linquish his title in favor of the Serbian Obrenović dynasty and recognize the political primacy of Serbia over Montenegro.97 This agreement, in addition to those that the Serbian prince signed with Greece (1867) and Romania (1868), made Serbia "the center of revolutionary and national activity in the Balkans."98

Nikola I Petrović Njegoš had an acute sense of dynasty, and at the close of the nineteenth century, he focused on political actions that would secure the dynastic prestige of the Petrović family among the South Slavs. He was aware that any future unification of South Slav lands into one state would place the dynastic issue at the political forefront and would result in a conflict between his family ruling in Montenegro and the family ruling in Serbia. Prince Nikola I moderated Montenegrin state policies in accordance with his wish that the Petrović family occupy the throne of such a "revived" empire, and from then on tried to do everything in his power to prove his rightful claim to the ancient crown. His actions were aimed in two directions: establishing a unified Serbian state and eliminating the rival dynasty. For Nikola I, to sit on the throne of "his ancestors" was not only a matter of pride and historical right but also a matter of the very survival of his dynasty.

Notes