in the event of a Russian attack. In this respect, the Imperial Chancellor instructed the German ambassador to Vienna “(...) *not to insist on it [the extension of the casus foederis – the author], since the treaty now in force is indeed sufficient (...)*.”⁴² This passage is further proof that Bismarck did not intend to make any substantial changes. Neither Franz Joseph nor Kálnoky accepted the extension of the defensive nature of the alliance in the event of an attack by any state other than Russia. One of the arguments put forward by Kálnoky was that a possible Franco–Austrian–Hungarian war could embolden the southern Slavs and the Romanians, and that for a two- or multi-front war the military contingents of the Monarchy were inadequate. The second argument of the Austro-Hungarian joint foreign minister was the Francophone attitude of the Hungarian public, which would have rejected any cooperation that may be directed against France.⁴³ The leadership of the German Foreign Ministry gave Vienna a free hand in determining the so-called *notice period*.⁴⁴ In the opinion of Franz Joseph, the alliance is strengthened if the pact stipulates a two-year notice period, “(...) *if no call for negotiations is received from either parties in the first month of the penultimate year of the contract, the contract will be considered extended for three more years.*”⁴⁵ In parallel, the Austro-Hungarian monarch accepted the proposal of William I for a five-year extension. Kálnoky left the question to the decision of the German diplomacy whether to sign a new treaty or a protocol for an extension to the treaty.⁴⁶

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Nr. 578. Der Reichskanzler Fürst von Bismarck an den Botschafter in Wien Prinzen Heinrich VII. Reuß. Berlin, 21. Februar 1883. In: *Die Große Politik*, 1922. 254–255.

⁴³ Memorandum zum Schlussätze die Aufzeichnung einer Mitteilung des Fürsten in Betriff der Erneuerung unseres Vertrage mit Deutschland vom Oktober 1879. Wien, 26. Februar 1883. In: HHStA PA/I. Kt. 454.

⁴⁴ In the original German text, the noun *die Kündigungsfrist* appeared.

⁴⁵ Nr. 579. Der Botschafter in Wien Prinz Heinrich VII. Reuß an den Reichskanzler Fürsten von Bismarck. Wien, den 27. Februar 1883. In: *Die Große Politik*, 1922. 255–257.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

The Hungarian aspect of the extension of the dual alliance is that on 3 March 1883 Kálnoky sent a letter to the Hungarian Prime Minister Kálmán Tisza, which was full of details; no similar letter was sent when the League of the Three Emperors was extended. The document approaches the events from two points of view, which were not mentioned in the official German nor in the Austro-Hungarian diplomatic documents. On the one hand, Kálnoky said that “*From our point of view, I share the belief that the alliance of the two monarchies [German Empire and the Russian Empire – the author] is equally useful, and I am therefore very glad to see its extension and the reassurance it brings, namely, in connection with our very important relations with Russia, about which, as you know, I personally have never been worried, despite the terrible noise in the press lately.*”⁴⁷ On the basis of the text, it can be concluded that Kálnoky tried to influence the Russophobic Hungarian political opinion and broaden his own circle of supporters at the same time by extending the treaty, which was established with the powerful assistance of Count Gyula Andrassy, and which also meant a guarantee against Russian attack. The other such case was the question of the customs union between Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Kálnoky informed Tisza that this “*(...) is not intended as a formal customs union, but as a common position on customs issues towards foreign countries with the possible opening of customs borders between the two neighbouring countries.*”⁴⁸ Based on the research of István Németh, it can be stated that the customs union could not have been realized due to the 1871 Franco–German peace treaty of Frankfurt. The essence of this was that Article XI stipulated that Germany and France would mutually guarantee the most-favoured-nation principle and excluded Germany from granting preferential customs duties to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in the future. Finally, Berlin and Vienna concluded a trade and customs treaty in 1891.⁴⁹

A common position was reached on the points of amendment to the treaty by 10 March 1883. Emperor William I accepted the two-year notice period and that the *casus foederis* would continue to apply only in the case of an attack by Russia. At this point it is also worth men-

⁴⁷ Abschrift eines geheimen Privatschreiben des Grafen Kálnoky an den ungarischen Ministerpräsidenten von Tisza, dd. Wien, 3. März 1883. In: HHStA PA/I. Kt. 454.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Németh, István, *Hatalmi politika Közép-Európában – Német és osztrák-magyar Közép-Európa tervezés 1871–1918*. [Power politics in Central Europe – German and Austro-Hungarian Central Europe planning] Bp., 2009. 197. (Hereinafter: Németh, 2009.) For the 1891 Customs and Trade Agreement, see: Németh, 2009. 79–81.

tioning that the dual alliance was extended from 21 October 1884 to 21 October 1889.⁵⁰ The provisions were finally signed – at the suggestion of Bismarck – in the form of a protocol on 22 March 1883 by Kálnoky and Reuß in Vienna.⁵¹ Therefore, the renewal of the dual alliance may seem formal, but it is in the light of the League of the Three Emperors that the gestural value of the policy of Bismarck can truly be understood.

The Austro-Hungarian–Russian preliminary negotiations resumed in May 1883.⁵² In his meeting with the Russian ambassador to Vienna, Aleksey Borisovich Lobanov-Rostovsky, Kálnoky expressed his intention to extend the League of the Three Emperors and maintain the cooperative Austro-Hungarian–Russian relations.⁵³ With this information, Lobanov-Rostovsky travelled to Moscow for the coronation of Alexander III and was able to attend the Moscow meeting at which Russian intentions and proposals for changes to the League of the Three Emperors were discussed.⁵⁴ As a result, the Russian ambassador to Vienna was charged with the task of conveying towards Kálnoky the position of the Russian Emperor

⁵⁰ Kálnoky an Franz Joseph, Wien, den 10. März 1883. In: HHStA PA/I. Kt. 454.

⁵¹ Protokoll vom 22. März 1883 über die Verlängerung des deutsch–österreich–ungarischen Bündnisvertrages. The German version is published in: Nr. 582. Protokoll vom 22. März 1883. über die Verlängerung des deutsch–österreich–ungarischen Bündnisvertrages. In: *Die Große Politik*, 1922. 258–259. The Austrian text is published in: Pribram, Alfred Francis: *The Secret Treaties of Austria-Hungary. 1879–1914*. London, 1920. 74–77.

⁵² The date of the meeting is not recorded, but it took place before the coronation of Alexander III in Moscow on 28 May 1883.

⁵³ Aufzeichnungen über eine Unterredung dessen Kálnoky mit F[ür]st Lobanow. Wien, Juni 1883. In: HHStA PA/I. Kt. 460.

⁵⁴ There was a consensus on extending the contract, but several alternatives were put forward. According to Saburov, the fact that Germany is free to launch a war against France, while Russia can only do so after prior consultation, is a crucial element. Furthermore, Saburov wanted to get a declaration from Bismarck and Kálnoky that Russia would be free to occupy the straits in the event of the collapse of the Ottoman Porte. In contrast, Giers and Lobanov-Rostovsky considered the extension of the contract without amendments to be more in line with reality. Three positions have emerged in the context of the Bulgarian Union. Lobanov-Rostovsky expected the consolidation in Bulgaria to be achieved by implementing the Union as soon as possible. Saburov expressed his opposition, saying that the unification would not be successful, as Alexander Battenberg already pursues too much of an Austrophil policy. Finally, Giers justified his refusal to intervene by arguing that such a move could easily lead Russia into a war with the Ottoman Empire, which he wanted to avoid in order to settle internal political relations. In essence, the foreign policy programme of Russia to maintain the status quo in the Balkans was already formulated in May 1883. For more on this, see: Kumpf-Korfes, 1968. 45–46.

and Foreign Minister, who stressed that the principles and interests of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the Russian Empire were pointing in the same direction, and that they were striving to achieve the common goal of maintaining peace and strengthening the cooperation of the three emperors.⁵⁵ However, Franz Joseph considered it important to emphasize that “(...) *neither too much nor too little weight should be attached to the matter [the negotiations – the author].*”⁵⁶ The passage points out that in essence the Austro-Hungarian ruler allowed negotiations based on mutual dialogue, but did not consider significant changes – which were beneficial to Russia – as a basis for negotiation. Thus, the three courts had informed their partners by June 1883 of the rationale behind the extension of the treaty.⁵⁷

Kálnoky explained the importance of extending the contract with two reasons. First, in his instruction sent on 5 July 1883 to Anton Wolkenstein-Trostburg, the Austrian ambassador to St. Petersburg, he stated that “(...) *friendly relations with Russia are one of the most important conditions for the preservation of general peace, on which the peaceful development of the Danube and Balkan countries depend.*”⁵⁸ It is clear from this that one of the main elements of Kálnoky’s Balkan policy in the period under review was to gain economic advantage, which he hoped would bring political benefits,⁵⁹ and to achieve this good relations with Russia were necessary. On the other hand, after the meeting with Lobanov-Rostovsky at the beginning of June 1883, Kálnoky listed in his notes the maintenance of Austro-Hungarian–Russian allied relations as one of the cardinal factors of *general peace*. He substantiated this by arguing that a possible war could lead to the weakening of the *monarchical principle* and the *dynasties*, and to the strengthening of international socialist and anarchist parties.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Aufzeichnungen über eine Unterredung dessen Kálnoky mit F[ür]st Lobanow. Wien, Juni 1883. In. HHStA PA/I. Kt. 460.

⁵⁶ Abschrift eines geheimen Vortrages Seine Majestät. Wien, den 6. Juli 1883. In. HHStA PA/I. Kt. 460.

⁵⁷ Denkschrift des Freiherren von Aehrenthal über die Beziehungen Österreich-Ungarns zu Russland 1872–1894. In. HHStA PA/I. Kt. 469–2–XXIIIb–4.

⁵⁸ Weisung Kálnokys an Grafen Wolkenstein (nach St. Petersburg). Wien, 5. Juli 1883. In. HHStA PA/I. Kt. 460.

⁵⁹ For more on this, see: Demeter, Gábor, *A modernizációtól az expanziós törekvésekig, a liberalizmustól a turanizmusig*. A balkáni behatolás gazdasági és ideológiai alapjai. [From modernisation to expansionism, from liberalism to turanism. The economic and ideological foundations of the Balkan penetration] Sofia–Budapest, 2018.

⁶⁰ Aufzeichnungen über eine Unterredung dessen Kálnoky mit F[ür]st Lobanow. Wien, Juni 1883. In. HHStA PA/I. Kt. 460.

The relationship between Vienna and St. Petersburg was further aggravated by the fact that both Kálnoky and Lobanov-Rostovsky had lodged mutual complaints about the war preparations made by the other side. As Kálnoky pointed out in a letter to Count Imre Széchenyi, the ambassador of the Monarchy to Berlin, “*What I can attempt to state with absolute certainty is that no one here, military or civilian, is thinking of waging a war against Russia.*”⁶¹ Kálnoky also informed about this the Russian ambassador to Vienna. At the same time, Kálnoky informed Wolkenstein-Trostburg that Lobanov-Rostovsky “*(...) complained about the fact that Austrian officers in “disguise” were roaming the areas along the Russian border; one of whom had recently been arrested and confessed to having travelled on commission with a forged passport. I have flatly denied any knowledge of such travellers, just as Giers did not know about when Russian officers were arrested years ago in Przemyśl.*”⁶² Franz Joseph questioned the pro-peace rhetoric of the Petersburg government on the basis of reports from the German General Staff, as the Emperor, citing German sources, believed that the development of military forces would allow Russia to launch a war much more effectively in two or three years.⁶³

Russian diplomacy proposed a meeting between Franz Joseph and Alexander III to dispel the atmosphere of mistrust. At the Kálnoky–Lobanov meeting in June 1883, the Russian ambassador to Vienna expressed his intention to settle the Austro-Hungarian–Russian relationship with a *meeting of the two rulers*. In principle, Kálnoky shared this diplomatic move, but stressed that he could not discuss specifics until he knew the Russian position.⁶⁴ In the summer of 1883, both Franz Joseph and Alexander III agreed to the meeting, however, Russian Interior Minister Dmitry Andreyevich Tolstoy refused to allow Alexander III to travel to Russian Poland. A much later correspondence between Kálnoky and Wolkenstein, dated 24 November 1883, shed light on the real reasons behind the cancellation of the meeting. The Interior Minister argued that General Iosif Vladimirovich Gurko had not yet

⁶¹ Privatschreiben Kálnokys an Széchenyi. Wien, 4. Juli 1883. In HHStA PA/I. Kt. 460.

⁶² Weisung Kálnokys an Grafen Wolkenstein (nach St. Petersburg). Wien, 5. Juli 1883. In. HHStA PA/I. Kt. 460.

⁶³ Abschrift eines geheimen Vortrages Seine Majestät. Wien, den 6. Juli 1883. In. HHStA PA/I. Kt. 460.

⁶⁴ Aufzeichnungen über eine Unterredung dessen Kálnoky mit F[ür]st Lobanow. Wien, Juni 1883. In. HHStA PA/I. Kt. 460.

spent enough time as head of the Warsaw Military Governorate to be familiar with local conditions and ensure the safety of the two monarchs and their delegations.⁶⁵ Consequently, the meeting of the monarchs in the summer of 1883 could not be held.

Kálnoky and Bismarck discussed the Austro-Hungarian and German negotiating positions in Salzburg on 30 August 1883. The published German sources said little about the Salzburg meeting, therefore, just the notes of Kálnoky⁶⁶ allow us to reconstruct the course of the conversation.⁶⁷ First, the grievances of the Petersburg court and possible Russian proposals for amendments were discussed.⁶⁸ The German Imperial Chancellor did not reject the initiative of Saburov, but he could not enter into negotiations without knowing the official Russian negotiating position.⁶⁹ According to a note written by Kálnoky, at the Salzburg meeting Bismarck “(...) *agreed with everything that we [Austria-Hungary – the author] accept in relation*

⁶⁵ Abschrift eines geheimen Privatschreibens des Grafen Kálnoky an Grafen Wolkenstein in St. Petersburg. Wien, 24. November 1883. In. HHStA PA/I. Kt. 460.

⁶⁶ Besprechung mit F[ür]st[en] Bismarck in Salzburg. 30. August 1883. In. HHStA PA/I. Kt. 460.

⁶⁷ As a control source, it is worth noting the Aehranthal memoir mentioned earlier, but the content of the two documents is identical, so I referred to the material written by Kálnoky. See: Denkschrift des Freiherren von Aehrenthal über die Beziehungen Österreich-Ungarns zu Russland 1872–1894. In. HHStA PA/I. Kt. 469–2–XXIIIb–4.

⁶⁸ These were unofficial demands, but the Russian court nevertheless expressed its grievances in three points regarding the League of the Three Emperors. On 25 August 1883, the Russian ambassador to Berlin handed the points over to the German Foreign Ministry, from where they were immediately forwarded to the government in Vienna and to Bismarck, who was preparing to leave for Austria. In the first point, the Tsar complained that he could not achieve the unification of the Principality of Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia, since the treaty of 18 June 1881 had only contributed to the union “*in a natural way*”, on the initiative of the two provinces in question. It is worth mentioning at this point that the pro-Russian Bulgarian political elite could have brought the union to life, but the main problem was that the Bulgarian prince Alexander Battenberg and the governor of Eastern Rumelia, Aleko Pasha, were of Austrophile orientation. According to the second point, it was against the interests of St Petersburg that Austria-Hungary and Germany could go to war against France without the consent of the Tsar, while Russia would have to consult its allies in the event of a war against the Ottoman Porte. And on the third point, the Tsarist government complained that they had no information about the content of the dual and triple alliance. On this subject, see: Nr. 605. Aufzeichnungen des Unterstaatssekretärs im Auswärtigen Amt Busch. Reinschrift. Berlin, 25. August 1883. In. *Die Große Politik*, 1922. 292–293.

⁶⁹ Besprechung mit F[ür]st[en] Bismarck in Salzburg. 30. August 1883. In. HHStA PA/I. Kt. 460.

to the Balkan countries.”⁷⁰ The leadership of the Vienna Foreign Ministry was aware that reaffirming the content of the Reichstadt Agreement could be of great advantage in the Balkans, but for pragmatic reasons they rejected it. Kálnoky argued that between 1876 and 1883, conditions in the Balkans and in Europe had changed significantly, so it was not in the interest of the Monarchy to return to the Reichstadt points. A prime example of this was the excellent Austro-Hungarian–German–Turkish relationship, which was important to both Kálnoky and Bismarck. Related to this is the fact that the Reichstadt Agreement envisaged the partition of the Ottoman Empire, while the interest of Kálnoky was to strengthen and maintain the Porte to counterbalance Russia. Afterwards, they turned to the questions of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the two Bulgarian principalities. In relation to the Bulgarian Union, Kálnoky and Bismarck concluded that the Bulgarian Principality and Eastern Rumelia were vassals of the Ottoman Empire, and accordingly the grievances of Giers and the Russian state apparatus against Bulgaria had no legal basis and contradicted the League of the Three Emperors.⁷¹

Kálnoky also stressed at the Salzburg meeting the *policy of non-interference* regarding Bulgaria. More and more information about the “violent” Russian lobbying in Bulgaria reached the courts of Vienna and Berlin. And referring to the pro-Austrian Alexander Battenberg, according to Kálnoky, Bulgarian resistance was growing stronger. The question of Bulgarian intervention was a major dilemma during the consultation, although the political and/or military aspects of this did not arise. In this respect, Kálnoky still considered the presence of the Russian army in Bulgaria too strong, and therefore saw little chance of forming a – pro-Austrian – Bulgarian national government. This may explain why Kálnoky’s foreign policy in the period under study was intended to avoid interfering in Bulgarian relations, creating space for a “violent” Russian policy in Bulgaria. Consequently, the ultimate goal of Kálnoky was to bring the Balkan countries closer to Vienna instead of St. Petersburg, as a result of the events in Bulgaria. Kálnoky therefore rejected the demarcation line advocated by Bismarck, which would have divided the Austro-Hungarian and Russian interests in the Balkans. In Salzburg, Kálnoky justified this by saying that, on the one hand, he was not willing to give up the economic influence in Bulgaria and, on the other hand, he believed that Russia would not have respected the separation of interests.⁷²

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

The next important aspect was to review the options for a military and commercial action against Russia. The Berlin Cabinet supported the expansion of the Russian trade volume in the Black Sea and the Balkans in the hope of bringing benefits to the Austro-Hungarian Empire as well as the German Empire. While doubtless agreeing with this argument, Kálnoky's emphasis was more on signalling to the London government, and above all to British Prime Minister William E. Gladstone, the active policy of Russia in Bulgaria and the Black Sea region, which was harming the interests of Britain by threatening Constantinople and the Straits.⁷³ Finally, Kálnoky and Bismarck agreed to form an alliance with the Kingdom of Romania, which was approaching the Monarchy in opposition to Russia.⁷⁴

The next stage in the negotiations was the establishment of formal negotiating programmes and the consideration of the terms. It is interesting to note that according to a group of sources, the meeting between Kálnoky and Bismarck proved to be fruitful, as the content of the consultation was reflected in the evolving German and Austro-Hungarian positions. In an unsigned instruction sent to Reuß on 8 September 1883, Bismarck outlined the following concept: 1. To mitigate the anti-Russian policy, it is better if it is not the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy or the German Empire that provokes diplomatic and/or military conflict, but other rivals, especially Great Britain. 2. The aim is to prolong the League of the Three Emperors, and therefore Vienna and Berlin cannot remain passive with regard to Russian diplomacy. 3. It is prohibited to lay down in the treaty of alliance any provisions that would violate the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire. Whether Bismarck could have been referring to the content of the Reichstadt Agreement is not specified in the text. Bismarck attached great importance to the third point, as he stated in his instruction dated 5 September that “(...) *if this [the extension of the alliance – the author] is possible without a conspiracy against the Sultan, then I consider the agreement between the three of us to be the least dangerous and most useful result that we [the German Empire – the author] and Austria can derive from the situation. If that fails, my political vote is that Russia should be left to go her own way, evidently unchecked and at her own risk, as long as other powers are not concerned about her and they [the other powers – the author] do not need our help.*”⁷⁵ The

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Nr. 606. Der Reichskanzler Fürst von Bismarck, z. Z. in Gastein, an den Botschafter in Wien Prinzen Heinrich VII. Reuß. Gastein, den 8. September 1883. In: *Die Große*

piquant part of the story is that the Viennese foreign affairs files contain an extract, also dated 8 September 1883, in which the head of the Wilhelmstraße presented to the German ambassador to Vienna that “(…) *if possible, we should come to an agreement with Russia along the lines of the latest Saburov proposals, and if this agreement fails, we should leave the Bulgarian gate open to the Russians, (...) whose [Russia's – the author] alliance we can win more surely in this way than by a signed paper.*”⁷⁶

The position of the Viennese government can be reconstructed from the report of Reuß from 18 September 1883, according to which Kálnoky formulated the following three points: 1. The treaty should be concluded for a short period of time, so that it can always be adapted to the current geopolitical power relations and interests. 2. Under the current circumstances, it is not advantageous to modify the treaty, so he also rejects the Reichstadt principles. 3. He will not reject the Saburov negotiating basis pending receipt of official Russian proposals for amendments.⁷⁷ It is not possible to determine from the surviving sources the influence that Kálnoky had on Bismarck in Salzburg. According to one version, Bismarck gave way to the ideas of Kálnoky and the German diplomacy also followed his alternative, however, the second version suggests that Bismarck did not support Kálnoky's ideas. Thus, the course of the negotiations may further colour this picture.

Although the Austro-Hungarian, Russian and German positions had been formulated beforehand, the negotiations were suspended until the trip of Giers to Germany on 13–14 November 1883. According to the sources of the meeting in Friedrichsruh on 14 November, the Russian Foreign Ministry wanted to reach an agreement on a single issue. Giers wanted the third paragraph of the first article to be deleted, which stated that if one contracting party is at war with a fourth, and an ally not at war provides assistance to its partner, then the assistance applies to the third contracting party as well.⁷⁸ Bismarck thought that with this, Russia

Politik, 1922. 294–295.

⁷⁶ Auszug aus einer Depesche des F[ür]sten Bismarck an P[rin]z Reuß. Gastein, 8. Sept[ember], 1883. In: HHStA PA/I. Kt. 460.

⁷⁷ Nr. 610. Der Botschafter in Wien Prinz Heinrich VII. Reuß an den Reichskanzler Fürsten von Bismarck. Wien, 18. September 1883. In: *Die Große Politik*. 1922. 301–302.

⁷⁸ Nr. 612. Der Reichskanzler Fürst von Bismarck, z. Z. in Friedrichsruh, an den Botschafter in Wien Prinzen Heinrich VII. Reuß. 19. November 1883. In: *Die Große Politik*, 1922. 305–307.; Auszug aus einer Depesche an P[rin]z[e]n Reuss nach dem Besuche des H[err]n. von Giers in Friedrichsruhe und aus einem Vortrag des F[ür]st[e]n

wanted to ensure that it would not get involved in a war against France. Although no official position was taken on this issue in Friedrichsruh, Bismarck considered the proposal acceptable, all the more so because Russia did not make the extension of the treaty conditional on it.⁷⁹

In a private letter to Wolkenstein-Trostburg, Kálnoky added another aspect to the Bismarck–Giers consultation. According to the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister, the idea of a summit between the three emperors was expressed at the meeting in Friedrichsruh, above all to resolve the Austro-Hungarian and Russian distrust. In the view of Kálnoky, the initiative came from St. Petersburg, and consequently this aspect was not included in the reports of the meeting that were sent to Ballhausplatz. At least, Kálnoky's version is supported by the fact that Lobanov-Rostovsky, after consulting with Giers, immediately conveyed the possibility of a meeting to Kálnoky.⁸⁰

Despite the fact that Bismarck supported the proposal of Giers for an amendment, little substantive progress was made in the course of events between late November and mid-January. After Reuß returned from Friedrichsruh, he formally informed Kálnoky of the results of the Giers–Bismarck meeting. Kálnoky rejected the possibility of any information leaking from the passages of the Triple Alliance, furthermore, he did not agree to Russia joining the Berlin–Rome–Vienna axis either.⁸¹ Kálnoky justified his position by arguing that it would be a mistake to build the alliance system on Russia and, by extending the Triple Alliance, abandon the net that provides protection against Russia.⁸² Therefore, the head of the Ballhausplatz has, as a precautionary measure, supported the extension of the contract without any amendments.⁸³

In this respect, it is worth examining the motivations of Kálnoky. The first segment was that he considered Russia too powerful for two neighbouring states not to count on it as a partner. It derives from this

Bismarck an Kaiser Wilhelm über denselben Gegenstande. [sine dato, loci]. In. HHStA PA/I. Kt. 460.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Abschrift eines geheimen Privatschreibens des Grafen Kálnoky an Grafen Wolkenstein. Wien, 24. November 1883. In. HHStA PA/I. Kt. 460.

⁸¹ Nr. 613. Der Botschafter in Wien Prinz Heinrich VII. Reuß an den Reichskanzler Fürsten von Bismarck. Wien, 20. Dezember 1883. In. *Die Große Politik*, 1922. 307–308.

⁸² Abschrift eines geheimen Privatschreibens des Grafen Kálnoky an Grafen Wolkenstein. Wien, 24. November 1883. In. HHStA PA/I. Kt. 460.

⁸³ Nr. 614. Der Botschafter in Wien Prinz Heinrich VII. Reuß an den Reichskanzler Fürsten von Bismarck. Wien, 28. Dezember 1883. In. *Die Große Politik*, 1922. 308–310.

that Kálnoky, in order to avoid conflict, wished to maintain the League of the Three Emperors. A fine example of this is that in a private letter to Wolkenstein-Trostburg on 24 November 1883, Kálnoky, as a result of the Russian domestic crisis, stated that “*I gladly agree to advise our Gracious Lord [Franz Joseph – the author] to be very considerate in everything that may outwardly document the friendly relations and unity of the three emperors (...).*”⁸⁴ Essentially, the concept outlined by Kálnoky meant that he supported representative acts such as the meeting of the three monarchs,⁸⁵ but in the Balkan policy the “Vienna” and “Salzburg” programs, which were unfavourable to Russia, continued to predominate.⁸⁶

With the visit of Giers to Vienna, the negotiations continued from 19 to 21 January 1884. We do not know the motives of Giers as to whether he intended to travel to Vienna to see Kálnoky. In any case, in an exchange of letters with Franz Joseph, Kálnoky reported to the Emperor that through the mediation of Lobanov-Rostovsky he had invited the Russian Foreign Minister to Vienna.⁸⁷ Giers consulted not only Kálnoky, but also the Emperor himself. At the audience, Giers assured Franz Joseph that the government in St. Petersburg had no intention of waging war against the Monarchy. Nevertheless, the Emperor complained that on the pretext of defence measures Giers shared the preparations in Russian Poland and the war plans of some officers of the Russian General Staff.⁸⁸

At the meeting of the two foreign ministers in Vienna, an agreement was reached on some issues. According to the notes of Kálnoky,

⁸⁴ Abschrift eines geheimen Privatschreibens des Grafen Kálnoky an Grafen Wolkenstein. Wien, 24. November 1883. In: HHStA PA/I. Kt. 460.

⁸⁵ Although Kálnoky supported the possibility of a meeting between the three rulers, this did not happen until the signing of the treaty. The reports from Wolkenstein-Trostburg are somewhat contradictory in this respect. On the one hand, he felt that Schweinitz wanted to play a central role in the implementation, and on the other hand, he avoided discussions on the subject. Later, reflecting on the plans of Russian military attaché Dolgorukiy for a meeting in Berlin, Schweinitz did not support it, claiming that there were organisational difficulties. See: Wolkenstein-Trostburg an Kálnoky. 19/7. Dezember 1883. In: *Ibid.*; Nr. 617. Der Legationsrat Graf Herbert von Bismarck, z. Z. in Petersburg an den Reichskanzler Fürsten von Bismarck. St. Petersburg, 27. Januar 1884. In: *Die Große Politik*, 1922. 315–318.

⁸⁶ Abschrift eines geheimen Privatschreibens des Grafen Kálnoky an Grafen Wolkenstein. Wien, 24. November 1883. In: HHStA PA/I. Kt. 460.

⁸⁷ Kálnoky an Franz Joseph in Gödöllő. Wien, 2. Dezember 1883. In: *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ Nr. 615. Der Botschafter in Wien Prinz Heinrich VII. Reuß an den Reichskanzler Fürsten von Bismarck. Wien, 21. Januar 1884. In: *Die Große Politik*, 1922. 311–314.

the negotiations were set back by Giers' concerns about the ambitions of Saburov and Nyelidov, to the extent that Kálnoky considered calming the Russian Foreign Minister the most difficult task.⁸⁹ The sources do not emphasise this per se, but presumably military issues were also discussed at the Kálnoky–Giers meeting. Kálnoky considered Serbia to be the central issue of the meeting and stressed that the influence of the Monarchy in Serbia and the rule of the pro-Austrian Obrenović dynasty was an integral part of the policy of the status quo in the Balkans, and that Russia had no legal basis for intervening in Serbia. Regarding the latter, Giers explained that the Tsarist court did not intend to interfere in the Serbian relations,⁹⁰ then Kálnoky expressed his consent to the Russian proposals for amendments formulated in Friedrichsruh and to the Petersburg negotiations. At this point, it is worth noting that Kálnoky still did not understand the relevance of the amendment, but since in his view it did not diminish the weight of the first article, he accepted it.⁹¹ A report by Reuß indicates that Kálnoky essentially shared the view of Bismarck, according to which, with the amendment Russia sought to reduce its obligations towards its allies.⁹² They also managed to agree on a meeting between Alexander III and Franz Joseph, but Kálnoky left it to Russian diplomacy to decide on the date and venue.

Although it can be argued from the above that the Kálnoky–Giers meeting was a success, it is also true that consensus was not reached on a number of issues. Referring to an earlier discussion with Lobanov-Rostovsky, Kálnoky urged the extension of the contract by another six years, but Giers rejected it.⁹³ The Russian Foreign Minister had a strong vision for resolving the *dispute*, which was aimed at ensuring that Russia created the best possible conditions for the Orthodox inhabitants of the Monarchy. We do not know exactly what the argumentation was, as the Austro-Hungarian and German diplomatic material only highlighted that the case was unsuccessful.⁹⁴ To summarise the results of the Kálnoky–Giers meeting in Vienna, it can be concluded that a compromise was rea-

⁸⁹ Abschrift eines Privatschreibens Kálnokys an Grafen Wolkenstein. Wien, 9. Februar 1884. In: HHStA PA/I. Kt. 460.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Nr. 615. Der Botschafter in Wien Prinz Heinrich VII. Reuß an den Reichskanzler Fürsten von Bismarck. Wien, 21. Januar 1884. In: *Die Große Politik*, 1922. 311–314.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.; Abschrift eines Privatschreibens Kálnokys an Grafen Wolkenstein. Wien, 9. Februar 1884. In: HHStA PA/I. Kt. 460.

ched regarding the amendment of the treaty, but a number of other issues illustrated the differences between the Russian and Austro-Hungarian mindsets. This is supported by the fact that, although Aehrenthal did not elaborate the contents of Giers' visit to Vienna, he nevertheless referred to the telegram sent by Giers on 16 February, in which Russian diplomacy demanded assurances on the "Vienna consensus", the maintenance of the status quo for as long as possible.⁹⁵

At the end of January 1884, the confidence of the Viennese cabinet in Russian diplomacy continued to deteriorate. Kálnoky attributed to the success of Saburov that Alexander III preferred a one-year extension of the agreement. The Ballhausplatz was puzzled by the events, as Lobanov-Rostovsky had recently given information about a six-year extension.⁹⁶ On 5 February, Bismarck accepted the proposal in order to maintain the treaty, but in another letter he explained that this could raise concerns regarding Russian peace efforts.⁹⁷ However, Kálnoky was not so reticent when he said that "(...) *unfortunately Giers has no backbone and does not know how to act with the kind of security that is even more necessary in Russia (...)*".⁹⁸ From this passage we can conclude that Kálnoky considered the one-year extension a destabilizing element, he hoped that the League of the Three Emperors would solidify the foreign relations of the Monarchy.

It is now worth turning to the question of the method of contract renewal. Sources suggest that by the end of January 1884, Bismarck had already considered it settled that the negotiations would take place in St. Petersburg, as he appointed his son Herbert von Bismarck as First Secretary of the Petersburg Embassy in early January 1884;⁹⁹ however, this is contradicted by a later correspondence in which Bismarck left it to the Petersburg Foreign Ministry to decide where to hold the negotiations, but it was also known in Berlin that Giers wanted to chair the negotiations

⁹⁵ Denkschrift des Freiherren von Aehrenthal über die Beziehungen Österreich-Ungarns zu Russland 1872–1894. In: HHStA PA/I. Kt. 469–2–XXIIIb–4.

⁹⁶ Abschrift eines Privatschreibens Kálnokys an Grafen Wolkenstein. Wien, 9. Februar 1884. In: HHStA PA/I. Kt. 460.

⁹⁷ Nr. 622. Der Reichskanzler Fürst von Bismarck, z. Z. in Friedrichsruh, an den Botschafter in Petersburg von Schweinitz. Friedrichsruh, 5. Februar 1884. In: *Die Große Politik*, 1922. 325.

⁹⁸ Abschrift eines Privatschreibens Kálnokys an Grafen Wolkenstein. Wien, 9. Februar 1884. In: HHStA PA/I. Kt. 460.

⁹⁹ Nr. 617. Der Legationsrat Graf Herbert von Bismarck, z. Z. in Petersburg an den Reichskanzler Fürsten von Bismarck. St. Petersburg, 27. Januar 1884. In: *Die Große Politik*, 1922. 315–318.

himself, so it was expected that the talks would be held in St Petersburg.¹⁰⁰ What is certain is that Bismarck sent his son to Petersburg to “supervise” the negotiations.¹⁰¹ In spite of having agreed to the discussions to be held in St. Petersburg during the visit of Giers to Vienna, Kálnoky was slow to make a formal statement. Firstly, he only agreed to the location in Russia if it was through the mediation of Bismarck. Secondly, he authorised Wolkenstein-Trostburg to intervene in the negotiations immediately if they were going unfavourably for the Monarchy.¹⁰² In the meantime, Bismarck had put back on the agenda the plan to transform the Triple Alliance into a quadruple one (*Quadruppelallianz*), which would have meant including Russia in the treaty signed by Italy, Germany and the Monarchy in 1882, while also maintaining the League of the Three Emperors. Already in the autumn of 1883, Bismarck had informally enquired in Vienna whether the admission of Russia to the Triple Alliance would be supported, which Kálnoky firmly refused.¹⁰³ However, on the orders of Bismarck, Reuß formally discussed the matter with Kálnoky on 22 February 1884. The Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister did not change the position he had taken in the autumn of 1883, and he considered it a fatal mistake to base the alliance system on Russia, therefore he again firmly rejected the possibility of extending the Triple Alliance.¹⁰⁴

The first version of the final concept of the Russian treaty amendment was outlined by early February 1884. As expected, the first point demanded the abolition of the third paragraph of the first article.¹⁰⁵ In the second point, the more significant amendment was proposed: in the sentence of the second article, the phrase “the whole peninsula” was considered appropriate instead of “European Turkey”. The amendment meant that before any intervention in the Balkans, the three contracting parties would have to hold consultations.

¹⁰⁰ Nr. 622. Der Reichskanzler Fürst von Bismarck, z. Z. in Friedrichsruh, an den Botschafter in Petersburg von Schweinitz. Friedrichsruh, 5. Februar 1884. In: *Die Große Politik*, 1922. 324.

¹⁰¹ Privatschreiben Kálnokys an Wolkenstein-Trostburg. 30/18. Januar 1884. In: HH-StA GKA GesA St. Petersburg Kt. 117.

¹⁰² Abschrift eines Privatschreibens Kálnokys an Grafen Wolkenstein. Wien, 9. Februar 1884. In: HHStA PA/I. Kt. 460.

¹⁰³ Kálnoky an Wolkenstein-Trostburg. Wien, 24. November 1883. In: HHStA PA/I. Kt. 460.

¹⁰⁴ Notizen über eine Unterredung mit dem deutschen Gesandten Prinz Reuß betreffend eine Convention à quatre (Österreich-Ungarn, Deutschland, Italien, Russland). Wien, 22. Februar 1884. In: HHStA PA/I. Kt. 69-2-XXIIIa-2.

¹⁰⁵ Auswärtigen Amt. Abschrift. No. IV. St. Petersburg, 8. Februar 1884. In: HHStA PA/I. Kt. 460.

Giers justified this by arguing that he and Kálnoky had agreed in Vienna to maintain the status quo in the Balkans, and this passage ensured the partnership of the two empires in the Balkans. In essence, referring to Kálnoky, the Russian Foreign Minister wanted to give contractual form to his ambition to “(...) *postpone annexation and union* (...)” to maintain the status quo.¹⁰⁶ Schweinitz had already pointed out to Giers that Kálnoky would under no circumstances sign such a proposal, and therefore in St. Petersburg they settled for not naming Bosnia-Herzegovina and Bulgaria in the draft that was sent. Nevertheless, according to Giers, the second point, without specifying the areas in question, “(...) *allows us to prevent and resolve any unforeseen difficulties that the events may create*.”¹⁰⁷ Undoubtedly, Giers maintained his view that without prior consultation the Monarchy could not make any changes in the Balkans, not even the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Finally, the third point proposed a three-year extension of the agreement.¹⁰⁸ The available sources do not mention the discussions that took place within the tsarist government regarding the duration of the extension of the treaty, determining this would require further research and a review of the Russian diplomatic documents.

Meanwhile, consultations between the St. Petersburg and Vienna governments revolved around the second point of the Russian proposal. Kálnoky did not rush to reply, which made Giers increasingly impatient. According to a letter dated 16 February 1884, Bismarck stated that Germany would not launch a war against France, and Giers would have liked to receive a note from Kálnoky in which he confirmed the policy of maintaining the status quo.¹⁰⁹ Kálnoky was outraged by the second point of the Russian proposal. Undoubtedly, Kálnoky had already assured Giers on 18 February about maintaining the status quo in the Balkans, but the issue of the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina was still under discussion.¹¹⁰ According to Kálnoky, the 1881 treaty already implied that prior consultations were necessary regarding the “entire peninsula”, and the *formal annexation* of Bosnia and Herzegovina did not entail

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ (Copie) Giers an Lobanov–Rostovsky, St. Pétersbourg le 8/21. février 1884. In. HHStA PA/I. Kt. 460.

¹⁰⁸ Auswärtigen Amt. Abschrift. No. IV. St. Petersburg, 8. Februar 1884. In. HHStA PA/I. Kt. 460.

¹⁰⁹ Télégramme St. Pétersbourg, le 4/16. février 1884. (Copie, Giers an Lobanov–Rostovsky). In. HHStA PA/I. Kt. 460.

¹¹⁰ Schweinitz believed that on 18 February 1884 Kálnoky sent a statement to St Petersburg through Lobanov–Rostovsky. See: Schweinitz, 1929. 264.

a change in the status quo, and no international treaty stipulated that this should take place in parallel with the Bulgarian union. Kálnoky firmly rejected the Russian proposal and insisted that the *freedom of action* with regard to Bosnia and Herzegovina should be preserved, the annexation should exclusively be decided in Vienna.¹¹¹ At this point, in order to overcome the problems of interpretation, Wolkenstein-Trostburg proposed to negotiate simply on the basis of the provisions of the Berlin Congress of 1878,¹¹² which Kálnoky supported, although he was aware that St. Petersburg would not give up the possibility of uniting Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia¹¹³. However, Kálnoky and Wolkenstein-Trostburg did not take into account that the Berlin Congress had only allowed the occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina by the Monarchy, so by this move Kálnoky would have virtually renounced the support of Russia regarding the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The Austro-Hungarian and Russian talks were making rapid progress at the end of February. Adding to the tension, Giers drew Kálnoky's attention to one of the outcomes of their meeting in Vienna, namely the maintenance of the status quo, and added that in St. Petersburg they were confident that, as a result of the talks, the annexation would not come to fruition.¹¹⁴ Outraged by this, Kálnoky sent an instruction to St. Petersburg the very next day, asking Wolkenstein-Trostburg to remind the Russian Foreign Minister that in Vienna they had only agreed to maintain the status quo in the Balkans and that he still refused to give up the freedom of action in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina.¹¹⁵ Despite this, the Ballhausplatz still supported the extension of the treaty, therefore Kálnoky assured Giers regarding the annexation that "(...) *we do not want to solve such an important issue without the prior consent of Russia*",¹¹⁶ then on 2 March the Russian Foreign Minister acknowledged the Monarchy's freedom of action in Bosnia and Herzegovina.¹¹⁷

¹¹¹ Weisung Kálnokys an Wolkenstein-Trostburg. Wien, 22. Februar 1884. In. HHStA PA/I. Kt. 460.

¹¹² Telegramm des Grafen Wolkenstein-Trostburg an Grafen Kálnoky. 23. Februar 1884. No. 16. In. HHStA PA/I. Kt. 460.

¹¹³ Weisung Kálnokys an Wolkenstein-Trostburg. Wien, 23. Februar 1884. No. 10. In. HHStA PA/I. Kt. 460.

¹¹⁴ Télégramme St. Pétersbourg, le 14/26. février 1884. (Copie Giers an Lobanov-Rostovsky). In. HHStA PA/I. Kt. 460.

¹¹⁵ Weisung Kálnokys an Wolkenstein-Trostburg. Wien, 27. Februar 1884. In. HHStA PA/I. Kt. 460.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Telegramm des Grafen Wolkenstein-Trostburg an Grafen Kálnoky. 2. März 1884. In. HHStA PA/I. Kt. 460.

By 3 March 1884, a consensus was reached to amend the treaty, which was based on the Russian position that had been established by early February. The draft treaty contained the deletion of the third paragraph of the first article, the maintenance of the status quo policy for the “entire peninsula” with no reference to Bosnia and Herzegovina nor Bulgaria, as well as an extension for another three years, which came into force on the expiration of the original treaty, that is, on 18 June 1884. However, Kálnoky was not informed about the final passages¹¹⁸ until 22 March, then on 26 March he accepted the contents of the protocol containing the amendments and sent an authorisation to Count Imre Széchenyi to sign the treaty.¹¹⁹ The protocol was signed on 27 March 1884 by Bismarck, Széchenyi and the new Russian ambassador to Berlin, Nikolay Alekseyevich Orlov, who had been sent to Berlin to replace Saburov.¹²⁰

Evaluate the significance of a contract amendment is not an easy task. It is certain that the extension of the dual alliance did not ultimately play a role in the negotiations relating to the League of the Three Emperors, but the aforementioned evidence suggests that before knowing the Russian negotiating programme, by allowing Kálnoky to make decisions on informal issues and by conveying the primacy of the dual alliance to him, the Berlin cabinet certainly wanted to facilitate the course of the Austro-Hungarian–Russian consultations.

Kálnoky played a central role in the negotiations relating to the League of the Three Emperors, and the deal between him and Giers was instrumental in extending the treaty without the strong mediation of Bismarck. The significance of the final amendments can be grasped in the compromise solution that Kálnoky was not forced to draw the demarcation line separating Austro-Hungarian and Russian interests, which was supported by Bismarck, and thus did not have to give up the economic and political influence of the Monarchy in Bulgaria. At the same time, Giers was given a guarantee that the status quo in the Balkans would be maintained and could be changed by imposing mandatory consultations between the contracting parties. In my opinion, it is in the latter passage that the real result of the amendment is to be found, which has strengthened the partnership between the Monarchy and Russia in the Balkans. To underline this, it is worth pointing out, on the one hand, that this passage caused serious difficulties for Kálnoky when he wanted to in-

¹¹⁸ Kaiserlich Botschaft in Wien. 24. März 1884. In. HHStA PA/I. Kt. 460.

¹¹⁹ Weisung Kálnokys an Széchenyi. Wien, 26. März 1884. In. HHStA PA/I. Kt. 460.

¹²⁰ Bericht des Grafen Széchenyi an Grafen Kálnoky. Berlin, 15. April 1884. In. HHStA PA/I. Kt. 460.

tervene in the Serbian–Bulgarian war on the side of Serbia in the autumn of 1885, in other words, Kálnoky ultimately gave the authority to sign a protocol that essentially limited the freedom of action of the Monarchy in the Balkans. On the other hand, it is also important to keep in mind that the union of the Bulgarian Principality and Eastern Rumelia in 1885 was achieved without Russian interference and to reduce the influence of St. Petersburg, which was in the interests of the Monarchy after the Salzburg meeting. In contrast, after the Russian opposition to the union, Kálnoky also raised his voice against the union until October 1886 and sought to restore the status quo.¹²¹ Alexander III did not intend to extend the League of the Three Emperors in 1887, so we do not know how Giers would have reacted if the Monarchy had annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina during the term of the treaty. What is certain is that neither the Monarchy nor Russia had enough power to change the status quo in the Balkans, which played a major role in maintaining the alliance, thus, the extension of the treaty was seen as a success by both sides.

¹²¹ Palotás, Emil, “A három császár szövetségének kudarca” [“The failure of the League of the Three Emperors”], *Századok*, 121, 1987, 828–829.